

TNPSC THERVUPETTAGAM

CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY 2020

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CONTENTS

TNPSC BITS	12
TAMIL NADU	17
First Transgender victory in Local Body.....	17
Intensified Pulse polio immunization campaign – Tamil Nadu.....	17
Tamil Development Awards	18
Fatal road accidents in Tamil Nadu.....	19
Tiger Sharks squadron	19
NATIONAL.....	20
Swachh Survekshan League 2020	20
SDG India Index 2019	21
Railway Protection Force Rename	23
PPRTMS portal	23
27th National Children’s Science Congress 2019	23
e-BCAS Project Training Module	23
80th session of the Indian History Congress (IHC)	24
National Infrastructure Pipeline	24
Rabi Crop Sowing increase	25
Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana	25
Asiatic Lion Census.....	26
Rs 12,000 crore under PM Kisan.....	27
107th Indian Science Congress.....	27
MEA’s NEST division.....	28
Railway helpline number 139	28
Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).....	28
Cyber Safe Women’ initiative	29
Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan Yojana	29
Young Scientists Laboratories	29
Setting Up of Medical Colleges under PPP	30
Farmers Science congress	30
Women Science Congress	31



KIRAN Scheme	31
Naseem Al Bahr Naval exercise	31
ICMR report on Sugar Intake of India	32
Disaster relief fund to 7 states	32
Indian Army begins work on GOCO Model	33
NetSCoFAN.....	33
List of Medical Devices	33
Indian Data Relay Satellite System.....	34
State of Aadhaar report.....	34
IMD's State of Climate Report 2019.....	35
Western Zonal council.....	35
2nd National GST Conference	36
Regulation on minority education institutions.....	36
Railways plans to Link J&K with rest of India	37
North East Gas Pipeline Grid	37
5th Pulses Conclave 2020.....	37
India & Germany - Zero Budget Natural Farming	38
International recognition for Indian airports.....	38
Operation Sankalp	39
Green Credit Scheme	39
India's Energy Policy Report	39
Access to Internet.....	40
Raisina Dialogue – 5th edition	40
150th Anniversary of Kolkata Port Trust.....	41
Cyber AASHVAST	41
National Draft Policy on rare diseases.....	41
ASER Report 2019	42
Railway News.....	42
NEAT initiative	43
Sixth Island Development Agency meeting	43
NCRB report on Crime.....	43
IP based Video Surveillance System.....	44
Revised guidelines for mutual legal assistance treaties.....	44
Madhavpur Mela festival	44



Saksham.....	45
Civil Aviation Meet	45
National TB Control Programme	45
Census 2021	45
Winged Raider	46
Food Processing Summit.....	46
Globalizing Indian Thought	46
Sahyog-Kaijin	47
ELECRAMA 2020	47
National Investigation Act, 2008	48
Supreme Court on Private Property	48
Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD)	49
Commissionerate system	49
Ranking on water departments.....	50
Kerala and CAA.....	51
Punjab and CAA	51
Pulse Polio Program 2020.....	51
POLNET 2.0 platform	52
Tech Conclave 2020.....	53
Republic Day Parade 2020.....	53
32nd PRAGATI meet.....	53
Tribal Youth Exchange Programme	54
Mahatma Gandhi Convention Centre	54
Integrated Check Post.....	54
Extension of Rohini Commission.....	55
National Media Award	56
NCRB Data – Crime in India 2018	56
Speaker’s role.....	58
0 Corruption Perception Index 2019.....	59
Enemy properties	60
3rd Apex Conference of Smart City.....	60
Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal.....	61
Nagardhan Excavations	62
Bodo agreement with central and state.....	63



Global Potato Conclave	63
India's first underwater Metro – Kolkata	64
NISHTHA programme	64
Operation Vanilla.....	65
Composite Regional Centre launched in Port Blair	65
MGNREGA scheme faces funds shortage	66
Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020	66
INTERNATIONAL.....	66
Avangard hypersonic missile system.....	66
UNICEF report on Children.....	67
Netherlands scrapping its nickname	67
Lists of Civilian prisoners and fishermen	67
UNESCO creative Cities Network (UCCN)	68
USA vs Iran.....	68
Iran Nuclear Deal	69
Global meet on marine ecosystems.....	69
Polar Science Co-operation.....	69
Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement	70
India – Mongolia outer space cooperation agreement.....	70
Sea Guardians 2020 – Exercise	70
Nepal's Seke Language	71
Hormuz Peace Initiative.....	71
SCO's 8 Wonders.....	72
Global Economic Prospect report.....	73
Global Risks Report	73
Global Health Challenges for 2020	74
Rohingya refugees	75
Women, Business and the Law 2020	75
Libya Peace Conference.....	75
Maritime Research Coordination Centre	76
New BRI deals.....	76
Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement (BIPA)	77
Global Social Mobility Index	77
Global Investment Trend Monitor Report.....	78



UNAIDS	79
Democracy Index	79
Ujjwala model – Ghana	80
China’s Birth Rate	80
Judicial Reciprocating territory	81
Iran Nuclear Issue	81
WEF Meeting	82
Interpol notice.....	83
BREXIT	84
Time to Care Report	84
Rohingya Crisis	85
Sagarmatha Sambaad – April 2020	85
Measles vaccine	86
Polio comeback in many countries	86
New 50 pence coin commemorating Brexit	86
ECONOMY	87
E - auction platform – eBkay	87
Insurance for Bank Deposits.....	87
From January – MDR	87
MANI application for visually challenged.....	88
India's Forex reserves	88
NSE Knowledge Hub	88
Effect of Automation on FDI flows	89
GDP Growth For 2019 – 2020	89
Market Study on E-Commerce in India	89
V-CIP for KYC	90
Purvodaya	90
Ordinance to amend coal mining laws.....	91
Regulations of Drones	91
Hallmarked gold artifacts	92
New RBBG scheme by SBI	92
Retail Inflation	92
Juice Jacking	92
World Gold Outlook 2020	93



Bilateral International Treaty organization	93
National Startup Advisory Council.....	94
SERVICE Scheme.....	94
World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2020 (WESO)	94
GATI	95
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	95
Astronaut Christina Koch.....	95
Rohini 200 sounding rocket	95
FAME II	96
Fourth Regional Academic Centre for Space.....	96
AK-203 assault rifles.....	96
Project NETRA.....	97
Human Space Flight Infrastructure Centre at Challakere	97
Global Drosophila conference - Pune.....	98
‘EGS77’ Farthest Galaxy Group	98
EVALI.....	99
Neon - World’s first Artificial Human	99
Earth-sized planet in habitable zone	100
Lithium Sulfur (Li-S) Battery	100
LIGO second wave detection.....	101
Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center (I4C)	102
Corona Virus.....	102
New Fuel	102
Shopper malware	102
LCA Tejas	103
Vikram Sarabhai Children Innovation Center	103
New communication experiment satellite - TJSW-5.....	104
S-400 Missile system	104
Block Chain Technology Centre.....	105
Bharati Script.....	105
GSAT 30	105
H9N2 Virus.....	106
Artemis Mission.....	106
K4 Missile	106



Yada Yada Virus.....	107
Seismic Hazard Micro zonation project.....	108
Agricultural product testing laboratories	108
Xenobots	108
East Asian Core Observatories Consortium	109
Vyom Mitra	109
Thirty-Metre Telescope	109
National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP)	110
NavIC	111
International Summit on Women in STEM	111
Poly Crack Technology.....	112
Bhuvan Panchayat 3.0.	112
SISDP-Update project.....	112
ENVIRONMENT	113
State of Forests Report, 2019.....	113
First elephant colony – Madhya Pradesh	115
Senna Spectabilis.....	116
1st turtle rehabilitation centre	116
Palau banned sunscreen cream.....	117
Extinction of Paddlefish	117
Red brittle star	117
Breeding of Great Indian Bustard.....	118
Chilika lake - CDA.....	119
Indian Pompano fish cultivation.....	120
Australian Koalas.....	120
Camel Culling.....	121
Urea Production.....	122
Taal Volcano.....	122
Genome of Indian cobra	123
The National Mission of Clean Ganga (NMCG)	123
Dolphin Census in Chilika Lake	124
Exploratory Drilling License	126
Decarbonization target.....	126
Paperless licensing process	126



Carbon Disclosure Project	127
Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) -141 b.....	127
Most Polluted Cities in India	128
Ophichthus kailashchandrai.....	128
Yarrabubba crater	129
Pavagada Solar plant – Karnataka	130
New archaen in Sambhar Lake	130
Biorock or mineral accretion technology	130
Ramsar Sites in India.....	131
African Cheetah - introduced in India	132
STATES.....	133
ePAUTI App	133
Kerala - Anti-CAA Resolution.....	133
Nagaland under AFSPA	134
Chhattisgarh - financial scheme for labourers	134
World's 2nd tallest statue of Vallabhbhai Patel	134
Lai Haroba Festival	134
YSR Aarogyasri scheme.....	135
Bhitarkanika National Park	135
Farm loan waiver	135
Zo Kutpui festival	136
Deliver sand at door steps – AP government.....	136
Miyawaki method of afforestation.....	136
Maharashtra - PMFBY.....	136
Amma Vodi scheme.....	137
Arunachal Pradesh - new logo for the state	137
Highest Inpatient Department care.....	138
Bru-Reang Refugee agreement	138
Assam Inland Water Transport Project.....	139
Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan	139
Z Morh tunnel.....	140
Ashfaquallah Khan Zoo	141
Pune-Mumbai Hyperloop project.....	141
Andhra Pradesh – 3 Capital.....	141



1 st Innovation festival	142
India's 1 st Super Fab Lab	143
Andhra Pradesh to Scrap Legislative Council.....	143
Shiv Bhojan Scheme	143
Sustainable growth goals performer list	144
PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS	144
Dhanu Jatra festival.....	144
Sangita Kalanidhi award.....	144
Global child prodigy award 2020.....	145
Marine Ecosystems-Challenges and Opportunities (MECOS)	145
Antarrashtriya Yoga Diwas Media Samman Award	145
World Book Fair – New Delhi.....	145
Khelo India Youth Games.....	146
Kamal Singh – passed away	146
Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu National Award	147
UK Costa Children's award - 2019.....	147
'Model Sports Villages	148
Chuni Goswami.....	148
Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2020.....	148
Prince Harry	149
1 st Ganga - Volga Dialogue of civilizations 2020	149
2019 Harit Ratna Award.....	149
Republic Day 2020.....	149
Padma Awardees 2020.....	150
World Sustainable Development Summit.....	152
SPORTS	153
Chennai Marathon 2020.....	153
IMPORTANT DAYS	153
Global Family Day – January 01	153
Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti – January 02	154
World Braille Day 2020 – January 4	154
World Day for War Orphans – January 06	155
NRI Day - January 9, 2020	155
World Hindi Day – January 10	156



National Youth Day – January 12.....	156
Siddha Day – January 13.....	157
Armed Forces Veterans Day – January 14	157
IMD Foundation Day – January 15.....	158
72nd Indian Army Day – January 15	158
31st National Road Safety Week 2020.....	159
Central Adoption Resource Authority - January 15	160
Thiruvalluvar Day – January 16.....	160
National Immunization Day – January 19	161
Birth anniversary of Subhash Chandra Bose	162
National Girl Child Day - January 24.....	162
International Day of Education – January 24	163
National Voters Day – January 25.....	163
National Tourism Day – January 25	164
50th Himachal Pradesh Statehood Day – January 25	164
International Customs Day – January 26	164
International Holocaust Remembrance Day - January 27.....	165
Data Privacy day – January 28.....	165
Lala Lajpat Rai Birth Anniversary - January 28	165
World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day - January 30	166
World Leprosy Day – January 30.....	166
MISCELLANEOUS.....	167
11th CEBR's report.....	167
2020 - “Year of Nurse and Midwife”	168
New born babies on January 01, 2020.....	169
North East Monsoon.....	169
Year of Mobility – 2020	169
Conservation of Bibi Ka Maqbara	169
Word of the Decade.....	170
State Energy Efficiency Index - 2019.....	170
Colonial structures – Kolkata	171
Fastest growing urban regions/cities	171
Forbes India's 20 people.....	172
Henley Passport Index 2020	173



New Words in Oxford dictionary	173
Bharat Parv 2020	174
Global Talent Competitive Index 2020	174
NITI Aayog's Aspirational District Ranking	175
Budget formulation - transparency report	175



TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Home Minister Amit Shah laid foundation stone of CRPF Headquarters in New Delhi.
 - He also launched a new logo “Garud” for those engaged in providing security to the common man and VIPs in that occasion.
- ❖ Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad launched Central Equipment Identity Register System to facilitate blocking and tracing of stolen/lost mobile phones in New Delhi.
- ❖ A research team from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Hyderabad has discovered the working of a protein which repairs damaged DNA.
 - This special class of proteins called 'DNA proteins' gets activated in response to damaged DNA.
- ❖ Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has inaugurated a “Atal Kisan Mazdoor canteen” in Karnal’s New Anaj Mandi, Haryana.
 - This canteen will greatly benefit farmers and labourers, who can get food for Rs 10.
- ❖ On January 1, 2020, India and Pakistan exchanged their nuclear installations under an agreement that prevents them from attacking each other’s atomic facilities.
 - The practice is being followed for 29 years.
- ❖ Indian Weightlifter Seema, who won a silver medal in the Commonwealth Games 2017, has been banned for 4-years by National Anti-Doping Agency.
- ❖ Venkaiah Naidu has unveiled a book titled “The Renaissance Man-The Many Facets of Arun Jaitley”.
 - This book which describes about Arun Jaitley was compiled by Deepa Venkat and Muppavarapu Harshavardhan.
- ❖ Harjeet Kaur Joshi has been appointed as the full-time Chairperson and Managing Director (CMD) of privatization-bound Shipping Corporation of India.
 - By this appointment she became the 13th CMD and also the 1st ever woman CMD of SCI.
- ❖ Afghanistan spinner, Mujeeb Ur Rahman has broken Rashid Khan’s record of being the youngest bowler to reach the tally of 100 wickets in T20 cricket.
- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs has included Madagascar and Comoros in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Division.
- ❖ The ISRO Chairman Sivan announced that four astronauts have been selected for the country’s first manned mission to space, called Gaganyaan.



- ISRO aims to launch its maiden Human Space Mission “Gaganyaan” before the 75th anniversary of India’s independence in 2022.
- ❖ The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) opened its first Silk Processing Plant in Surendranagar district of Gujarat.
 - It aims to increase the production of Gujarat Patola Sarees.
- ❖ In 2019, the number of farmers' suicides in the Marathwada of Maharashtra was recorded to be as high as 835, till November.
- ❖ The Emergency was declared in New South Wales state of Australia recently because of forest fires.
- ❖ Dhoti Day (Veshti Day) was celebrated on January 06 in Tamil Nadu.
 - The state-run Co-optex desperately worked to promote the “Veshti Day”.
- ❖ Yoga Science Meet was conducted on January 6, 2020 on the side-lines of 107th Indian Science Congress in Bengaluru.
 - The meet discussed how Yoga helps insulate from diseases.
- ❖ CPI (M) MP and Sahitya Akademi winner Su. Venkatesan has been selected for the Iyal award-2019.
 - This award is given by the Canada-based Tamil Literary Garden, an organisation dedicated to the promotion of Tamil internationally.
- ❖ Al-Shabaab has attacked a military base used by the United States of America (USA) and Kenyan forces in Kenya’s coastal Lamu region.
 - Lamu Island is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is situated in the Indian Ocean in the East of Kenya.
- ❖ Union Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan announced Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR) declaration in the scientific establishments on the lines of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
 - If enacted, India would be possibly the first country in the world to implement a national policy on scientific social responsibility.
- ❖ Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) and LED Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) under Ministry of Power marked their fifth anniversary on January 5, 2020.
 - The schemes were implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL).
- ❖ New Zealand batsman Leo Carter entered the record books by becoming the seventh cricketer in the world to hit six sixes in an over.



- ❖ Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank has become the first co-operative bank in the country to get permission from the RBI to convert into a small finance bank (SFB).
 - Shivalik MCB headquartered in Saharanpur of Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ Visakha Utsav is a tourism event every year conducted by the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation and Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority at Visakhapatnam.
- ❖ Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has inaugurated the 31st International kite festival in Ahmedabad.
- ❖ The new research led by Universities Space Research Association (USRA) of U.S.A has found that Earth's sister planet Venus has active volcanoes.
- ❖ The Christianity festival "Epiphany" was celebrated in parts of India, such as Goa and Kerala.
 - In Goa, the celebration is known by its Portuguese name 'Festa dos Reis', and in parts of Kerala by its Syriac name 'Denha'.
- ❖ Visakhapatnam is set to host an International Naval event 'MILAN' in March 2020.
 - The theme of the exercise is "Synergy Across the Seas".
- ❖ Indian Railways announced that it will source 1000 MW of solar power and 200 MW of wind power to zonal railways by 2021-22.
- ❖ The Ministry of Health and BMGF (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) had signed the MoU to strengthen health sector of the country.
 - It focuses on reducing child mortality, morbidity, maternal mortality and neonatal mortality.
- ❖ The Ministry of Railway and the UK Government signed MoU to make Indian Railways self-sufficient in energy.
 - The UK Government will also aid in deploying Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure.
- ❖ 24 states and union territories (UTs) have joined together to set up a total of 1,023 'fast-track special courts' (FTSCs) to dispose of over 1.60 lakh rape cases across the country.
 - The FTSC will be set up as part of National Mission for Safety of Women (NMSW).
- ❖ India will erect non-cut steel fence in the sensitive areas of Pakistan and Bangladesh borders.



- The first steel fence is to be erected across 7-km stretch in Assam's Silchar, the border across Bangladesh. After the erection, the border is to be analysed by the BSF (Border Security Force).
- ❖ The Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), Tejas successfully landed on INS Vikramaditya.
 - With this achievement, the LCA becomes the first aircraft to make an arrested landing on a naval ship.
- ❖ The World Future Energy Summit held at Abu Dhabi.
 - Along the summit, the CLIX 2020 - Climate Innovations Exchange, was also held.
- ❖ Union Home Minister Amit Shah released the book 'Karmayoddha Granth' on the life of Prime Minister Modi.
- ❖ Ladakh won the 7th National Ice Hockey Championship Women trophy held at in Ladakh.
- ❖ Lokpal Member and the Former Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court, Justice Dilip Babasaheb Bhosale has resigned from his post.
- ❖ The Competition Commission of India released a report titled "Market Study on E-commerce in India: Key Findings and Observations".
- ❖ The 2nd edition of the National GST Conference of the Commissioners of State Tax and Chief Commissioners of Central Tax was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ The Minister of State for Culture and Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel launched the digital exhibition on Indian Heritage in New Delhi.
 - This digital exhibition is first of its kind in the country.
- ❖ The first session of India-Norway trade and investment dialogue was held in New Delhi.
 - It was the first meeting of the countries after they signed an agreement in 2019.
- ❖ Thailand reported to have found the first case of the corona virus following Japan.
 - The infections of the virus are linked to sea food market.
- ❖ Amazon announced that it has planned to invest 1 billion USD in India and generate 1 million jobs.
 - In order to involve small and medium businesses, a mega summit called the smBhav was organized by Amazon in Delhi.
- ❖ The fifth edition of Science Film Festival of India 2020 was started Panaji, Goa.
- ❖ Khagendra Thapa Magar of Nepal, the world's shortest man (two feet and two inches) since 2010, has died recently.



- ❖ The Bureau of Research on Industry and Economic Fundamentals (BRIEF) has released a report highlighting the impact of trade shutdown between India and Pakistan on people across borders.
 - The report is called “Unilateral Decisions, Bilateral Losses”.
- ❖ Khadi Village Industries Corporation is eyeing international trademark for ‘khadi’ under the Paris Convention for protection of industrial property.
 - Paris Convention is administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).
- ❖ Maharashtra government has made it compulsory to recite the Preamble to the Constitution in all schools starting January 26.
 - The objective is to instil values such as justice, freedom and equality enshrined in the Constitution.
- ❖ Three States namely Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura celebrated their Statehood Days on January 21, 2020.
 - On this day in 1972, all the three states became full-fledged states under the North Eastern Region (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.
- ❖ The realty developer DLF, backed by Singapore’s sovereign fund GIC, will develop an IT park in Taramani, Chennai.
 - With this, Chennai will become DLF’s second largest market after Gurugram.
- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs of Central Government has notified the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 on 10th January 2020.
- ❖ The US Department of State has unveiled new rules aimed at restricting “birth tourism,” in which women travel to the United States to give birth so their children can have U.S. citizenship.
 - Birth tourism refers to the practice of traveling to another country for the purpose of giving birth in that country.
- ❖ The Hindu Tamil has won the Election Commission of India’s award for its voter awareness and education campaign in 2019 as part of the poll panel’s national awards given on the occasion of the 10th National Voters Day.
 - National Voter’s day was celebrated on January 25, 2020.
- ❖ Basketball legend Kobe Bryant, 41, and his 13-year-old daughter Gianna Bryant were killed in a helicopter crash in Calabasas, California.
 - Bryant retired in 2016 as a five-time NBA champion.
- ❖ After Kerala, Punjab and Rajasthan, West Bengal became the fourth state passed a resolution against Citizenship (Amendment) Act.



- ❖ Recently around 40 buffaloes have died due to suspected Sahana disease (hemorrhagic septicemia) in a number of villages located in the Garadapur block of Odisha's Kendrapara.
- ❖ Union Minister Piyush Goyal announced that Indian Railways will run 100% on electricity by 2024.
 - Indian Railways has also planned to make the network zero-emission network by 2030.
- ❖ India has cut import duty on crude palm oil (CPO) and refined, bleached and deodorised (RBD) palm oil.
 - The government moved RBD oil from the "free" to the "restricted" list of imports.
- ❖ European Parliament decided to postpone voting on a critical anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) resolution to March 2020.
- ❖ Martyrs Day or Sarvodaya Day was observed on 30 January to give homage to the death of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.


TAMIL NADU

First Transgender victory in Local Body

- ❖ For the first time in the history of the local body polls in Tamil Nadu, a transwoman representing the opposition DMK party won the Union councillor post.
- ❖ 30-year-old Riya won in the Nammakal district's Tiruchengode town.

Intensified Pulse polio immunization campaign – Tamil Nadu

- ❖ The Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine of Tamil Nadu is targeting the vaccinating of around 70.50 lakh children in the age group of 0 to 5 years in a single round of the Intensified Pulse polio immunisation campaign on January 19.
- ❖ This year, Tamil Nadu has entered the 16th polio-free year.
- ❖ Booths would be set up in all primary health centres, government hospitals, ICDS centres, noon meal centres, schools and other important places in the State.

IMMUNISATION DRIVE	
<p>The immunisation campaign is held on a single day to produce herd immunity among children.</p>	
<p>January First phase of pulse polio immunisation campaign</p>	 <p><i>A child being given polio drops</i></p>
<p>Feb Second phase of the campaign</p>	
<p>WHERE CAN PARENTS TAKE THEIR CHILDREN:</p>	
<p>to booths set up at schools, ICDS centres (anganwadis), Primary Health Centres, Government Hospitals</p>	<p>in case, you are travelling, the booths have been put up at various locations such as bus terminuses, railway stations and toll plazas on national highways</p>
<p>• The booths will be open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.</p>	
<p>WHAT PAEDIATRICIAN SAYS?</p>	
<p>Immunisation is a must for children aged 0 to 5 years, irrespective of previous immunisation against polio</p>	<p>Children on steroids for nephrotic syndrome, malignant conditions, immuno-suppressed, unconscious/unresponsive, had convulsions should not be given the drops</p>
<p>Children with minor illnesses such as mild fever, running nose and upper respiratory tract infection can be given the drops</p>	<p>In case of doubts, consult your paediatrician</p>

Tamil Development Awards

- ❖ The Development Awards of Tamil Nadu Government 2019 have been announced.
- ❖ The Tamil Thai award 2019 has been announced for the Chicago Tamil Sangam.
- ❖ Other awards were
 - Kapilar Award – Vettri alagar,
 - U.Ve.Sa Award – V Mahadevan,
 - Kambhar Award - Saraswathi Ramanathan,
 - Sollin Selvar Award – Kavidasan,
 - G.U. Pope Award - Maria Joseph Xavier,
 - Ilangovadigal Award - Kaviko Gnanaselvan (A) Thirunana sambantham,
 - Umaruppar Award - Liaquat Ali khan,
 - Amma Literary Award - Umayaal muthu,
 - Singaravelar Award - Ashoka Subramanian,
 - Maraimalai adigal Award - Scholar Muthukumaraswamy,
 - Iyothee Thass Pandithar Award - Scholar Prabhakaran,
 - Best language Translator Awards - Mohammed Yusuf, Mastan Ali, Prof. Siva. Murugesan,
 - Chief Minister's Computer Tamil Award for 2018 – Nagarasan.

Fatal road accidents in Tamil Nadu

- ❖ Tamil Nadu will observe the 31st Road Safety Week from January 20 to 27.
- ❖ The fatal road accidents reduced by 43 per cent in 2019 when compared to 2016 at Tamil Nadu.

Tiger Sharks squadron

- ❖ The 222 Squadron of Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jets was inducted by the Indian Air Force in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The squadron has been named “Tiger Sharks”.
- ❖ So far there are 12 squadrons of Tiger Sharks inducted in India including the one recently inducted in Tamil Nadu.



- ❖ The Squadron is being inducted in Tamil Nadu to check the fast-expanding strategic footprint of China in the Indian Ocean Region.
- ❖ China had established its first military base/overseas army support base in Djibouti in the region surrounding Horn of Africa.

NATIONAL

Swachh Survekshan League 2020

- ❖ The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on December 31, 2019, released Swachh Survekshan League in New Delhi.
- ❖ It is a cleanliness survey that helps in competitive federalism.
- ❖ In the category of 10 lakh plus population, Indore secured first place.



Top 20 Cities in >10 Lakh Population Category

Quarter 1			Quarter 2		
Rank	State	ULB	Rank	State	ULB
1	MADHYA PRADESH	INDORE	1	MADHYA PRADESH	INDORE
2	MADHYA PRADESH	BHOPAL	2	GUJARAT	RAJKOT
3	GUJARAT	SURAT	3	MAHARASHTRA	NAVI MUMBAI
4	MAHARASHTRA	NASHIK	4	GUJARAT	VADODARA
5	GUJARAT	RAJKOT	5	MADHYA PRADESH	BHOPAL
6	MAHARASHTRA	PIMPRI CHINCHWAD	6	GUJARAT	AHMEDABAD
7	GUJARAT	AHMEDABAD	7	MAHARASHTRA	NASHIK
8	MAHARASHTRA	NAVI MUMBAI	8	MAHARASHTRA	GREATER MUMBAI
9	UTTAR PRADESH	ALLAHABAD	9	UTTAR PRADESH	ALLAHABAD
10	MAHARASHTRA	VASAI VIRAR	10	UTTAR PRADESH	LUCKNOW
11	CHHATTISGARH	CHANDIGARH	11	MADHYA PRADESH	JABALPUR
12	MAHARASHTRA	PUNE	12	MAHARASHTRA	PUNE
13	MAHARASHTRA	GREATER MUMBAI	13	MADHYA PRADESH	GWALIOR
14	UTTAR PRADESH	VARANASI	14	MAHARASHTRA	PIMPRI CHINCHWAD
15	UTTAR PRADESH	KANPUR	15	MAHARASHTRA	NAGPUR
16	UTTAR PRADESH	LUCKNOW	16	MAHARASHTRA	KALYAN DOMBIVALI
17	MAHARASHTRA	KALYAN DOMBIVALI	17	MAHARASHTRA	VASAI VIRAR
18	CHHATTISGARH	RAIPUR	18	ANDHRA PRADESH	VIJAYAWADA
19	ANDHRA PRADESH	VISAKHAPATNAM	19	UTTAR PRADESH	VARANASI
20	ANDHRA PRADESH	VIJAYAWADA	20	GUJARAT	SURAT

- ❖ Indore has remained in first place for the last three years (2017, 2018, 2019).
- ❖ Following Indore, Bhopal and Surat are in second and third places respectively.
- ❖ In the category of population between one lakh and 10 lakhs, Jamshedpur was in 1st spot following New Delhi and Khargone.

SDG India Index 2019

- ❖ The SDG India Index was launched last year (2018) by Niti Aayog with the help of United Nations.
- ❖ It took into account 16 out of 17 goals specified by the United Nations as SDGs
- ❖ It evaluates progress of States and Union Territories on social, economic and environmental parameters.
- ❖ It will generate competition among the states to further improve on SDGs like poverty, education and health
- ❖ According to this year report, India's composite score improved from 57 in 2018 to 60 in 2019 with major success in water and sanitation, industry and innovation.

In the other SDGs, the **best performers** were

1. Tamil Nadu for 'no poverty';
2. Goa for 'zero hunger', sustainable cities and communities';
3. Kerala for 'good health';
4. Himachal Pradesh for 'quality education';
5. Himachal again for 'gender equality';
6. Andhra Pradesh for 'clean water and sanitation';
7. Sikkim for 'affordable and clean energy';
8. Telangana for 'decent work & economic growth';
9. Gujarat for 'industry, innovation and infrastructure';
10. Telangana for 'reduced inequalities';
11. Nagaland for 'sustainable consumption and production';
12. Karnataka for 'climate action';
13. Manipur for 'life and land';
14. Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat for 'peace, justice, strong institutions'.

- ❖ However, nutrition and gender continue to be problem areas for India, requiring more focussed approach from the government.
- ❖ The first report had 13 goals and 39 indicators.
- ❖ The Index this year ranked states based on 54 targets spread over 100 indicators out of 306 outlined by the UN.

States

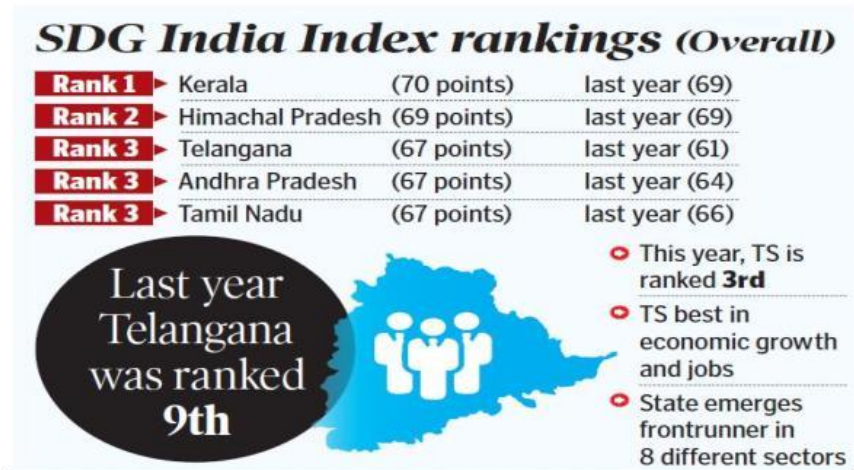
- ❖ Kerala achieved the first rank in the composite SDG Index with a score of 70, followed by Himachal Pradesh at 69.
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu ranked at the third position with the score of 67.
- ❖ Chandigarh too maintained its top spot among the UTs with a score of 70.
- ❖ Bihar was adjudged as the worst performer.
- ❖ The states showing biggest improvement since 2018 are Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Sikkim.
- ❖ UP has moved from the 29th position to the 23rd position.
- ❖ Odisha from 23rd to 15th and Sikkim from 15th to 7th position.

Front runners

- ❖ Only three states were placed in the category of Front Runners (with a score in the range 65-99, including both) in 2018 - Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ In 2019, five more states joined this league - Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Sikkim and Goa, taking the total tally to eight.
- ❖ The states were classified under 4 categories based on their scores.
 - 0 to 49 - Aspirant
 - 50 to 64 - Performers
 - 65 to 99 - Front Runner
 - with a score of 100 - Achiever

About SDG

- ❖ The year 2020 will be the fifth anniversary of the adoption of SDGs by 193 countries at the UN General Assembly
- ❖ The SDGs have 17 goals and 169 related targets to be achieved by 2030.





Railway Protection Force Rename

- ❖ The Railways Ministry has renamed Railway Protection Force (RPF) as Indian Railway Protection Force Service.
- ❖ The current RPF was formed under the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957.
- ❖ The RPF was first formed in 1854 when the Railway construction was begun in India for the first time.
- ❖ However, it received its legal identity for the first time under Police act, 1861.
- ❖ In 1872, the Railway Police Committee recommended organization of Railway Police Force.

PPRTMS portal

- ❖ The Election Commission of India launched an online system that will allow political parties to track their applications.
- ❖ The system is called Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System (PPRTMS).
- ❖ The system will track applications registered by political parties.
- ❖ The status of the application shall be obtained through SMS or e-mail.

27th National Children's Science Congress 2019

- ❖ 27th edition of National Children's Science Congress (NCSC) 2019 held at in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- ❖ It based on the theme "Science, Technology and Innovation for a clean, green and healthy nation".
- ❖ Technical sessions, 'Meet the scientist' programme, opening of stalls, techno tour for child scientists were the special attraction of the congress.

e-BCAS Project Training Module

- ❖ The Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched the Biometric enabled Centralised Access Control System (CACS) and 'e-BCAS Project Training Module' in New Delhi.
- ❖ These 2 projects were launched to enhance security and to improve ease of doing business at airports.
- ❖ CACS project aims to digitize the employee movement process at the airports.



- ❖ Through the e-BCAS Module, more than 1.5 lakh employees will be migrated from manual to digital platform.
- ❖ The project is envisaged to achieve “paperless office” under e-Governance initiative of Govt. of India.

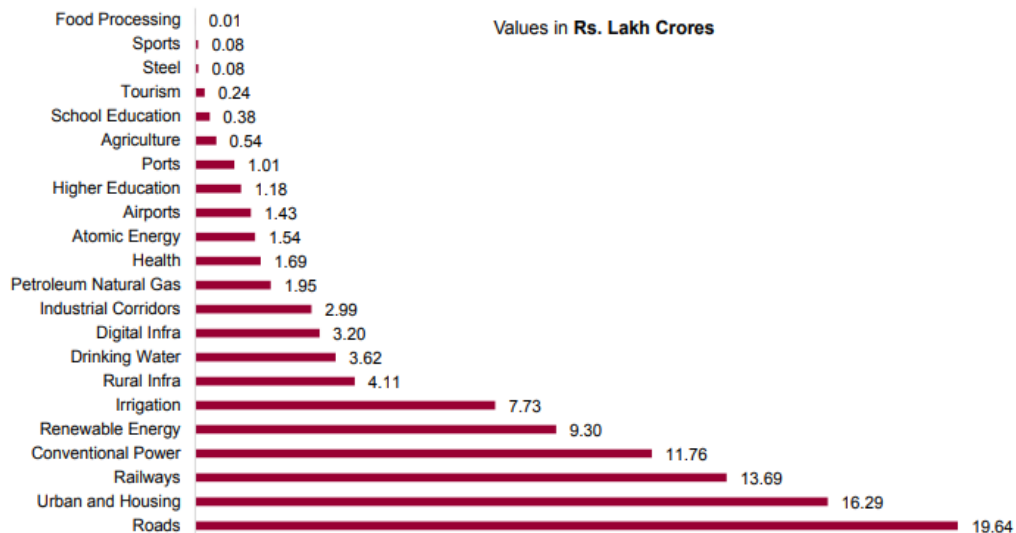
80th session of the Indian History Congress (IHC)

- ❖ The 80th session of the Indian History Congress (IHC) was held at Kannur, Kerala between 28th and 30th December 2019.
- ❖ IHC was founded in 1935.
- ❖ It is the largest association of professional historians in South Asia.
- ❖ The first session of IHC took place in Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, Poona in 1935.
- ❖ The main objective of IHC is
 - To regulate the standard of works of history produced in India
 - To promote impartial and substantive history and
 - To commit to a fair and scientific history, devoid of bias and politics.
- ❖ The Bharata Itihasa Samshodhaka Mandala (BISM) was founded by Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade in 1910 in Pune with the support of K C Mehendale.

National Infrastructure Pipeline

- ❖ The Government has released a report of the task force on National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) for 2019-2025.
- ❖ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has unveiled a ₹102 lakh crore national infrastructure pipeline project.
- ❖ The finance ministry had set up a task force headed by Economic Affairs Secretary to prepare a road map for this project from 2019-20 to 2024-25.
- ❖ During the fiscals 2020 to 2025, sectors such as Energy (24%), Roads (19%), Urban (16%), and Railways (13%) amount to around 70% of the projected capital expenditure in infrastructure in India.
- ❖ It has outlined plans to invest more than ₹102 lakh crore by the Centre, States and the private sector to share the capital expenditure in a 39:39:22 formula.

Sector-wise break-up of the NIP



- Roads, urban and housing, railways, power (renewable and conventional) and irrigation to comprise ~80% of the NIP

Rabi Crop Sowing increase

- ❖ The Ministry of Agriculture announced that the sowing area of rabi crops have increased by 36 lakh hectares.
- ❖ The total area under Rabi crops was 536 hectares last year and this has increased to 571 hectares.
- ❖ This is mainly due to improvement in soil moisture in Rabi growing states.
- ❖ The major Rabi crops in India are wheat, barley, sesame, peas, mustard.
- ❖ They are sown in winter and are harvested in summer.

Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana

- ❖ Out of the total 790, only 252 Members of Parliament (MPs) have adopted gram panchayats under phase-4 of Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY).
- ❖ This scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development.
- ❖ The scheme was launched by the Prime Minister of India on 2014 on the birth anniversary of Jai Prakash Narayan.

About scheme

- ❖ It is a village development project under which each Members of Parliament (MPs) are responsible for developing the socio-economic and physical infrastructure of three villages each by 2019, and a total of eight villages each by 2024.
- ❖ The first Adarsh Gram (Model Village) was to be developed by 2016, and two more by 2019.
- ❖ From 2019 to 2024, five more Adarsh Grams must be developed by each MP, one each year.

Asiatic Lion Census

- ❖ The Asiatic Lion Census is scheduled to take place in May 2020.
- ❖ The Gujarat forest department conducts lion census in Asiatic Lion Landscape, which includes Gir National Park and Sanctuary.
- ❖ The census will take place in every five years by Wildlife Institute of India.
- ❖ The Institute will use 10,000 cameras to conduct the census.



About Asiatic Lion

- ❖ It is listed as 'Endangered' under the IUCN Red List.
- ❖ It is listed in Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ❖ The only surviving free-ranging population of the Asiatic lion exists in the Gir forest, Gujarat.
- ❖ According to the 2015 Lion Census, there are 523 Asiatic Lions.
- ❖ The African Lion is listed as Vulnerable under the IUCN Red List.



Asiatic Lion Conservation Project

- ❖ This 3-year project (2018/2021) was Launched by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, it aims to protect and conserve the Asiatic Lion.

Rs 12,000 crore under PM Kisan

- ❖ The centre government will release third instalment of PM KISAN of Rs. 2000 for December 2019-March 2020.

About PM KISAN Scheme:

- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a Central Sector Scheme with 100% funding from Government of India.
- ❖ It was announced in February 2019.
- ❖ Under the Scheme, income support of Rs.6000/- per year is provided to all farmer families across the country in three equal instalments of Rs.2000/- every four months.
- ❖ The entire responsibility of identification of beneficiary farmer families rests with the State/UT Governments.
- ❖ The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

About Krishi Karman Awards

- ❖ Krishi Karman Awards are given to best performing States in food grain production.
- ❖ The award was constituted in 2010-11 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

107th Indian Science Congress

- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated 107th Indian Science Congress.
- ❖ It is scheduled to take place at the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ❖ The theme of the congress for 2020 is "Science & Technology: Rural Development".
- ❖ For the first time, Farmers Science Congress is to be held on the side-lines of Indian Science Congress.

Indian Science Congress

- ❖ Indian Science Congress is organised by the Indian Science Congress Association every year in the first week of January.



- ❖ It is a major focal point for scientists, researchers and academicians interested in various aspects of scientific discoveries and technologies.
- ❖ The previous (2019) session 106th edition was held at Lovely Professional University (LPU) in Jalandhar, Punjab.
- ❖ The first meeting of the Congress was held on 1914 at the premises of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta.

MEA's NEST division

- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has set up a New, Emerging and Strategic Technologies (NEST) division.
- ❖ It helps to deal with new and emerging technologies.
- ❖ NEST helps to partner with 5G and artificial intelligence areas of other countries.
- ❖ Under NEST, central government allows data sharing of various network makers in which Huawei shares its customer details with Chinese government under 5G trails.
- ❖ This division acts as the intermediate agency within the Ministry for issues pertaining to new and emerging technologies.
- ❖ NEST also negotiates “technology governance rules, standards and architecture”.

Railway helpline number 139

- ❖ The Indian Railways launched an integrated helpline number 139 for quick grievance and enquiries by the passengers during journeys.
- ❖ It is an integrated form of existing helpline numbers (except 182) particularly to avoid the inconvenience over multiple helpline numbers and will be easy to connect with Railways for all their needs during travel.
- ❖ The helpline number will be available in 12 languages.
- ❖ It will be based on an interactive voice response system and it can also be used for general complaints, accidents and safety issues.

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)

- ❖ The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) announced that eight states namely Maharashtra, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Karnataka finalized their action plan to boost agricultural exports.



- ❖ The product clusters selected were at Jalandhar (Potato), Sangli (Grapes), Salem (Poultry products), Theni (Banana), Chittoor (Mango).
- ❖ The Agricultural Export Policy was introduced in December 2018.
- ❖ The policy aimed at doubling agricultural exports from 30 billion USD to 60 billion USD by 2022.
- ❖ In 2016, India's share in global agricultural exports was merely 2.2%.

Cyber Safe Women' initiative

- ❖ The Maharashtra government has launched a 'cyber safe women' campaign across the state, on January 3, the birth anniversary of Indian social reformer, Savitribai Phule.
- ❖ It will educate women about how the web is used by anti-social elements to commit various types of crimes.
- ❖ Savitribai Phule was the first female teacher of India.

Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan Yojana

- ❖ The National Pension Scheme for traders, Shopkeepers and Self-Employed persons, also called the Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan Yojana was launched in July 2019.
- ❖ It aimed at benefitting 3 crore small traders and shopkeepers
- ❖ The Government set a target of 50 lakh enrolment by the end of March 2020.
- ❖ But it attracted only 25000 beneficiaries.
- ❖ Among all states Uttar Pradesh has highest registrations with 6,765 persons.
- ❖ No one has so far registered in the scheme in the states of Mizoram and Lakshadweep.
- ❖ The scheme is being implemented by Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Young Scientists Laboratories

- ❖ Prime Minister has launched 5 Young Scientists Laboratories of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ❖ The five labs are:
 - Artificial Intelligence research will be at Bengaluru.
 - The Quantum Technology laboratory will be at IIT Mumbai.
 - Cognitive Technologies research will be done at a lab based in IIT Chennai.



- Asymmetric Technologies will be based out of the campus of Jadavpur University, Kolkata.
- Smart Materials research will be based out of Hyderabad.
- ❖ DRDO already has 52 labs.
- ❖ It can be noted that N Chandrasekaran Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Defence in 2018 to study the use and application of artificial intelligence (AI) in the military.

Setting Up of Medical Colleges under PPP

- ❖ Government Think Tank NITI Aayog released its Draft “Model Concession Agreement for Setting Up Medical Colleges under Public Private Partnership” (PPP) guideline document.
- ❖ As per various reports, Niti Aayog has unveiled PPP model to link new or existing private medical colleges with functional district hospital.
- ❖ The suggestion will address the issues of limited resources and finances in medical education.
- ❖ The model is already operative in the states of Gujarat and Karnataka.
- ❖ Also, this will help to bridge the gap of shortage of doctors & nurses in the country.
- ❖ According to WHO, there is only one government doctor for every 10,189 people in the country.
- ❖ Also, there is shortage of 2 million nurses in India.

Farmers Science congress

- ❖ 107th Indian Science Congress was inaugurated by PM Modi on January 3, 2020.
- ❖ On the sidelines of the event, the Farmers Science Congress was conducted for the first time.
- ❖ The conference is significant as the current era is shifting from becoming self-sufficient in production to nutritional security.
- ❖ The importance of programmes such as ARYA were stressed at the event.
- ❖ The Farmer Science Congress was held under 3 different themes namely.
 - Farmers innovation on integrated agriculture and entrepreneurship to double farmers’ income
 - Climate change, bio-diversity, conservation.
 - Agrarian distress, farmers empowerment and rural bio-entrepreneurship.



ARYA

- ❖ ARYA is Attracting and Retaining of Youth in Agriculture.
- ❖ It is being implemented by the ICAR.
- ❖ The programme aims at bringing the youth under Agriculture sector.
- ❖ This is to prevent the increase in migration of youth from rural areas to urban.

Women Science Congress

- ❖ The 9th Women Science Congress (WSC) is organized as part of the Indian Science Congress (ISC) at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore.
- ❖ The event highlighted opportunities that can help women overcome the hurdles they face because of their gender in the pursuit of Science.
- ❖ Indian Science Congress Association is a premier scientific organisation of India with headquarters at Kolkata, West Bengal.
- ❖ The first meeting of the Congress was held in January 1914 at the premises of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta.

KIRAN Scheme

- ❖ KIRAN (Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing) is the women-exclusive scheme of DST (Department of Science and Technology).
- ❖ Its mandate is to bring gender parity in S&T through gender mainstreaming.
- ❖ Different programs and components of KIRAN deals with various crucial issues which are faced by women scientists in their career path.

Naseem Al Bahr Naval exercise

- ❖ Oman ships has arrived in Goa to participate in Naseem Al Bahr naval exercise.
- ❖ The Exercise Naseem-Al-Bahr (sea breeze) is a bilateral naval exercise between the Indian Navy and Oman.
- ❖ The exercise is being conducted since 1993.
- ❖ Other exercises between India and Oman:
 - Exercise Al-Najah: It is an army exercise conducted between the India and Oman.
 - Exercise Eastern Bridge: It is an Air Force exercise that is held between India and Oman.



ICMR report on Sugar Intake of India

- ❖ Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) released its report on sugar intake of India.
- ❖ The report was released based on a joint survey conducted by ICMR, NIN (National Institute of Nutrition), Hyderabad and ILSI (International Life Science Institute of India).
- ❖ The study is the first of its kind in the country.
- ❖ The report also stated that Intake of sugar by women was 20.2 g/day and that of men was 18.7 g/day.

Disaster relief fund to 7 states

- ❖ The Government of India approved Rs 5,908 crores of disaster relief fund to seven states.
- ❖ It includes Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The states were badly affected due to floods and landslides caused by South West Monsoon rains.
- ❖ On 2020, January 6 a high-level committee operating under Home Ministry approved disaster relief fund from National Disaster Respond Fund (NDRF).

About NDRF

- ❖ The National Disaster Respond Fund was established under the disaster Management Act, 2005.
- ❖ The NDRF was established to supplement SDRF.

- ❖ The aim of the fund is to provide immediate relief from natural disasters and not as compensation for crop loss or damage to properties.
- ❖ Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) audits the accounts of NDRF.

Indian Army begins work on GOCO Model

- ❖ Indian Army began its work on the GOCO (Government Owned Contractor Operated) Model.
- ❖ The model is extended to base workshops and ordnance depots.
- ❖ The workshops play vital role as they ensure the Indian Army is operationally prepared all the time.
- ❖ The GOCO model was one of the recommendations of the Lt. Gen. DB Shekatkar (Retd.) committee to enhance combat capability and re-balancing defence expenditure.
- ❖ In GOCO model, the assets owned by government will be operated by the private industries.

NetSCoFAN

- ❖ Union Health Minister Harsha Vardhan launched NetSCoFAN (Network for Scientific Co-operation for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition).
- ❖ It is a network of research & academic institutions working in the area of food & nutrition.
- ❖ The NetSCoFAN would comprise of eight groups of institutions working in different areas viz. biological, chemical, nutrition & labelling, food of animal origin, food of plant origin, water & beverages, food testing, and safer & sustainable packaging.
- ❖ FSSAI has identified eight Nodal Institutions who would develop a 'Ready Reckoner' that will have inventory of all research work, experts and institutions.

List of Medical Devices

- ❖ Niti Aayog draws up list of medical devices that have high export potential.
- ❖ It has come up with 10 devices to provide priority subsidies.
- ❖ It includes surgical blades, orthopaedic implants, catheters, syringes and needles, X-ray machines, blood bags, MRI machines and CT scan.
- ❖ The medical devices are governed under the Central Drugs Standard Control organization (CDSCO).

Central Drugs Standard Control organization (CDSCO)

- ❖ National regulatory body for Indian pharmaceuticals and medical devices established under Drugs and Cosmetics Act.
- ❖ It works under Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- ❖ Headquarters: New Delhi.

Indian Data Relay Satellite System

- ❖ India plans space-to-space tracking and communication of its space assets by putting up a new satellite series called the Indian Data Relay Satellite System (IDRSS).
- ❖ It will be a set of satellites that will track, send and receive information from other Indian Satellites.
- ❖ IDRSS satellites of the 2,000 kg class would be launched on the GSLV launcher to geostationary orbits around 36,000 km away.
- ❖ The first beneficiary would be the prospective crew members of the Gaganyaan mission of 2022 who can be fully and continuously in touch with mission control throughout their travel.



State of Aadhaar report

- ❖ State of Aadhaar report has been released on the completion of the tenth year of its existence.
- ❖ This report was done by the IDinsight and Omidyar Network of India.
- ❖ The report has also stated that 80% of participants felt that Aadhaar improved the reach of government schemes and services faster.



- ❖ Aadhaar even after 10 years is the world's largest bio metric ID system in the world.

Aadhaar

- ❖ The Aadhaar number is a verifiable twelve-digit unique identity number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to the residents of India.
- ❖ It is linked with the resident's demographic and biometric information.
- ❖ The Aadhaar project was conceptualised in the year 2006 and launched in the year 2009 with the creation of UIDAI.

IMD's State of Climate Report 2019

- ❖ India Meteorological Department (IMD) released State of the Climate Report-2019.
- ❖ The past decade was the hottest on record for India.
- ❖ 2019 was the seventh warmest year since 1901.
- ❖ The annual rainfall in 2019 was 109% of the long period average for 1961–2010.
- ❖ Five cyclones were recorded from the Arabian Sea- the highest number of Arabian Sea cyclones since 1902.
- ❖ The normal number is one per year.
- ❖ Of all the states, Bihar reported highest deaths (650) due to extreme weather events.
- ❖ New Delhi recorded the longest cold wave duration of 18 days, since 1902, this year.

Western Zonal council

- ❖ The 25th meeting of the western zonal council will be held in January 2020, under the chairmanship of Union Home Minister.
- ❖ Maharashtra is the lead coordinator with the Chief Minister of the state co-chairing the meeting.
- ❖ It will present a roadmap for the safety of women online and ways to curb cyberbullying.
- ❖ The 24th meeting of the council was held in Goa in August 2019.
- ❖ Western Zonal Council is functioning under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Inter-State Council Secretariat.
- ❖ It comprises of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, the Union Territory of Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.



Zonal Council

- ❖ The Zonal Councils are the statutory (and not the constitutional) bodies.
- ❖ They are established by the States Reorganisation Act of 1956.
- ❖ The Act divided the country into five zones (Northern, Central, Eastern, Western and Southern) and provided a zonal council for each zone.

2nd National GST Conference

- ❖ 2nd edition of the National GST Conference of the Commissioners of State Tax and Chief Commissioners of Central Tax was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ This conference was held under the chairmanship of Dr Ajay Bhushan Pandey, Revenue Secretary of the Ministry of Finance (MoF).
- ❖ The conference was held to streamline the GST (Goods and Service Tax) system and also to plug revenue leakages.

Regulation on minority education institutions

- ❖ The Supreme Court has held that the state has rights to introduce a regulatory regime in the “national interest” to provide minority educational institutions with well-qualified teachers in order for them to “achieve excellence in education.”
- ❖ The judgment came after the validity of the West Bengal Madrasah Service Commission Act of 2008 was challenged.
- ❖ This Act mandated that the process of appointment of teachers in aided madrasahs would be done by a Commission, whose decision would be binding.
- ❖ Minority institutions have the fundamental right under Article 30 of the Constitution to establish and administer their educational institutions according to their choice.
- ❖ However, they cannot ignore the regulations recommended by the state.
- ❖ The regulatory law should however balance the dual objectives of ensuring standard of excellence as well as preserving the right of the minorities to establish and administer their educational institutions.
- ❖ For this, the supreme court broadly divided education into two categories:
 - Secular education.
 - Education “directly aimed at or dealing with preservation and protection religious or a linguistic minority.”



Railways plans to Link J&K with rest of India

- ❖ Indian Railways announced that Kashmir is to be linked with the rest of India through railway network by December 2021.
- ❖ Konkan Railways is the implementing agency of the project.
- ❖ According to Railways, this is the most challenging infrastructure project in its 150-year long history.
- ❖ The bridge, that is part of the project, across Chenab river will be the highest bridge in the world.

North East Gas Pipeline Grid

- ❖ Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the North East Gas Pipeline Grid.
- ❖ The pipeline is to be constructed for around 1,656 km.
- ❖ The gas pipeline grid is to be developed in eight states of the North East Region namely Manipur, Meghalaya, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Sikkim, Nagaland and Tripura.
- ❖ The project is a joint venture of 5 Public sector units namely
 - ONGC (Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited),
 - IOCL (Indian Oil Corporation Limited),
 - OIL (Oil India Limited),
 - GAIL (Gas Authority of India Limited) and
 - NRL (Numaligarh Refinery Limited).
- ❖ The Joint Venture has been named IGGL (Indra Dhanush Gas Grid Limited).
- ❖ The Government of India has approved Rs 5,559 crores funding for the construction of the grid.
- ❖ The project will be monitored by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- ❖ The project is being implemented under the ambitious Urja Ganga Gas Pipeline Project.

5th Pulses Conclave 2020

- ❖ The fifth Pulses Conclave 2020 is to be held in Lonavala, Maharashtra.
- ❖ It is a biennial conference.
- ❖ The India Pulses and Grain Association will host the Conclave.

- ❖ Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka are the leading pulses producing states in India.
- ❖ India is the largest producer, the largest consumer and also the largest importer of pulses in the world.
- ❖ Pulses increase soil health and hence are used as annual leguminous crops.



India & Germany - Zero Budget Natural Farming

- ❖ Andhra Pradesh Government signed Memorandum of Understanding with a German firm to implement Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) in the state.
- ❖ Zero Budget Natural Farming is a chemical-free agricultural farming practice.
- ❖ The Government of India is promoting ZBNF through Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana since 2015-16.
- ❖ The ZBNF was first adopted by Karnataka.
- ❖ In 2018, Andhra Pradesh was the first state to introduce an ambitious plan of 100% of natural farming in the state by 2024.

International recognition for Indian airports

- ❖ Airports Authority of India (AAI) has announced that 4 Indian airports have received international recognition for reducing the carbon emission level.
- ❖ The standards were set by Airports Council International (ACI) for the grading.
- ❖ The 4 airports are as follows:
 - Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport (West Bengal)
 - Biju Patnaik International Airport (Odisha)
 - Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport (Uttar Pradesh)
 - Trivandrum International Airport (Kerala).



Operation Sankalp

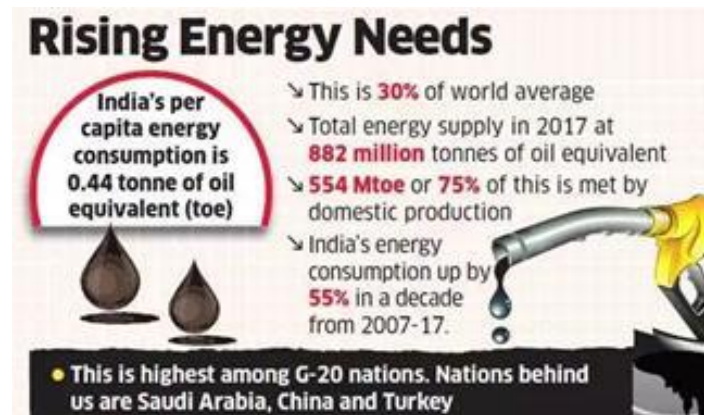
- ❖ Indian Navy has commenced Maritime Security Operations, code named Op SANKALP, in the Gulf region.
- ❖ This operation has to ensure safe passage of Indian Flag Vessels transiting through the Strait of Hormuz.
- ❖ The operation is being progressed in close coordination with all stakeholders including
 - Ministry of Defence,
 - Ministry of External Affairs,
 - Ministry of Shipping,
 - Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Green Credit Scheme

- ❖ The Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) has approved a scheme.
- ❖ It allows “forests” to be traded as a commodity.
- ❖ It allows the Forest Department to outsource one of its responsibilities of reforestation to non-government agencies.
- ❖ FAC is an apex body tasked with adjudicating requests by the industry to raze forest land for commercial ends.
- ❖ Previously in 2015, a ‘Green Credit Scheme’ for degraded forest land with public-private participation was recommended.
- ❖ But it wasn’t approved by the Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), who is the final authority.

India’s Energy Policy Report

- ❖ International Energy Agency (IEA) launched India’s Energy Policy Report.
- ❖ The report insisted that India should adopt NITI Aayog’s National Energy Policy.
- ❖ IEA released its “India Report 2020”, in collaboration with NITI Aayog.
- ❖ The report also said that the oil demand of India will overtake China by mid-2020.
- ❖ It also said that India is the third largest consumer of oil after China and United States.
- ❖ India is the fourth largest oil refiner in the world.
- ❖ The products mainly include diesel and gasoline.



Access to Internet

- ❖ The Supreme Court on 10th January said that access to the Internet is a fundamental right under Article 19 of the Constitution.
- ❖ Any order passed to restrict or suspend judicial scrutiny will be subject to judicial scrutiny.
- ❖ This was a verdict given by a five-judge bench headed by Justice NV Ramana.
- ❖ The internet shutdown in Kashmir is the longest in any democracy in the world.
- ❖ India also tops the list of Internet shutdowns globally.
- ❖ According to the Internet Shutdown Tracker, India saw 106 shutdowns in 2019, and 134 in 2018.

Backdrop

- ❖ The Information Technology Act, 2000, the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1973 and the Telegraph Act, 1885 are the three laws that deal with suspension of Internet services.
- ❖ But before 2017, Internet suspension orders were issued under section 144 of the CrPC.
- ❖ In India, Kerala had become the first state in 2017 to declare access to Internet "a basic human right".

Raisina Dialogue – 5th edition

- ❖ It is a multilateral conference that is held in New Delhi annually since 2016.
- ❖ The dialogue is organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and Observer Research Foundation.
- ❖ It is India's flagship global Conference engaging with geopolitics and geo-economics



- ❖ The conference is named after, “Raisina Hills”, which is the seat of Government of India and Rashtrapati bhavan.
- ❖ The dialogue was designed on the lines of Shangri-La dialogue.
- ❖ The foreign ministers from Russia, Iran, Maldives, Morocco, Australia, Bhutan, Denmark, Czech Republic, Uzbekistan and Estonia will attend this meet.
- ❖ Theme: 2020: Navigating the Alpha Century.
- ❖ The Key Note speaker for 2020 Raisina Dialogue is Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

150th Anniversary of Kolkata Port Trust

- ❖ The Prime Minister of India laid the stone for the development of Chittaranjan Locomotive Factory, Damodar Valley Corporation and Hindustan Aircraft Factory.
- ❖ During the event the Kolkata port trust was renamed as Shyama Prasad Mukherjee port.
- ❖ He was the founder of Bharatiya Jana Sangh.
- ❖ The PM also inaugurated Pritilata Chhatra Avas and Kaushal Vikas Kendra for 200 tribal girls in the Sunderbans region.
- ❖ The Kaushal Vikas Kendra are skill development centres for the youth of the country.
- ❖ They are established under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.

Cyber AASHVAST

- ❖ Home Minister Amit Shah launched the country’s first Cyber Crime Prevention Unit called the “Cyber AASHVAST” in Gandhinagar at Gujarat.
- ❖ Along with AASHVAST, the Video Integration and State Wide Advance Security project called VISWAS was also launched.
- ❖ Along with AASHVAST and VISWAS, Project NETRANG was also launched.
- ❖ The Cyber AASHVAST is a unit that will act to prevent cybercrimes with the help of VISWAS and NETRANG.

National Draft Policy on rare diseases

- ❖ The policy has proposed one-time fund of Rs 15 lakhs to treat rare diseases under Ayushman Bharat.
- ❖ The policy was drafted by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.



- ❖ Under the policy, certain medical institutes will be certified as Centre of Excellence for rare diseases.
- ❖ It includes AIIMS of New Delhi, Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Science, Lucknow, King Edward Medical Hospital, Mumbai and four others.

ASER Report 2019

- ❖ The Non-Profit Organization Pratham released its annual report, Annual Status of Education Report, 2019.
- ❖ The report is based on the survey conducted in 26 districts that covers 36,000 children in the age group of 4 to 8 years.

Key Findings

- ❖ The report says that around 56.8% of girls and 50.4% of boys are enrolled in government schools.
- ❖ Number of girls enrolled in government schools is higher than number of boys.
- ❖ On the other hand, number of boys enrolled in private institutions is higher than that of girls.
- ❖ According to RTE act, 2009 (Right to Education act), children should enter Class I at the age of 6.
- ❖ But according to the report, 4 out of every 10 children entering Class I are less than 5 years old.

Railway News

- ❖ The Indian Railways has signed MoU with the RailTel, a Mini Ratna Public Sector Undertaking in order to implement Phase II of e-office programme.
- ❖ E-Office system is an integrated file management system that will help employees manage data, content electronically.
- ❖ E-Office aims at adopting paperless culture.
- ❖ This will help reduce operational cost and also reduce carbon foot print.
- ❖ It will be implemented by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- ❖ The South-Central Railways and SBI signed MoU to implement door step banking in 585 railway stations.
- ❖ The door step banking will provide uniform cash remittance mechanism in all the railway stations.

NIC

- ❖ The National Informatics Centre was established in 1976.



- ❖ It operates under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- ❖ It provides infrastructure to deliver Government IT services and also the initiatives of Digital India.

NEAT initiative

- ❖ The NIIT (National institute of Information Technology), a multi-national company has been selected as one of the EdTech companies for the NEAT initiative.
- ❖ The NIIT will work with AICTE to implement the vision of Ministry of HRD (Human and Resource Development) on NEAT.
- ❖ NIIT was established in 1991.
- ❖ It is a non-profit university of higher education and research.
- ❖ The National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) was launched to customize learning process using Artificial Intelligence.
- ❖ The NEAT programme is being implemented by AICTE.

Sixth Island Development Agency meeting

- ❖ The Union Home Minister chaired the sixth Island Development Agency meeting in New Delhi.
- ❖ The meeting focused on “Green Development in the Islands to reach new heights”.
- ❖ The Island Development Agency (IDA) has taken up scientifically assessed sustainable development goals in order to improve growth of the Islands.
- ❖ The plan is to be implemented in four islands of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and five islands of Lakshadweep Islands.
- ❖ In the second phase 12 more islands of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and 5 Islands of Lakshadweep islands are to be covered.

NCRB report on Crime

- ❖ National Crime Record Bureau’s (NCRB) report on Crime in India for the year 2018 was released.
- ❖ The report finds that over 50 lakh crimes have been registered in 2018 which is 1.3% more than that of 2017.

findings of the report

- ❖ Uttar Pradesh accounted for the maximum number of economic offences in 2018.



- ❖ It was followed by Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Telangana and Bihar in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th rank respectively.
- ❖ Kidnapping and Abduction accounting for 13.8% and 10.2% respectively.
- ❖ Kidnapping and abduction in children in 2018 were 44.2% and cases under the POCSO Act-2012 were 34.7% that also included child rape.
- ❖ In the year 2017, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh accounted for the highest share of reported economic offences.

IP based Video Surveillance System

- ❖ Face recognition technology developed using Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been installed in Bengaluru, Manmad and Bhusawal railway stations as trial basis.
- ❖ The objective of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) is to link the facial recognition system with existing databases and identify the criminals.
- ❖ Indian Railways is also in the process of installing Internet Protocol (IP) based Video Surveillance System (VSS) at railway stations.

Revised guidelines for mutual legal assistance treaties

- ❖ The Home Ministry has issued revised guidelines to expedite the delivery of mutual legal assistance and justice in criminal matters with other countries under the government's policy of zero tolerance for crime at all.
- ❖ In this regard, India has signed Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) with 42 countries in November 2019 for cooperation in criminal matters.
- ❖ The MHA is also designated 'Central Authority of India' for it.

Madhavpur Mela festival

- ❖ The annual festival Madhavpur Mela of Gujarat will be held at Madhavpur Ghed in Porbandar district of Gujarat on 2nd April 2020.
- ❖ The seven days festival celebrates the immortal journey of Lord Krishna and Rukmini from Arunachal Pradesh to Gujarat.
- ❖ The eight North-Eastern states will participate in this festival.
- ❖ This festival shares its connection to the Mishmi Tribe, an ancestry to the legendary King Bhishmak, of Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ This will mark the cultural integration of Gujarat with the North-East under the Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat.



Saksham

- ❖ The Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) operating under Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas launched fuel conservation campaign.
- ❖ PCRA is a Government think tank that proposes strategies and policies on petroleum conservation and environment protection.
- ❖ This is to reduce the country's dependence on oil.

Civil Aviation Meet

- ❖ The Industrial meet of the Asia's largest Civil Aviation was held in Bengaluru.
- ❖ The Civil Aviation event is to be held at Begumpet airport, Hyderabad in March 2020.
- ❖ The theme of the event will be: Flying for All
- ❖ India is the third largest domestic civil aviation market in the world.
- ❖ Also, it is the second fastest aviation industry in the world.
- ❖ Currently, India ranks 9 in terms of the civil aviation market.

National TB Control Programme

- ❖ The Government of India renamed its National TB Control Programme to National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme.
- ❖ The name change is in line with the goal of India in eliminating the disease by 2025.
- ❖ This is five years ahead of the goal of United Nations Sustainable Development target.
- ❖ Also, the WHO (World Health Organization) recently endorsed on technology developed by Indian scientists to detect the disease called TrueNat MTB in terms of accuracy.
- ❖ The TrueNat test a new molecular test that can diagnose Tuberculosis in one hour.
- ❖ The test uses polymerase chain reaction to detect bacteria.

Census 2021

- ❖ The Census 2021 is to ask 31 questions to the citizens.
- ❖ The questions to be asked are decided by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ❖ The Census 2021 is to be conducted through mobile phone application.



- ❖ For the first time of Indian history, the following are to be included
 - The information about households run by transgender is to be collected.
 - Under the question of sex of household head, male, female and transgender is to be collected.
 - The 2011 census clubbed the employment of transgender, their caste and literacy under “Males” category.
 - Inquiry about main cereal consumed.
 - Earlier it was announced that the census for the first time will collect data on OBC.
 - However, this has not been included.
 - Rather there is provision of SC/ST in the census.

Winged Raider

- ❖ The Indian Army recently conducted the largest air borne exercise called the Winged Raider.
- ❖ The exercise was conducted in the north-eastern theatre.
- ❖ Similar exercise called Him Vijay was conducted in Arunachal Pradesh in October 2019.
- ❖ It was a mountain combat exercise.

Food Processing Summit

- ❖ The Department of Industries and Commerce, functioning under Ministry of Food Processing Industries organized food processing summit in Ladakh.
- ❖ The other stakeholders of the summit include Invest India and National Investment Promotion and Facilitation agency.

Globalizing Indian Thought

- ❖ The International Conclave on “Globalizing Indian Thought” was held in IIM, Kozhikode.
- ❖ The conclave aimed at revealing India’s thoughts in becoming one of top three economies of the world.
- ❖ According to India, the three thoughts Satyam (Truth), Nithyam (Sustainability) and Purnam (Wholeness) influence the world greatly.



Sahyog-Kaijin

- ❖ India and Japan took part in a joint exercise called “Sahyog-Kaijin”.
- ❖ The exercise was held between the coastal guards of the countries at Chennai Port.
- ❖ Indian and Japan hold other military exercises as well.
- ❖ The “Shinyuu Maitri” is the joint Air Force Exercise that was held in October 2019 for the first time.
- ❖ The India-Japan Maritime Exercise called JIMEX was conducted in 2013 for the first time.
- ❖ Dharma Guardian is the military exercise that is conducted between the armies of the countries.

ELECRAMA 2020

- ❖ The ELECRAMA 2020 was held in Noida.
- ❖ The event showcases innovations and achievements of Indian Electrical Industry.
- ❖ The “ELECRAMA” platform is organized by Indian Electrical and Electronics Manufacturers’ Association (IEEMA).
- ❖ It is supported by other ministries such as ministry of renewable energy, power, MSME (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises).

About power industry

- ❖ India is the third largest producer and consumer of electricity.
- ❖ The National Grid of the country has the capacity of 368.79 GW as of December 2019.



- ❖ Of this 41.16% is used for industrial purposes, 24.76% is used for residential purposes, 17.69% is used for agricultural purposes and commercial sector consumes 8.24% of the total electrical energy generated in the country.
- ❖ Of the 368.79 GW, the private sector production is 46%.

National Investigation Act, 2008

- ❖ The Chhattisgarh government moved the Supreme Court against the National Investigation Act, 2008 stating it is violative of the Constitution.
- ❖ This is the second instance in recent times when a state has sought to challenge a central legislation under Article 131 of the Constitution.
- ❖ Recently, the Kerala government moved the Supreme Court against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

About NIA Act

- ❖ The law governs the functioning of India's premier counter-terror agency.
- ❖ It was introduced by then home minister P.Chidambaram in the wake of the 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attacks.
- ❖ It gives the NIA powers to take suo motu cognisance of terror activities in any part of India and register a case, to enter any state without permission from the state government, and to investigate and arrest people.
- ❖ 'Police' is an entry in the State List of the Constitution's 7th Schedule.
- ❖ The 2019 NIA Amendment Act expanded the type of offences that the investigative body could investigate and prosecute.
- ❖ The agency can now investigate offences related to human trafficking, counterfeit currency, manufacture or sale of prohibited arms, cyber-terrorism, and offences under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.
- ❖ The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment (UAPA), also passed in 2019, allows an NIA officer to conduct raids, and seize properties that are suspected to be linked to terrorist activities without taking prior permission of the Director General of Police of a state.
- ❖ The investigating officer only requires sanction from the Director General of NIA.

Supreme Court on Private Property

- ❖ The Supreme Court held that the citizen's right to own private property is a human right.
- ❖ The state cannot take possession of it without following due procedure and authority of law.



- ❖ In a welfare state, right to property is a human right.
- ❖ Grabbing private land and then claiming it as its own makes the state an encroacher.
- ❖ Property ceased to be a fundamental right with the 44th Constitution Amendment in 1978 inserting Article 300A.
- ❖ Nevertheless, Article 300A required the state to follow due procedure and authority of law to deprive a person of his or her private property.
- ❖ The right to property is now considered to be not only a constitutional or statutory right, but also a human right.
- ❖ A Bench of Justices Indu Malhotra and Ajay Rastogi declared this verdict.

Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD)

- ❖ The database has been launched by the government.
- ❖ The system will be first piloted in the six States with highest fatalities from road crashes — Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The IRAD mobile application will enable police personnel to enter details about a road accident, along with photos and videos, following which a unique ID will be created for the incident.
- ❖ It will help in analysing causes of road crashes and in devising safety interventions to reduce such accidents in the country.
- ❖ India sees the largest number of road fatalities in the world.

About

- ❖ It has been developed by the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M).
- ❖ It will be implemented by the National Informatics Centre.
- ❖ The project cost is being supported by the World Bank.

Commissionerate system

- ❖ Previously, only four cities had the Commissionerate system of policing: Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai.
- ❖ Now, it will be implemented in Lucknow and Noida of Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ In the Commissionerate system, the Commissioner of Police (CP) is the head of a unified police command structure, is responsible for the force in the city, and is accountable to the state government.



- ❖ The system gives more responsibilities, including magisterial powers, to IPS officers of Inspector General of Police (IG) rank posted as commissioners.

Mechanism

- ❖ Policing is based on the Police Act of 1861.
- ❖ Under the colonial system, the overall in-charge of a district or region was the district collector; the SP reported to him.
- ❖ But under the Commissionerate system, the commissioner does not report to the District Magistrate.
- ❖ Under the 7th Schedule of the Constitution, 'Police' is under the State list, meaning individual states typically legislate and exercise control over this subject.
- ❖ In the arrangement in force at the district level, a 'dual system' of control exists, in which the Superintendent of Police (SP) has to work with the District Magistrate (DM) for supervising police administration.
- ❖ At the metropolitan level, many states have replaced the dual system with the Commissionerate system, as it is supposed to allow for faster decision-making to solve complex urban-centric issues.

Where

- ❖ Almost all states barring Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, UT of J&K, and some North eastern states have a Commissionerate system.
- ❖ The British brought the system first in Kolkata and followed it in Mumbai and Chennai presidencies.
- ❖ Delhi turned into a Commissionerate during the Morarji Desai regime.

Ranking on water departments

- ❖ The Ministry of Jal Shakti recently launched rankings of Central and state governmental water departments based on their efficiency targets.
- ❖ It also aims to create Water Resource Information System (WRIS) in all states.
- ❖ According to the report, Gujarat topped the ranking and Delhi was pushed to the last.
- ❖ Among the seven central government departments, Survey of India topped the list followed by National Institute of Hydrology and Central Water Commission.
- ❖ The Central Pollution Control Board received the lowest rank.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu was the best performer among all the states.
- ❖ The state was at 33rd position in 2018 and has been pushed to 13th rank this time.



Kerala and CAA

- ❖ The Kerala government invoked Article 131 to file a petition against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in the Supreme Court.
- ❖ Kerala has become the first state to move the apex court challenging CAA stating that it violates Article 14, Article 21 and Article 25 of the Indian constitution.
- ❖ Article 131, known as original jurisdiction, vests the Supreme Court with original jurisdiction over any dispute arising between the states or between the centre and state.
- ❖ The article gives the Supreme Court the power to take up such cases straight instead of going through a lower court or reviewing a lower court's judgement.
- ❖ Several petitions have been filed against the CAA act in the Supreme Court.
- ❖ The apex court may hear the petitions separately or club them together but Kerala Government's petition cannot be clubbed with those petitions.

Punjab and CAA

- ❖ After Kerala, Punjab assembly passes resolution against CAA or Citizenship Amendment Act.
- ❖ The move is significant as it highlights the opposition's attempt to use state legislatures and the judiciary to challenge the controversial law.

Pulse Polio Program 2020

- ❖ The Pulse Polio Programme 2020 was launched by the President Ram Nath Kovind by administering Polio drops to children below the age of five.
- ❖ India has eradicated polio completely in 2012.
- ❖ In 2015, India was declared polio free.
- ❖ However, because of the surge of new polio cases in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Government has decided to hold one more NID (National Immunization Day) in 2020.
- ❖ India's last reported polio case was from Howrah, West Bengal in the year 2011.
- ❖ India completed a full 5 years as a "polio-free nation" on January 13, 2016.
- ❖ Vellore, (Tamil Nadu) became the first Indian town to become 100% polio-free through the pulse strategy, and the rest of India adopted this strategy in 1995.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu has been free from polio for the last 16 years.

What are IPV and OPV?

- ❖ There are two types of vaccines that are being administered in the country.
- ❖ It includes IPV (Inactivated Polio Vaccine) and OPV (Oral Polio Vaccine).
- ❖ IPV is a wild-type poliovirus strain that is administered in combination of other vaccines.
- ❖ It includes Diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, haemophilus, hepatitis B and influenza.
- ❖ IPV is more effective than OPV.
- ❖ It increases intestinal immunity in children who have been already immunized with OPV.
- ❖ To prevent the virus from coming to India, the government has since March 2014 made the Oral Polio Vaccination (OPV) mandatory for those travelling between India and polio-affected countries, such as Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Syria and Cameroon.

POLNET 2.0 platform

- ❖ The Union Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah launched the new and enhanced platform 'POLNET 2.0' during the national conference of 'Heads of public protection and Disaster relief organizations' in New Delhi.
- ❖ The Directorate of Coordination Police Wireless (DCPW) manages and operates POLNET or the police network services in the country, which was in operation in the country since 2006.
- ❖ It will be beneficial during disasters or law and order problems and will be providing video conferencing facilities and internet facility to the forces even through satellite communication in remote areas.



Tech Conclave 2020

- ❖ The National Informatics Centre (NIC) held technology Conclave in New Delhi.
- ❖ The Technology Conclave will discuss application of Information and Communication Technology.
- ❖ The conclave is to be held under the theme: Technologies for NextGen Governance.
- ❖ Recently, NIC launched a Centre for Block Chain Technology in Bengaluru.

Republic Day Parade 2020

- ❖ The Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) operating under Ministry of Commerce and Industry is to showcase tableau on Start Up India at the Republic Day Parade to be held at Rajpath, New Delhi.
- ❖ The tableau is to be held under the theme: Reach for the sky.



- ❖ This is the first time Start Up India is participating at the Parade.
- ❖ The Indian Navy is to showcase its tableau at the Republic Day parade under the theme: Indian Navy-Silent, Strong and Swift.
- ❖ In 2020 republic day parade, Tania Shergil becomes the first woman officer to lead all-men contingent.

32nd PRAGATI meet

- ❖ Under the Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI), the Prime Minister reviewed projects that are being implemented by the union government and their progress.
- ❖ PRAGATI was launched by PM in March 2015.
- ❖ It is an interactive platform to address grievances of common people.

Tribal Youth Exchange Programme

- ❖ Tribal Youth Exchange Programme is organized by the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- ❖ The programme aims at providing an opportunity to tribal youth to visit different places to understand the culture, language, lifestyles, educational avenues, development activities and educational opportunities.

Mahatma Gandhi Convention Centre

- ❖ India recently opens First Mahatma Gandhi Convention Centre in Niamey, the capital of Niger, a West African Nation.
- ❖ It is the first centre to be established in Africa by India to honour the memory of Mahatma Gandhi whose 150th birth anniversary was observed in 2019.



Integrated Check Post

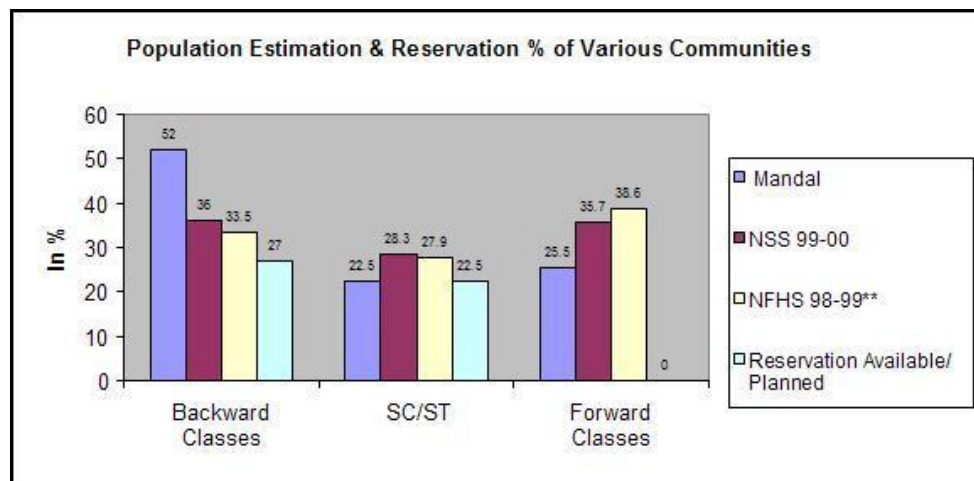
- ❖ Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nepalese PM Oli inaugurated an integrated check post (ICP) at Jogbani-Biratnagar in Bihar.



- ❖ This is the second check post that is being built at the border with Indian Assistance.
- ❖ The aim of the new integrated check post is to facilitate trade and movement of people across the border.
- ❖ The first integrated check post of the countries was built at Raxaul-Birgunj in 2018 in Bihar.

Extension of Rohini Commission

- ❖ The Commission of Sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) under the Retired Justice G. Rohini was constituted under article 340 of the Constitution with the approval of President on 2nd October, 2017.
- ❖ It was appointed to examine the issue of Sub-categorization within other Backward Classes in the Central List.
- ❖ It works under the Union of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- ❖ The Commission has sought extension of its term by six, that is upto 31st July 2020.



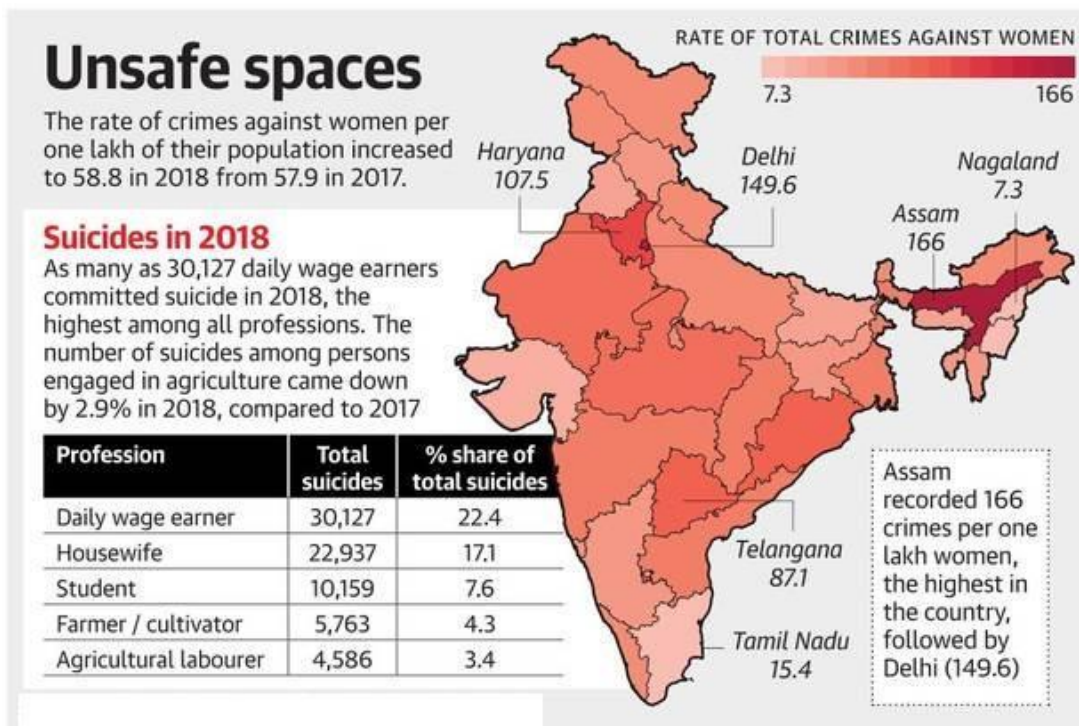
- ❖ The Commission is likely to make recommendations for benefit of marginalized communities in the Central List of OBCs.
- ❖ Sub categorization of the OBCs will ensure that the more backward among the OBC communities can also access the benefits of reservation for educational institutions and government jobs.
- ❖ So, the Union government is now seeking to ensure a more equitable distribution of reservation benefits by further differentiating caste groups coming under backward classes on the basis of their levels of social and economic backwardness.
- ❖ At present, there is no sub-categorisation and 27% reservation is a monolithic entity.

National Media Award

- ❖ N. Ram, chairman of The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited, has been selected as the outstanding media person in a national award.
- ❖ It is instituted by Kerala Media Academy of the Government of Kerala.
- ❖ The award instituted for fearless and brilliant journalistic work at a national level.

NCRB Data – Crime in India 2018

- ❖ Crime in India has increased by 1.3% in 2018 compared to 2017 with the registration of over 50 lakh cognisable crimes.
- ❖ But crime rate per lakh population was down to 383.5 in 2018 from 388.6 in 2017.
- ❖ In short, Crime rate has declined in India since 2016 but Actual number of crimes and crime against women up.
- ❖ A cognizable offence or case is defined as the one which an officer in-charge of a police station may investigate without the order of a magistrate and effect arrest without warrant.
- ❖ The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, is responsible for collecting and analysing crime data as defined by the Indian Penal Code and special and local laws in the country.





Suicides

- ❖ Overall, a total of 1,34,516 suicides were reported in the country in 2018, showing an increase of 3.6 per cent in comparison to 2017.
- ❖ The daily wage workers, those earning less than Rs 1 lakh per annum but educated up to the secondary level have the highest share in number of suicides in India in 2018.
- ❖ Majority of suicides were reported in Maharashtra (17,972) followed by Tamil Nadu (13,896), West Bengal (13,255), Madhya Pradesh (11,775) and Karnataka (11,561).
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state with 16.9 per cent share of the country's population, has reported comparatively lower percentage share of suicidal deaths, accounting for only 3.6 per cent of the total suicides in the country in 2018.
- ❖ Delhi, which is the most-populous UT, has reported the highest number of suicides (2,526) among UTs, followed by Puducherry (500).

Unemployment Suicides

- ❖ According to the NCRB data on accidental deaths and suicides, a total of 12,936 unemployed persons committed suicide in 2018.
- ❖ It accounts for 9.6 per cent of the total suicides i.e., 1,34,516 suicides.
- ❖ They were aged below 18 years to above 60 years.
- ❖ The number has surpassed the number of farmers who committed suicide in the same year.
- ❖ The NRCB data has revealed that one unemployed person committed suicide every hour during 2018.
- ❖ The highest number of suicides - 12.3 per cent - committed by unemployed persons were in Kerala, 12.2 per cent in Tamil Nadu, 9.7 per cent in Maharashtra, 8.5 per cent in Karnataka and 7 per cent in Uttar Pradesh.

Farm Suicides

- ❖ Suicides of persons engaged in the farming sector have come down for the third consecutive year.
- ❖ 5,763 farmers/cultivators and 4,586 agricultural labourers committed suicide in 2018.
- ❖ The suicide rate in the deeply stressed agrarian sector accounted for 7.7% of the total 134,516 suicides.
- ❖ Maharashtra accounted for the highest share in farm-related suicides at 34.7%, followed by Karnataka at 23.2%, Telangana 8.8%, Andhra Pradesh 6.4% and Madhya Pradesh at 6.3%.



- ❖ Maharashtra and Karnataka alone account for more than half of total suicides in the farming sector in the country.
- ❖ West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, Goa and Union territories, including Delhi, reported zero suicides by farmers/cultivators and agricultural labourers.

Speaker's role

- ❖ Justice Nariman wrote this judgment along with Justices Aniruddha Bose and V. Ramasubramanian.
- ❖ This judgment came on an appeal filed by the Congress legislator Keisham Meghchandra Singh against the Manipur Assembly Speaker for the disqualification of Minister T. Shyamkumar.
- ❖ Shyamkumar, who after contesting in the Congress ticket, switched sides to favour the BJP Government led by N Biren Singh.
- ❖ The court asked the State Assembly Speaker to decide the disqualification petition in four weeks.

Recommendations

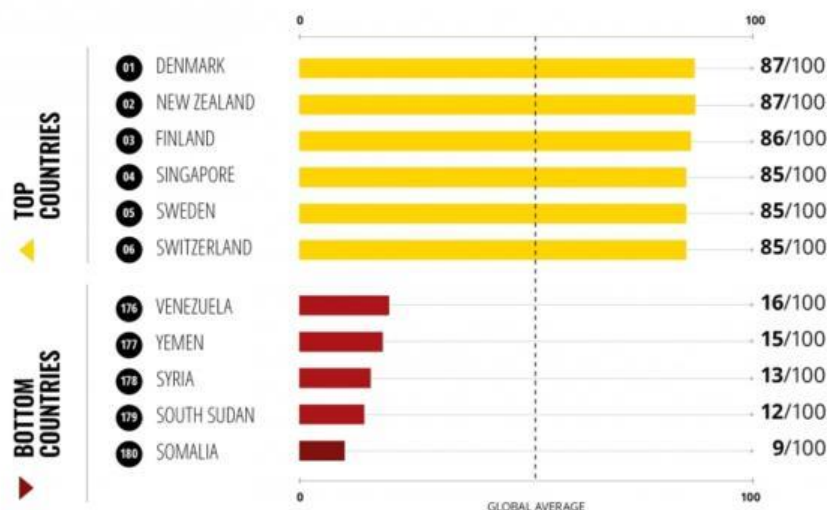
- ❖ The Supreme Court has made some decisions on the position of Speaker as the adjudicating authority under the Anti-Defection Law (ADL).
- ❖ The Supreme Court asked the Parliament to amend the Constitution to strip Legislative Assembly Speakers of their exclusive power to decide whether legislators should be disqualified or not under the anti-defection law.
- ❖ Disqualification petitions under the Tenth Schedule should be adjudicated by a mechanism outside Parliament or the Legislative Assemblies.
- ❖ An independent tribunal ought to be appointed instead to determine the fate of an MP or an MLA who has switched sides for money and power, it said.
- ❖ The court suggested a permanent tribunal headed by a retired Supreme Court judge or a former High Court Chief Justice.
- ❖ It questioned why a Speaker, who is a member of a particular political party and an insider in the House, should be the “sole and final arbiter” in the disqualification of a political defector.
- ❖ The court said the Speakers should decide Tenth Schedule disqualifications within a “reasonable period”.
- ❖ The Supreme Court set three months as the outer limit for the Speaker to conclude disqualification proceedings against defectors.

Backdrop

- ❖ In a landmark judgment in Kihoto Hollohan (1992) the Supreme Court upheld the validity of the ADL.
- ❖ This verdict had also made the Speaker's order subject to judicial review on limited grounds.
- ❖ In that, the SC also made it clear that the court's jurisdiction would not come into play unless the Speaker passes an order.
- ❖ It left no room for intervention prior to adjudication.
- ❖ In 2016, there was another case named as S.A. Sampath Kumar vs. Kale Yadaiah case.

0 Corruption Perception Index 2019

- ❖ It has been prepared and released by Transparency International since 1995.
- ❖ It is a composite index that draws from 12 surveys to rank nations around the globe.
- ❖ It ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption.
- ❖ It uses a scale of zero to 100, where zero is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.
- ❖ With a score of 41, India is at the 80th spot from 78th in 2018.
- ❖ The rank is also shared by China, Benin, Ghana and Morocco.
- ❖ Denmark and New Zealand have cornered the top spot, followed by Finland, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland in the top ten.





Enemy properties

- ❖ A Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Union Home Minister will monitor the disposal of over 9,400 enemy properties, which the government estimates are worth about Rs 1 lakh crore.
- ❖ Properties that were left behind by the people who took citizenship of Pakistan and China are known as Enemy Properties.
 - There are 9,280 such properties left behind by Pakistani nationals and 126 by Chinese nationals.
- ❖ Under the Defence of India Rules framed under The Defence of India Act, 1962, the Government of India took over the properties and companies of those who took Pakistani nationality.
- ❖ The Enemy Property Act, enacted in 1968, provided for the continuous vesting of enemy property in the Custodian of Enemy Property for India.
- ❖ Some movable properties too, are categorised as enemy properties.
- ❖ The 2017 amended Act expanded the definition of the term “enemy subject”, and “enemy firm” to include
 - the legal heir and successor of an enemy, whether a citizen of India or a citizen of a country which is not an enemy;
 - and the succeeding firm of an enemy firm, irrespective of the nationality of its members or partners.

3rd Apex Conference of Smart City

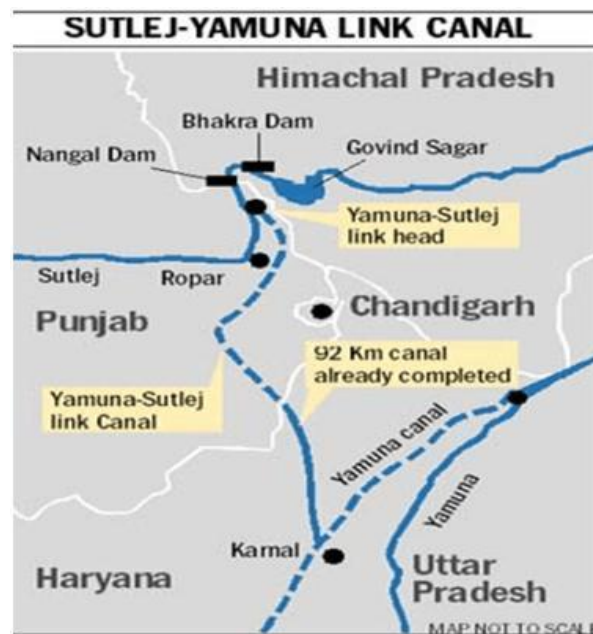
- ❖ The 3rd Apex Conference of the Smart Cities was organized on January, 2020 at Andhra University Convention Center, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs organized an Apex Conference on Smart Cities Project.
- ❖ Amaravati ranked first among all 100 smart cities in spending the funds released by the Union government under the Smart Cities Mission.
- ❖ Seven different awards have been conferred upon smart cities under seven themes.
- ❖ These cities include
 - Visakhapatnam and Ahmedabad from among round-1 cities,
 - Vadodara, Ranchi and Kanpur from among round-2 cities,
 - Sagar, Amaravati and Rajkot from among round-3 cities and
 - Erode from among round-4 cities.
- ❖ 1st Apex Conference, Bhopal, 2018.

- ❖ 2nd Apex Conference, New Delhi, 2019.
- ❖ 3rd Apex Conference, Visakhapatnam, 2020.



Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal

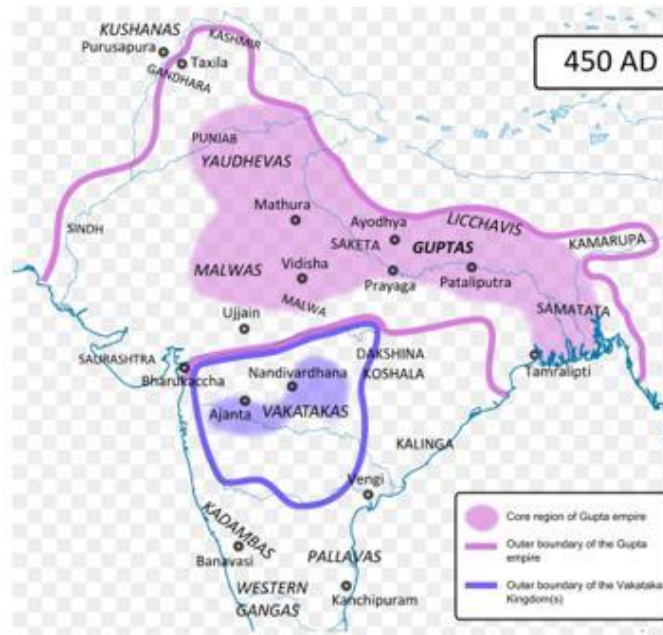
- ❖ Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal (SYL Canal) is a 214 km water way proposed to connect the Sutlej River in Punjab to Yamuna canal in Haryana.



- ❖ The recent Supreme Court order asked Central government to sort out SYL issue between Punjab and Haryana amicably.
- ❖ This order has brought to centre stage the contentious issue of sharing of waters between the two states by central government.
- ❖ The creation of Haryana from the old (undivided) Punjab in 1966 threw up the problem of giving Haryana its share of river waters.
- ❖ Punjab was opposed to sharing waters of the Ravi and Beas with Haryana and arguing that it had no water to spare.

Nagardhan Excavations

- ❖ Recently, archaeological excavations were carried out at Nagardhan village in Nagpur, Maharashtra.
- ❖ The excavations have provided evidence on the life, religious affiliations and trade practices of the Vakataka dynasty.



- ❖ Nagardhan served as a capital of the Vakataka kingdom.
- ❖ Vakataka Dynasty originated in the Central Deccan in the mid-3rd century CE.
- ❖ Its empire is believed to have extended
 - from Malwa and Gujarat in the north to the Tungabhadra in the south and
 - from the Arabian Sea in the west to the Bay of Bengal in the east.

Findings

- ❖ It is the first-time clay sealings have been excavated from Nagardhan.
- ❖ The copper plate issued by Queen Prabhavatigupta starts with a genealogy of the Guptas, mentioning the Queen's grandfather Samudragupta and her father Chandragupta II.

- ❖ Vakatakas traded with Iran and beyond, through the Mediterranean Sea and the sealings are believed to be used as official royal permission issued from the capital.

Bodo agreement with central and state

- ❖ Government of India signed the historic agreement with the nine factions of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB).
- ❖ According to the agreement, the Bodoland Territorial Area District will hold special rights for the locals.
- ❖ However, the outsiders will have to obtain “permit” to work in the territory.
- ❖ The agreement was signed in the presence of Home Minister Amit Shah and Assam Chief Minister Sarbanand Sonowal and the leaders of the NDFB.
- ❖ This agreement led to the formation of Bodoland Territorial Council under the sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

About Bodos

- ❖ Bodos are the single largest tribal community in Assam, making up over 5-6 per cent of the state’s population.
- ❖ The BTC now administrates 4 districts in Assam namely Chirang, Kokrajhar, Baksa and Udalguri.
- ❖ These areas are called the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts.



Global Potato Conclave

- ❖ The Global Potato Conclave is to be held between January 28 and January 31, 2020 at Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- ❖ The Conclave is being organized by Indian Potato Association (IPA) in collaboration with

- Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi,
- ICAR-Central Potato Research Institute, Shimla and
- International Potato Center (CIP), Lima, Peru.
- ❖ With a productivity of more than 30t/ha, Gujarat is holding the No. 1 position in India for last one decade.
- ❖ After rice and wheat, potato is the third most important food crop in the world.



India's first underwater Metro – Kolkata

- ❖ The first underwater Metro is being constructed in Hooghly river.
- ❖ The project is awaiting clearance of 2.8 million USD from the Indian Railways.
- ❖ It is expected that the metro project will be completed by March 2022.
- ❖ The Hooghly Metro is one of the oldest Metro in the country.
- ❖ It was started in 1984.
- ❖ The new under water tunnel will carry 20% of city's population and will cross the river in less than a minute.

NISHTHA programme

- ❖ NISHTHA is the world's largest teachers' training programme of its kind in the world.
- ❖ NISHTHA – National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement.
- ❖ It has been launched to improve Learning Outcomes at the Elementary level.
- ❖ The basic objective of this massive training programme is to motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students.
- ❖ The initiative is first of its kind wherein standardized training modules are developed at national level for all States and UTs.

Operation Vanilla

- ❖ Indian navy will perform Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations in Madagascar under 'Operation Vanilla'.
- ❖ The Operation has been launched to assist the population of Madagascar that were affected by Cyclone Diane.
- ❖ The Indian Navy ship Airavat has been deployed in the relief mission.



Composite Regional Centre launched in Port Blair

- ❖ The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched the Composite Regional Centre (CRC) in Port Blair.
- ❖ The Composite Regional Centres in India are located in Kozhikode, Bhopal, Lucknow, Patna, Guwahati, Srinagar, Ahmedabad, Mandi and Suraghi (Chhattisgarh).
- ❖ The CRCs are inaugurated to create infrastructure and resources for persons with disabilities such as persons with low-vision, mental retardation, Autism Spectrum Disorder etc.
- ❖ These centres focus at locals rather than urban areas.
- ❖ The centres aim at training of rehabilitation professionals and capacity building at centre, district and state levels.



MGNREGA scheme faces funds shortage

- ❖ The MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Employment Act) scheme released its financial statement recently.
- ❖ According to the statement, almost 96% of the money has already been spent.
- ❖ According to the financial statement of the scheme, 15 states are in red meaning, there is fund depletion or fund unavailability.

Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020

- ❖ Union Cabinet approved Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020.
- ❖ The bill aims to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy act, 1971.
- ❖ According to the proposal, termination of pregnancy is to be extended to 24 weeks. It was 20 weeks earlier.
- ❖ The extension is only for special category of women. It includes rape victims, survivors of rape and other vulnerable women like differently-abled women.
- ❖ The amendments were proposed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- ❖ In India the Shah Committee was appointed to review the socio-cultural and medical aspects of abortion.
- ❖ This committee recommended legalization of abortion for the first time.

INTERNATIONAL

Avangard hypersonic missile system

- ❖ Russia's military deployed a new intercontinental weapon, the Avangard hypersonic missile system.





- ❖ It can fly 27 times the speed of sound (as fast as Mach 20).
- ❖ This will be the Russian military's first Avangard hypersonic intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).
- ❖ This system is previously referred to as Project 4202.

UNICEF report on Children

- ❖ UNICEF released its annual report on Children.
- ❖ According to the report, the number of attacks on children since 2010 has increased three-fold.
- ❖ The agency has hence named the decade as "Deadly Decade".
- ❖ The report also stated that the number of countries experiencing violence has increased since 1989.
- ❖ The violations were predominantly in the conflict zones which includes northern Syria, Ukraine and Democratic Republic of Congo.
- ❖ The year 1989 has been specified as the Convention on Rights of Child was passed in 1989.

Netherlands scrapping its nickname

- ❖ The Netherlands has officially announced to drop the nickname 'Holland' from January 2020.
- ❖ Even the Netherlands' Board of Tourism and Conventions is also scrapping its symbol featuring a tulip, the national flower, and the word "Holland" and replacing it with a new logo that has an orange tulip and the initials "NL."
- ❖ 'Holland' refers only to the following two of the 12 provinces in the Netherlands.
 - North-Holland, where Amsterdam is located, and
 - South Holland consisting of Rotterdam and The Hague.
- ❖ But the name 'Holland' often used to describe the whole nation.

Lists of Civilian prisoners and fishermen

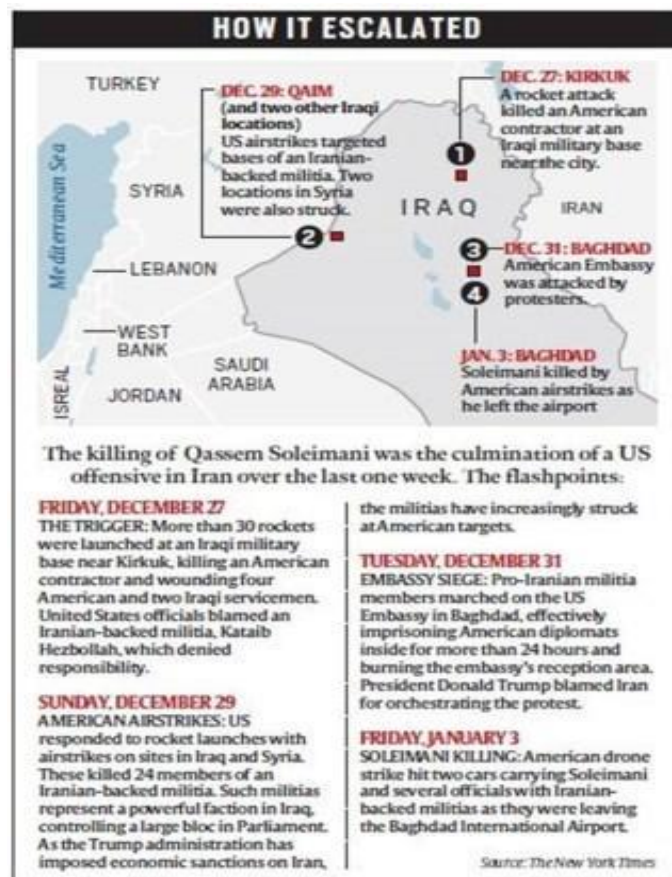
- ❖ On January 1, 2020, India and Pakistan exchanged list of prisoners and fishermen.
- ❖ The countries exchange the information every year on 1st January and 1st July.
- ❖ They also exchanged nuclear installations alongside on the same day.
- ❖ In 2008, India and Pakistan signed an agreement to allow consular access to prisoners in each country.

UNESCO creative Cities Network (UCCN)

- ❖ The government of Hanoi recently held a ceremony to formally announce that the Vietnamese capital city is joining the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).
- ❖ UCCN was created in 2004.
- ❖ The Network covers seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Arts, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music
- ❖ There are five Indian cities in UCCN.
 - Jaipur - Crafts and Folk Arts (2015).
 - Varanasi - Music (2015).
 - Chennai - Music (2017).
 - Mumbai – Film (2019).
 - Hyderabad – Gastronomy (2019).

USA vs Iran

- ❖ The US army killed Iran's most powerful military commander General Qasem Soleimani.





- ❖ He was killed at Baghdad airport of Iraq.
- ❖ He was the head of Quds Force.
- ❖ Quds is the Arabic word for Jerusalem.
- ❖ It is the overseas operations wing of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and a US-designated Foreign Terrorist Organisation.
- ❖ Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini set up the IRGC in 1979 after the Iranian Revolution ended to protect the Islamic order of the new Iranian government.

Iran Nuclear Deal

- ❖ Iran had completely withdrawn from JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) nuclear deal.
- ❖ The announcement came after the US troops killed General Qassem Soleimani.
- ❖ The Iran nuclear deal also called as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed between Iran and the P5 plus Germany and the EU in 2015.
- ❖ P5 is the five permanent members of the UNSC (US, China, France, Russia, and UK).
- ❖ The deal restricts Iran's nuclear programme, in return for lifting most economic sanctions against it.

Implications for India:

- ❖ Iran is presently India's third biggest supplier (after Iraq and Saudi Arabia) of oil, and any increase in prices will hit both inflation levels as well as the Indian rupee.
- ❖ It would impact the development of Chahbahar port.

Global meet on marine ecosystems

- ❖ The third international conference on marine ecosystems – challenges and opportunities (MECOS-3) will be held in Kochi, Kerala from January 2020.
- ❖ The Conference is organized by the Marine Biological Association of India.
- ❖ The Marine Biological Association of India was established in the year 1958.
- ❖ It serves the cause of promotion of research on marine sciences in the Asia-Pacific region.

Polar Science Co-operation

- ❖ Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), India and Ministry of Education and Research, Sweden has signed an agreement on cooperation in polar science.



- ❖ This MoU is their first maritime cooperation agreement.
- ❖ The agreement includes cooperation between the countries in both Arctic and Antarctic regions on environmental protection and hence the name Polar Science.
- ❖ Sweden as one of the eight "Arctic States" is one of the Member State in the Arctic Council whereas India has the Observer Status in the Arctic Council.
- ❖ India likewise, has sustained scientific research programs in both the Polar Regions as well as in the oceanic realm.

Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement

- ❖ Union cabinet has approved the ratification of Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement between India and France.
- ❖ The Agreement enhances people-to-people contacts, fostering mobility of students, academics, researchers and skilled professionals.
- ❖ It aims to strengthen cooperation on issues related to irregular migration and human trafficking between the two sides.

India – Mongolia outer space cooperation agreement

- ❖ The Union Cabinet approves agreement between India and Mongolia on Cooperation in the Exploration and Uses of Outer Space for Peaceful and Civilian Purposes.
- ❖ The agreement enables the countries to pursue research in planetary exploration, space system and application of space technology.
- ❖ The plan is to set up a Joint Working Group by drawing members from ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation), DOS (Department of Space), Communications and Information Technology Authority (CITA) of Mongolia.

Sea Guardians 2020 – Exercise

- ❖ China and Pakistan are holding nine-day naval exercise in the northern Arabian Sea.
- ❖ The naval exercise has been named "Sea Guardians".
- ❖ It aims to enhance all-weather strategic partnership between China and Pakistan.



Nepal's Seke Language

- ❖ Near-extinct Nepalese language 'Seke' has just 700 speakers around the world.
- ❖ Seke means golden language.
- ❖ It is one of the over 100 indigenous languages of Nepal.
- ❖ The Seke language has been retreating due to Nepali which is Nepal's official language.
- ❖ Seke considered to be a definitely endangered language under UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger.
- ❖ United Nations (UN) observed that 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

Degree of endangerment		Intergenerational Language Transmission
	safe	language is spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted >> not included in the Atlas
📍	vulnerable	most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)
💡	definitely endangered	children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home
🔦	severely endangered	language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves
📍	critically endangered	the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently
📍	extinct	there are no speakers left >> included in the Atlas if presumably extinct since the 1950s

Hormuz Peace Initiative

- ❖ India recently attended the Hormuz Peace Initiative that was held in Tehran.
- ❖ The initiative aimed at stabilizing one of world's busiest shipping lanes the Strait of Hormuz amidst US-Iran tensions.

- ❖ It was attended by leading trade partners of Iran namely China, Oman, India and Afghanistan.
- ❖ Strait of Hormuz is the world's most crucial choking points.
- ❖ The Strait connects Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.
- ❖ Around two-thirds of India's oil imports and half of LNG imports come through the strait.



SCO's 8 Wonders

- ❖ The Statue of Unity that was inaugurated by PM Modi in October 2018 has been included in 8 wonders of SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization).



- ❖ The statue was a monumental tribute to Sardar Vallabhai Patel.



- ❖ The Statue was inaugurated on the 143rd birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhai Patel.
- ❖ It is the world's tallest statue.

8 Wonders

- Statue of Unity in India
- Daming Palace in China
- Navruz Palace in Tajikistan
- Mughals Heritage in Pakistan
- Tamgaly Gorge in Kazakhstan
- Po-i-Kalan Complex in Uzbekistan
- The Golden Ring of Russia
- Lahore, the Mughals heritage in Pakistan.

Global Economic Prospect report

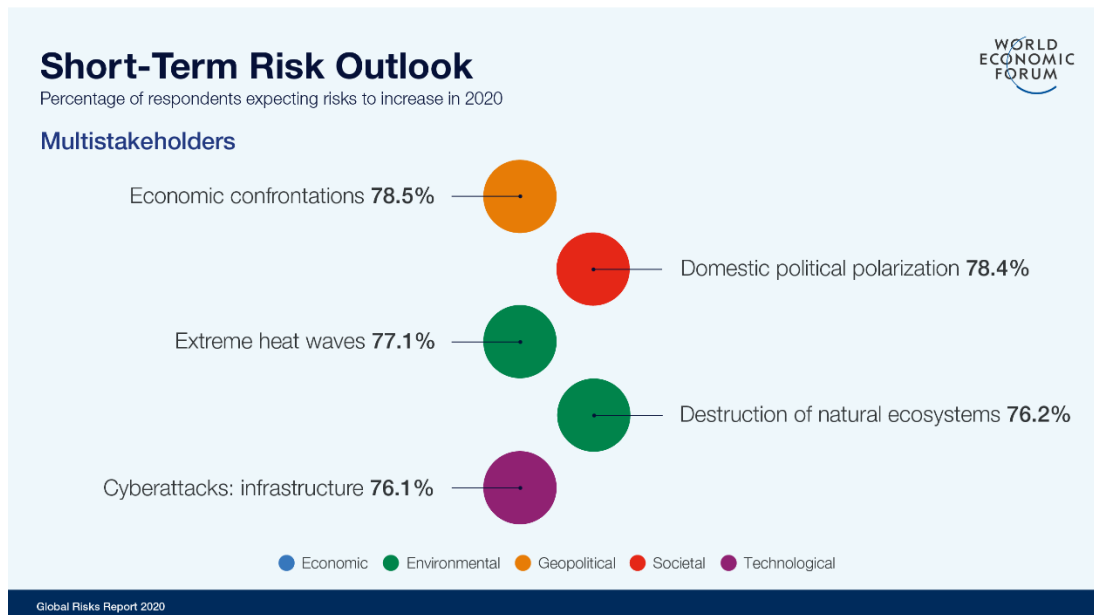
- ❖ The World Bank has released the Global Economic Prospects report 2020.
- ❖ According to its forecast, the world is expected to grow economically at the rate of 2.5%.
- ❖ The emerging markets in the developing economies are to witness acceleration in their growth according to the report but not all.
- ❖ Growth in South Asia is expected to rise by 5.5% in 2020.
- ❖ The report predicts India's growth rate at 5% and also see a growth rate of 5.5% in the subsequent year.
- ❖ The United States is expected to grow at 1.8% and European Union is projected to slip its growth by 1% in 2020.

Global Risks Report

- ❖ The World Economic Forum released its Global Risks Report.

Top 5 Global Risks

- ❖ The Forum reported that Climate-related risks had the greatest likelihood of severe impacts.
- ❖ The other threats include geopolitical turbulence.
- ❖ The retreat from multilateralism has threatened the ability of the world to deal the global risks.



- ❖ The current economic stagflation according to the report will increase.
- ❖ This might even lead to increased social issues, protests, increased populists' movements.
- ❖ Though the Digital Technology is in its peak of evolution, the unequal access of the technology across the globe will increase.
- ❖ The social demographic, environmental and technological pressure on health systems is growing.

Global Health Challenges for 2020

- ❖ The World Health Organization releases list of Global Health Challenges of the forth coming year
- ❖ The list included 13 potential threats. The foremost threat was Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) and climate crisis.
- ❖ Climate change has increased malnutrition and is fueling the spread of infectious diseases such as malaria.
- ❖ The other threats that have topped the list includes influenza epidemic and spread of infectious diseases such as HIV, malaria and tuberculosis.
- ❖ A new entrant to the list of top 13 potential threats is Lack of Access.
- ❖ Shortage of health care workers is also the major global concern.
- ❖ Above of all unhealthy food diets is also major threat. Lack of food, unhealthy diets and unsafe food are responsible for one-third of global disease burden.



Rohingya refugees

- ❖ The Bangladesh Government has planned to accommodate 100,000 Rohingya refugees in its Bhasan Char Island.
- ❖ The island, Bhasan Char that is regularly submerged in water during monsoon has been fortified with embankments and flood protection to relocate Rohingyas here.
- ❖ The Island is also known as Hatiya Upazila.
- ❖ Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh from Myanmar due to ethnic conflict.
- ❖ India has been deporting Rohingyas to Myanmar.

Women, Business and the Law 2020

- ❖ Women, Business and the Law 2020, the sixth edition in a series, has been released.
- ❖ Women, Business and the Law (WBL) is a World Bank Group project collecting unique data on the laws and regulations that restrict women's economic opportunities.
- ❖ The index analyzes laws and regulations affecting women's economic inclusion in 190 economies.
- ❖ It is composed by eight indicators structured around women's interactions with the law.
- ❖ The indicators are Mobility, Workplace, Pay, Marriage, Parenthood, Entrepreneurship, Assets, and Pension.
- ❖ No economy in 'East Asia and the Pacific', 'Europe and Central Asia', or 'Latin America and the Caribbean' were among top reformers.
- ❖ Only eight economies scored a perfect 100 —Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg, and Sweden.
- ❖ Those countries have ensured equal legal standing to men and women on all the eight indicators of the index.

Libya Peace Conference

- ❖ It was held recently at Berlin in Germany
- ❖ UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said that major powers are "fully committed" to a peaceful resolution in Libya



- ❖ Alongside German Chancellor Angela Merkel, attendees of conference included Russia's President Vladimir Putin, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, French President Emmanuel Macron and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson.
- ❖ Other countries invited were the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Algeria, China and the Republic of Congo.
- ❖ Leaders from the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union and the Arab League also attended
- ❖ The Libyan peace process is a series of meetings, agreements and actions that aim to resolve the Second Libyan Civil War.

Maritime Research Coordination Centre

- ❖ India plans to set up Maritime Research Coordination Centre in Sri Lanka.
- ❖ There are two maritime agreements that were signed in 1974 and 1976.
- ❖ In 1974 agreement, India agreed to Sri Lanka's sovereignty over Katchchativu island but with some safeguards.
- ❖ The safeguards were included by India to protect its fishermen.

New BRI deals

- ❖ China and Myanmar signed 33 new deals under BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) to implement China-Myanmar Economic Corridor.
- ❖ Also, a concession agreement was signed by the countries to implement the deep seaport project called Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone.

BRI

- ❖ The project allows China to have easy of access to Indian Ocean.



- ❖ This is because this route bypasses Strait of Malacca through which China imports most of its oil requirements.
- ❖ This will aid in China's plans of String of Pearls.
- ❖ Strait of Malacca connects Andaman Sea and South China Sea.

Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement (BIPA)

- ❖ The European Union (EU) has expressed interest in exploring a Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement (BIPA) with India.
- ❖ It would be delinked from the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) where ongoing negotiations are in a state of limbo.
- ❖ On 2007, India and the EU began negotiations on a broad-based Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) in Brussels, Belgium.

About BIPA

- ❖ It is one such bilateral treaty which is defined as an agreement between two countries (or States) for the reciprocal encouragement, promotion and protection of investments in each other's territories by the companies based in either country (or State).
- ❖ From the Indian angle, bilateral investment treaties not only encourage capital flows into India but also provide safe business environment for Indian investors abroad.
- ❖ India signed the first BIPA with UK in 1994.

Global Social Mobility Index

- ❖ The World Economic Forum released the Social Mobility Index.
- ❖ The index measures social mobility of the population worldwide.
- ❖ Social Mobility is the upward or downward movement of an individual in personal circumstances in relation to their parents.
- ❖ The countries' social mobility was measured based on following 5 key dimensions as follows
 - Health
 - Education-Quality, Access and Equity
 - Technology
 - Work-Wages, conditions and opportunities
 - Protections and Institutions-Inclusive institutions and social protection

- ❖ Relative Social Mobility is the assessment of effect of socio-economic background on a person's life.
- ❖ According to the report, Denmark ranks the first followed by Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland.
- ❖ India is ranked 76th out of 82 countries.
- ❖ The Areas of improvement for India include social protection (76th) and fair wage distribution (79th).
- ❖ According to the report, the fourth industrial revolution has created several social inequalities.

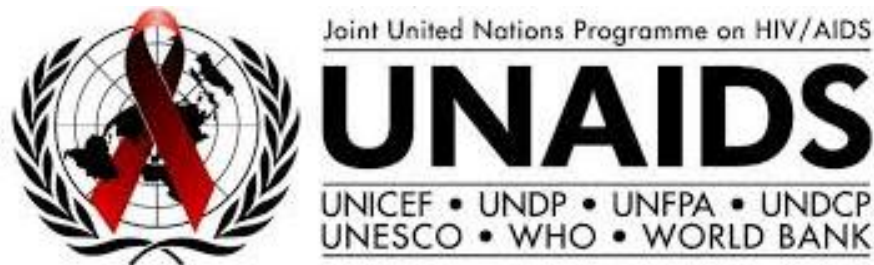


Global Investment Trend Monitor Report

- ❖ The United Nation Conference on Trade and Development released its report on Global Investment Trend Monitor Report for the year 2019.
- ❖ China remained the topmost FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) recipient in the world as it was in 2018 followed by the United States.
- ❖ The United States in 2019 attracted 251 billion USD FDI and the inflows of China was 140 billion USD.
- ❖ According to the report, FDI in South Asia increased by 10% as compared to 2018.
- ❖ The growth of FDI in South Asia was mainly due to India.
- ❖ In 2019, the India's FDI was 49 billion USD.
- ❖ The report says that FDI in 2019 has increased by 16% in India as compared to 2018.
- ❖ The majority of the input in India went into Information Technology.

UNAIDS

- ❖ India participated at the United Nations AIDS (UNAIDS) programme at the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- ❖ The theme of the programme was Theme: Access for all: Leveraging Innovations, Investments and Partnerships for Health.
- ❖ India is the third largest country with HIV epidemic in the world.
- ❖ The AIDS programme in India is implemented by NACO (National AIDS Control Organization).



Democracy Index

- ❖ The Economic Intelligence Unit released Democracy Index for the year 2019.
- ❖ According to this Index, there are four types of regime: full democracy; flawed democracy; hybrid regime; and authoritarian regime.
- ❖ The index was topped by Norway.
- ❖ Norway was followed by Iceland and Sweden at second and third positions respectively.
- ❖ India was pushed to 51st rank slipping 10 positions as compared to its previous ranking.

Democracy Index 2019

India falls 10 places to 51st position

India slipped 10 places to 51st position in the 2019 Democracy Index's global ranking, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit, which cited "erosion of civil liberties" in the country as the primary cause for the downtrend. India's overall score fell from 7.23 in 2018 to 6.90.

Top 5

Rank	Country	Score
1	Norway	9.8
2	Iceland	9.58
3	Sweden	9.39
4	New Zealand	9.26
5	Finland	9.25

Bottom 5

163	Chad	1.61
164	Syria	1.43
165	Central African Republic	1.32
166	Dem Republic of Congo	1.13
167	North Korea	1.08

Saarc nations

Rank	Country	Score
51	India	6.90
69	Sri Lanka	6.27
80	Bangladesh	5.88
91	Bhutan	5.30
92	Nepal	5.28
108	Pakistan	4.25
141	Afghanistan	2.85

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit Report





- ❖ It is placed in the “flawed democracy” category, which also includes Bangladesh.
- ❖ Other “full democracies” include Germany, the United Kingdom and France.
- ❖ The United States is a “flawed democracy”, in the same category as India.
- ❖ China and North Korea are categorised as “authoritarian regimes”.
- ❖ Pakistan is categorised as a “hybrid democracy”.

About

- ❖ It provides a snapshot of the state of world democracy for 165 independent states and two territories.
- ❖ The Index is based on five categories
 - Electoral process and pluralism.
 - Civil liberties.
 - Functioning of government.
 - Political participation.
 - Political culture.

Ujjwala model – Ghana

- ❖ Ghana announced that the country will replicate the Ujjwala model of LPG connection under the guidance of India (represented by Indian Oil Corporation).
- ❖ This symbolizes India as a global leader in providing clean energy.
- ❖ Under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, 8 crore cooking gas connection were provided to poor women in less than 3 years.
- ❖ The Programme was launched to safeguard health of children and women by replacing firewood with LPG.

China’s Birth Rate

- ❖ The birth rate in China has fallen to the lowest in 70 years.
- ❖ Birth rate in 2019 was at 10.48 per 1,000, the lowest since 1949.
- ❖ This fall in birth rate can be largely attributed to China’s one-child policy, which came into force in 1979 under then leader Deng Xiaoping.
- ❖ It was adopted that unchecked population growth would lead to economic and environmental catastrophe.
- ❖ Thomas Robert Malthus was the first economist to propose a systematic theory of population.



Judicial Reciprocating territory

- ❖ The Ministry of Law and Justice issued an Extraordinary Gazette Notification, declaring the United Arab Emirates to be a “reciprocating territory” under Section 44A of the Civil Procedure Code, 1908.
- ❖ Section 44A provides the law on the subject of execution of decrees of Courts in India by foreign Courts and vice versa.
- ❖ The notification also declared a list of courts in the UAE to be “superior Courts” under the same section.
- ❖ The decision is believed to help bring down the time required for executing decrees between the two countries.
- ❖ Indian expatriates in the UAE would no longer be able to seek safe haven in their home country if they are convicted in a civil case in the UAE.
- ❖ Apart from UAE, the other countries declared to be “reciprocating territories” are: United Kingdom, Singapore, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Trinidad & Tobago, New Zealand, the Cook Islands (including Niue) and the Trust Territories of Western Samoa, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Aden.

Iran Nuclear Issue

- ❖ Iran has warned to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if the European Nations refer the dispute over its atomic programme to the United Nation Security Council.
- ❖ Britain, France and Germany launched a process last week charging Iran with failing to observe the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal.
- ❖ This move could eventually see the Security Council reimpose international sanctions on the country.
- ❖ The landmark 2015 deal reached with Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States gave Iran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.

About

- ❖ The NPT is a multilateral treaty aimed at limiting the spread of nuclear weapons.
- ❖ The treaty was signed in 1968 and entered into force in 1970.
- ❖ The Treaty defines nuclear weapon states (NWS) as those that had manufactured and detonated a nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967. All the other states are therefore considered non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS).
- ❖ The five nuclear weapon states are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

WEF Meeting

- ❖ The World Economic Forum (WEF) began its 50th annual meeting in Davos of Switzerland.
- ❖ The highlight of the forum this year is over its initiative to plant 1 trillion trees in the next decade and also to equip 1 billion people with fourth industrial revolution.
- ❖ The forum has released a report on the role of passwords in cybercrimes.
- ❖ The World Economic Forum has joined the “Tree Trillion Campaign” that was launched by UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) in 2006 as “Billion Tree Campaign”.
- ❖ In 2011, the project was handed over to Plant for the Planet (a NGO).



Reskilling

- ❖ India joined the Reskilling Revolution Initiative launched at the World Economic Forum as founding member.
- ❖ It helps economies to adopt the changes being introduced by Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- ❖ The other founding members include US, UAE, Russia, Pakistan, France and Brazil.
- ❖ In order to achieve the reskilling, the World Economic Forum also released a report namely “Jobs of Tomorrow: Mapping Opportunity in the New Economy”.
- ❖ Fourth Industrial Revolution is the developing environment where robotics, Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence are changing the lives of people globally.
- ❖ It has increased machine operated automation and changed the labour force involved.

On Climate Science

- ❖ WEF also published its opinion poll on climate science.

- ❖ According to the survey, India and Bangladesh are the most trusting people in climate science.
- ❖ On the other hand, Ukraine and Russia lagged the most when it comes to updating themselves about climate science.
- ❖ The report says that the world has lost its trust in climate science.
- ❖ According to the survey, the world believes that global warming is mainly due to human activities.
- ❖ The survey has been presented on the 2020 theme: Toward More Sustainable World and Toward a more Cohesive World.

Interpol notice

- ❖ Interpol has issued a Blue Corner notice to help locate fugitive self-styled godman Nithyananda.
- ❖ Notices are international requests for cooperation or alerts allowing police in member countries to share critical crime-related information.
- ❖ There are seven types of notices — Red Notice, Yellow Notice, Blue Notice, Black Notice, Green Notice, Orange Notice, and Purple Notice.
- ❖ Blue Colour Notice issued to “collect additional information about a person’s identity, location or activities in relation to a crime.”
- ❖ While a Red Corner, notice is issued to seek arrest of a wanted person.
- ❖ The International Criminal Police Organisation, or Interpol, is a 194-member intergovernmental organisation headquartered in Lyon, France.
- ❖ It was formed in 1923 as the International Criminal Police Commission, and started calling itself Interpol in 1956.



BREXIT

- ❖ The UK Parliament ratified the Brexit law on January 22, 2020, finally approving the terms of Britain's historic departure from the 28 member European Union on January 31.
- ❖ Queen Elizabeth II gave her royal assent to the Brexit law on January 23, 2020, paving the way for Britain's smooth exit from the European Union.
- ❖ The nation will become the first-ever to leave the major bloc.
- ❖ The people of Britain had voted to leave the European Union in a historic referendum on June 24, 2016.

Time to Care Report

- ❖ A report titled “Time to Care” has been released by Oxfam International.
- ❖ The report focuses on global inequalities and alleviation of global poverty.
- ❖ The report suggested steps for inclusive development by taking gender inequalities measures.
- ❖ In 2019, there were a total of 2,153 billionaires in the world, all combine having more wealth than about 60 percent of the global population (4.6 billion people).
- ❖ World’s richest 1% have more than twice as much wealth as 6.9 billion people.
- ❖ As per the report, it would take a female domestic worker 22,277 years to earn what a top CEO of a technology company makes in one year.
- ❖ It also revealed a comparison that the total wealth of 63 Indian billionaires is higher than the total Union Budget of India for the fiscal year 2018-19
- ❖ India’s richest 1 per cent hold more than four-times the wealth held by 953 million people who make up for the bottom 70 per cent of the country’s population.





Rohingya Crisis

- ❖ The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has given its verdict on the Rohingya crisis.
- ❖ The ruling of the court is binding on Myanmar, and cannot be appealed.
- ❖ However, no means are available to the court to enforce it.
- ❖ It was the Republic of the Gambia who filed a case in the ICJ in November 2019, accusing Myanmar of genocide.
- ❖ The Gambia was backed by the 57-member Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC).
- ❖ Myanmar was represented by Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.
- ❖ So far, only three cases of genocide worldwide have been recognized since World War II: Cambodia (the late 1970s), Rwanda (1994), and Srebrenica & Bosnia (1995).
- ❖ An estimated 7.3 lakh Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh since 2017 when the Myanmar military launched a brutal crackdown on Rohingya villages in the country's coastal Rakhine state.

About ICJ

- ❖ The International Court of Justice (ICJ) sometimes called the World Court, is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN).
- ❖ The ICJ settles disputes between states and gives advisory opinions on international legal issues referred to it by the UN.
- ❖ All members of the UN are party to the ICJ Statute.
- ❖ The court is seated in the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands, making it the only principal U.N. organ not located in New York City.
- ❖ Its official working languages are English and French.
- ❖ The ICJ comprises a panel of 15 judges
- ❖ Out of 15, Dalveer Bhandari is an Indian member of the International Court of Justice since 2012 and was a judge of the Supreme Court of India.
- ❖ His term ends on 2027.

Sagarmatha Sambaad – April 2020

- ❖ It is the first ever multi-stakeholder diplomatic initiative of Nepal.
- ❖ The event will be focusing on the threat of climate change to the modern world.

Measles vaccine

- ❖ India has stepped in to help the Maldives tackle a recent outbreak of measles.
- ❖ The Indian Embassy in Male recently handed over 30,000 doses of measles and rubella (MR) vaccine to the Maldivian Health Ministry.
- ❖ The outbreak comes less than three years after the World Health Organization declared the Maldives measles-free.
- ❖ Under the Global Vaccine Action Plan, measles and rubella are targeted for elimination in five WHO Regions by 2020.
- ❖ Measles is a highly contagious viral disease.
- ❖ Measles is transmitted via droplets from the nose, mouth or throat of infected persons.
- ❖ Also called German Measles, Rubella is a contagious, generally mild viral infection.

Polio comeback in many countries

- ❖ Polio has made a comeback in countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Ghana, Myanmar, China, Cameroon, Indonesia and Iran, mostly as vaccine-derived polio infection.
- ❖ All these countries had wiped the virus out at various times during the last couple of decades.

New 50 pence coin commemorating Brexit

- ❖ The British Government has unveiled a new 50 pence coin commemorating Brexit.
- ❖ The coin has the inscription "Peace, Prosperity and Friendship with all nations".
- ❖ Around 3 million coins are to be distributed from post offices, banks and shops from January 31, 2020.





ECONOMY

E - auction platform – eBkray

- ❖ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has launched an e-auction platform 'eBkray'.
- ❖ The platform will enable online auction of attached assets by banks.
- ❖ Indian Banks Auctions Mortgaged Properties Information (IBAPI) portal is an initiative of Indian Banks Association under Ministry of Finance.
- ❖ It was launched to provide a platform to give details of mortgaged properties to be auctioned in online by Banks, starting with PSBs.
- ❖ Currently, 21 banks are onboard on this portal.

Insurance for Bank Deposits

- ❖ The finance ministry and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI) have recommended an insurance cover for bank accounts with deposits above Rs 1 lakh.
- ❖ At present, the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) covers only deposits of Rs 1 lakh and below.
- ❖ Deposit insurance is providing insurance protection to the depositor's money by receiving a premium.

About DICGC

- ❖ The government has set up DICGC under RBI to protect depositors if a bank fails.
- ❖ Every insured bank pays premium amounting to 0.001% of its deposits to DICGC every year.
- ❖ When a bank is liquidated, depositors are entitled to receive an insurance amount of ₹1 lakh per individual from the DICGC.
- ❖ The DICGC does not deal directly with depositors.

From January – MDR

- ❖ From January onwards, all companies with a turnover of Rs 50 crore or more need to provide the facility of payment through RuPay Debit card and UPI QR code to their customers.
- ❖ Based in this new announcement, Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) fee will not be charged from customers as well as merchants.
- ❖ MDR is a fee charged from a merchant by a bank for accepting payments from customers through credit and debit cards in their establishments.



MANI application for visually challenged

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India launched the MANI application for visually challenged persons.
- ❖ MANI's expansion is Mobile Aided Note Identifier.
- ❖ It helps to identify new currency notes that were launched after demonetization.
- ❖ However, the application does not detect genuine or counterfeit notes.

India's Forex reserves

- ❖ India's foreign exchange reserves touches a record high of 457.468 billion USD in the week ended on 27th December 2019.
- ❖ India's foreign exchange reserves are mainly composed of US dollar in the forms of US government bonds and institutional bonds with nearly 6% of forex reserves in gold.
- ❖ The Foreign Currency Assets also include investments in US Treasury bonds, bonds of other selected governments and deposits with foreign central and commercial banks.
- ❖ India is at 7th position (December 2019) in List of countries by foreign-exchange reserves, just below Republic of China (Taiwan).

Composition

- Foreign currency assets - 424.936 billion USD
- Gold reserves - 27.392 billion USD
- Special Drawing Rights with the International Monetary Fund - 1.441 billion USD
- country's reserve position in the IMF - 3.7 billion USD

NSE Knowledge Hub

- ❖ Union Commerce minister has inaugurated the NSE Knowledge Hub.
- ❖ It is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered learning ecosystem.
- ❖ The platform has been developed by NSE Academy, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Stock Exchange (NSE).
- ❖ This platform seeks to assist the banking, financial, securities and insurance (BFSI) sector in enhancing skills for their employees.

About NSE

- ❖ NSE is the leading stock exchange of India, located in Mumbai.
- ❖ The NSE was established in 1992.

Effect of Automation on FDI flows

- ❖ World Bank released its study on how Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows are affected in the world due to automation.
- ❖ The study concluded that automation will certainly disrupt the flow of capital from rich countries to poor countries.
- ❖ The study has used data of FDI and industrial robot usages between 2004 and 2015.

GDP Growth For 2019 – 2020

- ❖ National Statistical Office (NSO) of the Ministry of Statistics has released the first advance estimates of the national income.
- ❖ According to that India's GDP growth during the fiscal 2019-20 is expected at 5% as compared to 6.8% in last year.
- ❖ Agriculture sector is expected to see a growth of 2.8% as compared to 2.9% in the previous year.
- ❖ The growth rate in per capita income is estimated at 4.3% during 2019-20.
- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India in its December policy had revised GDP growth downwards to 5% for 2019-20 from 6.1% in its October policy.

Market Study on E-Commerce in India

- ❖ The Competition Commission of India (CCI) released a Report titled 'Market Study on E-commerce in India: Key Findings and Observations'.
- ❖ According to the report, the number of internet users have increased from 2017 to 2019.
- ❖ This is the primary reason for the fast growth of the E-Commerce sector in the country.
- ❖ The revenue from the E-Commerce sector is growing at the rate of 51%.
- ❖ Delivery market places in food industry raised by 90%.
- ❖ In India, The E-Commerce Sector was established in 2009.
- ❖ There are around 4757 E-commerce start-ups in India.



V-CIP for KYC

- ❖ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the first time has introduced Aadhaar-based Video Customer Identification Process (V-CIP).
- ❖ This process will allow banks and other lenders to complete the KYC (Know Your Customer) process of customers on video itself.
- ❖ This facility can be used as an alternative to the already available e-KYC facility.
- ❖ To introduce V-CIP, RBI has amended guidelines under the Prevention of Money-laundering (Maintenance of Records) Rules, 2005.

Purvodaya

- ❖ The Ministry of Steel announced that it will launch “Purvodaya”, a world class steel hub.
- ❖ The hub aims at an accelerated development programme of eastern states.
- ❖ The Ministry will be joined by CII (Confederation of India Industries) in the implementation of “Purvodaya”.
- ❖ The 5 Eastern states namely West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Northern Andhra Pradesh are extremely rich in coking coal, bauxite and dolomite reserves.
- ❖ The region also has major ports such as Haldia, Paradip, Kolkata and Vizag.
- ❖ 12 major steel zones identified in the region are
 - Kalinga nagar - Odisha
 - Angul – Odisha
 - Rourkela – Odisha
 - Jharsuguda – Odisha
 - Nagarnar – Chhattisgarh
 - Bhilai – Chhattisgarh
 - Raipur – Chhattisgarh
 - Jamshedpur – Jharkhand
 - Bokaro – Jharkhand
 - Durgapur- West Bengal
 - Kolkata – West Bengal
 - Vizag – Andhra Pradesh.

Ordinance to amend coal mining laws

- ❖ The Government of India has promulgated ordinance to amend MMDR act (Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation act), 1957 and Coal Mines (Special Provisions) act [CMSP], 2015.
- ❖ It will enhance ease of doing business and ease the auction of coal mines
- ❖ It will promote FDI (Foreign Direct Investment).
- ❖ Despite having the world's fourth largest coal reserves, India imported 235 million tonnes (mt) of coal last year.
- ❖ Thus, India is the second largest importer of coal in the world.
- ❖ The Government plans to increase coal production to 1 billion tonnes by 2024.
- ❖ For the financial year 2019-20, the target set is 660 million tonnes.

Regulations of Drones

- ❖ The Indian Aviation Ministry announced that registration of all drones in the country is mandatory.
- ❖ Every drone is to be provided with a Unique Identification Number (UIN) under the scheme.



- ❖ The Government has opened an online portal called “digital sky” for the users to register their drones.
- ❖ The drone owners failing to register their drones will face actions under the Aircraft act, 1934 and Indian Penal Code.
- ❖ The aircraft act governs aviation in India.
- ❖ Major General Soleimani was killed by the US military drone fired missile in Baghdad airport in January 2020.

Hallmarked gold artifacts

- ❖ The Government announced that Indian jewellers shall be allowed to sell hallmarked gold artifacts that are made of 14, 18 and 22 carat gold alone.
- ❖ Also, it is mandatory for all jewellers to get compulsory hallmark.
- ❖ Currently gold hallmarking is voluntary.
- ❖ The mandatory ruling is to be implemented from January 15, 2021.

New RBBG scheme by SBI

- ❖ the State Bank of India (SBI) has announced a new scheme named Residential Builder Finance with Buyer Guarantee (RBBG).
- ❖ This new scheme's purpose is to safeguard home buyers financially by issuing guarantee for completion of projects to customers availing SBI Home Loans.
- ❖ The ongoing home projects of SBI customers will be financed by the bank itself.



Retail Inflation

- ❖ According to the data released by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the food inflation increased to 14.12% in December 2019 as compared to 10.01% in November 2019.
- ❖ The CPI (consumer Price Index) rose to 7.35% as compared to 5.54% the previous month.
- ❖ The inflation was increase was mainly due to vegetables.
- ❖ For the first time, the inflation has breached RBI's target inflation of 4% ($\pm 2\%$).

Juice Jacking

- ❖ The State Bank of India (SBI) has warned customers against charging their phones at charging stations.
- ❖ The bank has advised the customers to think twice before plugging-in their phone at charging stations as malwares could infect their smartphone, thus in turn getting robbed off all their important data and passwords.



What is Juice Jacking?

- ❖ Intelligent hackers have reportedly developed a harmless looking and yet sophisticated USB port-like gadget that can be attached to the charging stations.
- ❖ Once a victim plugs his/her phone, the device can bypass the phone security to inject malware in it and steal entire contents of the phone including contact details, emails, messages, photos, private videos, and sensitive financial credentials.

World Gold Outlook 2020

- ❖ The World Gold Council (WGC) recently released its report, “World Gold Outlook 2020”.
- ❖ The report says that gold has performed the best since 2010 in 2019.
- ❖ According to the WGC, RBI (Reserve Bank of India) currently holds 625.2 tonnes of gold.
- ❖ This is 6.6% of the country’s foreign exchange.
- ❖ With this, India ranks sixth in the world among other central banks.
- ❖ The other 5 countries that have bought more gold than India include China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Poland.
- ❖ In 2019, the largest gold sellers were Uzbekistan and Venezuela.

WGC

- ❖ The headquarters of WGC is located in London.
- ❖ The offices of WGC are located in China, India, US and Singapore.
- ❖ The WGC office in India is located in Mumbai.

Bilateral International Treaty organization

- ❖ The Bilateral International Treaty organization (BIT), an international arbitration tribunal, recently dismissed all the claims against India.
- ❖ The claims against India was brought the organization by private firms in Cyprus and Russia.
- ❖ BIT is an agreement that was established for FDI.
- ❖ It allows countries to set up rules for investments between each other.
- ❖ The treaty is the successor of the 19th century friendship, commerce and navigation treaty.
- ❖ The first BIT was signed between Pakistan and Germany.



- ❖ BIT ensures that foreign investors are treated equally as that of domestic investors.
- ❖ It is important for India to sign BIT to make conditions favourable for foreign investors.
- ❖ While most of the treaties in the world focus on 'most favored Nation' treatment, BIT treats foreign countries equally.
- ❖ India has so far signed BIT with 75 states.

National Startup Advisory Council

- ❖ The Union government has notified the structure of the National Startup Advisory Council.
- ❖ It will be chaired by Commerce and Industry Minister.
- ❖ The council will facilitate public organizations to assimilate innovation with a view to improving public service delivery, promote creation, protection and commercialization of intellectual property rights
- ❖ India ranks 136 on 'starting a business' in the World Bank's ease of doing business table against an overall rank of 63.

SERVICE Scheme

- ❖ SERVICE is a scheme of Steel Authority of India (SAIL) to promote Voluntary Philanthropist Activities by its employees.
- ❖ The Ministry of Steel has launched it.
- ❖ The scheme called "SAIL Employee Rendering Voluntarism and Initiatives for Community Engagement (SERVICE)".
- ❖ It will contribute towards improving the triple bottom line (TBL) of the company by contributing to social welfare.
- ❖ TBL is an accounting framework with three parts; social, environmental (ecological) and financial.

World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2020 (WESO)

- ❖ UN International Labour Organization (ILO) releases WESO report annually.
- ❖ The report analyses key labour market issues including unemployment, labour underutilization, working poverty, income inequality, labour Income share and factors that exclude people from decent work.



GATI

- ❖ The web portal 'GATI' was launched by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.
- ❖ It was created by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).
- ❖ The portal 'GATI' can be accessed from NHAI's website, and contractors and concessionaires can raise any project-related issues on the platform.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Astronaut Christina Koch

- ❖ NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) Astronaut Christina Koch of USA has created a record for longest single spaceflight by a woman.
- ❖ She broke the record set in 2016-2017, by Peggy Whitson, a former space station commander after surpassing 288 days.
- ❖ She is onboarding the International Space Station (ISS) since 14 March 2019.
- ❖ She would have spent over 300 days in space by the time she arrives back on Earth in February 2020.

Rohini 200 sounding rocket

- ❖ Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) has successfully launched Rohini 200 sounding rocket from Thumba in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- ❖ Under this mission, it aims to study changes in the earth's upper atmosphere during the eclipse.
- ❖ VSSC has also launched a 2nd RH 200 flight on the very next day.

Sounding rocket

- ❖ It is also known as research rocket.
- ❖ It is an instrument-carrying rocket designed to take measurements and perform scientific experiments during its sub-orbital flight.
- ❖ These rockets have been launched from Thumba since the 1960s.



FAME II

- ❖ The Department of Heavy Industries operating under Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises has sanctioned 2636 Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations under FAME India scheme Phase II.
- ❖ FAME India is Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid) and Electric Vehicles.
- ❖ The objective of the scheme is to increase the use of electric and hybrid vehicles by offering incentives.
- ❖ India has planned to use three charging technologies.
- ❖ It includes CHAdeMO, Indian Bharat Standard and Combined Charging System (CCS).
- ❖ CHAdeMO is a quick charging method that delivers up to 62.5 KW by 500 volt and 125 ampere DC (Direct Current).
- ❖ The CCS involves both DC and AC charging.

Fourth Regional Academic Centre for Space

- ❖ ISRO sets its fourth Regional Academic Centre for Space (RAC-S) at the National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK) at Surathkal in Mangaluru.
- ❖ The centre helps for the advanced research in the areas of relevance to the future technological and programmatic needs of the Indian Space programme.
- ❖ It also helps in the promotion of space technology in southern regions like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Pondicherry and Lakshadweep.
- ❖ ISRO has set its first RAC-S in Jaipur, second at Guwahati and third at Kurukshetra.

AK-203 assault rifles

- ❖ The Indian Army will sign MoU with Russia to procure AK-203 assault rifles.
- ❖ Apart from the AK-203 rifles, the Indian army recently received the first batch of 10,000 SIG-716 assault rifles from US.
- ❖ Currently Indian army is using indigenous INSAS (Indian National Small Arms System) rifles.
- ❖ INSAS is a light machine gun that is currently being manufactured at Ordnance Factory Trichy, Ishapore Arsenal and Kanpur.



Project NETRA

- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organization signed a pact with Indian Institute of Astrophysics to establish an optical telescope under “Project NETRA”.
- ❖ Project NETRA was launched by ISRO in September 2019.
- ❖ Under the Project, ISRO plans to set up observational facilities that will help in making early warnings to satellites about debris and hazards in their orbit.
- ❖ The project will help India detect threats to Indian satellites from debris.
- ❖ Currently, India operates 15 communication satellites, 13 remote sensing satellites and eight navigation satellites.
- ❖ Apart from ISRO, DRDO (Defence Research Development Organisation) operates NETRA (Network Traffic Analysis).
- ❖ It is a software network used to analyse internet traffic.
- ❖ It is used by Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Intelligence Bureau (IB) and other intelligence agencies of Government of India.

Human Space Flight Infrastructure Centre at Challakere

- ❖ ISRO is planning to construct Human Space Flight Infrastructure Centre at Challakere, Chitradurga district of Karnataka.
- ❖ It is expected to become operational in three years.
- ❖ The Centre is to be located in the NH-4 Bengaluru-Pune Highway.
- ❖ At present, astronauts who are the part of Gaganyaan Mission, the Human Spaceflight Programme of ISRO are trained in Russia.
- ❖ The centre aims at bringing in all the features that are provided by Russia and begin training astronauts within the country.
- ❖ If successful in the Gaganyaan mission, India will become the fourth country after US, Russia and China to send humans to space.

Global Drosophila conference - Pune

- ❖ The fifth edition of the Asia Pacific Drosophila Research Conference (APDRC5) commenced at Pune.
- ❖ It was organised in the country for the first time by the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER).
- ❖ The conference is held twice a year.

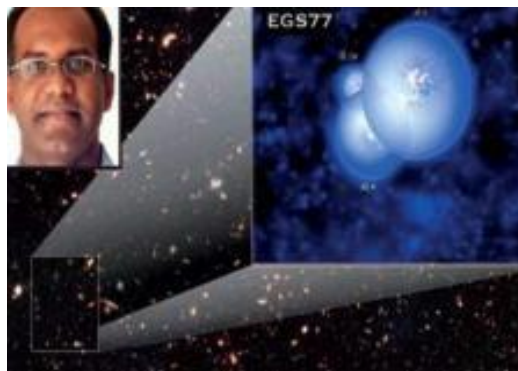
Drosophila

- ❖ It is a small fruit fly and belongs to the Drosophilidae family.
- ❖ It is used as a model organism in researches.
- ❖ Its genome is entirely sequenced and there is an enormous amount of information available about its biochemistry, physiology and behaviour.



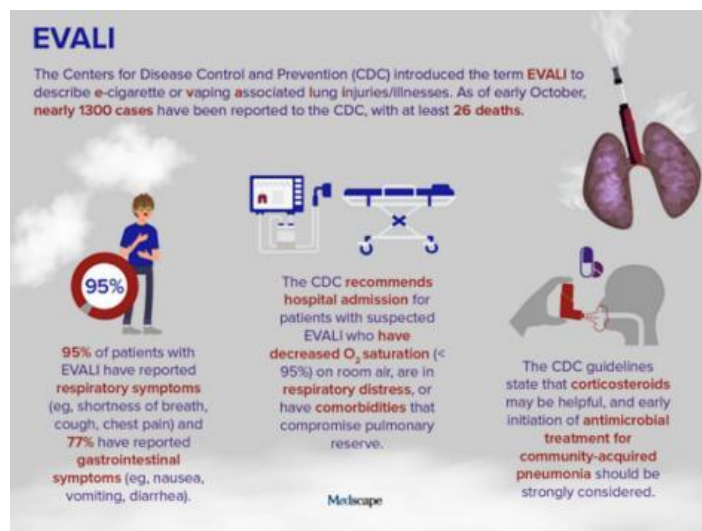
‘EGS77’ Farthest Galaxy Group

- ❖ An international team of astronomers funded in part by NASA has found the farthest galaxy group identified as “EGS77”.
- ❖ EGS77 was discovered as part of the Cosmic Deep and Wide Narrowband (Cosmic DAWN) survey.
- ❖ The team of astronomers was led by an Indian-origin Goa-born scientist, Vithal Tilvi.



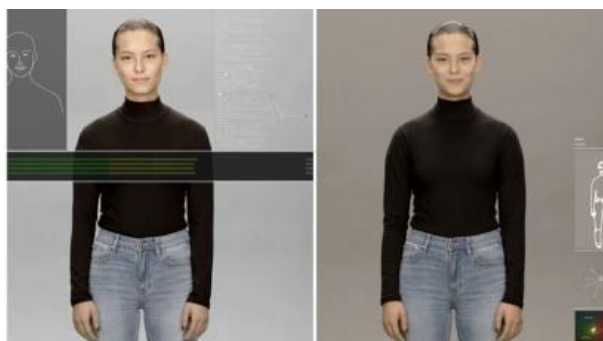
EVALI

- ❖ Galveston County club of USA has confirmed the first death associated with EVALI.
- ❖ Its acronym is E-cigarette, or Vaping, Associated Lung Injury (EVALI).
- ❖ EVALI is the name given by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to the dangerous, newly identified lung disease linked to vaping.
- ❖ CDC and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officials urge everyone to avoid e-cigarette or vaping products that contain tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC.
- ❖ THC is a high-inducing chemical derived from marijuana.



Neon - World's first Artificial Human

- ❖ Samsung-backed Star Labs has unveiled Neon, the world's first "artificial humans".
- ❖ Neon is a humanoid AI chatbot.
- ❖ It aims to deliver a personalised experience with an AI.
- ❖ It has the ability to show emotions and intelligence.



Earth-sized planet in habitable zone

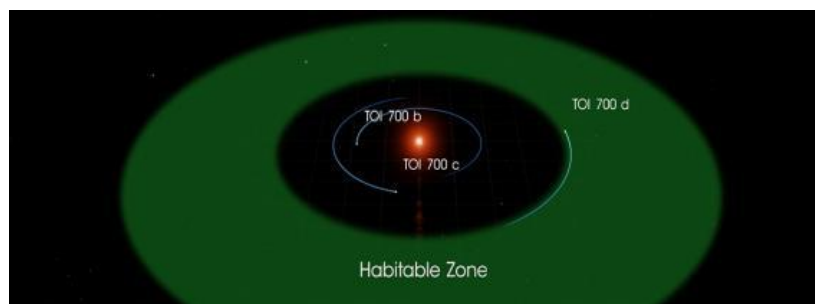
- ❖ Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) has discovered an Earth-sized planet, termed as “TOI 700 d”, within the habitable range.
- ❖ Earth-sized planet located in constellation Dorado.

Habitable zone:

- ❖ Habitable zone is known as Goldilocks zone or Circumstellar Habitable Zone (CHZ).
- ❖ A habitable zone, also called the “Goldilocks zone”, is the area around a star where it is not too hot and not too cold.
- ❖ Our Earth is in the Sun’s Goldilocks zone.

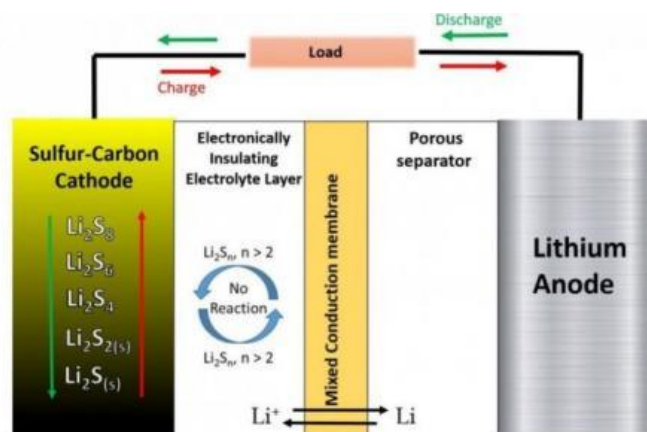
About TESS:

- ❖ It is an all-sky survey mission launched by NASA in 2018.
- ❖ It seeks to discover exoplanets around nearby bright stars.



Lithium Sulfur (Li-S) Battery

- ❖ Researchers from Australia have claimed that they have developed the world’s most efficient lithium-sulfur (Li-S) battery.
- ❖ It is capable of powering a smartphone for five continuous days, the equivalent of an electric car being able to drive a distance of over 1,000 km.



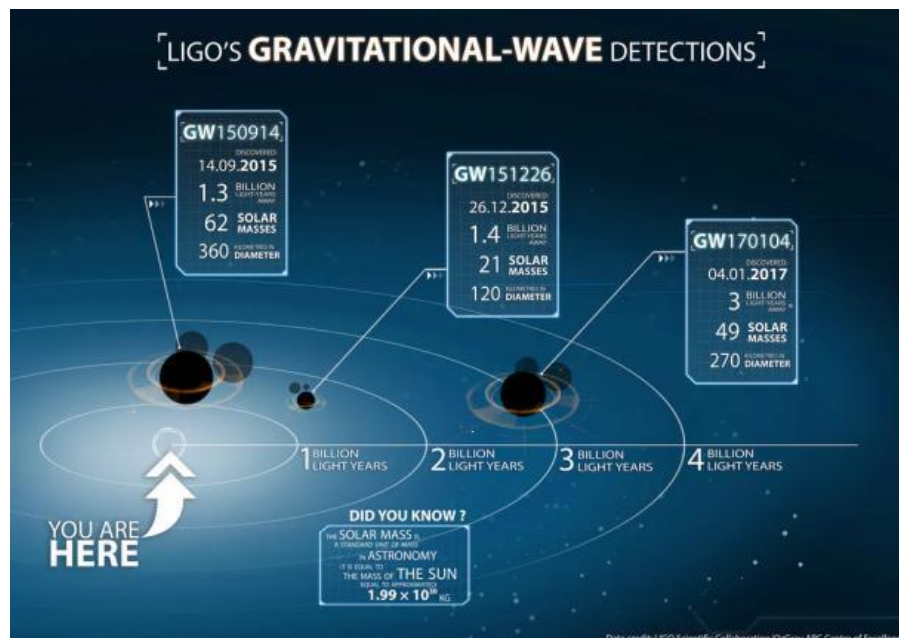
- ❖ Li-S batteries are considered as the successors of the Lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries because of their lower cost of production, energy efficiency and improved safety.
- ❖ Their cost of production is lower because sulphur is abundantly available.

LIGO second wave detection

- ❖ The LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory) detected gravitational waves due to collision of two neutron stars.
- ❖ This is the second time the gravitational waves are being detected.
- ❖ Neutron stars are the remnants of giant stars that died in a fiery explosion known as a supernova.
- ❖ They have a mass of about 1.4 times that of the sun.
- ❖ The neutron stars were at a distance of 520 million light years from the earth.

LIGO

- ❖ It is a massive observatory for detecting cosmic gravitational waves and for carrying out experiments.
- ❖ Currently LIGO operates three gravitational wave detectors at Livingston, Louisiana and Hanford at USA.
- ❖ LIGO India will come up in Maharashtra.
- ❖ LIGO - India project is piloted by Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Department of Science and Technology (DST).





Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center (I4C)

- ❖ Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has inaugurated the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) and a National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal.
- ❖ This I4C Centre is located in New Delhi.
- ❖ It will be set up under the newly created Cyber and Information Security (CIS) division of the MHA.
- ❖ The National Cyber Crime reporting portal will enable the citizens to report cybercrimes online.
- ❖ Apart from I4C, the central government has also launched NIC-CERT (National Informatics Centre-Computer Emergency Response Team).

Corona Virus

- ❖ China reported the first death in the country due to pneumonia caused by a new virus.
- ❖ The Chinese scientists discovered that the new strain of virus is that of the corona virus.
- ❖ In 2002-03, the flu-like Sars virus that belongs to Corona virus family, originated in China.
- ❖ The other deadly virus of the corona virus is the MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome).
- ❖ There is no specific vaccine for the virus as of 2019.

New Fuel

- ❖ The Ministry of Defence announces new fuel upgradation for Indian Navy with revised technical specifications.
- ❖ The High Flash High Speed Diesel (HFHSD) was launched.
- ❖ The aim of the new fuel introduction is to reduce carbon footprint.

Shopper malware

- ❖ A new Trojan called Shopper malware is increasing its presence among smart phone users.
- ❖ The malware is screening unsolicited ads and flashing fake reviews.
- ❖ Prior to Shopper Malware, the largest such infection was created by “Trojan-Dropper”.

- ❖ This was between October 2019 to November 2019.
- ❖ It affected 14.23% of Indians.
- ❖ Russia was the most affected.

LCA Tejas

- ❖ The Government of India will acquire around 200 aircrafts.
- ❖ Of these 200, 83 fighter jets are LCA Tejas Mark 1A and are to be procured from HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited).



About

- ❖ The LCA Tejas was designed by HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) and ADA (Aeronautical Development Agency) in 1980s.
- ❖ It replaced India's MiG-21.
- ❖ So far, LCA Tejas is operating only in India.

Vikram Sarabhai Children Innovation Center

- ❖ Gujarat is going to set its Vikram Sarabhai Children Innovation Center (VSCIC).
- ❖ It aims to identify, nurture and promote innovation of children up to 18 years in the state.
- ❖ This innovation centre will come up in Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Centre for Extension Research and Innovation at Gujarat University.
- ❖ It is a joint partnership between the Gujarat University and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

New communication experiment satellite - TJSW-5

- ❖ China has successfully launched a new communication technology experiment satellite, Tongxin Jishu Shiyan Weixing -5 (TJSW-5) by its Long March-3B carrier rocket.
- ❖ It was the 324th mission for the Long March series of carrier rockets.
- ❖ This will be used in communication, radio, television and data transmission, as well as high throughput technology test.
- ❖ Recently China also launched its heaviest and most advanced communications satellite, Shijian-20 with its largest new carrier rocket Long March-5.

S-400 Missile system

- ❖ Russia announced that the production of S-400 air defence missile system for India has begun.
- ❖ The missiles are to be delivered by 2025.

S-400 Triumf air defense missile system

Alphanumeric code	Designation	Specifications
Russian Army: S-400 NATO reporting name SA-21 Growler	A surface-to-air missile system designed to engage with all types of aerial targets (aircraft, UAVs, cruise missiles, etc.) with a range of 400 km (250 miles) and an altitude of 30 km (10,000 feet)	Operational range: ~ for aerodynamic targets 3 km to 240 km ~ for ballistic targets 5 km to 60 km Altitude up to 30 km (10,000 feet) Maximum target speed up to 4,800 m/s Deployment time of 5-10 min. Missiles per system up to 48 (384 in all)



Composition

- Command & Control System
- Several different radar units
- Up to 8 medium- and long-range surface-to-air missile systems (up to 12 missiles per system)
- 48N6E, 48N6E2, 9M96E, 9M96E2 midrange guided missiles and a 40N6E long-range missile

Technical specifications

Missile 9M96E2



Guided 24-kg fragmentation warhead

Operational range of **120 km (75 miles)**

Altitude of **up to 30 km (10,000 feet)**

Reaction time of **no more than 8 seconds**

Service life of **15 years**

Weight of **420 kg**

Features

- Twice as effective as previous generation systems
- The only system capable of selectively deploying one of five types of missiles
- All operations are completely automated, from target acquisition to assessment of results of engagement
- Considered a 4+ generation system by specifications and combat capabilities

- ❖ India was the fourth country to possess S 400 missiles only after Russia, Belarus and China.
- ❖ China will be the first country to get S500 missile system from Russia.
- ❖ S500 is very much similar to the US THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defence) system.

Block Chain Technology Centre

- ❖ The National Informatics Centre (NIC) will set up block chain technology centre in Bengaluru.
- ❖ The centre aims to provide Block Chain as service to all the stake holders who are interested in shared experiences, learning and resources.
- ❖ NIC operating under Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology.

Bharati Script

- ❖ Researchers from IIT Madras have already developed a unified script for nine Indian languages, named the Bharati Script.
- ❖ The scripts that have been integrated include Devnagari, Bengali, Gurmukhi, Gujarati, Odiya, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil.
- ❖ Now, going a step further, developed a method for reading documents in Bharati script using a multi-lingual optical character recognition (OCR) scheme.

GSAT 30

- ❖ India's telecommunication satellite GSAT-30 was successfully launched into a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) on January 17, 2020 from Kourou launch base, French Guiana by Ariane-5 VA-251.



GSAT-30 Launch Successful

India's communication satellite GSAT-30, built by ISRO, was successfully launched by the Ariane 5 VA-251 rocket from Kourou launch base in French Guiana on Jan 17, 2020. It will replace the INSAT-4A satellite

Applications

- GSAT-30 will be extensively used for supporting VSAT networks, television uplinking & teleport services, Digital Satellite News Gathering (DSNG), DTH-television services, cellular backhaul connectivity and many such applications
- It will also provide extended coverage in C-band, which will help television broadcasters to beam their programmes over India, Gulf countries, large number of Asian countries and Australia





Launch site:
Kourou

Salient Features

Type of satellite : Communication	Lift-off weight: 3,357 kg
Payload: Ku-band and C-band transponders	
Coverage area: Ku-band for Indian mainland and islands C-band for wide coverage	
Mission life: Over 15 years	Orbit: Geostationary

KBK graphics

- ❖ It is configured on ISRO's enhanced I-3K Bus structure to provide communication services from Geostationary orbit in C and Ku bands.
- ❖ Weighing 3357 kg, GSAT-30 is to serve as replacement to INSAT-4A spacecraft services with enhanced coverage.
- ❖ The satellite provides Indian mainland and islands coverage in Ku-band and extended coverage in C-band covering Gulf countries, a large number of Asian countries and Australia.
- ❖ The designed in-orbit operational life of GSAT-30 is more than 15 years.

H9N2 Virus

- ❖ India's first case of Avian influenza or Bird flu caused by a rare variety of H9N2 virus has been reported at Maharashtra.
- ❖ The infection is caused by a rare variety of H9N2 virus, which is a subtype of the influenza A virus that leads to human influenza as well as bird flu.
- ❖ The viruses are found in wild birds and are endemic in poultry in some countries.

Artemis Mission

- ❖ Artemis is the name of NASA's program to return astronauts to the lunar surface by 2024.
- ❖ NASA wants to send the first woman and the next man to the Moon, specifically at the lunar south pole region, by the year 2024.
- ❖ Indian American Raja Chari is among the one who joined in that mission.



K4 Missile

- ❖ India has successfully test-fired a 3,500-kilometre range nuclear capable missile that can be launched from a submarine.
- ❖ It was conducted off the Vizag coast in Andhra Pradesh.

- ❖ With this test, India has moved one more step towards the induction of this ballistic missile on the INS Arihant class of nuclear submarines.
- ❖ The missile was developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Air-Launched Missile	K-4 Ballistic Missile
<p>RANGE 200 km</p> <p>WEIGHT OF MISSILE 2 tonne</p> <p>WARHEAD 500 kg</p> <p>LENGTH 4 m</p> <p>STATUS Hypersonic missile project called the Air Launched Article. Designed to fit under the belly of a Su-30MKI. First prototype by 2012.</p>	<p>RANGE 3,500 km</p> <p>WEIGHT OF MISSILE 20 tonnes</p> <p>WARHEAD 1 tonne</p> <p>LENGTH 10 m</p> <p>STATUS Second test by January 2011. At least six more tests before induction by 2017. Future variants for larger nuclear submarines to be 2 m taller and have 5,000-km range.</p>

- ❖ It carries a nuclear warhead of over one tonne.
- ❖ Only the US, Russia and China have submarine-launched ballistic missiles of 3,500-kilometre range.
- ❖ The submarine-launched ballistic missile is the most important part of the air, land and sea nuclear triad and is at the front of India's second-strike capability.

Yada Yada Virus

- ❖ A new virus detected in Australian mosquitoes has been provisionally named the Yada Yada virus (YYV).
- ❖ It is an alphavirus, a group of viruses that the researchers described as small, single-stranded positive-sense RNA viruses.
- ❖ It includes species important to human and animal health, such as Chikungunya virus and Eastern equine encephalitis virus.
- ❖ They are transmitted primarily by mosquitoes and (are) pathogenic in their vertebrate hosts.
- ❖ Unlike some other alphaviruses, Yada Yada does not pose a threat to human beings.

Seismic Hazard Micro zonation project

- ❖ The Ministry of Earth Science has launched Seismic Hazard Microzonation project in major cities of India.
- ❖ The project aims to reduce hazards of seismic activities by putting in adequate measures.
- ❖ So far, the mapping has been done in the State of Sikkim and in other eight cities.
- ❖ The cities are Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Guwahati, Jabalpur, Dehra Dun, Ahmedabad and Gandhidham.
- ❖ Japan is the best example where microzonation techniques are well implemented.

Seismic Hazard Microzonation

- ❖ It is the process of dividing earth quake prone areas based on certain factors.
- ❖ The factors include geological and geophysical characteristics of sites.
- ❖ They are ground shaking, landslide, liquefaction susceptibility, rock fall hazard and flooding caused due to earth quakes.

Agricultural product testing laboratories

- ❖ The APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Development Authority) has added 135 laboratories to the existing 51 laboratories.
- ❖ The new laboratories are being installed in states with high agricultural potential such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Karnataka.

Xenobots

- ❖ Scientists in the United States have created the world's first "living machines".
- ❖ These are tiny robots built from the cells of the African clawed frog (*Xenopus laevis*), that can move around on their own.
- ❖ They have named the millimetre-wide robots "xenobots" — after the species of aquatic frog found across sub-Saharan Africa from Nigeria and Sudan to South Africa, *Xenopus laevis*.
- ❖ The xenobots can move toward a target, perhaps pick up a payload (like a medicine that needs to be carried to a specific place inside a patient) and heal themselves after being cut.

East Asian Core Observatories Consortium

- ❖ India is in preliminary discussions to be a part of the East Asian Core Observatories Consortium of eight countries committed to build large telescopes.
- ❖ Its first task is to assume the operation of the James Clerk Maxwell Submillimetre Telescope (JCMT) on the summit of Maunakea at Hawaii.
- ❖ It consists of China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea as full members and Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia as observers.
- ❖ Having India join the group could mean the establishment of new kinds of telescopes — one proposed being in Tibet — that could aid the observation of new black holes and throw light on cosmic phenomena.

Vyom Mitra

- ❖ ISRO is to send a half-humanoid robot called the “Vyom Mitra” as an experimental mission to Gaganyaan.
- ❖ Vyom Mitra means a friend in Sky.
- ❖ It will be used for an unmanned flight of ISRO’s GSLV III rocket in December 2020, which, along with a second unmanned flight in July 2021.
- ❖ The robot can speak two languages namely Hindi and English.



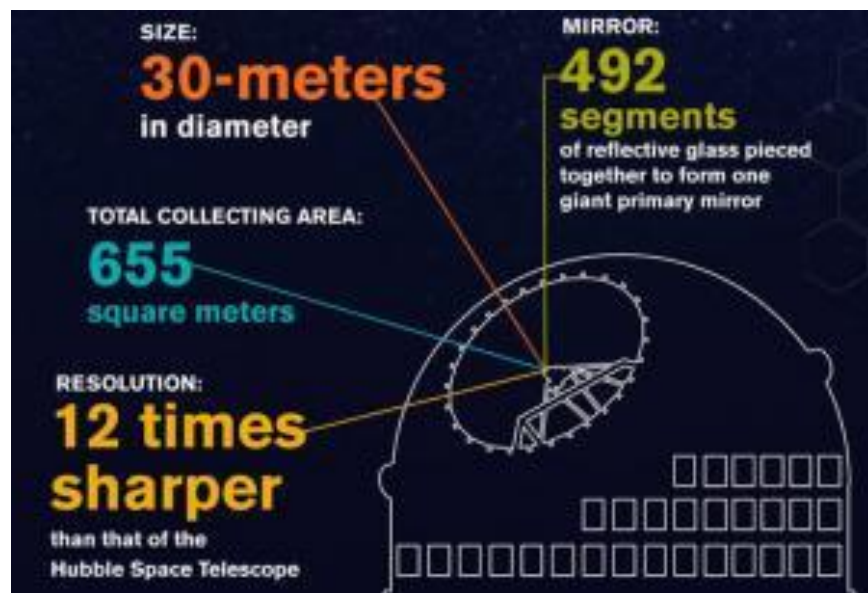
Thirty-Metre Telescope

- ❖ India Wants Thirty-Metre Telescope Shifted Out of Hawaii of USA.
- ❖ India has committed 10% of the project's resources, a sum of about Rs 1,423 crore.

- ❖ Once it is built, the Thirty-Meter Telescope (TMT) will become one of the world's largest general-purpose observatories and one of the largest visible-light telescopes.
- ❖ It will allow astronomers to study the outer reaches of the universe and study distant stars and exoplanets than much greater detail than is currently possible.
- ❖ TMT has been proposed atop the dormant Mauna Kea volcano in Hawaii.
- ❖ The Volcano is also a sacred location for the island's native population.

About TMT

- ❖ The Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) is an astronomical observatory with an extremely large telescope (ELT).
- ❖ It is an international project being funded by scientific organisations of Canada, China, India, Japan and USA.
- ❖ The TMT is designed for near-ultraviolet to mid-infrared observations, featuring adaptive optics to assist in correcting image blur.



National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP)

- ❖ NITI Aayog announced that it will launch National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP) in 2021.
- ❖ The Platform aims to democratize the access of government data.

NavIC

- ❖ Qualcomm Technologies has unveiled mobile chipsets supporting the Indian regional satellite navigation system – NavIC (Navigation in Indian Constellation).

About

- ❖ It is an independent regional navigation satellite system designed to provide position information in the Indian region and 1500 km around the Indian mainland.
- ❖ Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) would provide two types of services, namely Standard Positioning Services available to all users and Restricted Services provided to authorized users.
- ❖ It is a regional system and so its constellation will consist of seven satellites.
- ❖ Three of these will be geostationary over the Indian Ocean, i.e., they will appear to be stationary in the sky over the region, and four will be geosynchronous – appearing at the same point in the sky at the same time every day.



International Summit on Women in STEM

- ❖ The Department of Biotechnology (Ministry of Science & Technology) organized an International Summit on Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in New Delhi in January 2020.
- ❖ The overall aim was to boost the participation of women in the STEM fields for the development of a scientific career.
- ❖ Theme of the summit is “Visualizing the Future: New Skylines”.
- ❖ The objective of the summit was to showcase successful women in the field of STEM.



Poly Crack Technology

- ❖ The East Coast Railways commissioned the first waste-to-energy plant of Railways sector of India.
- ❖ It is the fourth such plant in the country.
- ❖ The plant has been set up at a cost of Rs 1.79 crores with Poly crack technology.
- ❖ In Poly crack Technology, waste is processed and reformed in 24 hours.
- ❖ The technology involves de-polymerization, cracking, reforming, scrubbing, particle filtration and rapid quenching.
- ❖ The major benefit of the method is that it does not require pre-segregation.

Bhuvan Panchayat 3.0.

- ❖ ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization) launched Bhuvan Panchayat version 3.0.
- ❖ Under the project, the ISRO will collaborate with Gram panchayat members to understand their data requirements.
- ❖ The portal will function with the help of satellite technology of ISRO.
- ❖ The project will run for two years.
- ❖ The portal aims at helping village development planning process under the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

SISDP-Update project

- ❖ Satellite imagery-based database of rural natural resources, called SISDP, was launched by ISRO.
- ❖ The Space-based Information Support for Decentralised Planning programme (SISDP) was taken up in 2011 to empower panchayati raj institutions.
- ❖ SISDP phase-I project was successfully concluded in 2016-17.
- ❖ Based on the experience of SISDP phase-I, 'SISDP-Update' has been initiated.



ENVIRONMENT

State of Forests Report, 2019

- ❖ Union Environment Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar has released State of Forests Report, 2019 (ISFR).
- ❖ It is released every two years since 2003.
- ❖ It has been prepared by Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun.
- ❖ It assesses the forest and tree cover, bamboo resources, carbon stock and forest fires.
- ❖ According to this report, the forest area in the country has increased by 5,188 square km in the last two years.
- ❖ But however, the gain in forest cover is outside forestland.
- ❖ Only there is a gain of 301 sq km of dense forest on forestland since 2017.
- ❖ There is a loss of 2,145 sq km of dense forests that have become non-forests in those two years.
- ❖ Dense forests are defined by canopy cover: over 70% is considered very dense and 40-70% medium dense.
- ❖ Unlike natural forests, commercial plantations grow rapidly and show up as dense cover in satellite images.
- ❖ The 2019 assessment has for the first time also assessed biodiversity of plant species in forests.
- ❖ Karnataka is the top state measured in terms of richness of tree species with 325 species, followed by Tamil Nadu (252 species), Andhra Pradesh (242 species), Kerala (238 species) and Odisha (192 species).
- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh is the top state for plant species richness with 737 species, followed by Tamil Nadu (652 species), Karnataka (505 species), Jammu and Kashmir (478 species) and Kerala (477 species).

key findings of the ISFR 2019

- ❖ The total Forest and Tree cover of the country is 8,07,276 sq km which is 24.56% of the geographical area of the country.
- ❖ It is short of the National Forest Policy, 1988, which envisages 33% to be under such cover.
- ❖ The total forest cover of the country is 7,12,249 sq km which is 21.67% of the geographical area of the country.
- ❖ The tree cover of the country is estimated as 95,027 sq km which is 2.89% of the geographical area.

- ❖ There is an increase of 42.6 million tonnes in the carbon stock of the country.
- ❖ According to the report, 7124 million tonnes of carbon stock has been recorded in the country.
- ❖ Mangrove cover in the country has increased by 54 sq km (1.10%).
- ❖ It has increased in Gujarat (37 Sq.Km), Maharashtra and Odisha.
- ❖ The total mangrove area is recorded to be 4975 square kilometers.
- ❖ West Bengal accounts for 42.45%, followed by Gujarat (23.66%) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (12.39%).
- ❖ Total bamboo bearing area of the country is estimated as 1,60,037 sq km.
- ❖ There is an increase of 3,229 sq km in bamboo bearing area.
- ❖ This has happened because bamboo was reclassified as grass.
- ❖ It could be cut and then replanted.
- ❖ Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) represents the largest pool of carbon stock in forests, which has been estimated 4,004 million tonnes.
- ❖ The SOC contributes 56% to the total forest carbon stock of the country.

States data

- ❖ The top five States in terms of increase in forest cover are Karnataka (1,025 sq km), Andhra Pradesh (990 sq km), Kerala (823 sq km), Jammu & Kashmir (371 sq km) and Himachal Pradesh (334 sq km).
- ❖ There was a sharpest decline in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram.
- ❖ Total forest cover in the North Eastern region is 1,70,541 sq km, which is 65.05% of its geographical area.
- ❖ Except Assam and Tripura, all the States in the region show decrease in forest cover (765 sq km - 0.45 per cent).
- ❖ The loss in the North East is attributed primarily due to the traditional farming practice of Shifting Cultivation (Jhum cultivation).
- ❖ There are 62,466 wetlands covering 3.83% of the area.
- ❖ Amongst the States, Gujarat has largest area of wetlands within the country followed by West Bengal.
- ❖ Dependence of fuelwood on forests is highest in the State of Maharashtra, followed by Odisha and Rajasthan.
- ❖ For fodder, small timber and bamboo, dependence is highest in Madhya Pradesh.

Tamilnadu

- ❖ Tamil Nadu increased its total green cover by 83.02sqkm

- ❖ The state's overall green cover currently stands at 20% of its geographical area (Target is 33).
- ❖ The area under mangrove forest cover in Tamil Nadu has shrunk by four sq km
- ❖ Tamil Nadu's mangrove cover is estimated to be close to 45sqkm.

Forest cover

- ❖ In terms of forest cover as percentage of total geographical area, the top five states include Mizoram (85.41%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.63%), Meghalaya (76.33%), Manipur (75.46%) and Nagaland (75.31%).

Rank	Top Forest Cover	Area wise largest forest covers	Mangrove Coverage Increase
1	Karnataka (1025 sq km)	Madhya Pradesh	Gujarat- 37sq KM
2	Andhra Pradesh (990 sq km)	Arunachal Pradesh	Maharashtra- 16 sq KM
3	Kerala (823 sq km)	Chhattisgarh	Odisha - 837sq KM
4		Odisha	
5		Maharashtra	

First elephant colony – Madhya Pradesh

- ❖ For the first time, Bandhavgarh Reserve forest located in Madhya Pradesh (MP), has a colony of elephants which migrated from Chhattisgarh in November 2018 and has stayed on.
- ❖ Bandhavgarh Reserve forest resides on the extreme north-eastern border of Madhya Pradesh and the northern edges of the Satpuras mountain ranges.
- ❖ In 1968, Bandhavgarh was notified as a national park and in 1993 was declared a tiger reserve - under the Project Tiger Network at the neighbouring Panpatha Sanctuary.
- ❖ Its mention can be found in the ancient books of the 'Narad Pancharatra' and the 'Shiv Purana' that this place is being associated with Ramayana.
- ❖ Till now there are no elephants in Madhya Pradesh and there is no known reason for this disappearance from India's central region, including MP and until a few years ago Chhattisgarh.
- ❖ Madhya Pradesh is known as Tiger State.
- ❖ In the 2019 Tiger census, it recorded the greatest number of estimated tigers at 526.



Senna Spectabilis

- ❖ The Kerala Government is planning to arrest the rampant growth of Senna spectabilis, in the forest areas of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR), including the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.
- ❖ It is a deciduous tree native to tropical areas of America.
- ❖ It grows up to 15 to 20 metres in a short period of time and distributes thousands of seeds after flowering.
- ❖ It is an invasive species.
- ❖ It is categorised as 'Least Concern' under IUCN Red List.



1st turtle rehabilitation centre

- ❖ A 1st of its kind rehabilitation centre for freshwater turtles is to be inaugurated in January 2020 in the Bhagalpur forest division of Bihar.
- ❖ This centre spread over half a hectare will be able to shelter 500 turtles at a time.



- ❖ The centre will also treat turtles that are sick, severely injured or smuggled, and then be returned safely into its natural habitat.
- ❖ The turtle species are under threat due to loss through dams and barrages, pollution, illegal poaching, accidental drowning through fishing nets and threats to their nesting habitats etc.

Palau banned sunscreen cream

- ❖ The Pacific Island, Palau has become the first country to ban sunscreen cream that is harmful to corals.
- ❖ The country has banned 10 ingredients such as oxybenzone, ethyl paraben, Octinoxate, Butyl paraben, etc., that harm coral reefs. These ingredients are used in cosmetics.
- ❖ The sun creams absorb UV radiations and make corals susceptible to bleaching.

About Palau

- ❖ The Rock Islands in the Palau is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- ❖ Palau was the second nation to ratify Paris climate agreement after Fiji.

Extinction of Paddlefish

- ❖ China has declared that the country's giant paddlefish often called as 'Panda of the Yangtze river' has become extinct.
- ❖ The extinction was reported due to decades of overfishing.
- ❖ As per scientists of the Yangtze River Fisheries Research Institute it became extinct between 2005 and 2010.
- ❖ The paddlefish with scientific name *Psephurus gladius*, can grow up to 22 feet (7 meters) in length.
- ❖ The last confirmed sighting of the paddlefish was in the year 2003.

Red brittle star

- ❖ Researchers have shown that red brittle star, which are relatives of starfish, can see even though it does not have eyes.
- ❖ The red brittle star lives in the coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea.
- ❖ It becomes only the second creature, after a sea urchin species, known to have this ability (barring freak cases in other species).
- ❖ The ability to see without eyes is known as extraocular vision.

- ❖ The extraocular vision is facilitated by the photoreceptor cells found on their bodies.



Breeding of Great Indian Bustard

- ❖ India made a successful world record of having succeeded in breeding of Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*).
- ❖ Barely 150 of these birds are estimated to be surviving now globally.
- ❖ It is endemic to the Indian subcontinent.
- ❖ It is found in Rajasthan (Desert National park), Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in India and parts of Pakistan.

Ardeotis nigriceps

GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

A VERY LARGE GRASSLAND BUSTARD, DRIVEN TO EXTINCTION, DUE TO MASSIVE HABITAT LOSS AND HUNTING

50-249 POPULATIONS OF MALES INDIVIDUALS, NUMBERS DECLINING

15.6 years LIFESPAN

92-122 cm SIZE FROM HEAD TO TAIL

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED ON THE IUCN RED LIST LISTED ON SCHEDULE I OF WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT OF 1972

VOICE: A BARK WHEN ALARMED, A DEEP MOAN IN DISPLAY

EATS: PLANTS, CROPS, INSECTS, LIZARDS AND RODENTS

REGULARLY, SOCIABLE BIRD, FORM SEGREGATED FLOCKS, WHICH DISPERSE DURING BREEDING TIME

BROWN AND WHITE BUSTARD: MALES - WHITISH NECK AND UNDERPARTS WITH NARROW BLACK BREAST BAND. FEMALES - SMALLER WITH GREYER NECKS, NO BREAST BAND (NON-BREEDING) AND BROKEN BREAST BAND (BREEDING) BIRD

SPENDS MOST OF ITS TIME ON GROUND BUT IS A GOOD FLYER

SPENDS MOST OF ITS TIME ON GROUND BUT IS A GOOD FLYER

FAMILY

- Males exhibit courtship displays by inflating their gular pouches and producing deep resonant calls. They also cock their tails and may get into territorial fights with other males.
- Females lay one egg and incubate it for 25-30 days. Chick fledges in about 75 days and stays with the mother for about a year.
- Breeding season March-September

THREATS

- HABITAT DESTRUCTION AND FRAGMENTATION, CONVERSION OF GRASSLANDS
- POWER LINES AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT DISTURBANCE
- OVERGRAZING
- HUNTING

CONSERVATION MEASURES

- Project Bustard
- Conservation breeding programmes
- Intense legal protection and severe penalties on killing the bird
- Research and Monitoring: Conservation sites identified and are being declared as small protected areas.
- Strengthening protection along protected Area boundaries
- Controlled grazing
- Control repeated grass burning
- Eradication of invasive species of flora
- Education and awareness programme

Conservation Status:

- ❖ Critically Endangered in IUCN Red List.
- ❖ Listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ❖ Listed in Appendix I of CITES.

Conservation Measures

- ❖ Project Great Indian Bustard:
 - It is a Rajasthan government project launched in 2018.
 - It envisages constituting enclosures and securing inviolate areas to ensure successful breeding of birds in the Desert National Park.
- ❖ Bustard Recovery Programme:
 - Initiated by the Union Environment Ministry in 2017.

Chilika lake - CDA

- ❖ The Chilika Development Authority (CDA) has said that it expects over 1 million migratory birds to flock to Chilika lake in 2020.
- ❖ Chilika lake is the Asia's largest brackish water lake and the second largest coastal lagoon in the world.
- ❖ The lake is also home to the largest wintering ground for migratory birds on the Indian subcontinent.
- ❖ Chilika lake was also designated as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention in 1981.
- ❖ Chilika Development Authority has been created under Forest & Environment Department of Government of Odisha in the year 1991.



Indian Pompano fish cultivation

- ❖ For the first time in India, the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has developed a viable scientific method to cultivate Indian Pompano fish in ponds.
- ❖ Pompanos are marine fishes.
- ❖ The Indian government began the scientific study on Pompano in 2014.
- ❖ The funding was provided by the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB).
- ❖ The scientists also said that growing Pompano along with shrimp will increase the survival rate of the shrimp as the Pompanos breaks the life cycle of viruses that attack shrimps.
- ❖ The government is currently planning to implement inter-cropping of Shrimp and Pompanos.



Adult Pompano



Pompano Fingerlings (1.5 inch size)

Australian Koalas

- ❖ The Australian Koalas population suffered an extraordinary hit in the bush fires of Australia.
- ❖ Australia recorded 2019 as its hottest year on record.
- ❖ The Australian Koalas are to be put under “endangered” from “vulnerable” as 30% of their habitat were destroyed by the fires.
- ❖ The Australian Koalas is herbivorous animals that are native to Australia.
- ❖ They are found in coastal areas of New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia.
- ❖ The IUCN red list currently puts Australian Koala under Vulnerable Category.

Why were the bush fires severe?

- ❖ The Indian Ocean Dipole was in its positive phase in 2019.

- ❖ This means, the eastern Indian Ocean (lying in the north west of Australia) was cooler than the western Indian.
- ❖ This drew away the moisture from Australia raising temperatures in Australia.
- ❖ The westerlies blowing hot air into the continent increased the fires further fanning them.



Camel Culling

- ❖ Australia initiated culling of up to 10,000 camels, using sniper fire from helicopters.
- ❖ The exercise was taking place in Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (called APY Lands) in South Australia state.



- ❖ Unless their breeding is controlled, the camel population doubles every 9 years.
- ❖ The animals also have a massive carbon footprint, each camel emitting methane equivalent to one tonne of carbon dioxide a year.

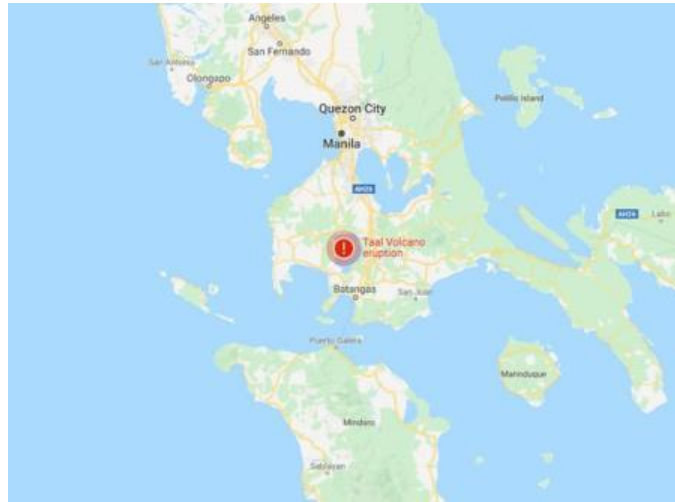
Urea Production

- ❖ The APNA UREA-SonaUgle brand of HURL (Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited) was launched by the Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers D V Sadananda Gowda.
- ❖ In order to make India self-sufficient in Urea, the Union Government approved revival of three Urea plants located in Sindri, Gorakhpur and Barauni.
- ❖ The other two major fertilizer plants at Talcher and Ramagundam are also to be reopened.
- ❖ The government plans to increase the annual production of Urea by 63.5 lakh metric tonnes per annum.
- ❖ HURL is a joint venture of Indian Maharatna companies namely IOCL (Indian Oil Corporation Limited), NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation) and Coal India Limited.
- ❖ The objective of HURL is to make India self-reliant in Urea.
- ❖ According to National Urea Policy 2015, there are totally 31 Urea producing plants in India.
- ❖ Out of these, 28 units Natural Gas as feedstock.
- ❖ The rest of the units use Naphtha as feedstock.



Taal Volcano

- ❖ A volcano called Taal on the island of Luzon, 50 km from Manila, Philippines erupted.
- ❖ Taal is classified as a “complex” volcano.
- ❖ A complex volcano, also called a compound volcano, is defined as one that doesn't have just one main vent or cone but several eruption points.



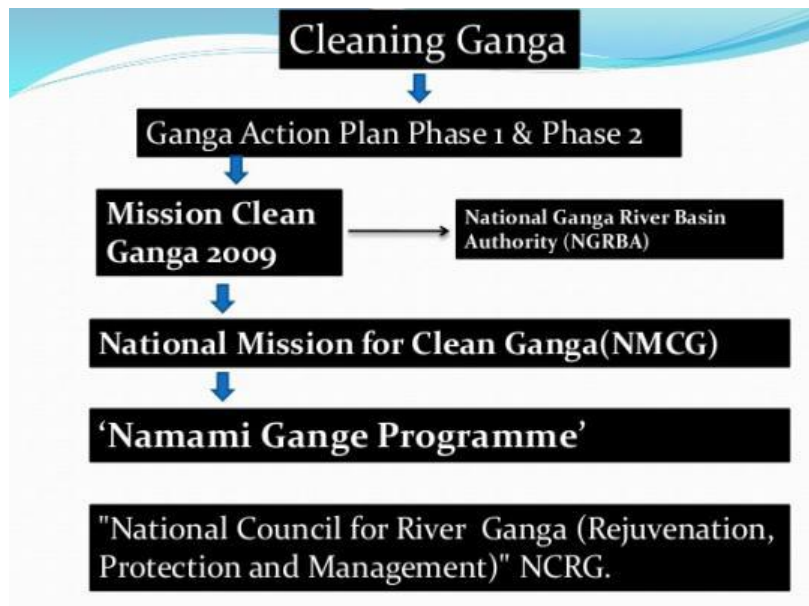
Genome of Indian cobra

- ❖ An international team of researchers have sequenced the genome of the Indian cobra.
- ❖ In the Indian cobra genome, the researchers have identified 19 key toxin genes, the only ones that should matter in snakebite treatment.
- ❖ This genome sequence can provide a blueprint for developing more effective anti-venom.
- ❖ In India, the challenge has been producing anti-venom for the species known collectively as the “big four”
 - The Indian cobra (*Naja naja*),
 - Common krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*),
 - Russell’s viper (*Daboia russelii*), and
 - Saw-scaled viper (*Echis carinatus*).
- ❖ These 4 species are not found in northeastern India but the region reports a significant number of snake bites.
- ❖ India is the snakebite capital of the world.
- ❖ India alone accounts for about 50,000 deaths annually, and these are primarily attributed to the “big four”.

The National Mission of Clean Ganga (NMCG)

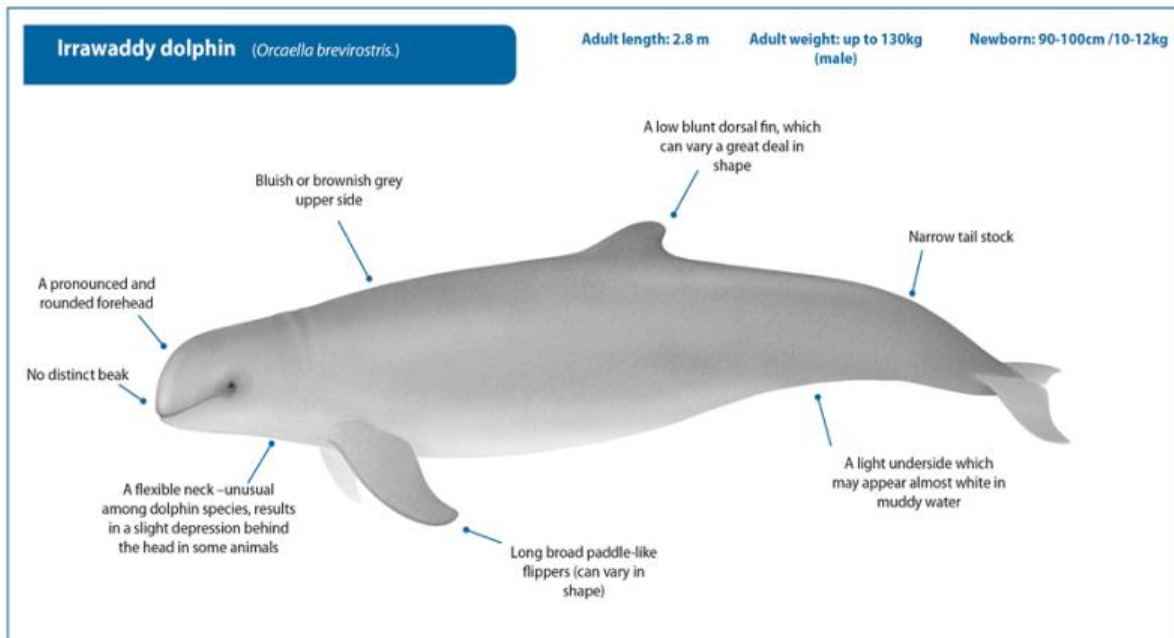
- ❖ It has taken up the initiative under Namami Gange Project to conserve wetlands of the Ganges basin.

- ❖ The wetlands provide nutrient recycling, flood and drought mitigation, surface and groundwater recharge.
- ❖ NMCG is the implementation wing of National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga (referred as National Ganga Council).
- ❖ In October 2016, National Ganga Council has replaced National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) which was constituted under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act (EPA), 1986.
- ❖ The basin covers 11 states viz., Uttarakhand, U.P., M.P., Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal and Delhi.
- ❖ The current focus of world bank funded National Ganga River Basin Projects (NGRBP) of NMCG is on five major states on the main stem of river Ganga namely Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal.



Dolphin Census in Chilika Lake

- ❖ The dolphin census in Odisha coast was taken up by the Chilika Development Authority (CDA).
- ❖ 146 Irrawaddy dolphins were sighted here.
- ❖ At present, the total population of the Irrawaddy dolphins is estimated to be less than 7,500 globally out of which 6,000 as per report are in Bangladesh
- ❖ Chilika is considered as the highest single lagoon dolphin population in the world.



About Irrawaddy Dolphin

- ❖ Although the species gets its common name from the Irrawaddy River in Myanmar, where it also lives, it was first described in 1866 from a specimen found in the Vishakhapatnam harbour in present day Andhra Pradesh on India's east coast.
- ❖ Its range extends from the Bay of Bengal to New Guinea and the Philippines.
- ❖ Besides the Irrawaddy River, it is also found in India's Ganges, and Southeast Asia's Mekong River.
- ❖ However, it is not a true river dolphin and prefers to live in estuaries and brackish water near coasts.
- ❖ Irrawaddy dolphins are classified as 'Vulnerable' in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- ❖ Chilika Lake is the largest brackish water (mixture of saline and fresh water) lagoon of India, spread over the Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of Odisha State on the east coast of India.
- ❖ It is the largest coastal lagoon in India, located at the mouth of the Daya River, which is flowing into the Bay of Bengal.
- ❖ It is designated as 'wetland of international importance under the Ramsar convention.



Exploratory Drilling License

- ❖ The Environment Ministry has exempted oil and gas firms, looking to conduct exploratory drilling, from seeking an environmental clearance.
- ❖ The clearance is for both on-shore and offshore drilling explorations.
- ❖ The process is an ecologically-intensive exercise that involves digging multiple wells and conducting seismic surveys offshore.
- ❖ Until today, even exploratory surveys have merited the highest level of environmental scrutiny — called category 'A'.
- ❖ That required project proponents to prepare an environment impact assessment (EIA) plan and have scrutinized by a centrally constituted committee of experts.

Decarbonization target

- ❖ The United Nations had set the target of reducing carbon emissions from shipping industry by 50% by 2050 as compared to the levels in 2008.
- ❖ To achieve this target, the world has to spend 1 trillion USD.
- ❖ According to the United Nations, the emissions from shipping account to 2.2% of world carbon-dioxide emissions.
- ❖ The Decarbonisation target was initiated by the International Maritime Organization.
- ❖ The International Maritime Organization regulates international shipping and its greenhouse gas emissions.

Paperless licensing process

- ❖ The Department of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has launched paperless licensing process for petroleum service stations under Petroleum Rules, 2002.
- ❖ The implementing agency of the order would be Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization (PESO).
- ❖ PESO is a department formed under DPIIT and both the bodies work under Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- ❖ It controls the export, import, storage, transport and usage of explosive materials.
- ❖ PESO administers the following acts
 - Explosive Act, 1884,
 - Petroleum Act 1934,
 - Explosive Substance Act,



- Inflammable Substance Act 1952,
- Environment Protection Act 1986.

Carbon Disclosure Project

- ❖ The Carbon Disclosure Project is an annual report on carbon reduction activities of different countries and their firms.
- ❖ It was released by a non-profit organization Global Reporting Initiative.
- ❖ According to the report, the countries were ranked based on their corporate responsibilities of carbon reduction.
- ❖ Among the Indian Companies, Infosys, Dalmia Cement and Tata Motors have reported 100% Renewable Energy consumption.
- ❖ United States topped the list with 135 companies in this list.
- ❖ Followed by US, Japan ranked second with 83 companies.
- ❖ On the third, fourth and fifth ranks were UK (78), France (51) and India (38) respectively.

Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) -141 b

- ❖ India has successfully achieved the complete phase out of hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) - 141 b.
- ❖ It is a chemical used by foam manufacturers.
- ❖ It is used mainly as a blowing agent in the production of rigid polyurethane (PU) foams.
- ❖ It is one of the most potent ozone depleting chemicals after Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).
- ❖ The ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEFCC) also brought out a Gazette notification prohibiting the issuance of import license for HCFC-141b from 1 January 2020.
- ❖ It was issued under Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation and Control) Amendment Rules, 2019 issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- ❖ Nearly, 50% of the consumption of ozone depleting chemicals in the country was attributable to HCFC-141 b in the foam sector.
- ❖ Polyurethane is used in applications such as water geysers, refrigerators, thermo wares, furniture appliance, commercial refrigeration.



- ❖ The complete phase out of HCFC 141 b from the country in foam sector is among the first at this scale in Article 5 parties (developing countries) under the Montreal Protocol.
- ❖ The phase out of HCFC-141b from the country has twin environmental benefits, viz, assisting the healing of the stratospheric ozone layer, and towards climate change mitigation.

Most Polluted Cities in India

- ❖ Jharia, a city in Jharkhand is the most polluted city in India, which is followed by Dhanbad of the same state.
- ❖ Jharia and Dhanbad are twin cities in the coal mining belt of Jharkhand.
- ❖ The report also revealed that six of the country's ten most polluted cities are in the state of Uttar Pradesh (Noida, Bareilly, Ghaziabad, Allahabad, Firozabad, and Moradabad).
- ❖ Lunglei city of Mizoram is the least polluted city and it is the only city with Particulate matter (PM) levels under the World Health Organisation's (WHO) prescribed level.
- ❖ It was according to Greenpeace India's, an environmental non-governmental organization, fourth Airpocalypse report.
- ❖ In 2019, the central government launched National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) with 2017 as the base year.
- ❖ It is a five-year action plan with a target of reducing concentrations of PM-10 and PM-2.5 up to 30% by 2024 in 102 non-attainment cities.
- ❖ Greenpeace was founded in 1971 in Vancouver, Canada and is headquartered in the capital city of Netherlands, Amsterdam.
- ❖ In India, the organization's headquarter is in Bengaluru.

Ophichthus kailashchandrai

- ❖ This is a new snake eel species residing in the Bay of Bengal.
- ❖ It has been named Ophichthus kailashchandrai to honour the vast contributions of Dr. Kailash Chandra, Director of Zoological Survey of India, to Indian animal taxonomy.
- ❖ It is the eighth species of the Ophichthus genus found on the Indian coast.



Yarrabubba crater

- ❖ The Yarrabubba crater is an asteroid impact structure situated in the Mid-West Western Australia.
- ❖ It was the eroded remnant of a former impact crater.
- ❖ According to recent study, Australia's Yarrabubba asteroid impact crater is oldest on earth (age of 2.229 billion years) and it may have been responsible for ending an ice age.
- ❖ The Yarrabubba resisted reliable estimates of its age because of erosion and plate tectonics.
- ❖ Other older asteroid crater is the Vredefort Dome in South Africa (2.023 billion years old) and Canada's Sudbury Basin (1.850 billion years old).
- ❖ These are the only other precisely dated Precambrian impact structures that are currently known.
- ❖ The geological record shows the Earth had glacial ice before the time of the impact – but afterwards, ice disappeared for hundreds of millions of years.
- ❖ Geologists date events using "isotopic clocks" in minerals like zircon and monazite.
- ❖ These minerals contain small amounts of uranium, which gradually decays into lead at a known rate.





Pavagada Solar plant – Karnataka

- ❖ The first phase Shakti Sthala solar park having total capacity of 2,050 megawatts (MW) is now fully operational in drought-prone Pavagada region of Tumkur district, Karnataka.
- ❖ It is claimed that world's largest solar park.
- ❖ The park ties in with the Central Government's scheme to generate 100 gigawatts (GW) of solar power by 2020.
- ❖ It has been executed within record time of two years, with zero land acquisition.
- ❖ The project has been developed by the Karnataka Solar Park Development Corporation Limited (KSPDCL), a joint venture between the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) and the Karnataka Renewable Energy (KREDL).

New archaeon in Sambhar Lake

- ❖ Scientists at the National Centre for Microbial Resource — National Centre for Cell Science (NCCR-NCCS) have discovered a new archaeon (a kind of microorganism) in Sambhar Salt Lake in Rajasthan.
- ❖ Archaea (singular archaeon) are a primitive group of microorganisms that thrive in extreme habitats such as hot springs, cold deserts and hypersaline lakes.
- ❖ They are also known for producing antimicrobial molecules and for antioxidant activity with applications in eco-friendly waste-water treatment.
- ❖ The new archaeon discovered in Sambhar Lake has been named Natrilba swarupiae after Dr Renu Swarup, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology for her initiative in supporting microbial diversity studies in the country.

About NCCR - NCCS:

- ❖ National Centre for Microbial Resource (NCCR) was started as Microbial Culture Collection (MCC) in 2009.
- ❖ It comes under the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India.
- ❖ Its mandate is to preserve and catalogue the diversity of bacteria.

Biorock or mineral accretion technology

- ❖ India begins coral restoration in Gulf of Kachchh.
- ❖ The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), with help from Gujarat's Forest Department, is attempting for the first time a process to restore coral reefs using bio rock or mineral accretion technology.

- ❖ The technology works by passing a small amount of electrical current through electrodes in the water.
- ❖ India has four major coral reefs areas:
 - Andaman and Nicobar Islands,
 - Lakshadweep,
 - Gulf of Mannar and
 - Gulf of Kutch.



Ramsar Sites in India

- ❖ India has added 10 more wetlands to sites protected by the Ramsar Convention.
- ❖ With this, a total of 37 sites in the country have been recognised under the international treaty.
- ❖ Among the 10 sites, Maharashtra (Nadur Madhameshwar bird sanctuary) gets its first Ramsar site.

S.No	States	Ramsar sites
1	Maharashtra	1. Nandur Madhameshwar bird sanctuary
2	Punjab	1. Beas conservation reserve 2. Keshopur-Miani community reserve 3. Nangal wildlife sanctuary
3	Uttar Pradesh	1. Nawabganj bird sanctuary 2. Parvati Arga bird sanctuary 3. Saman bird sanctuary 4. Sarsai Nawar Lake 5. Samaspur bird sanctuary 6. Sandi bird sanctuary

About Ramsar convention & Montreux Record

- ❖ Ramsar convention is an international treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
- ❖ The treaty was signed on 2 February 1971.
- ❖ Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Ramsar wetlands of international importance.
- ❖ Indian sites in the Montreux Record are Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan), Loktak Lake (Manipur).
- ❖ Conserving Wet Lands will also help in achieving Nal Se Jal scheme. The scheme aims to provide water connection to every house hold by 2024.

African Cheetah - introduced in India

- ❖ Supreme Court ruled that African Cheetah shall be permitted to be introduced in India.
- ❖ The cheetah, *Acinonyx jubatus*, is being introduced on experimental basis.
- ❖ The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had previously told the Supreme Court that African cheetahs would be translocated in India from Namibia and would be kept at Kuno-Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has given a 'no objection' for the translocation.
- ❖ Cheetah is the only mammal being hunted to extinction in India.
- ❖ IUCN Status: Vulnerable
- ❖ Geographic range: North, Southern and East Africa, and a few localities in Iran
- ❖ Cheetah in India: Extinct in India since 1947



STATES

ePAUTI App

- ❖ Odisha govt has launched an e-certificate portal and ePAUTI App.
- ❖ The e-certificate project is a part of 5T model of Governance by the revenue and disaster management department.
- ❖ Using this App, people can pay land revenue online with the help of their smartphones without visiting a government office.
- ❖ According to CM, no fees will be charged for the certificates specifying these services as the rights of the people.



Kerala - Anti-CAA Resolution

- ❖ Kerala has become the first state in India to pass a resolution demanding rollback of the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019.
- ❖ According to the Kerala Government, the CAA Act contradicts secularism - the basic principles of Constitution.
- ❖ The Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 was passed in December 2019.
- ❖ The Act amended Citizenship act passed in 1955.
- ❖ It allows Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, Christians and Parsi religious minorities to gain Indian citizenship.
- ❖ The issue around the Act is that it does not include Muslims.

Nagaland under AFSPA

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has declared entire State of Nagaland a 'disturbed area' for a period of 6 more months under Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) with effect from December 30, 2019.

About AFSPA

- ❖ Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) came into force in 1958.
- ❖ This Act came into force in the context of increasing violence in the North-eastern States of India.
- ❖ AFSPA empowers security forces to maintain public order in disturbed areas.

Chhattisgarh - financial scheme for labourers

- ❖ Chhattisgarh government has launched 'Mukhyamantri Vishwakarma Nirman Shramik Mrityu evam Divyang Sahayta Yojana'.
- ❖ It seeks to provide fixed compensation for registered construction and unorganised labourers in the event of death on work or disability.

World's 2nd tallest statue of Vallabhbhai Patel

- ❖ Chief Minister of Gujarat Vijay Ramniklal Rupani unveiled the world's 2nd largest statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at Sardardham campus near Vaishnodevi circle in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- ❖ This bronze statue which is 50 feet tall weighing 70,000 kilograms was built at a cost of Rs 3.25 crores.
- ❖ Ram Vanji Sutar (Sculptor) who designed the world's tallest statue has built this world's second tallest statue too.
- ❖ The Statue of Unity is the world's tallest statue at 182 metres (597 ft) situated in Gujarat.

Lai Haroba Festival

- ❖ Lai Haroba, a ritualistic festival observed by Manipuri meitei communities began in Agartala, Tripura.
- ❖ The five-day long festival is celebrated through oral literature, music, dance and rituals.
- ❖ A cultural troupe from Manipur came and performing manipuri martial arts, folk music and folk dances.



YSR Aarogyasri scheme

- ❖ Andhra Pradesh government has inaugurated “YSR Aarogyasri scheme” to provide free medical treatment to the poor.
- ❖ The scheme will be extended to each district of the state from the month April 2020.
- ❖ The revamped healthcare scheme is aimed at providing free medical treatment to people having an annual income of up to Rs 5 lakh.
- ❖ For this, the state government will distribute 1.42 crores Aarogyasri cards with QR (Quick Response) codes across the state.

Bhitarkanika National Park

- ❖ According to the recent census at the Bhitarkanika National Park, the population of salt water crocodiles have increased to 1,757 as compared to 1,742 in 2018.
- ❖ The IUCN status of salt water crocodile is Least Concern.
- ❖ The Park obtained the status of Ramsar site in 2002.
- ❖ It was the second area to get the status after Chilika lake.
- ❖ The Park is the second largest mangrove ecosystem in India.

Farm loan waiver

- ❖ The new Maharashtra government has announced a loan waiver for farmers who had up to Rs 2 lakh in pending loans between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2019.
- ❖ Maharashtra thus became possibly the only state to have offered two consecutive farm loan waivers within two-and-a-half years of each other.



- ❖ Back in 2008-09, the then UPA government at the Centre had announced a loan waiver scheme for the entire country.
- ❖ States like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and others have announced similar schemes in the recent past.

Zo Kutpui festival

- ❖ The Mizoram State Government is organising Zo Kutpui festival.
- ❖ By conducting such festival, the Mizoram Government is trying to unify the Mizo population in the country and also across the world.
- ❖ The event will host performances of several Mizo tribes.

Deliver sand at door steps – AP government

- ❖ As a pilot project, The Andhra Pradesh Government announced that it will deliver sand at customers' door steps.
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh Mineral Development Corporation will implement this initiative.
- ❖ The step will help address issues of sand scarcity and sand mafia.
- ❖ Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) act (MMDR act), 1957 provides rules to prevent illegal mining of sand.

Miyawaki method of afforestation

- ❖ The Miyawaki method of afforestation is to come up on the government office premises, residential complexes, school premises, and puramboke land in Kerala.
- ❖ The Miyawaki method involves planting saplings in small areas, causing them to “fight” for resources and grow nearly 10 times quicker.
- ❖ It originated in Japan, and is now increasingly adopted in other parts of the world, including Chennai.
- ❖ It has revolutionised the concept of urban afforestation by turning backyards into mini-forests.

Maharashtra - PMFBY

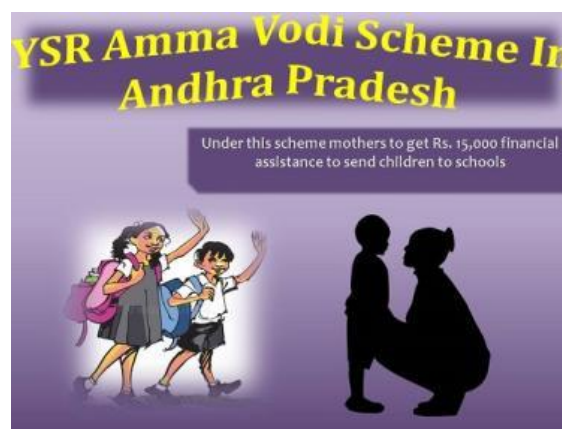
- ❖ Maharashtra has become the first state in the country to integrate its land records with the web portal of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).
- ❖ The integration of land records with the PMFBY has helped in saving of time and plugging leakages as the land records will be available online.

About PMFBY

- ❖ The PMFBY is the Prime Minister's Crop Insurance Scheme.
- ❖ It was launched in 2016.
- ❖ The scheme is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- ❖ The scheme envisages a uniform premium of 2% to be paid by farmers for Kharif crops and 1.5% for Rabi crops.
- ❖ The premium for annual commercial and horticultural crops will be 5%.

Amma Vodi scheme

- ❖ Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy launched Amma Vodi Scheme in Chittoor.
- ❖ The scheme aims at benefitting school students (includes both public and private schools) studying in classes I to XII.
- ❖ Under the scheme, these students belonging to Below Poverty Line will get Rs 15,000 per annum.
- ❖ However, the guardian or mother of the child should ensure 75% attendance of the child.
- ❖ The State Government has allocated Rs 6318 crores under the scheme.
- ❖ The amount is to be directly transferred to the accounts of the mothers till the children complete their Class 12 education.



Arunachal Pradesh - new logo for the state

- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly adopted a new logo which will reflect the distinct identity and culture of the state.
- ❖ The new logo consists of the

- National Emblem to signify the federal system of the Indian Constitution.
- Flower foxtail orchid (*Rhynchosstylis retusa*) which represents the state, its people and culture.
- Blue colour denotes the autonomy of the assembly secretariat.



Highest Inpatient Department care

- ❖ Jammu and Kashmir have registered the highest Inpatient Department (IPD) care in the country.
- ❖ The state-wise fact sheets were released by National Health Systems Resource Centre, New Delhi.
- ❖ According to the report overall all women in J&K are availing Antenatal Care (ANC) services.
- ❖ Also, 96 percent IPD care in rural areas of J&K is provided by Public Health Facilities which is highest against the country's average of 85 percent.
- ❖ In 2016, Jammu and Kashmir had surpassed Kerala as the state with the highest life expectancy in India for all ages, barring life expectancy at birth.

Bru-Reang Refugee agreement

- ❖ Government of India, Bru-Reang representatives, Government of Tripura and Mizoram signed an agreement in New Delhi to end the refugee crisis of Bru-Reang community.
- ❖ Under the agreement, around 34,000 Bru Refugees are to settle in Tripura.

Backdrop

- ❖ Due to ethnic tension in 1997, around 5,000 families of 30,000 Bru-Reang tribes were forced out of Mizoram to seek shelter in Tripura.

- ❖ In 2018, the Government of India signed an agreement with the State Governments of Tripura and Mizoram in order to help the families and increase the aid substantially.
- ❖ The Bru Tribes are locally called Reang and hence the name Bru-Reang.
- ❖ They are ethnic tribes living in India, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand.
- ❖ They speak Katuic language.
- ❖ The Bru-Reang are one of the 21 ethnic tribes of Tripura that are included in the Scheduled Tribe list.



Assam Inland Water Transport Project

- ❖ The Government of Assam, Government of India and World Bank signed 88 million USD agreement.
- ❖ The agreement aims to modernize Assam's Ferry transport service on the Brahmaputra river.

Inland Waterways

- ❖ Around 15 waterways are operating in Assam.
- ❖ They operate on rivers such as Barak, Beki, Lohit, Doyang, Kopili, Subansiri, Aai, Dihing, Dikihow, Puthimari, Gangadhar, Jinjiram and Tiwang.

Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan

- ❖ It is an annual conference for literary discussions by Marathi writers.
- ❖ At the recently concluded 93rd edition of this conference, a resolution was passed demanding the declaration of Marathi as a 'Classical' language.
- ❖ Currently, six languages enjoy the 'Classical' status: Tamil (declared in 2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014).

Guidelines

- ❖ High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500-2000 years.
- ❖ A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers.
- ❖ The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community.
- ❖ The classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

Z Morh tunnel

- ❖ A Concession Agreement for completing the 6.5-kilometre long Z-Morh tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir was signed in presence of Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari.
- ❖ Z-Morh Tunnel will provide all-weather road connectivity to Sonmarg tourist spot in Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ It will be two lane bi-directional road tunnel between Gagangir and Sonmarg on NH 1.
- ❖ It mostly remains closed during the winters due to heavy snowfall.
- ❖ Z-Morh Tunnel is a road tunnel between Srinagar and Kargil in Ladakh region of India.
- ❖ The tunnel gets its name from its Z formation between Sonamarg and Gagangir.



Ashfaqullah Khan Zoo

- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet approved a proposal for construction of a zoological garden named after Shaheed Ashfaqullah Khan in Gorakhpur.
- ❖ At present, there are two zoological gardens in Uttar Pradesh, one in Lucknow and another in Kanpur.
- ❖ Freedom fighter Ashfaqullah Khan was sentenced to death along with Ram Prasad Bismil for the Kakori train robbery, commonly known as the Kakori conspiracy of 1925.

Pune-Mumbai Hyperloop project

- ❖ The proposed Pune-Mumbai Hyperloop project may be scrapped by the Maharashtra state government.
- ❖ It is an ultra-modern transport system that will reduce the travelling time between the two cities to 25 minutes from 2.5-3 hours.
- ❖ The state has expressed reservations about the project that was still in its experimental stage, and had not been “implemented anywhere in the world”.

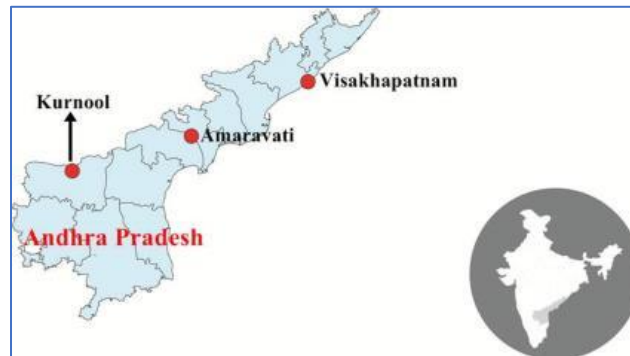


- ❖ It is a transportation system where a pod-like vehicle is propelled through a near-vacuum tube connecting cities at speeds matching that of an aircraft.
- ❖ The hyperloop concept is a brainchild of Tesla founder Elon Musk.

Andhra Pradesh – 3 Capital

- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh assembly passed the Bill to establish three capitals.
- ❖ The state government plans to build three capitals--executive capital in Visakhapatnam, legislative capital in Amaravati and judicial capital in Kurnool.

- ❖ In 2014, when Telangana was carved out of Andhra Pradesh, it was decided that Hyderabad would remain the joint capital of the two states (for a maximum of 10 years).
- ❖ During his chief ministership, Chandrababu Naidu pitched for making Amaravati the state capital.



Other states in India

- ❖ Dehradun officially is Uttarakhand's "temporary capital" since November 2000.
- ❖ Gairsain is being considered as the future capital of Uttarakhand.
- ❖ One assembly session is held in Gairsain every year.
- ❖ Maharashtra has two capitals – Mumbai and Nagpur (which holds the winter session of the state assembly).
- ❖ Himachal Pradesh has capitals at Shimla and Dharamshala (winter).
- ❖ The former state of Jammu & Kashmir had Srinagar and Jammu (winter) as capitals.

1st Innovation festival

- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh state council for science & Technology (APSCS&T) with partnership with National Innovation Foundation organised the 1st ever Innovation festival at Itanagar.





- ❖ The two days festival aims to encourage the cultural innovation among the people and students of Arunachal Pradesh.

India's 1st Super Fab Lab

- ❖ CM of Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated India's 1st Super Fab Lab facility at the Integrated Startup Complex of the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM).
- ❖ The lab will function in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, United States, will work in enhancing the hardware industry.
- ❖ It is the only such facility outside the United States.

Andhra Pradesh to Scrap Legislative Council

- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh (AP) assembly has passed a resolution to abolish the state's Legislative Council.
- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh government has to send the resolution to the Governor for his approval and then to the Parliament for ratification.
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh's Legislative Council, set up in 1958, was abolished in 1985, then reconstituted in 2007.
- ❖ According to article 169, The Parliament can abolish a Legislative Council (where it already exists) or create it (where it does not exist) by a simple majority, if the legislative assembly of the concerned state, by a special majority.
- ❖ Besides Andhra Pradesh, the other states having Legislative Councils are Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Shiv Bhojan Scheme

- ❖ Maharashtra government launched 'Shiv Bhojan' scheme.
- ❖ The scheme aims to provide a meal to the poor for just 10 rupees, on the occasion of the 71st Republic Day.
- ❖ Under the pilot scheme, at least one 'Shiv Bhojan' canteen has been started at district headquarters.
- ❖ The scheme aims at providing affordable, quality food to all.



Sustainable growth goals performer list

- ❖ According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Telangana has emerged the best performing states in terms of achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
- ❖ In December 2019, India released SDG India Index.
- ❖ India was the first country to release SDG index.
- ❖ The index was launched by NITI Aayog.

S. No	State	Score
1	Telangana	82
2	Andhra Pradesh	72
3	Karnataka	72

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

Dhanu Jatra festival

- ❖ Dhanu Jatra, the famous 11-day long open-air theatre festival begins at Bargarh in western Odisha.
- ❖ Jatra's drama is based on the story of Lord Krishna and his uncle Kansa.
- ❖ It is the world's longest open-air drama named in the Guinness book of records.
- ❖ To celebrate Indian's Independence and to symbolize the victory of good over evil this festival was celebrated from 1947-1948.
- ❖ Government of India gave the National Festival Status to Dhanu Jatra in November 2014.

Sangita Kalanidhi award

- ❖ S.Sowmya (Carnatic Singer) has been conferred with Sangita Kalanidhi Award.
- ❖ Sangita Kalanidhi Award was instituted by the Music Academy, Chennai.
- ❖ It is the title awarded yearly to a Carnatic Musician.



Global child prodigy award 2020

- ❖ A Dubai-based Indian girl, Sucheta Satish has won the '100 Global Child Prodigy Award 2020' in the category of singing.
- ❖ She made her double world record in January 2018 at the Indian Consulate Auditorium, Dubai as a 12-year-old when she sings in 102 different languages over 6 hours and 15 minutes.
- ❖ She can currently sing in 120 languages and recently released her second album 'Ya Habibi' in Arabic.

Global child prodigy award

- ❖ This award is a platform to showcase the talent of children in dance, music, art, writing, acting, modelling, science, sports etc.
- ❖ The award is supported by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam International Foundation and AR Rahman among others.

Marine Ecosystems-Challenges and Opportunities (MECOS)

- ❖ The Marine Ecosystems-Challenges and Opportunities (MECOS), the third international symposium, is to be held in Kochi.
- ❖ The symposium is conducted by the Marine Biological association of India.
- ❖ The symposium is to focus on the Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations, SDG-14.
- ❖ SDG-14 says, "Conserve and Sustainably use the oceans and its resources for sustainable development".

Antarrashtriya Yoga Diwas Media Samman Award

- ❖ The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will confer "Antarrashtriya Yoga Diwas Media Samman" award to 30 media houses.
- ❖ The award is being presented for the first time.
- ❖ The aim of the award is to acknowledge positive role of media in disseminating outreach of Yoga.

World Book Fair – New Delhi

- ❖ The New Delhi World Book Fair was organised by National Book Trust (NBT) in association with India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO).
- ❖ The fair also acts as a gateway to the intellectual world of South Asia.

- ❖ The theme of the fair is “Gandhi, the Writers’ Writer”.
- ❖ The fair is important for the Indian market as India is the third largest market for English publications with more than 12,000 publishers.

National Book Trust

- ❖ This Indian Publishing House was founded in 1957 functions under the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- ❖ The Headquarters is located in New Delhi.

Khelo India Youth Games

- ❖ 3rd edition of the Khelo India Youth Game is to be held on February, 2020 in Guwahati, Assam.
- ❖ Khelo India was launched by PM Modi in January 2018.
- ❖ The games include two categories namely,
 - under-17-year school students.
 - under-21-year college student.
- ❖ Under the event, annual scholarship of Rs 5,00,000 is given for 1000 kids to prepare them for international sporting events.
- ❖ The event is to be held every year in 20 disciplines.
- ❖ All the 36 states and union territories are to participate in the event.

Kamal Singh – passed away

- ❖ A member of the country’s first Lok Sabha and last Maharaja of the erstwhile Dumraon Raj (a Zamindari Estate) Kamal Singh died in Bihar’s Buxar district.
- ❖ Singh was the country’s youngest MP, having been elected to the first Lok Sabha in 1952 at the age of 25.



- ❖ He represented Buxar parliamentary constituency (Bihar) in the Lok sabha as an Independent till 1962.
- ❖ He has opened a number of educational institutions and health facilities for the poor in the old Shahabad region.

Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu National Award

- ❖ Agricultural Scientist Dr M S Swaminathan and Social worker Dr. Gutta Muniratnam have been selected as the 1st recipient of the Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu National Award for Excellence.
- ❖ The award was given at a function in Hyderabad, Telangana.



UK Costa Children's award - 2019

- ❖ Indian born UK author Jasbinder Bilan's named as the winner of 2019 UK children's book award named Costa Children's Award.
- ❖ This is for her debut novel 'Asha and the Spirit Bird', which focusing on the readers of age range 9 years and above.
- ❖ The award will be presented annually across 5 categories of "First Novel, Novel, Biography, Poetry and Children's Book".



'Model Sports Villages'

- ❖ Bahadurpur and Kheri Viran of Uttar Pradesh are set to become India's first 'Model Sports Villages'.
- ❖ It is a part of Institute of Management Technology (IMT) Ghaziabad's plan to evolve a sports culture in the country.

Chuni Goswami

- ❖ Chuni Goswami, the Indian Football stalwart who led India to win the gold medal in the 1962 Asian Games in Bangkok was honoured by the Indian Postal Department.
- ❖ He is the third Indian footballer after the late Gostho Paul (1998), and late Dr Talimeren Ao (2018) on whose name a postal stamp has been issued.



- ❖ He is also one of the six Indian Footballers to have received the prestigious Padma Shri Award along with the Arjuna Award (others being the Late Gotsho Paul, late Sailen Manna, PK Banerjee, Bhaichung Bhutia, and Sunil Chhetri).

Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2020

- ❖ The Home Ministry announced the winners of Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2020.
- ❖ The award will be conferred to Uttarakhand's Disaster Mitigation & Management Centre in the institution category and Kumar Munnan Singh in the individual category.
- ❖ It is announced every year on January 23, on the occasion of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's birth anniversary.
- ❖ The award aims to recognise the excellent work done by individuals and institutions in India in the field of disaster management.



- ❖ Kumar Munnan Singh was appointed as a founder member of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in 2005 in recognition of his commendable work during the destructive 2004 Tsunami.

Prince Harry

- ❖ Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex is a member of the British royal family.
- ❖ He is the younger son of Charles, Prince of Wales, and Diana, Princess of Wales.
- ❖ He is sixth in the line of succession to the British throne.
- ❖ In January 2020, Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle announced their intention to step back as senior members of the royal family.

1st Ganga - Volga Dialogue of civilizations 2020

- ❖ The 1st edition of Ganga-Volga Dialogue of Civilizations 2020 was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ It is conducted based on the theme of “Connectivity”, between India & Russia.
- ❖ The dialogue aims to provide a platform for enhancing the special and privileged bilateral partnership between India & Russia.

2019 Harit Ratna Award

- ❖ Vice Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agriculture University N Kumar was honoured with Harit Ratna Award 2019 at the 5th National Youth Convention.
- ❖ The award was given by All India Agricultural Students Association (AIASA).

Republic Day 2020

- ❖ India celebrated its 71st Republic Day on January 26, 2020.
- ❖ Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro was the chief guest at India's 71st Republic Day Parade.
 - Bolsonaro is the third Brazilian President to be invited as Chief Guest for India's Republic Day Parade.
- ❖ This year, for the first time, the wreath laying ceremony was held at the newly built National War Memorial instead of Amar Jawan Jyoti beneath the India Gate arch.
- ❖ PM Modi was joined by newly appointed Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat along with the Tri-Services chief.

- ❖ The marching contingent of the Indian Air Force (IAF) has been adjudged the first among the Marching contingents of the three services while The Central Industrial Security Force Has bagged the first prize among paramilitary forces for the parade.
- ❖ Captain Tanya Shergil, a fourth generation Army Officer led an all-male marching contingent of the Indian Army Corps of Signals.
 - The motto of the Corps is “Teevra Chaukas”.
- ❖ All-woman biker contingent of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) make its debut as a part of the 71st Republic Day Parade.
- ❖ Key highlight of the 71st Republic Day Parade was inclusion of the Dhanush artillery gun for the first time.
 - The Dhanush Artillery Guns are being produced by Ordnance Factory Board under the flagship project of “Make in India”.

List of Participants / Tableaux for Republic Day

- ❖ The Republic Day Parade 2020 included a total of 22 tableaux including 16 from various states and union territories and remaining 6 from various ministries, departments and the National Disaster Response Force.

State	Tableaux
Gujarat	Rani ki Vav - Jal Mandir
Meghalaya	Living Root Bridge
Punjab	550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev
Tamil Nadu	Rural and ancient cultural heritage- statue of Ayyanar
Rajasthan	Jaali Jharokha
Jammu & Kashmir	Back to Village – rehabilitate Kashmiri Pandits
NDRF	Disaster Relief Technology
Ministry of Finance	Financial Inclusion
Ministry of Commerce	Startup India

Padma Awardees 2020

- ❖ The government of India has announced the names of Padma Award winners on January 26, 2020.
- ❖ The Padma Awards are the highest civilian awards in India.

- ❖ The personalities of various fields like arts, science and engineering, social work, sports, civil service, literature and education etc are awarded.
- ❖ Former Union Minister Manohar Parrikar (Posthumous), Olympian badminton player PV Sindhu have been named for the Padma Bhushan award on the eve of Republic Day.
- ❖ These awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day and the President of India confers these awards in March/April at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- ❖ The Padma Awards are given in three categories:
 - "Padma Vibhushan" exceptional and distinguished service;
 - "Padma Bhushan" distinguished service of outstanding quality and
 - "Padma Shri" distinguished service in any field.

Name	Field	State/Country	Award
George Fernandes (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Bihar	Padma Vibhushan
Arun Jaitley (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Delhi	Padma Vibhushan
Sir Anerood Jugnauth GCSK	Public Affairs	Mauritius	Padma Vibhushan
M. C. Mary Kom	Sports	Manipur	Padma Vibhushan
Chhannulal Mishra	Art	Uttar Pradesh	Padma Vibhushan
Sushma Swaraj (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Delhi	Padma Vibhushan
Vishvesha teertha Swamiji Pejavara Adhokhaja Matha Udupi (Posthumous)	Others - Spiritualism	Karnataka	Padma Vibhushan

NAME	FIELD	STATE	AWARD
Manoj Das	Literature and Education	Puducherry	Padma Bhushan
Ms. Krishnammal Jagannathan	Social Work	Tamil Nadu	Padma Bhushan
Venu Srinivasan	Trade and Industry	Tamil Nadu	Padma Bhushan
Ms. Lalitha & Ms. Saroja Chidambaram (Duo)*	Art	Tamil Nadu	Padma Shri
Manohar Devadoss	Art	Tamil Nadu	Padma Shri
S. Ramakrishnan	Social Work	Tamil Nadu	Padma Shri
Kalee Shabi Mahaboob & Shri Sheik Mahaboob Subani (Duo)*	Art	Tamil Nadu	Padma Shri
Pradeep Thalappil	Science and Engineering	Tamil Nadu	Padma Shri
V. K. Munusamy Krishnapakthar	Art	Puducherry	Padma Shri

World Sustainable Development Summit

- ❖ The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) has started at Habitat Centre, New Delhi.
- ❖ The summit was earlier known as Delhi Sustainable Development Summit.
- ❖ WSDS is an annual event organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).
- ❖ It is being organized since 2001.
- ❖ The theme of the event is Theme: 'Towards 2030: Making the Decade Count'.



SPORTS

Chennai Marathon 2020

- ❖ Kenya's Felex Rop and India's K Suguna won the men's and women's full marathon respectively in the Chennai Marathon 2020.
- ❖ The 8th Edition of Chennai Marathon, Skechers Performance Chennai Marathon 2020 is the largest sporting event in Chennai and second largest in India.
- ❖ Previously it was known as “The Wipro Chennai Marathon”.
- ❖ It is Organized by Chennai Runners, a not-for-profit organization run by passionate runner-volunteers since 2006.



IMPORTANT DAYS

Global Family Day – January 01

- ❖ Global Family Day is also known as One Day of Peace and Sharing.
- ❖ The celebration of this holiday begins in 2007 at the initiative of the American World Family Foundation with the support of the US Congress and the UN General Assembly.
- ❖ The Family Day recognizes that we are a part global family that ultimately makes up the human race.



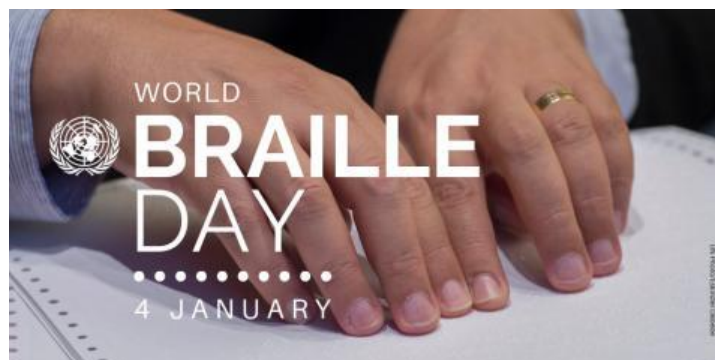
Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti – January 02

- ❖ India celebrated the birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh.
- ❖ He is considered to be the 10th Guru of Sikhs.
- ❖ He was born on January 5, 1666.
- ❖ Guru Gobind Singh founded Sikh Warrior community called Khalsa in 1699.
- ❖ He introduced five Ks in Sikhism.
- ❖ It is called the “Panj Kakar”, They are uncut hair (Kesh), an iron bracelet (kara), a wooden comb (Kangha), 100% cotton undergarment (Kachera) and iron dagger (Kirpan).
- ❖ In Sikhism, the holy text Dasam Granth is dedicated to Guru Gobind Singh.



World Braille Day 2020 – January 4

- ❖ World Braille Day is observed on January 4 every year across the world to mark the remembrance of Louis Braille.
- ❖ Louis Braille invented Braille script which helps the visually disability persons to read as well as to write.
- ❖ The aim is to spread awareness among society about the plight and cause of people with visual abilities.
- ❖ United Nations Observed First Official World Braille Day on 4th January 2019.



World Day for War Orphans – January 06

- ❖ This special day enables the international community to recognize the sufferings and plights of orphans during world War.
- ❖ This day is organised by French organisation, SOS Enfants en Detresses.



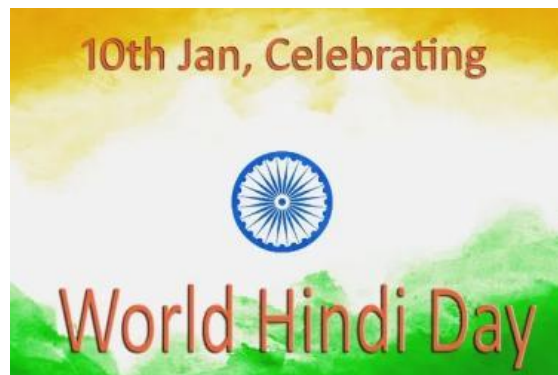
NRI Day - January 9, 2020

- ❖ Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is called as NRI (Non-Resident Indian) day.
- ❖ This is celebrated as Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa on the day in 1915.
- ❖ In 2019, the event was celebrated in Varanasi.
- ❖ The day is being marked since 2003 to recognize overseas Indians.
- ❖ The event is organized by the Ministry of External Affairs.
- ❖ It is sponsored by Confederation of Indian Industry.
- ❖ The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award is presented by the President of India to honour the exceptional NRIs.



World Hindi Day – January 10

- ❖ World Hindi day is commemorated every year to promote use of Hindi language abroad.
- ❖ Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Missions abroad observed the annually.
- ❖ The first World Hindi Conference was held in Nagpur on January 10, 2006.
- ❖ Hindi is the fifth most spoken language among the total languages spoken in the world.
- ❖ 'National Hindi Day' is celebrated on September 14 every year.
- ❖ The Constituent Assembly gave Hindi the status of official language on September 14, 1949.



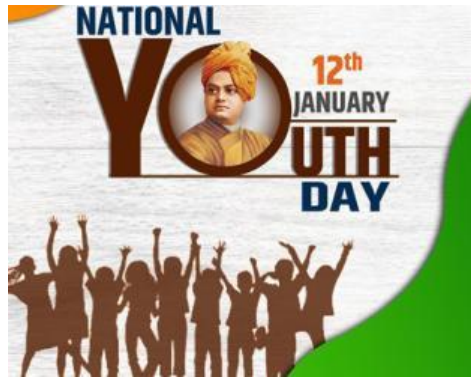
National Youth Day – January 12

- ❖ The Indian Government declared Swami Vivekananda's birthday, January 12, as National Youth Day in 1984.
- ❖ Its objective is to honor the great spiritual leader, and to encourage the youth in the country.
- ❖ It will be celebrated with the theme 'Channelizing Youth Power for Nation Building'.
- ❖ The National Youth Festival was to be held between January 12, 2020 and January 16, 2020 in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The 23rd National Youth Festival was organized by the Union Ministry of youth Affairs and State Government of Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The theme of the festival is Fit Youth Fit India.

About Vivekananda

- ❖ Narendra Nath Datta, famously known as Swami Vivekananda, was born on 12 January 1863.

- ❖ He represented India in the first Parliament of Religion held in Chicago in 1893.
- ❖ He established the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897 at Belur near Calcutta.
- ❖ Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had called Vivekananda the “maker of modern India.”



Siddha Day – January 13

- ❖ The 3rd Siddha day was celebrated on January 13th.
- ❖ Every year Agathiar birthday is being observed as SIDDHA DAY.
- ❖ The Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy of the Government of India coordinates and promotes research in the fields of Ayurveda and Siddha medicine.

Armed Forces Veterans Day – January 14

- ❖ The day is being celebrated since 2017.
- ❖ Every year, January 14 is marked as Armed Forces Veteran Day as the Field Marshal KM Cariappa, the first Commander-in-chief of Indian Armed Forces retired on the day.
- ❖ The day was initially called Armistice Day.
- ❖ The Day began its journey as Armistice Day in order to reflect upon heroism of those who died in country's service.
- ❖ Unlike Memorial Day, on armistice day, the world pays tribute to living veterans who were part of the war.

About

- ❖ Armistice Day is celebrated on November 11 all over the world.
- ❖ It was commemorated on November 11 to mark the armistice that was signed between Allies of World war I and Germany.



- ❖ The first Armistice Day was celebrated on November 11, 1919 marking the anniversary of the end of World War I and celebrating the brave soldiers who were part of World War I.
- ❖ However, in India the day was first marked through a resolution passed by the Congress in 1926.

IMD Foundation Day – January 15

- ❖ The IMD (Indian Meteorological Department) under the Ministry of Earth Science celebrated its 145th Foundation Day.
- ❖ It is the principle agency that makes weather forecasts, meteorological observations and seismological observations.
- ❖ The headquarters of IMD is in Delhi.
- ❖ It operates observatory station in India and in Antarctica.
- ❖ The major IMD centres are located in Guwahati, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, New Delhi and Nagpur.
- ❖ IMD is one of the six regional specialised Meteorological centres of WMO.
- ❖ Around 5 observatories of IMD received recognition from World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
- ❖ It includes Chennai, Mumbai, Pune, Thiruvananthapuram and Panjim.

72nd Indian Army Day – January 15

- ❖ It is observed in India, in recognition of Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa's taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India.
- ❖ This year, Captain Tania Shergill from the Corp of Signals was leading an all men contingent on Army Day Parade at Delhi.
- ❖ It will be the very first time when the woman army officer will be seen leading the Army Day Parade.
- ❖ 'Digital Transformation of Defense' is the Indian Army Day 2020 Theme.
- ❖ The Indian Army was formed in 1776 by the East India Company in Kolkata.
- ❖ Later, the Indian Army was founded almost 125 years ago by the British on April 1, 1895.
- ❖ Field Marshal K. M. Cariappa became the first Indian Army Chief of Independent India on 15 January 1949.
- ❖ The motto of the Indian Army is 'service before self'.

- ❖ According to the Global Fire Power Index 2017, India's army is considered the world's fourth strongest army.
- ❖ America, Russia, and China have a better army than India.



31st National Road Safety Week 2020

- ❖ The 31st Road Safety Week was observed from 11th January to 17th January 2020.
- ❖ The theme for National Road Safety Week 2020 is: 'Bringing Change Through Youth'.
- ❖ The Road Safety Week observance is being initiated by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.
- ❖ It is organised every year in January by the National Safety Council of India since 2011.
- ❖ On 15 March 2010, India's Union Cabinet approved the National Road Safety Policy based on the Sunder Committee's recommendation.
- ❖ In 2015, India became a signatory of the Brasília Declaration, committing to reduce its road deaths rate by 50 per cent by 2020.



Central Adoption Resource Authority - January 15

- ❖ Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) celebrated its 5th Annual Day in New Delhi.
- ❖ CARA is an apex body of Government of India for promoting and facilitating In-country Adoption.
- ❖ It is the designated Central Authority for regulating Inter-country Adoption.

**Central Adoption Resource Authority
(CARA)**

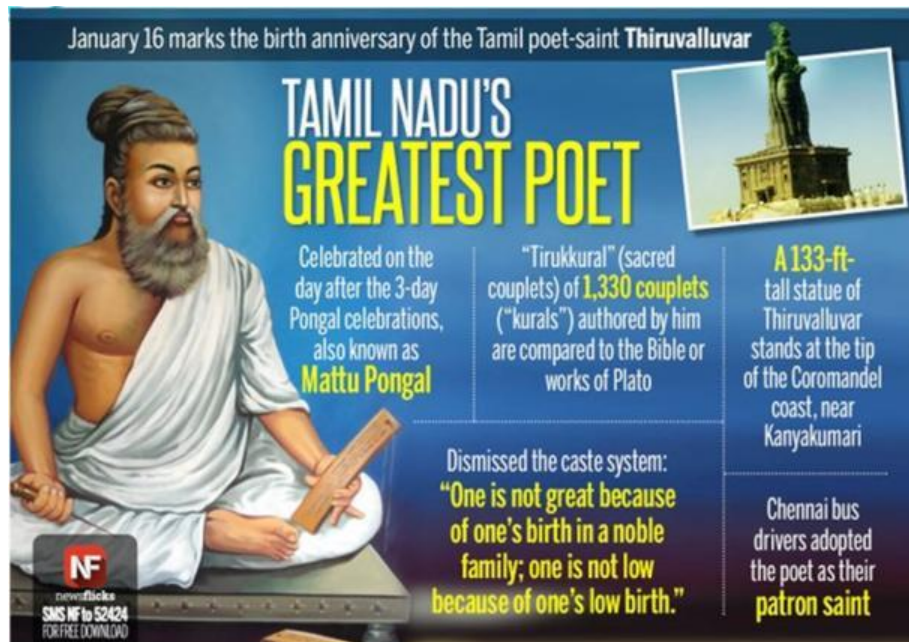
- The **Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)** is an Autonomous Body under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India and is responsible for both in-country and inter-country adoptions in India.
- Its objectives are to find an affectionate and caring family for every orphan/destitute/surrendered child in the country.
- It firstly ensures that no Indian child is given for inter-country adoption without him/her having been considered by Indian families residing in India.
- It also provides financial assistance to various NGOs and Government run Homes to promote quality child care to such children and place them in domestic adoption.

- ❖ The Hague Conventions on Inter-Country Adoptions, 1993 was ratified by the Government of India in 2003.
- ❖ CARA was designated as a Statutory Body on 15 Jan 2016, under the provisions of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.
- ❖ It functions under the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Thiruvalluvar Day – January 16

- ❖ A resolution to celebrate a day known as "Thiruvalluvar Day" for him by all Tamils was passed on 17 January 1935 by Kali Sivakannuswami Pillai and Padmashri V. Suppaya.
- ❖ The first Thiruvalluvar Day was celebrated on May 17 and 18, 1935 in Chennai Pachaiaappan College in the presence of Maraimalai Adigal, T.P. Meenakshisundaram and Thiru. V. Kalyanasundaram.
- ❖ In the present time, it is usually observed either on January 15 or 16 in Tamil Nadu and is a part of Pongal celebrations.

- ❖ Thiruvalluvar year, also known as the Valluvar year, is an officially recognized Tamil calendar system for use in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ When comparing it with the widely used Gregorian calendar, Thiruvalluvar year will have an additional 31 years.
- ❖ For instance, the year 2019 in Gregorian calendar way is 2050 in the Thiruvalluvar year.
- ❖ In 1971, Thiruvalluvar Year was released in the Tamil Gazette by M. Karunanidhi's DMK government and came into existence in 1972.
- ❖ At the Madurai World Tamil Conference in 1981, the then Chief Minister, M. G. Ramachandran, issued a formal order for official use of the same in all government documents.



National Immunization Day – January 19

- ❖ It was observed all over India as a part of Pulse Polio Programme, 2020.
- ❖ The day was observed with an aim to maintain the 'NO POLIO' status.
- ❖ The next round of National Immunization Day (NID) is to be held in March 10.

About

- ❖ The National Immunization Day are one of the four strategies that are recommended by the WHO to eradicate polio completely.
- ❖ According to WHO, the NID has to be conducted twice a year at a gap of 2 to 4 weeks.

Birth anniversary of Subhash Chandra Bose

- ❖ India celebrated 123rd birth anniversary of Subhash Chandra Bose.
- ❖ He was born on January 23, 1897.
- ❖ In order to commemorate Netaji's birth anniversary, The Government of India is inaugurating a temple at Varanasi in the name of the leader (Netaji Temple) with a Dalit woman as a chief priest.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Born January 23, 1897, Bose was one of 14 siblings ➤ Twice-elected president of the Congress, founder and president of the All India Forward Bloc, and founder of Provisional Govt of Free India ➤ Advocated armed struggle for India's independence ➤ Under house arrest before escaping from India in 1940, arrived in Germany 1941 ➤ Met Hitler and sought military help to fight against the British 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attempted to rid India of British rule during WWII by enlisting help of Nazi Germany and Japan ➤ Formed Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army) INA ➤ Moved to Japanese-held Sumatra in 1943, where he revamped INA, which fought alongside Japan in an unsuccessful bid to invade India ➤ Disappeared in August 1945 after last being seen at Taihoku airport. Believed to have died when his plane crashed
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- ❖ The prayers are to be performed to Bharat Mata at the temple.
- ❖ The temple is to be built in red, white and black colours.
- ❖ The red colour symbolizes revolution, black represents strength and white for peace.
- ❖ In 2017, the Government confirmed that the leader had died on August 18, 1945 in a plane crash.

National Girl Child Day - January 24

- ❖ It was initiated by Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2008.
- ❖ The aim of the day is to spread awareness about inequalities faced by girls in the country.
- ❖ The international day of girl child is celebrated on October 11 every year.
- ❖ The Women and Child Development Department will be observing the National Girl Child Week during January 24-30, 2020.

International Day of Education – January 24

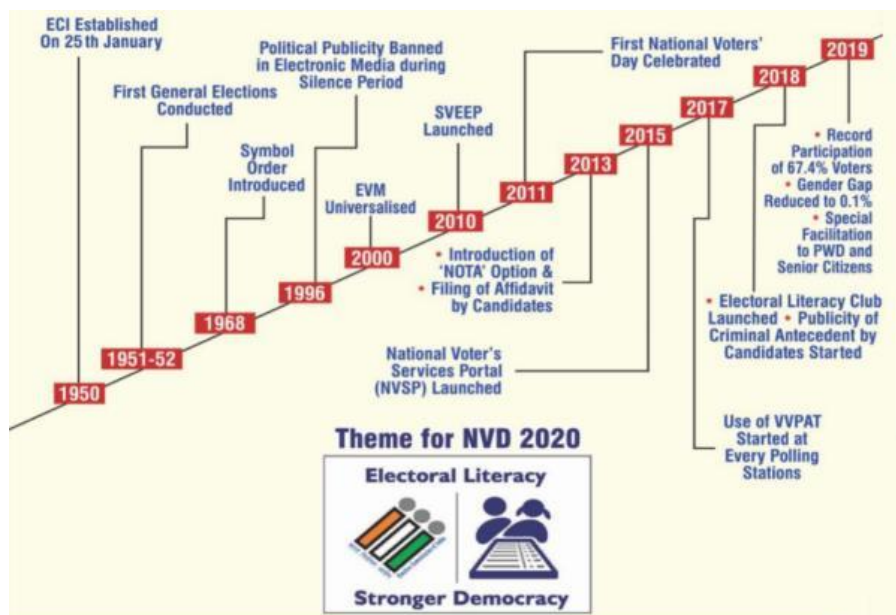
- ❖ It was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2018 to honor education and its centrality to human well-being and sustainable development.
- ❖ The 2020 theme is 'Learning for people, planet, prosperity and peace'.

About Education right

- ❖ The right to education is enshrined in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- ❖ The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, goes further to stipulate that countries shall make higher education accessible to all.
- ❖ Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030.

National Voters Day – January 25

- ❖ It is celebrated every year to mark the foundation day of Election Commission of India (ECI) on 25 January 1950.
- ❖ It is a constitutional body deriving its authority from Article 324 of the Constitution and Representation of the People Acts.
- ❖ The purpose of celebrating National Voters' Day is to make the youth aware of voting.



- ❖ The day was started in 2011.
- ❖ The theme of National Voters Day 2020 is 'Electoral Literacy for a Stronger Democracy.'

National Tourism Day – January 25

- ❖ It was established by the Ministry of Tourism to raise awareness of the importance of tourism for the country's economy.



- ❖ Nearly close to 6 per cent of India's total GDP was from travel and tourism.
- ❖ India also participates in the celebration of the UN World Tourism Day (September 27).

50th Himachal Pradesh Statehood Day – January 25

- ❖ It was on this day in 1971 that Himachal Pradesh became the 18th state of India.
- ❖ It was established in 1948 as a Chief Commissioner's Province within the Union of India.
- ❖ Himachal Pradesh became a Union Territory on 1 November 1956.

International Customs Day – January 26

- ❖ It will be dedicated to the contribution of Customs towards a sustainable future where social, economic, health and environmental needs are at the heart of our actions.
- ❖ Theme is "Customs fostering Sustainability for People, Prosperity and the Planet".
- ❖ It commemorates the day in 1953 when the inaugural session of the Customs Cooperation Council (CCC) was held in Brussels, Belgium.
- ❖ In 1994 the CCC was renamed World Customs Organization (WCO) and today custom organizations from 179 countries are WCO members.



- ❖ World Customs Organization is called as the only intergovernmental organization which solely highlights the customs matters.
- ❖ The WCO maintains the international Harmonized System (HS) goods nomenclature, and administers the technical aspects of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements on Customs Valuation and Rules of Origin.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day - January 27

- ❖ The United Nations Department of Global Communications marked the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of Holocaust.
- ❖ This year, 2020 marks 75th anniversary of the day.
- ❖ The Day was officially announced in November 2005 at the United Nations General Assembly.
- ❖ This International Day marks the ending of world war II.
- ❖ Theme: 75 Years after Auschwitz - Holocaust Education and Remembrance for Global Justice
- ❖ The day also marks the anniversary of Liberation of Auschwitz.
- ❖ The holocaust was the genocide of the European Jews between 1941 and 1945.

Data Privacy day – January 28

- ❖ This day marks the EU passing Data Protection Convention in 2006, called Convention 108.
- ❖ This day is observed all across the globe to disseminate privacy practices, risked or sensitive individuals and data privacy principles.

Lala Lajpat Rai Birth Anniversary - January 28

- ❖ India celebrated the legend Lala Lajpat Rai's 155th birth anniversary.
- ❖ His patriotism earned him titles such as "Punjab Kesari" and "Lion of Punjab".
- ❖ He was born on 28 January, 1865 in Punjab.
- ❖ He was one of the triumvirates of the Lal Bal Pal.
 - It includes Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab, Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra and Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal.
- ❖ He was an active participant of Hindu Reform Movements, Indian Independence Movements, Indian Nationalist Movements.
- ❖ Young men Bhagat Singh and Chandrasekhar Azad were greatly influenced by Rai.

- ❖ He was also a major participant of the protests against Simon commission, 1927.
- ❖ He founded several institutions and organizations such as Hisar Bar Council, Hisar Arya Samaj, Hisar Congress, National DAV Managing Committee.



World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day - January 30

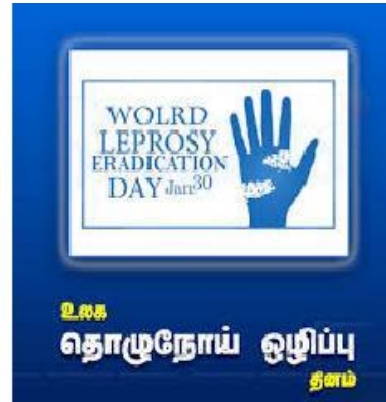
- ❖ The day creates awareness in addressing the tropical diseases.
- ❖ This is the first time World Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) Day that is being marked.
- ❖ The Neglected Tropical Diseases are caused by pathogens such as bacteria, helminths, viruses and protozoa.
- ❖ They are common in low-income countries of Asia, Africa and America.
- ❖ The common NTD of India is Lymphatic filariasis.



World Leprosy Day – January 30

- ❖ World Leprosy Day is observed on the last Sunday of January, seeks to increase public awareness about leprosy and focuses on the target of zero cases of leprosy-related disabilities in children.

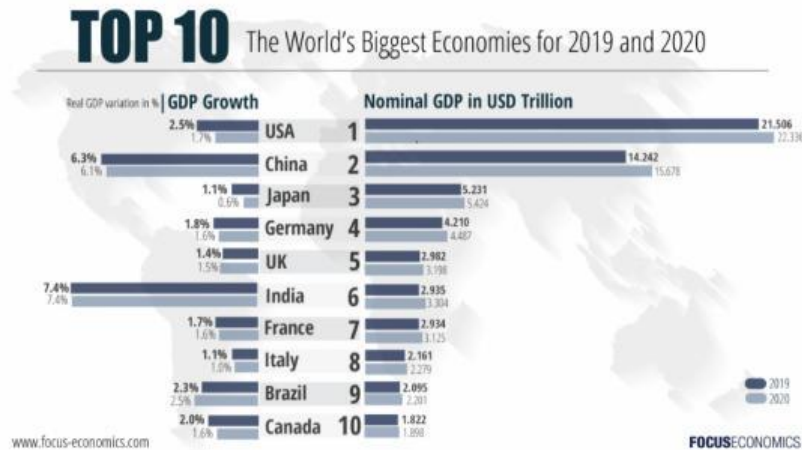
- ❖ In India, it is celebrated on the 30th January each year to commemorate the death of Mahatma Gandhi.
- ❖ This day was chosen as a tribute to the life of Gandhi who had a lifelong compassion for people affected by leprosy.
- ❖ World Leprosy Day 2020 theme is “Overturning the Stigma of Leprosy”.
- ❖ Leprosy is an infectious disease that causes severe, disfiguring skin sores and nerve damage in the arms, legs, and skin areas around the body.



MISCELLANEOUS

11th CEBR's report

- ❖ UK based Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) released its 11th annual report titled 'World Economic League Table 2020' (WELT 2020).
- ❖ According to the report, India is expected to overtake Germany as the fourth-largest economy in the world by 2026.
- ❖ It also estimated that India will overtake Japan as the third-largest economy by 2034.
- ❖ The report estimated that India, Japan and Germany will battle for the 3rd position in the next 15 years.
- ❖ USA will remain as the world's largest economy throughout 2020s and may be overtaken by China in 2033.



2020 - “Year of Nurse and Midwife”

- ❖ World Health Organization designated the year 2020 as the “Year of Nurse and Midwife” to achieve Universal Health Coverage.
- ❖ In order to honor the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, this year is celebrated.
- ❖ The organization is leading the development of “World Nursing Report” that is to be launched in 2020.

Florence Nightingale

- ❖ Florence Nightingale was an English Social reformer born in 1820.
- ❖ She was called “The Lady with the Lamp” for making rounds on wounded soldiers during war.
- ❖ Also, every year, the International Nurse Day is being celebrated by the International Council of Nurses on May 12 in her honour.



2020
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF THE NURSE AND
THE MIDWIFE



New born babies on January 01, 2020

- ❖ As per UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), India has recorded the highest number of births of 67,385 children on the first day of 2020 in the world.
- ❖ The list followed by China, Nigeria, Pakistan, Indonesia and the USA.
- ❖ A Total of 3,92,078 babies were born around the world.

North East Monsoon

- ❖ This year's Northeast monsoon ended on a high, with the season's total rainfall recorded remaining 30 per cent surplus.
- ❖ The India Meteorological Department (IMD) recognises October to December as the time for the northeast monsoon.
- ❖ During this period, rainfall is experienced over Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh, along with some parts of Telangana and Karnataka.
- ❖ The year 2019 was one of the most active North Indian Ocean cyclone seasons on record.
- ❖ There were eight cyclonic storms in and around India—the highest number of cyclones in a single year since 1976.

Year of Mobility – 2020

- ❖ The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) observes 2020 as the “Year of Mobility” for the welfare of the troops.
- ❖ It will focus on construction of residential units and implementation of welfare measures.

CISF

- ❖ The CISF was initially established under the CISF act, 1968.
- ❖ It was converted into armed force under an amendment to the act in 1983.
- ❖ It is the largest security system in the world.
- ❖ The Force is operated under Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

Conservation of Bibi Ka Maqbara

- ❖ The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will undertake scientific conservation of Bibi Ka Maqbara located in Aurangabad, Maharashtra.
- ❖ The maqbara was commissioned in 1660 by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in the memory of his wife Dilras Banu Begum.

- ❖ The structure is known as the 'Taj of the Deccan' because of its striking resemblance to the Taj Mahal.



Word of the Decade

- ❖ The linguists at the American Dialect Society in New Orleans, Louisiana –have chosen “They” as the “Word of the Decade”.
- ❖ The singular pronoun “They” is used as third-person plural pronoun to refer to those who do not identify with either male or female gender (non-binary gender).
- ❖ “They” was also adjudged as the word of the year in 2015.
- ❖ The American Dialect Society has picked only two “Word of the decade” winners till now - “web” for the 1990s decade and “Google” for 2000s.

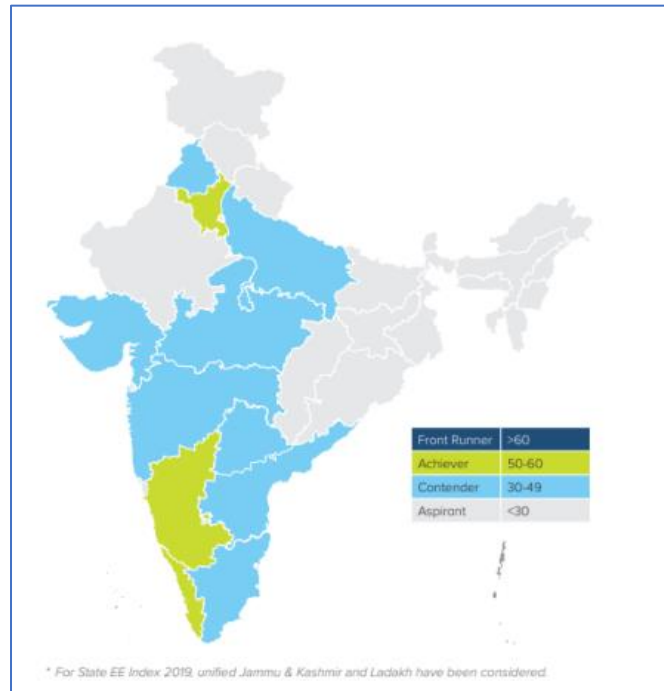
State Energy Efficiency Index - 2019

- ❖ Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) launched the State Energy Efficiency Index, 2019.
- ❖ The report was prepared considering the basic energy requirements such as coal, electricity, gas and oil.
- ❖ The report tracks the progress of Energy Efficiency initiatives in 36 states and Union Territories based on 97 indicators.
- ❖ Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Puducherry were the best performers (Achiever category) according to the report.
- ❖ Manipur, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir were the least performers (Aspirant category).
- ❖ This year, BEE has included Energy Conservation Building Code as one of its indicators.

Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)

- ❖ The BEE is a statutory body under the Ministry of Power.

- ❖ It assists in developing policies and strategies with the primary objective of reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy.



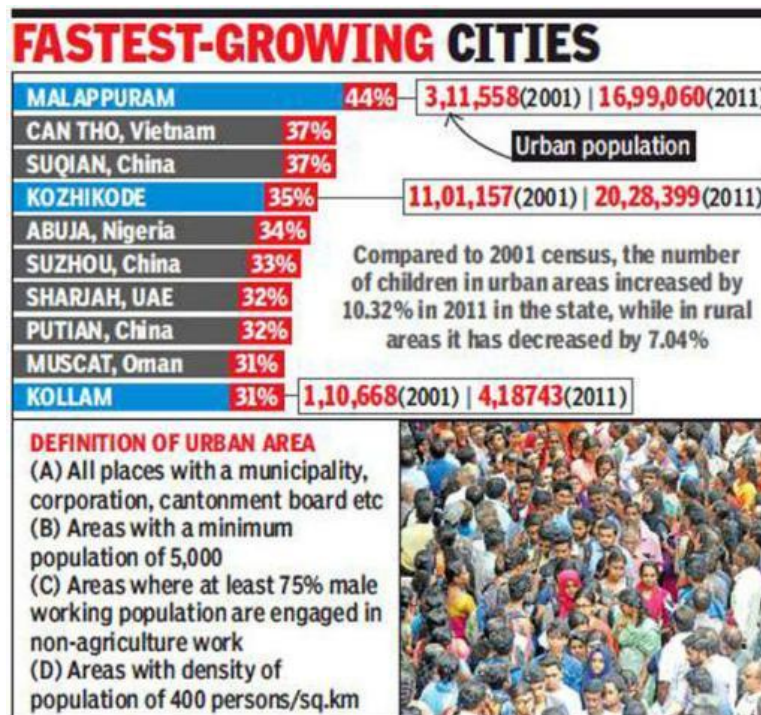
Colonial structures – Kolkata

- ❖ Prime Minister dedicated Old Currency Building, Metcalfe House, Belvedere House and Victoria Memorial Hall of Kolkata to the country.
- ❖ The buildings were renovated by Ministry of Culture.
- ❖ The RBI operated from the Currency building till 1937 after which it was abandoned.
- ❖ The building was named after Lord Metacalfe, the Governor General of India.
- ❖ The Belvedere House was Mir Jafar's palace.

Fastest growing urban regions/cities

- ❖ The Economist Intelligence Unit released the latest ranking based on fastest growing urban regions/ fastest growing cities in the world.
- ❖ As per the report 3 of the cities in Kerala were ranked in the top 10 places.
- ❖ Malappuram city of Kerala was ranked 1st in the list, while Kerala's Kozhikode and Kollam cities were ranked in the 4th and 10th place respectively.
- ❖ Can Tho region in Vietnam at 2nd spot and Suqian in China in the 3rd spot.

- ❖ The list was compiled on the basis of the data provided by the United Nations Population Division.



Forbes India's 20 people

- ❖ Forbes India's list of '20 people to watch in the 2020' released with 7 Persons from India in the list.
- ❖ US based Indian origin, Hasan Minhaj, topped in the list, while Kenya's Marathon runner Eliud Kipchoge in on the 20th place.
- ❖ The following 7 Indians occupied in various places

Name	Position	Profession
Aditya Mittal	2	CFO and CEO, ArcelorMittal Europe
Godrej family	6	Adi Godrej
Dushyant Chautala	7	Deputy chief minister, Haryana
Mahua Moitra	9	Lok Sabha MP, Trinamool Congress
Prashant Kishor	12	Poll strategist and JD(U) national vice-president
Garima Arora	14	Chef, the first Indian woman to receive a Michelin star
Kanhaiya Kumar	16	Former JNU Students' Union president

Henley Passport Index 2020

- ❖ As per the index based on the data obtained from International Air Transport Association, the Henley passport Index 2020 was released by Henley & Partners.
- ❖ Indian passport ranked at the 84th spot among the world's most powerful passports list.
- ❖ India faced a drop by 2 places as it ranked 82nd in 2019.
- ❖ India provides visa free access to 58 countries.
- ❖ The list was topped by Japan while Afghanistan's passport in the bottom.



New Words in Oxford dictionary

- ❖ Aadhaar, hartal, dabba and shaadi are among the 26 new Indian-English words that have been made into the latest edition of the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (OALD).
- ❖ These new inclusions take the number of Indian-English words to 384 in the 10th edition of the dictionary which features a staggering 86,000 words.
- ❖ The dictionary chose 'climate emergency' as the Word of the Year 2019.
- ❖ The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) is the principal historical dictionary of the English language, published by Oxford University Press (OUP) of the United Kingdom.

Bharat Parv 2020

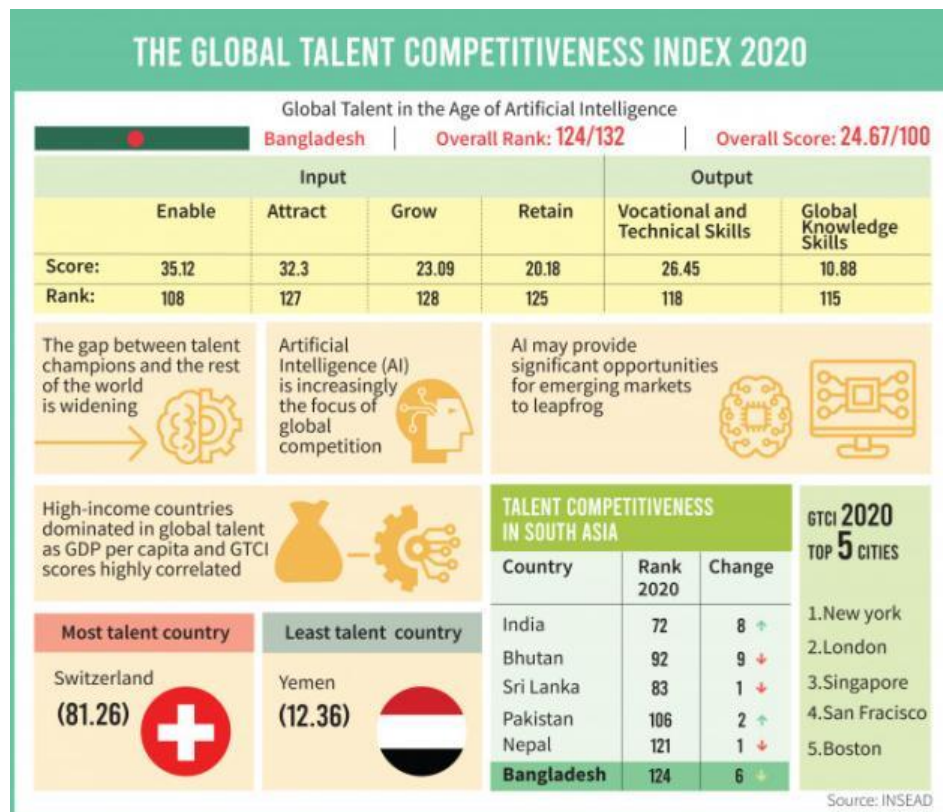
- ❖ Bharat Parv, 2020, the programme to celebrate the Spirit of India, started at Red Fort in New Delhi and will be continued till 31st January, 2020.
- ❖ Theme of the Program is “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat” & “Celebrating 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi”.
- ❖ The objective of Bharat Parv is to encourage people to visit different tourist places of the country and to inculcate the spirit of ‘Dekho Apna Desh’.

Global Talent Competitive Index 2020

- ❖ Global Talent Competitive Index (GTCI) for 2020 has been released at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- ❖ INSEAD Business School released the GTCI report with the help of Google and Adecco Group.
- ❖ This year India climbed eight ranks and secured the 72nd rank in the index.
- ❖ Switzerland is in the first place while the USA and Singapore grabbed the second and third positions respectively.

About GTCI

- ❖ GTCI launched in 2013.



- ❖ GTCI is an annual benchmarking report that measures the ability of countries to compete for talent.
- ❖ GTCI gives ranking based on six indicators – attract, retain, enable, grow, vocational skills and global knowledge skills.

NITI Aayog's Aspirational District Ranking

- ❖ NITI Aayog has released the ranking of Aspirational Districts of the country for the month of December 2019.
- ❖ Chandauli district of Uttar Pradesh (UP) has topped the list of aspiring districts in December 2019 with the score of 57.6.
- ❖ The rankings took into account incremental progress made by over 112 aspirational districts across six developmental areas in December 2019.
- ❖ The six developmental areas are Health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and basic infrastructure.
- ❖ The Aspirational districts programme was launched in 2018.
- ❖ Aspirational districts are ranked every month.

S.No	District	State
1	Chandauli	Uttar Pradesh
2	Balangir	Odisha
3	Y.S.R.	Andhra Pradesh
4	Sahibganj	Jharkhand
5	Hailakandi	Assam



Budget formulation - transparency report

- ❖ According to the survey conducted by Transparency International, Assam tops in terms of budget formulation followed by Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The states that were ranked lower in terms of budget formulation are Goa, Maharashtra and Punjab.
- ❖ The international Non-Governmental Organization measures and prevents criminal activities arising due to corruption.
- ❖ It releases Global Corruption Index annually.
- ❖ Its headquarters is located in Germany.

