

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

# DECEMBER 2019

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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1. Saudi Arabia takes over G20 Presidency from Japan becoming 1<sup>st</sup> arab country to do so.
  - Saudi Arabia will host world leaders for a global summit in its capital Riyadh in 2020.
2. Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi has submitted his resignation to Parliament amid ongoing anti-government protests across the country.
3. Global Migration Film Festival organised in Dhaka Bangladesh.
  - The festival screened 15 films on the theme of “migration and its various aspects”.
4. The National Assembly of Republic of Mauritius has unanimously elected Prithvirajsing Roopun, as new President of the island nation, a largely ceremonial post.
5. Finland’s Social Democrats elected 34-year-old Sanna Marin to the post of the prime minister, making her the youngest head of government in the country’s history.
6. US, Mexico, Canada sign USMCA trade deal
  - The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) will now go to the countries’ legislatures for final approval.
  - The accord is meant to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a deal in place since 1994.
7. World’s First commercial electric plane takes flight in Vancouver, Canada.
8. Thailand’s famous 2000-year-old massage, Nuad Thai massage was added to UNESCO’s (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) prestigious heritage list.
  - Nuad Thai is an intense form of massage in which the body is pulled and rotated well with the help of the thumb, elbow, knees and feet. Thai massage originated in India and brought it to Thailand about 2,500 years ago by doctors and monks who carried its secrets for generations.
9. Abdelmadjid Tebboune, former Prime Minister (PM) of Algeria was elected as the President of Algeria succeeding Abdelkader Bensalah.
10. Sri Lankan government has formally released its new National policy Framework titled ‘Vistas of Prosperity and Splendor’.
11. Donald Trump has become the third US President in history to be impeached by the House of Representatives.
  - The impeachment will lead to setting up a trial in the Senate that will decide whether Trump will remain in office or not. The House of Representatives formally charged Donald Trump with abuse of power. Although, no President in the 243-year history of the United States has been removed from office by impeachment. Only two previous presidents have been impeached in the US history. The House in 1998 impeached President Bill Clinton while President Andrew Johnson was impeached in 1868.
12. Ethiopia launched its first space satellite
  - The launch of the Ethiopian Remote Sensing Satellite (ETRSS) took place at a space station in China.
  - The launch makes Ethiopia the 11th African country to put a satellite into space. Egypt was the first in 1998.
13. The emergency protocol was activated to contain the environmental impact of a fuel spill in the Galapagos Islands
  - The step was taken after a barge carrying 600 gallons of diesel fuel sank. The Galapagos archipelago in Ecuador is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to one of the most fragile ecosystems on the planet.
14. Tennis legend Roger Federer will become the first living person in Switzerland to have a coin minted in his honour.
  - The Federal Mint, Swissmint, has created a 20-franc silver coin bearing Federer’s image.
  - It’s the first time in its history that Swissmint has created a commemorative coin to honour a living person

15. In Turkey, the main body of the 610-year-old Er-Rizk mosque was removed from the town of Hasankeyf ahead of its submergence as part of a Ilisu dam project.

**Eight West African nations rename common currency to Eco**

- Eight West African countries have agreed to change the name of their common currency to Eco and severed their earlier currency CFA Franc's links to former colonial ruler France. Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo currently use the currency.

16. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), has removed the 'Carnival of Aalst' of Belgium from its Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List.

- The 2019 carnival featured a parade float that included racist and anti-Semitic representations which mocked the Orthodox Jews. The carnival was added to the Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2010.

17. China launches its largest carrier rocket "Long March-5"

- The Chinese rocket carried the Shijian-20 satellite, a communication satellite and placed it into its designated orbit. The Shijian-20 satellite will lay the foundation for the development of highly sensitive space probes.

18. Russia deploys its 1st Avangard Hypersonic missile system

- The nuclear-capable missiles can travel more than 20 times the speed of sound. They have a "glide system" that affords great manoeuvrability and could make them impossible to defend against.
- The Avangard can carry a nuclear weapon of up to 2 megatons. Avangard is designed using new composite materials to withstand temperatures of up to 2,000 Celsius resulting from a flight through the atmosphere at hypersonic speeds.

## NATIONAL NEWS

1. Nationwide vaccination drive launched under Mission Indradhanush 2.0

- The government's flagship scheme is aimed at immunizing children under the age of 2 years and pregnant women against vaccine-preventable diseases. The IMI covers vaccines for diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, measles, meningitis and Hepatitis B, Vaccines for Japanese encephalitis and Hemophilus influenza are also being provided in selected areas. The IMI 2.0 aims to achieve targets of full immunization coverage in 272 districts spread over 27 States. The IMI 2.0 will be carried out between December 2019 and March 2020.

2. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched the 'Bharatiya Poshan Anthem' in New Delhi.

- The aim towards taking the message of making India malnutrition free to all corners of the country.
- The anthem was conceptualised by Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) and has been penned by noted lyricist Prasoon Joshi and sung by Shankar Mahadevan.

3. Fit India School Rating System launched as part of Fit India Campaign

- The Fit India school rating system as per certain parameters is expected to enhance the image of the schools.
- Fit India program is an innovative initiative launched by the Prime Minister to increase the awareness among the masses and to encourage people to adopt healthy lifestyle.

4. GoI launched National Clean Air Programme

- The government is targeting to achieve 20 per cent to 30 per cent reduction in Particulate Matter PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations by 2024 keeping 2017 as the base year for the comparison of concentration.

5. Hallmarking to be mandatory for gold jewellery and artefacts

- Hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts will be made mandatory across the country from January 15, 2021. The step aims to ensure the purity of the precious metal. The decision will make it compulsory for all the jewellers to register with the Bureau of Indian Standards and sell only hallmarked gold jewellery and artefacts.
- Gold hallmarking is a purity certification of the precious metal. The Bureau of Indian Standards has formulated standards for hallmarking gold jewellery in 3 grades: 14 carat, 18 carat and 22 carat.

6. President Ram Nath Kovind laid the foundation stone to the memorial being built in memory of the Paika rebellion, a 200-year-old armed revolt in 1817 against the British East India Company in Odisha.

- The memorial is seen as an epitome of Odisha's valour and will serve as an inspiration for the youth.
  - A chair in the name of Buxi Jagabandhu who led this revolt has been established with a Rs 5 crore grant and memorial coin and stamp issued to mark the two hundred years of the event.
- 7. India becomes 1st country to make entire Haj process digital**
- An online application, e-visa, Haj mobile app, 'e-MASIHA' health facility, "e-luggage pre-tagging" providing all information in India itself regarding accommodation and transportation in Mecca and Madina will be provided to 2 lakh Indian Muslims going for Haj in 2020.
- 8. Public sector trading firm MMTTC has ordered import of 11,000 metric tonnes of onions from Turkey.**
- This has been done on the directions of the Department of Consumer Affairs. The decision has been taken to moderate the rising prices of onion across the nation.
- 9. Delhi will host 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue and Delhi Dialogue XI**
- The theme for the Indian Ocean Dialogue is "Indo-Pacific: Re-imagining the Indian Ocean through an Expanded Geography", while the theme for the Delhi Dialogue is "Advancing Partnership in Indo-Pacific".
- 10. ISRO begins preparations for setting up 3rd rocket launchpad**
- Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has begun preparatory works for setting up a 3rd rocket launchpad in the small coastal hamlet of Kulashekrappattinam in the Thuthukudi district of Tamil Nadu.
  - At present, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has two launch pads at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
  - The demand for additional launch pads has arisen as a result of the increase in the number of satellite launches from India, both for domestic and international customers.
- 11. National Tribal Dance Festival to be held in Raipur**
- A National Tribal Dance Festival will be held in Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur from December 27 to 29. In the event, international folk artists from 23 states and six other countries are expected to take part and portray their respective tribal folk culture.
  - Nearly 1,400 artists belonging to 151 art troupes from 23 states and guest artists from six countries including Sri Lanka, Belarus, Uganda and Bangladesh will participate in the three-day programme.
- 12. FASTags becomes mandatory for all vehicles from 15th December 2019**
- The FASTags or prepaid rechargeable tags allows automatic payment of toll. The government launched the National Electronic Toll Collection System which provides for the collection of user fee through FASTag to save fuel and time, curb pollution and ensure seamless movement of traffic.
  - National Highways Authority of India has equipped all fee plazas with Electronic Toll Collection System.
  - With the help of a FASTag, drivers will not have to stop their vehicles at toll plazas to pay tax.
  - A FASTag uses radio frequency identification technology(RFID) to enable direct toll payments from a moving vehicle.
- 13. GOI has launched National Broadband Mission to provide Broadband access to all villages by 2022.**
- The mission aims to connect 600,000 villages across India with an investment of Rs 7 lakh crore in the next 4 years from both government and private sector. The mission is a part of the National Digital Communications Policy, 2018. The mission will secure universal broadband access for implementation of broadband initiatives and aims to offer Internet speed upto 50 Mbps in a phased manner.
- 14. Government e-commerce portal GeM has launched a national outreach programme, "GeM Samvaad", to bring on-board more local sellers.**
- Indian Railways has decided to grant 50% concession for the youth participating in the "Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat" programme. The concession has been granted as a special case and it is admissible only in the normal train services and not for booking of Special Trains or Coaches.
- 15. Chennai Corporation, Tamil Nadu launched India's first waste exchange platform namely "Madras Waste Exchange" (www.madraswasteexchange.com) to buy and sell municipal solid waste online.**
- India and the US have signed an agreement to facilitate the transfer of defence technology.
  - During a 2+2 dialogue held at Washington DC, the top foreign affairs and defence leaders on growing strategic relations between the world's largest and most powerful democracies.

**16. Afghanistan becomes 1st country to recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia**

- The Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP) is an officially recognized book of standards as per the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules 1945 thereunder. It specifies the standards of drugs manufactured and marketed in India in terms of their identity, purity and strength.
- To ensure the quality of medicinal products, the legal and scientific standards are provided by Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) in the form of Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP).

**17. Portugal announces Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize**

- The first edition of this prize will be dedicated to animal welfare as Mahatma Gandhi said that the greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated.

**18. President Ramnath Kovind releases mobile app of Red Cross Society of India in hyderabad**

- The developers informed that the access to blood bank and Red Cross membership will become easy with the launching of the mobile app.

**19. Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban has achieved its target of creating Urban India Open Defecation Free.**

- Urban areas of 35 states and Union Territories have become ODF. In all, 4,320 cities out of 4,372 have declared themselves ODF, of which 4,167 cities have been certified through third-party verification.
- This has been achieved by the construction of nearly 65.81 lakh individual household toilets against Mission target of 59 lakhs and 5.89 lakh seats of public toilets against Mission target of 5.08 lakh seats.

**20. 'Oxygen Parlour' at Nashik Railway Station to combat air pollution**

- In a unique initiative to battle rising air pollution in cities, an 'Oxygen Parlour' has been opened at Nashik railway station to provide an experience of breathing clean air to the commuters.
- The initiative comes with the efforts of Airo Guard in collaboration with the Indian Railways.
- The concept of Oxygen Parlour is based on the recommendation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). There are around 1500 plants here, so, these plants can directly and effectively bring down the pollution in the air at the railway station and allow the people to breathe cleaner air.

**21. Petroleum Minister unveils India's first long distance CNG bus from Delhi to Dehradun.**

**22. Rohtang tunnel in Himachal Pradesh named as Atal tunnel**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi named Rohtang passageway in Himachal Pradesh as Atal Tunnel to mark the 95th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

**23. The 5th Round of India-Japan Maritime Affairs Dialogue was held in Tokyo, Japan. The two sides exchanged views on various topics of mutual interest in the maritime domain and identified the means for further strengthening their maritime cooperation.**

**24. Indian railway launches 'Him Darshan Express'**

- Indian Railways started a glass-enclosed vistadome "Him Darshan Express" train on the heritage Kalka-Shimla route, with glass rooftop to have a panoramic view of the hilly region. This train will have seven coaches, including one first-class sitting cum luggage room coach (FCZLR) and six first-class AC vistadome coaches.

**25. Government of India will launch "Digital Radio" in 2024**

**26. CACS & e-BCAS launched to enhance security & ease of doing at airports**

- Minister of State (I/C) for Civil Aviation launched the Biometric enabled Centralised Access Control System (CACS) and 'e-BCAS Project Training Module'. The two projects aim to enhance security and ease of doing business at airports. The CACS project is aimed to digitize the employee movement process at the airports. This multi-layered security system encompasses the uniqueness of the Airport Entry Permit (AEP) users, biometric authentication in addition to PIN-based identity verification through contactless smart card technology.
- The 'e-BCAS' project envisaged to achieve a "paperless office" under e-Governance initiative of Government of India. The 'e-BCAS Project: Training Module' aims to switch from manual process of training to digital platform.
- The objective of the e-BCAS project is to make all the activities in the BCAS transparent, user-friendly, and efficient. It also intends to provide an ease of doing business with the stakeholders.

### 27. BSF Celebrated its Raising Day

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended greetings to Border Security Force (BSF) personnel on the organization's 55th raising day (01st December 2019).
- The BSF was raised in 1965 with the specific purpose of manning Indian borders as the 'First Line of Defence' against infiltration, smuggling, and military assault.

### 28. 35th anniversary of Bhopal Gas Tragedy

- It is one of the world's worst industrial disaster that claimed thousands of lives on the night of December 2, 1984.
- The disaster took place in a pesticide production plant, named the Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL).
- The leak of 40 tonnes of deadly methyl isocyanate gas on the night of December 2 and 3, 1984.

### 29. VP Naidu launches new Rotavirus vaccine: ROTAVAC-5D

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched the new Rotavirus vaccine: ROTAVAC-5D designed and developed by Bharat Biotech in New Delhi. ROTAVAC is an example of a true social innovation that was realized through a partnership between scientists from India and the USA. The first generation, Rotavirus vaccine, ROTAVAC developed under a Public-Private Partnership with the Department of Biotechnology, Govt. of India, has put India on the global map for setting new standards in pharmaceutical Research and Development.

### 30. India's first maritime museum coming up at Lothal in Gujarat

- Government of India & Portugal has decided to cooperate in the setting up of an India's 1st National Maritime Heritage Museum at the ancient Indian site of Lothal in Gujarat with the aim to boost the underwater or marine archaeology. The Museum will showcase salvaged material from shipwreck sites in the Indian Ocean waters.

### 31. HDFC ERGO launches "my:health Woman Suraksha" policy

- To cover women against numerous illnesses and contingencies they may face during their lifetime, thereby providing financial aid in case of medical contingencies. This policy is offered to women between 18-65 years of age and offers a sum insured ranging from Rs. 1 lakh to 1 crore.

### 32. Ripu Daman Bevli as "Plogging Ambassador of India" on 50th Fit India Plogging Run

- Plog run is a unique way of picking up garbage while jogging, it was added to the Fit India Movement as an initiative to combine fitness with cleanliness like combining the Fit India Movement and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

### 33. The Federation of Indian Association (FIA) has invited Super 30 founder Anand Kumar to a function on the eve of India's Republic Day celebrations in New York.

- The Federation of Indian Association is the oldest organisation of the non-resident Indians. Year "2020" also marks the 50th anniversary of FIA. Anand Kumar has been invited for his contribution in the field of education through his programme 'Super 30'.

### 34. Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) distributed 500 Bee Boxes, 500 Electric Pottery Wheels and 200 Leather Tool Kits in an event organised by KVIC in Boondi District, Rajasthan.

- KVIC has been running a mass campaign for the revival of bee keeping, pottery and leather industry under the Honey Mission, Kumhar Sashaktikaran Mission and Leather Mission respectively.

### 35. Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Girish Chandra Murmu inaugurated the 72-metre long Multi Cell Box Type Load Class 70 bridge to the Nation in Rajouri.

- This bridge will facilitate all weather and speedy movement of Army troops as well as locals.

### 36. ASI(Archaeological Survey of India) has identified 138 monuments as "Must See" monuments in country

- There are 38 World Heritage Sites in India, out of which 22 Cultural Sites including monuments/ buildings and caves are under the protection of Archaeological Survey of India.
- The 'Must See' list of ASI features first-class Indian monuments and archaeological sites including those that feature

## STATES IN NEWS

### 1. Andhra Pradesh Cabinet approves Disha Bill 2019

- The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet approves the A.P. Disha Bill, 2019 (A.P. Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2019) paving the way for awarding the death penalty for the offences of rape and gang-rape and expediting the verdict in trials of such cases to 21 days.
- 2. **Virtual Police Station inaugurated at Andhra University**
  - This is the first such facility in the State of Andhra Pradesh.
  - The AU facility is seen as a pilot project and will later be replicated at other educational institutions. The initiative is expected to help bridge the gap between students and the police department
- 3. **The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Kamal Nath will inaugurate the International Film Festival in Shilpkala village of Khajuraho.**
  - The International Khajuraho Film Festival is being organized by the Prayas Sanstha in collaboration with the State Government.
- 4. **Haryana police have introduced a unique barcoding software “Trakea” to enable foolproof security of the samples collected in Forensic reports.**
  - Haryana became the first state in the country to introduce this unique barcoding system. Manohar Lal Khattar, Chief Minister (CM) of Haryana inaugurated the TRAKEA barcoding system of Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) at Madhuban, Haryana.
- 5. **Ministry of I & B is organising a “Multi Media Exhibition” at World War II museum, Kisama in Nagaland.**
  - It has been organised to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. During the event, late Natwar Thakkar was also remembered. Lt. Thakkar, is popularly known as Nagaland’s Gandhi.
- 6. **Nagaland celebrates Statehood Day**
  - Nagaland bordering Myanmar, became the 16th state of the country on 01st December 1963.
- 7. **The 20th Edition of Hornbill Festival began with a colourful blend of culture and tradition with a modern twist at Naga Heritage Kisama in Nagaland.**
  - The festival organised by Nagaland Government is an annual tourism promotional event to showcase the state’s traditional and rich cultural heritage in all its ethnicity, diversity and grandeur.
  - The Hornbill Festival will witness the cultural performance of different tribes of Nagaland and Northeastern States, indigenous games, city tour, night carnival, art exhibition, photo-fest and many more
- 8. **Odisha launches ‘Madhu’ app to help school students**
  - Through this app, the students will be able access the video explanation of the topics they were taught in their classroom
- 9. **UP govt announces 25% subsidy & full stamp duty waiver for defence industry.**
- 10. **45 new fast track courts will be set up in Odisha.**
  - The 21 courts would be dedicated to cases of rape and sexual harassment of women. The remaining 24 fast track courts will specifically deal with Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) cases.
- 11. **India’s 1st HAM project in “Sewerage Sector” inaugurated in Haridwar**
  - Union Minister for Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat inaugurated the 14 MLD sewage treatment plant (STP) in Sarai village near Haridwar in the presence of Sweden’s King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia.
  - The Sarai STP is “the first-ever project in the country on a hybrid annuity PPP model (HAM)”.
  - 34 STPs are being built in Uttarakhand at a cost of Rs 1,144 crore, besides crematoria and ghats on the Ganga. Of these, 23 have been completed. Once all the STPs become operational, there will be considerable improvement in the water quality of Ganga.
- 12. **Avantee mega Food Park inaugurated in MP’s Dewas**
  - This first food park of central India is spread over 51 acres and has been constructed at a cost of about 150 crore rupees. About 5 thousand local people will get employment from this Mega Food Park. Processing of soybean, gram, wheat and other grains and vegetables will be done in the park.

13. **Human Library event, a concept which seeks to replace books with humans, will be held in the City of Palaces, Mysuru, Karnataka.**
  - The first event of the Human Library aims to break past long-standing prejudices and stereotypes by creating a safe framework for conversation by using a library analogy of lending people rather than books. It intends to generate greater human cohesion across various social, religious and ethnic diversities. The notion of Human Library was initially launched in the year 2000 and currently exists in more than 85 countries, known as The Human Library Organization. In India, Human Library is spread across various metropolitan cities including Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru.
14. **Music festival 'Tansen Samaroh' begins in Gwalior**
15. **In Madhya Pradesh, popular classical music festival 'Tansen Samaroh' began with traditional style in Gwalior with the recitations of Harikatha and Milad. The 5-day festival is celebrated every year in the memory of one of the most eminent singers of Indian history, 'Mian Tansen'.**
  - Tansen Samaroh, the oldest and esteemed classical music festival in India is organised by Ustad Alauddin Khan Kala Evam Sangeet Academy, under the Madhya Pradesh culture department attracts thousands of musicians and aspiring singers from all over the country. It is the 95th year of the festival. Artistes from Greece, USA, Iran and Belgium will perform in different sessions of Tansen festival.
16. **Orange festival begins at district Tamenglong in Manipur**
  - Tamenglong district is largest producer of orange fruit in Manipur. The state government under the sponsorship of North Eastern Council organise the festival annually to promote the fruit and encourage its growers.
  - As part of the festival, cultural show, traditional games, orange queen completion, seminar for growers will be held.
17. **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has launched the 'Jalsathi' programme to ensure supply of safe drinking water to all households in the state. The Odisha CM also launched the 'JalSathi' App on the occasion.**
18. **The Meghalaya Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Government of India to implement Inner Line Permit in the state under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.**
  - Inner Line Permit (ILP) is an official travel document issued by the Government of India to allow inward travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period. It is obligatory for Indian citizens from outside those states to obtain a permit for entering into the protected state. The document is an effort by the government to regulate movement to certain areas located near the international border of India.
19. **Rajasthan Chief Minister inaugurated its first "Janta clinic" at in the Malviya Nagar area of Jaipur.**
  - This clinic open to provide free primary health care to people living in slums. In its first phase, 12 Janta Clinics will be opened in Jaipur where people would get free medicines and free medical examination in some cases.
20. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a statue of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at Lok Bhawan in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.**
21. **Hemant Soren to take oath as Jharkhand CM on Dec 29**
22. **Mandu Festival begins at Mandu, Madhya Pradesh**
  - The Mandu festival will offer an eclectic mix of performing arts, workshops, art installations, nature trails, walks, food, architecture and music to the visitors during the festival. The festival is based on the idea of "Khojne Me Kho Jao".
23. **Andhra Pradesh CM launched 'Netanna Nestham' welfare scheme for weavers**
  - Under the scheme, the state government of Andhra Pradesh will provide financial assistance of Rs 24,000 annually to handloom weavers across the state.
24. **The 11-day long 'Dhanu Jatra' begins at Bargarh in western Odisha.**
  - Dhanu Jatra is considered as the largest open-air theatre of the world.

- It is based on the mythological story of Lord Krishna and his demon uncle King Kansa. It is about the episode of Krishna and Balaram's visit to Mathura to witness the Dhanu ceremony organized by their (maternal) uncle King Kansa. Dhanu Jatra is the annual drama-based open-air theatrical performance celebrated in and around Bargarh city. The annual festival came into being in 1947-48 to celebrate Indian's Independence and to symbolize the victory of good over evil.

## ECONOMY

### 1. RBI releases "Guidelines for 'on tap' Licensing of SFB in the Private Sector"

- Now payments banks willing to convert themselves into small finance banks (SFBs) can apply for such a licence only after 5 years of operations. The licensing window will be open on-tap. The minimum capital for setting up an SFB has been mandated at ₹200 crores, adding for primary (urban) co-operative banks (UCBs), which wish to become SFBs, the initial requirement of net worth will be ₹100 crores, which will have to be increased to ₹200 crores within five years from the date of commencement of business. SFBs will be given scheduled bank status immediately upon commencement of operations. On-tap licensing means aspirants can apply for universal bank license at any time, subject to fulfillment of the set conditions.

### 2. 1st time India's forex reserves cross \$450 billion

- The country's foreign exchange reserves crossed the \$450-billion mark for the first time ever on the back of strong inflows which enabled the central bank to buy dollars from the market, thus checking any sharp appreciation of the rupee. India's foreign exchange reserves were at \$451.7 billion on December 3, 2019, an increase of \$38.8 billion over end-March 2019. The Reserve Bank has always maintained that it intervenes in the foreign exchange market to curb volatility and does not target a particular level of the exchange rate.

### 3. India's Exim Bank (Export-Import Bank of India) has provided \$500 million (Rs 3561 crore) Line of Credit (LoC) to Bangladesh for defence-related procurement in the neighbouring country.

- Out of total credit, 75% of the contract price will be applied by the seller and the remaining 25% will be procured by the seller for the purpose of the eligible contract from outside India, including Bangladesh. The contract price may be reduced from 75% to 65% based on the nature of procurement.

### 4. In its 5th Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Committee meeting, the Reserve Bank of India has decided to keep the policy repo rate unchanged to 5.15%.

- The MPC has also decided to maintain the accommodative stance of monetary policy to revive growth, while ensuring that inflation remains within the target. The reverse repo rate under the LAF stands same i.e. 4.90%.
- The marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate also remains same i.e. 5.40%.

### 5. Loans worth over Rs10 lakh cr sanctioned under PMMY

- As per the findings of the PMMY survey, around five crore persons were working in the establishments for which MUDRA loans were availed between April 2015 to March 2018.

### 6. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has waived NEFT, RTGS transfer charges for savings account holders. The new rule will be effective from January 1, 2020.

- NEFT transactions to be made 24x7 from December 16

### 7. Xiaomi launches service "Mi Credit up to Rs 1 lakh loan." in India for Android phones

- Mi Credit app will come pre-loaded on all MIUI phones, and can be downloaded from Google Play Store.

### 8. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has lowered its forecast for India's economic growth in fiscal year 2019-20 to 5.1%.

### 9. The 5th meeting of the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) of the 15th Finance Commission was held in New Delhi.

- In the meeting, possible macro assumptions related to real growth, inflation, ongoing structural reforms, tax revenue including GST, adherence to Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act and fiscal transparency were discussed. Further, the Advisory Council was informed about the submission of the 2020-21 report and Commission's next course of actions pertaining to the preparation of the report for 2021-26 period.

10. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to advance a loan of US \$206 million to develop water supply and sewerage infrastructure in Tiruchi and other cities in Tamil Nadu.
11. **Edelweiss AMC launches India's 1st corporate bond 'Bharat Bond ETF'**
  - Edelweiss Asset Management Company (AMC), a subsidiary of Edelweiss Capital Limited (ECL) has launched India's 1st Corporate Bond ETF (exchange trade fund) called the Bharat Bond ETF.
  - The ETF is a government initiative and Edelweiss AMC was given the mandate to design and manage the product.
12. **The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a \$250 million loan for Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL).**
  - The loan aims to expand energy efficiency investments in India that will benefit agricultural, residential and institutional consumers. Additionally, \$46 million financing will be provided from the Clean Technology Fund (CTF), to be administered by ADB. The project is expected to contribute to the mission of Government of India to promote energy efficiency and meet Government's commitments to reduce energy intensity of the economy.
13. **Infosys has announced the launch of three blockchain-powered distributed applications.**
  - The applications will be dedicated for government services, insurance, and supply chain management domains.
  - The applications are equipped with predictive return on investment (ROI) analytics for business investments that can be tailored to meet numerous industry-specific needs.
14. **HDFC Bank has become the 3rd Indian firm to cross \$100 billion mark in market capitalisation.**
  - HDFC Bank has joined the league of Reliance Industries Ltd, which has a market cap of \$140.74 billion, and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) that has a market cap of \$114.60 billion.
15. **ADB & India signs \$490 Million loan to upgrade roads of Madhya Pradesh**
16. **Google searches for 'Operation Twist' surge in India**
  - Google searches for "Operation Twist" surged in India after the central bank announced its version of the U.S. Federal Reserve's unconventional monetary policy. The central bank will buy long-term bonds, while simultaneously selling short-term government securities in an effort to cheapen long-term borrowing and boost bank lending. The Reserve Bank of India will buy longer-tenor bonds while selling shorter debt.
17. **RBI to buy and sell govt bonds worth Rs 10,000 crore-"operation twist"**
  - The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will simultaneously purchase and sell government securities worth Rs 10,000 crore under a special Open Market Operation (OMO).
  - On a review of the current liquidity and market situation and an assessment of the evolving financial conditions, the Reserve Bank has decided to conduct simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities on December 23, 2019. The purchase will be for government securities worth Rs 10,000 crore for the instrument 'G-Sec 2029'.
18. **GoI to infuse Rs 8,655 crore into Allahabad Bank, IOB & UCO Bank**
  - The infusion will be done for preferential allotment of shares. Fresh capital amounting to Rs 2,153 crore will be allocated to Allahabad Bank, Rs 2,142 crore to UCO Bank and Rs 4,330 crore to Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) for preferential allotment of shares.
19. **AIIB to give \$210 million loan for irrigation & solar energy projects**
  - The bank will lend \$145 million to improve irrigation services and strengthen flood risk management in West Bengal. The irrigation project in West Bengal is co-financed by the World Bank and is expected to strengthen the management of the Damodar Valley Command Area irrigation scheme. The bank will also lend \$65 million for a 250-megawatt (MW) solar project in Rajasthan.
20. **The Reserve Bank of India has introduced a new semi-closed prepaid payment instrument (PPI) which can be used for the transaction of goods and services up to a limit of Rs 10,000.**
21. **Finance Minister launches an e-auction platform "eBkay"**
  - Finance Minister has launched an e-auction platform "eBkay". The platform will enable online auction of attached assets by banks. The platform provides navigational links to all PSB e-auction sites, property search

feature. It also presents single-window access to information on properties up for e-auction, comparison of similar properties, and also contains videos and photographs of the uploaded properties.

## **SCHEMES AND COMMITTEES**

### **1. Govt launches drive to enroll 1 cr beneficiaries under two pension schemes**

- The government has launched a drive to enroll one crore beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) and the National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed Persons (NPS-Traders) by March next year.

### **2. Govt launches 4th round of Regional Connectivity Scheme-UDAN(Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik)**

- The focus in this round will be North East Region, Hilly States, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Islands.
- The scheme was launched in October 2016, which seeks to provide connectivity to un-served and under-served regions through the revival of existing airstrips and airports.

### **3. Switzerland will be the country partner at the 17th edition of BioAsia2020 scheduled to be held from February 17-19, 2020 with the theme "Today For Tomorrow" in Hyderabad, Telangana.**

### **4. Puducherry government unveils start-up policy**

- The Puducherry government unveiled a start-up policy. The policy, launched by Minister for Industries M.O.H.F Shahjahan, aims to create a corpus fund of ₹10 crores to support the setting up of start-up incubators and to develop co-working spaces.

### **5. "Environmental Sustainability and Economic Development" Summit held in Delhi**

- Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change addressed the summit with the concerns about the depleting ozone layer and the emission of Cfc's and Hfc's.

### **6. NATO Summit 2019 in Watford, United Kingdom**

### **7. International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems for BIMSTEC countries begins in New Delhi**

- The objective of this International Seminar is to have experience sharing to enable improvement of tropical smallholder farming systems for greater productivity and resilience to climate change through ecological approaches.

### **8. GoM constituted to expedite revival plan of BSNL & MTNL**

### **9. The government announced Rs 436 crore outlay for skilling 4 lakh professionals in futuristic areas such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and cybersecurity over the next 3 years.**

- The "Future Skills PRIME" programme will be jointly rolled out by the information technology ministry and industry body Nasscom and will seek to position the initiative as India stack for digital talent.
- The programme will increase employability

### **10. Atal Bhujal Yojana launched by Government of India**

- It aims to improve groundwater management.
- The 7 states includes Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

### **1. Former High Court Judge Justice CV Ramulu has been appointed as the Lokayukta of Telangana.**

### **2. Soma Roy Burman becomes new Controller General of Accounts**

- She is the 24th CGA and the seventh woman to hold this coveted position.

### **3. Lt Gen Podali Shankar Rajeshwar took over as the 14th Commander-in-Chief of the Andaman & Nicobar Command.**

### **4. Hari Mohan has taken over the charge as Chairman, Ordnance Factory Board (OFB).**

5. PUMA signs Sunil Chhetri as brand ambassador
6. Lt Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane to be next Army Chief.
7. British PM Boris Jhonson re-elected as Prime Minister of UK
8. Sangita Reddy appointed as the President of FICCI for 2019-20
9. Harsh Vardhan Shringla appointed new Foreign Secretary
10. Sridhar Patra was appointed as the chairman-cum-managing director of National Aluminium Company Ltd (NALCO).
11. Cuba names Manuel Marrero Cruz to be first PM since 1976
  - In Cuba, President has appointed Manuel Marrero Cruz as the country's first prime minister in more than 40 years..
  - The post of prime minister was scrapped in 1976 by the then-revolutionary leader Fidel Castro.
12. Pepsico appoints Salman Khan as Pepsi's new brand ambassador
13. News Broadcasters Federation elects Arnab Goswami as governing board president.
14. Girish Chandra Chaturvedi appointed as new chairman of NSE
15. K Vijay Kumar appointed senior security advisor in MHA
16. Nagaland Governor R N Ravi has been given additional charge of Meghalaya.
17. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) board has unanimously elected Masatsugu Asakawa as its new president.
  - He will succeed Takehiko Nakao, who will leave office on January 16, 2020.
18. Sundar Pichai promoted as Alphabet Inc. CEO after Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin have announced that they are stepping down from the leadership role of the parent company Alphabet.

## **RANKS AND REPORTS**

1. **Railways Operating ratio worst in last 10 years**
  - The CAG's report stated that the railways recorded an operating ratio of 98.44% in 2017-18 shows that the Railways spent Rs 98.44 to earn Rs 100. Operating ratio is a measure of expenditure against the revenue.
2. **Aberdeen Police station in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands ranks 1st in the list of the best-performing police stations in the country while dealing with a property offence, a crime against women and weaker sections.** Home Ministry released the list of ten best-performing Police stations in the country. Balasinor police station in Gujarat secured the 2nd rank while and Ajk Burhanpur in Madhya Pradesh got the 3rd position.
3. **Worldwide arms sales rose by nearly 5 per cent in 2018-SIPRI report.**
  - The market is dominated by the United States. Russia was second in the rankings for arms production, with 8.6 per cent of the market, just ahead of the United Kingdom on 8.4 per cent and France on 5.5 per cent.
4. **India, for the first time, ranks among the top 10 in this year's Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) at the COP25 climate summit in the Spanish capital Madrid.**
  - The current levels of per capita emissions and energy use in India ranked 9th in the high category showing that emissions are still comparatively low. China, the largest global emitter slightly improves its ranking in the index to 30th place.
  - The index is jointly presented by Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute and Climate Action Network.

5. **India has been ranked 129th among 189 countries in the Human Development Index 2019 released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).** India was ranked 130th last year in the index. Norway, Switzerland, Ireland occupied the top three positions in the index.
6. **Nirmala Sitharaman 34th among world's 100 most powerful women: Forbes**
  - 'The World's 100 Most Powerful Women' has been topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.
7. **India slips to 112th place on WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2020.**
8. **India world's 3rd largest producer of Scientific Articles-1,35,788 articles in 2018**
  - India accounts for 5.31%, China, which accounts for 20.67 per cent of all global publications in scientific articles, is at the top position, followed by the US at 16.54 per cent, as per the statistics compiled by the US National Science Foundation (NSF).
9. **Tamil Nadu tops 'Good Governance Index' launched by GoI**
  - The Index was launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, and the Centre for Good Governance. Among the "Big States", Tamil Nadu topped the Good Governance Index.
  - Among the "North-East and Hill States", Himachal Pradesh topped the index, followed by Uttarakhand, Tripura, Mizoram and Sikkim. Among the UTs Puducherry topped the index followed by Chandigarh and Delhi.
10. **"India State of Forest Report 2019" released**
  - The total forest and tree cover of the country is 80.73 million hectare. It is 24.56% of the total geographical area of the country. In comparison to the assessment of 2017, there is an increase of 5,188 sq. km in the total forest and tree cover of the country. Area-wise, Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover in the country. Percentage wise Mizoram (85.41) has largest forest cover.
  - The top 3 states showing increase in forest cover are Karnataka (1,025 sq. km) followed by Andhra Pradesh (990 sq km) and Kerala (823 sq km). The total carbon stock in country's forest is estimated 7,124.6 million tonnes and there an increase of 42.6 million tonnes in the carbon stock of country as compared to the last assessment of 2017.

## AWARDS

1. **English author Tony Joseph has won the 12th 'Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize 2019'.**
  - He was awarded for his 2018 book, "Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From".
2. **Barcelona forward Lionel Messi has won the Ballon d'Or award for the world's best player for a record 6th time.**
3. **Mumbai Central gets first 'Eat Right Station' certification from FSSAI--'Eat Right India' movement'**
4. **Arun Jaitley former Finance Minister of India was bestowed with the Economic Times Lifetime Achievement Award for Public Service 2019.**
5. **'Joker' fame Joaquin Rafael Phoenix, American actor from California, United States (US) has been bestowed with the PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) 'Person of the Year' Award 2019.**
6. **Bollywood actor Shilpa Shetty's fitness app "Shilpa Shetty App" has been awarded Google Play's Best Apps of 2019.**
7. **Gujarat police became 7th state police to get 'President's Colours'**
8. **English cricket player Ben Stokes awarded with Sports Personality of the Year 2019 award**
9. **Tony-Ann Singh of Jamaica was announced as the winner of the Miss World 2019 beauty pageant held at the ExCeL London.**
10. **National Florence Nightingale awards 2019 was given to Late Lini Sajeesh from Kozhikode, Kerala, who died while on duty caring for a Nipah (NiV) virus-infected patient in Kerala. The award was received by her spouse.**

**11. New Zealand wins MCC's Spirit of Cricket award**

- The team has been awarded for its exemplary show of sportsmanship during the final match of the ICC World Cup at Lord's in July 2019, which it lost under controversial circumstances.

**12. Miss South Africa Zozibini Tunzi was crowned Miss Universe 2019 in Atlanta, US.**

**13. The 4 prominent diplomats have been honoured with 'The Diwali – Power of One' award 2019 in recognition and celebration of their work, especially at the United Nations, for a secure and peaceful world. The awards which have now come to be known as 'Oscars of Diplomacy' were established by Diwali Foundation USA, Inc in 2017. The awards seek to promote a peaceful and consensus-based process to achieve societal good, as befitting high hopes and ideals of humanity enshrined in the UN Charter.**

- Former foreign minister and Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to UN: Kairat Abdrakhmanov.
- Former Permanent Representative of Cyprus to UN: Nicholas Emiliou.
- Former Chef de Cabinet to President of 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and Permanent Representative of Slovakia to UN: Frantisek Ruzicka.
- Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the UN: Volodymyr Yelchenko.

**14. Abu Dhabi (UAE) has been selected as the world's leading Sports tourism Destination at the 26th edition of the World Travel Awards (WTA) being held in Muscat, Oman.**

**15. Ashleigh Barty and Rafael Nadal were named International Tennis Federation's World Champions in singles for 2019.**

**16. Aditya K. of Kozhikode, Kerala has become the first child from the State to bag the Bharat Award for bravery.**

**17. Ethiopia's PM receives Nobel Peace Prize**

- Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has received the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to resolve the long-running conflict with neighbouring foe Eritrea.

**18. Sugandh Rajaram appointed as India's next envoy to the Republic of Ghana**

**19. Odisha won the bronze in 'World Habitat Award' for Jaga Mission also called Odisha Liveable Habitat Mission (OLHM), a slum land titling project executed for the benefit of millions of urban-poor people living in slums.**

- The award was given by the World Habitat, a UK (United Kingdom) based organization which gives the award annually to recognize innovative housing projects around the world.

**20. Sweden's Greta Thunberg has been named as Time magazine's Person of the Year for 2019.**

- Greta Thunberg is the Swedish schoolgirl who inspired a global movement to fight climate change and became popular with the "#FridaysForFuture". She is the youngest person to be chosen by the magazine in a tradition that started in 1927.

**21. Sahitya Akademi announced its annual Sahitya Akademi Awards 2019 in 23 languages. Award in neali language will be announced later. Some Important awards:**

LANGUAGE	WORK	WINNER
English	An Era of Darkness (Non-Fiction)	Shashi Tharoor
Hindi	Chheelate Hue Apne Ko (Poetry)	Nand Kishore Acharya
Sanskrit	Prajnachakshusham (Poetry)	Penna Madhusudan
Urdu	Sawaneh-E-Sir Syed: Ek Bazadeed (Biography)	Shafey Kidwai

**22. Gurgaon-based startup won 'Space Oscar' award**

- The Gurugram-based startup blue Sky Analytics has created an application called 'Zuri' that won the Copernicus Masters Award also called Space Oscars, under the Social Entrepreneurship category.

**23. UN Medal awarded to Indian peacekeepers to support the people of South Sudan**

- Almost 850 Indian troops received the United Nations Medal for their dedication and sacrifice serving so far away from home to protect civilians and build durable peace in South Sudan. The Indian troops were particularly praised

for their efforts to support peace talks between Government and Opposition forces in the Upper Nile region and establishing the first-ever UNMISS base on the west bank of the Nile at Kodok.

**24. Kamareddy district of Telangana has secured the United Nations International Children's and Education Fund (Unicef)-2019 Award.**

- The district has won the award for effective implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission in water sanitation and hygiene sectors.

### **IMPORTANT DAYS**

**1. World AIDS Day: 01st December**

- The theme of this year's World AIDS Day is "Communities make the difference".

**2. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery: 2 December**

**3. International Day of Persons with Disabilities: 3 December**

- The theme this year is – Promoting the Participation of Persons with Disabilities and their leadership: Taking Action on the 2030 Development Agenda.

**4. Indian Navy Day: 4 December**

- The day is celebrated in honour of the maritime force's role during the war with Pakistan in 1971 when Indian warships attacked Karachi port and successfully hurt Pakistani operations in the western coast.

**5. International Volunteer Day: 5 December**

- This year theme is "Volunteer for an inclusive future".

**6. World Soil Day: 5 December**

- This year, by addressing the increasing challenges of soil management, the FAO campaign "Stop soil erosion, Save our future" aims to raise awareness of the importance of sustaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being.

**7. Armed Forces Flag Day: 7 December**

- The fund collected on this day is used for the welfare of the serving personnel and ex-servicemen.

**8. International Civil Aviation Day: 7 December**

- The theme of this year Civil Aviation Day is "75 Years of Connecting the World".

**9. International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime: 9 December**

**10. International Anti-Corruption Day: 9 December**

- This year International Anti-Corruption Day theme is "United Against Corruption".

**11. Human Rights Day: 10 December**

- With the theme "Youth Standing Up for Human Rights"

**12. International Mountain Day: 11 December**

- The theme for 2019 IMD is "Mountains Matter for Youth".

**13. Vijay Diwas: 16 December**

- To commemorate India's victory over Pakistan in 1971 war. It was on this day in 1971, the chief of the Pakistani forces, General AA Khan Niazi, along with 93 thousand troops, had surrendered unconditionally to the allied forces consisting of Indian Army and Mukti Bahini.

**14. International Migrants Day: 18 December**

- The International Migrants Day is organized across the world on 18th December to protect the rights of migrant workers and members of their families.

**15. 13. International Human Solidarity Day: 20 December**

- The General Assembly, on 22 December 2005, by resolution 60/209 identified solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values. It is to celebrate Unity in Diversity.

**16. National Mathematics Day: 22 December**

- To mark the 132nd birth anniversary of legendary mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan and his contributions in the development of modern mathematics.

**17. National Farmers Day: 23 December**

- The day honours Chaudhary Charan Singh, the 5th Prime Minister of India whose was born on this day.

**18. National Consumer Day: 24th December**

- The theme of this year is “alternate consumer grievance/dispute redressal”.

**19. Good Governance Day: 25 December**

- In this day nation celebrates the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna and former-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

## DEFENCE

1. **The Indian Air Force bids farewell to the iconic “MiG-27” with a decommissioning ceremony at the Jodhpur air base.** The Mig 27 is a soviet origin aircraft that was built under licence by HAL and became a part of the IAF strike fleet in 1985. The jet contributed significantly in wars and peace-keeping operations and also emerged as the real hero in the 1999 Kargil war. It’s contribution in the Kargil war earned it the title ‘Bahadur’.
2. **General Manoj Mukund Naravane took charge as the 28th Chief of Army Staff.**
3. **The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) conducted a two-day regional level pollution response exercise named ‘Swachchh Samundra NW-2019’ at sea off Vadinar in Gulf of Kutch.**
  - The exercise was conducted to validate and reinforce the response mechanism for oil pollution incidents and enable the Indian Coast Guard to fine-tune the actions required in such eventualities.
4. **India test fires QRSAM System**
  - Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) system developed by DRDO was successfully flight-tested from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the Odisha coast. The missile was flight-tested with the full configuration in deployment mode intercepting the target mid-air, meeting the mission objectives.
5. **The 4th edition of International Seminar cum Exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems ‘NAVARMS-19’ begins in Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, Development Enclave, New Delhi.**
  - The theme of the Exhibition is “Make in India – Fight Category: Opportunities and Imperatives”.
  - NAVARMS is the only international seminar and exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems conducted in the country.
6. **8th India-China joint training exercise ‘HAND-IN-HAND 2019’ with the theme counter-terrorism**
7. **A joint Indo-Nepal military training exercise “SURYA KIRAN-XIV” was held in Salijhandi, Rupendehi district of Nepal.**
8. **The 7th edition of India-Sri Lanka joint exercise “MITRA SHAKTI” begins at Aundh Military Station, Pune.**
9. **Exercise INDRA 2019 a joint, tri-services exercise between India and Russia will be conducted in India from 10-19 December 2019 simultaneously at Babina (near Jhansi), Pune, and Goa.**
10. **India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed surface-to-surface nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missile off Odisha coast. Which as a range of 350 km & is capable of carrying 500 to 1000 kilograms of warheads**
11. **Land-attack version of BrahMos missile successfully test-fired from Odisha’s Chandipur.**
  - The 9-meter long missile can travel at thrice the speed of sound and carry a conventional warhead weighing up to 300 kg. it is cruise missile capable of being launched from submarines, ships, fighter jets or land.

12. The 5th edition of ARTECH is being organised by Indian Army on 'Technologies for Non-Contact Warfare' which will be organised on 23 December 2019 at Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantonment.
  - The seminar is the flagship event of the Indian Army which sets the agenda for focus areas of harvesting indigenous capabilities in the Defence sector.
13. Upgraded version of Pinaka Rocket successfully test-fired off Odisha coast
14. The Indian Rafale fighter jets will fly with the tail sign 'BS' after the recently retired Air Force Chief Birender Singh Dhanoa. The Indian Air Force has decided to put tail numbers in 30 Rafale jets with "BS" initials. Six Rafale trainer aircraft will carry RB series tail numbers which stand for Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria, the current Chief of Air Staff who played a key role as lead negotiator for the mega-deal.
15. UAE, US joint military exercise 'Iron Union 12' commences.

## BOOKS AND AUTHORS

1. Noted Economist and Political Analyst S Gurumurthy released a book titled "Politics of Opportunism: Regional Parties, Coalitions, Centre-State Relations In India". The book is authored by R P N Singh. The book throws light on the subject related to rise of regional parties and Centre-States relation.
2. Viswanathan Anand has launched his autobiography 'Mind Master'. Anand's autobiography is co-authored by sports journalist Susan Ninann.
3. A book titled "Dreams of a Billion: India and the Olympic Games" author by Boria Majumdar with Nalin Mehta released. The book will be published by HarperCollins India in January 2020.
4. The Vice President of India Venkaiah Naidu released a book titled 'Turbulence and Triumph: The Modi Years' in New Delhi.
  - The book is jointly authored by Rahul Agarwal and Bharathi S Pradhan and is published by Om Books International.
  - The book is about the life journey of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi from his days as a young boy in Gujarat till becoming the Prime Minister of India.
5. Social Justice and Empowerment Minister launched the Braille version of the book "Exam Warriors" written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.
6. Telangana CM releases book on Kaleswaram project
  - Chief Minister K.Chandrasekhar Rao has released a book in Telugu on 'Kaleswaram Project — Telangana's chariot of Progress' authored by Officer on Special Duty, Irrigation to the Chief Minister, Sridhar Rao Deshpande.
  - The author explained in detail the efforts of Chief Minister Chandrasekhar Rao right from the conception of project and research done by using Google earth software and data of water flow from Central Water Commission in his book.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. WHO 1st time approved Biosimilar of "Trastuzumab" for breast cancer treatment  
The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that for the 1st time it had approved a "biosimilar" medicine of Trastuzumab named "Ontruzant" to make cheaper breast cancer treatment at an affordable rate to women globally. The medicine is derived from living sources rather than chemicals. The biosimilar medicine of the Trastuzumab drug was supplied by Samsung Bioepis co Ltd.
2. The International Astronomical Union (IAU) announced the names of the newly discovered stars and planets, where the name "Sharjah" was chosen for a star with "Barjeel" being the name of one of its planets.
3. Google Earth covers 98 percent of entire population. Search engine giant Google has revealed that it's powerful mapping service, Google Earth now covers more than 98 per cent of the world.

4. The “Duchifat-3”, Israeli student’s made satellite will be launched from ISRO’s Sriharikota launch site.
  - “Duchifat-3” is a satellite jointly built by Herzliya Science Center and Sha’ar HaNegev High School students of Israel. It is a remote sensing satellite through which students from all schools across the country will be able to experiment and carry through Earth observation.
5. Christina Koch records longest single spaceflight by woman
  - She would return to Earth in February 2020. Till then, she would have spent more than 300 days in the space. She is onboard on the International Space Station since 14th March 2019.

### OBITUARIES

1. Veteran actor Shelley Morrison passes away
2. Bob Willis Former England cricket captain passes away
3. Braj Bihari Kumar, the Chairman of Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) passed away.
4. The inventor of Universal Product Code(UPC) or Barcode, George Joseph Laurer, passed away.
  - Barcode is a ubiquitous marking, composed of unique black bars and a 12-digit number, that allows retailers to identify products by means of scanning the code.
5. Former Nandi Award winner and renowned Telugu actor and writer Gollapudi Maruti Rao passed away recently.
6. New Zealand three-times Olympic champion Peter Snell passes away
7. Former Kerala Minister Thomas Chandy passes away
8. Writer and critic LS Sheshagiri Rao passes away
9. Renowned Hindustani classical vocalist Vidushi Savita Devi passes away
  - She was known for her thumris. She was the author of the book ‘Maa...Siddheshwari’ which was the biography of her mother Siddheshwari Devi.
10. Renowned Hindi author Ganga Prasad passes away
11. Veteran Political cartoonist Vikas Sabnis passes away

### SPORTS NEWS

1. Mercedes racer Lewis Hamilton has won the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix held in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
2. 13th South Asian Games Kicked Off on Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu, Nepal.
3. Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik clinch gold in Senior Wrestling National Championship.
4. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), banned Russia for 4 years, from participation in global sporting events, including the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, after accusing Moscow of falsifying data from an anti-doping laboratory.
5. India’s R. Praggnanandhaa wins London Chess Classic. The 14-year-old Indian chess player finished joint first with Anton Smirnov of Australia both scoring 7.5 points.
6. Wasim Jaffer becomes first Indian to play 150 Ranji matches
7. Actor Suniel Shetty has been selected as the brand ambassador of National Anti-Doping Agency NADA.

8. The 13th South Asian Games concluded in Nepal. India finished on top with 312 medals comprising 174 gold, 93 silver and 45 bronze.
9. Indian match referee GS Lakshmi is set to become the first woman match referee to officiate a men's ODI match.
10. India opener Smriti Mandhana was named in both the International Cricket Council's ODI and T20 teams of the year.
11. Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu won the women's 49kg category gold medal to open India's account at the 6th Qatar International Cup in Doha.
12. Belgium has been crowned FIFA 'Team of the Year' for the second successive time after a record-breaking year for the global ladder.
13. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced that it has extended its partnership with UNICEF through to the Women's T20 World Cup 2020 with the focus on empowering women and girls through cricket.
14. India's shuttler Maisnam Meiraba Luwang has won the Men's singles Bangladesh Junior International Badminton Series 2019 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
15. Top-seeded Meiraba, who hails from Manipur, beat Ken Yong Ong 21, 14, 21-18 in the final.
16. Former India skipper and wicket-keeper batsman MS Dhoni been named captain of Cricket Australia's (CA) ODI team of the decade and the line-up features three Indian players.
17. Indian tennis ace Leander Paes has announced that 2020 will be his last year as a professional tennis player. Leander, who made his Olympic debut in 1992, will look for one final flourish at Tokyo Olympics next year.
18. Abhinav Lohan wins Bengaluru Open Golf Championship
19. Virat Kohli named in Wisden cricketers of the decade list
20. Indian men's football team ranked 108th in latest FIFA rankings
21. Australia paceman Peter Siddle retires from international cricket
22. Kohli & Bumrah named in Wisden's T20I Team of the decade
23. Indian Grandmaster Koneru Humpy wins the World Women's Rapid Chess Championship held in Moscow, Russia
24. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has withdrawn its boycott call for the 2022 Commonwealth Games to be held in Birmingham. The decision was taken during its Annual General Meeting held in New Delhi. The cause of the boycott call was exclusion of shooting. IOA also announced that the country will bid to host either the 2026 or the 2030 edition.