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CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

Awards and Honours

Name	Award name	Additional Information
Tony Joseph	Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize 2019	Tony Joseph, a journalist-author won against four other debut writers and the award was announced Shakti Bhatt Foundation.
Lionel Messi	Ballon d'Or Prize 2019	Lionel Messi won a record sixth men's Ballon d'Or award at a ceremony in Paris, beating Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk to take the honours.
New Zealand	2019 Christopher Martin-Jenkins Spirit of Cricket award	England team captain Kane Williamson was presented with the award during the drawn second Test between his team and England.
Joaquin Phoenix	PETA's 2019 Person of the Year	Phoenix's dedication to animal rights is just one of the many reasons the actor won the prestigious honor, along with his veganism at the age of 3 after seeing a fish caught and killed.
Priyanka Chopra	UNICEF's Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award	Priyanka Chopra has been associated with UNICEF for the past 15 years as a Goodwill Ambassador.
Lini Puthussery	National Florence Nightingale Award	Lini Puthussery, the nurse from Kerala who died due to Nipah virus that she contracted while treating a patient last year during the Nipah outbreak
Davi Kopenawa	Alternate Nobel Prize for protecting the Amazon rainforest	He has led his people's 20-year campaign to protect their Amazonian territory.
Duncan Hamilton	William Hill Sports Book of the Year	He was presented with the £30,000 cash prize for his biography .
Priyanka Chopra	Top star of Indian cinema and television series in 2019	List released by the global film and TV website IMDb.
Ruby Ahluwalia	Change Makers Award	Ruby Ahluwalia, Founder of Sanjeevani – Life Beyond Cancer was conferred with the Change Maker award at the just concluded Grant Thornton SABERA Awards 2019.

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

Zozibini Tunzi	Miss Universe 2019	Miss South Africa Zozibini Tunzi was crowned as Miss Universe 2019 at the event held at Tyler Perry Studios in Atlanta, United States.
Dr Padmeswar Gogoi	Siu-Ka-Pha Award	The Award is instituted by the central committee of different ethnic groups and organisations of Golaghat district.
Abiy Ahmed	Nobel Peace Prize	Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has received the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to achieve international peace and co-operation.
Greta Thunberg	TIME's 2019 Person of the Year	"Thunberg has become the biggest voice on the biggest issue facing the planet—and the avatar of a broader generational shift in our culture", TIME magazine said.
Greta Thunberg, Davi Kopenawa Yanomami, Guo Juanmei, Aminatou Haidar	Right Livelihood Award	Four people won the Right Livelihood Award for the year 2019.
Ashleigh Barty	WTA Player of the Year	Australian Ashleigh Barty, whose breakout 2019 campaign included French Open crown and world number one ranking, was named the WTA Player of the Year.
Angela Merkel	Forbes most-powerful women	German Chancellor Angela Merkel has topped Forbes' list of world's most-powerful women for the ninth year running. Following Merkel was Christine Lagarde, president of the European Central Bank.
Toni-Ann Singh	Miss World 2019	Jamaica's Toni-Ann Singh was crowned Miss World 2019 at the pageant's finale held in London.
Suman Rao	Miss World Asia 2019	Rajasthan's Suman Rao, who had represented India at the Miss World 2019 beauty pageant, was crowned Miss World Asia.
Deepika Padukone, Jin Xing, Theaster Gates, and Lynette Wallworth.	26th Crystal Award	World Economic Forum (WEF) has announced 4 winners for the 26th Crystal Award. The

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

		winners will be awarded during the opening session of the WEF Annual Meeting 2020 at Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, on January 20, 2020.
Southern Railway	energy conservation awards	The electrical department of Southern Railway had bagged three national energy conservation awards from Bureau of Energy Efficiency.
Ellyse Perry	2019 Best cricketer and ODI player	Australian wicketkeeper Alyssa Healy was named the Best T20I Player. The top T20 cricketer won the title for a second straight year.
B. P. Raju	India Cyber Cop of the Year 2019 award	He won the award for investigating and cracking a fraud case in an online entrance exam conducted by an engineering college in Rajasthan.
Shashi Tharoor	Sahitya Akademi Award 2019	The Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha from Thiruvananthapuram won the prestigious award for his book An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India. The book was published in 2016.
BHEL plant	India Green Energy Award	The 7.5 MWp Solar Photo Voltaic Plant functioning in BHEL Tiruchi has won for the Corporation Indian Green Energy Award 2019 instituted by the Indian Federation of Green Energy (IFGE).
R. Nagaswamy	Silver Jubilee International Conference of Art	Renowned archaeologist R. Nagaswamy was honoured at the Silver Jubilee International Conference of Art held in Dhaka by Bangladesh Culture Minister K.M. Khalid. He was honoured for the contribution of Nagaswamy to art, archaeology, history, and culture.
Amitabh Bachchan	Dadasaheb Phalke award	Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu will give away the award in New Delhi. The award, named after the father of Indian cinema, Dhundiraj

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

		Govind Phalke, was instituted in 1969.
Anoop Mishra	Army Design Bureau Excellence Award	Indian Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat felicitated Major Anoop Mishra with prestigious Army Design Bureau (ADB) Excellence Award for indigenously developing 'Sarvatra Kavach', a bulletproof jacket that can provide protection against various ammunition including that from sniper steel bullets.
Kamareddy district of Telangana	Unicef-2019 Award for Swachh Bharat implementation	Kamareddy district on top in the country among other districts in construction of individual sanitary lavatories, swachh darpan wall paintings, swachh survekshan, swachh sundar shouchalay and many other activities.
Malala Yousafzai	famous teenager of the decade: UN	The UN review stated that from a young age, Yousafzai was known for speaking out in favour of education for girls. She has also been extremely vocal about the atrocities committed by the Taliban on common people.
Ilaiyaraja	Harivarasanam award for 2020	The award, comprising a cash prize of ₹1 lakh, citation and a plaque, will be presented at a function at Sabarimala Sannidhanam next month. Tourism minister Kadakampally Surendran announced the award.

Appointments

Name	Designation	Extra Information
Shri Hari Mohan	Chairman, Ordnance Factory Board	A 1982-batch Indian Ordnance Factories' Service (I.O.F.S.) officer with Post Graduate Degree in Mechanical Engineering, Shri Hari Mohan had been a topper of University of Allahabad & University of Pune while obtaining his Bachelor &

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

		Masters in Mechanical Engineering.
Soma Roy Burman	new Controller General of Accounts	Smt. Soma Roy Burman, a 1986-batch Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS) Officer, took charge as the new Controller General of Accounts here. Smt.
Masatsugu Asakawa	president of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)	Asakawa, who is currently special advisor to Japan's prime minister and finance minister, was unanimously elected by the bank's board of governors. He is to assume office as the ADB's 10th president on Jan. 17.
Sundar Pichai	CEO at Alphabet	Alphabet is the parent company of Google and it was created in 2015 as a part of corporate restructuring.
Siddharth Mittal	Biocon CEO, joint MD	Mittal has been elevated from his position as chief financial officer (CFO) and president – finance, in the company.
Rajendran Chinna Veerappan	CSB Bank – MD & CEO	Veerappan has been on CSB board since November 2016 and his tenure was to end on 8 December. The board of directors of the bank have appointed for another three years with effect from 9 December till 8 December 2022.
K Vijay Kumar	Senior Security Advisor in the Home Ministry	He will be advising the Home Ministry headed by Amit Shah on security-related matters of Union Territory of JK and Left Wing Extremism (LWE).
Ripu Daman Bevlī	Plogging Ambassador of India	The minister also launched the nation-wide Plogging Ambassador Mission under which, Indians who have been running and cleaning their cities, towns or districts, will be nominated as Plogging Ambassadors of their region.
GS Lakshmi	match referee to oversee a men's One Day International (ODI)	Former India cricketer GS Lakshmi has become the first woman match referee to oversee a men's One Day

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

		International (ODI). She officiated the opening match of the third series of the World Cup League 2 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
K Vijay Kumar	senior security advisor - in the Union Home Ministry headed by Amit Shah	The 1975-batch officer of the Indian Police Service (IPS) will "advise the ministry on security-related matters of Union Territory of JK and Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected States," the order said.
Girish Chandra Chaturvedi	Chairman National Stock Exchange	The NSE chairman was lying vacant since January 2019 when then incumbent Chairman of NSE Ashok Chawla resigned in the middle of charges of corruption in Aircel-Maxis case.
Sanna Marin	Prime Minister – Finland	The 34-year-old Sanna Marin, was selected by her Social Democratic party of Finland to become the country's youngest prime minister ever, taking over after resignation of outgoing leader Antti Rinne.
Suniel Shetty	National Anti-Doping Agency - brand ambassador	NADA hopes that his celebrity status would help its efforts to clean up sports in the country from the menace.
Salman Khan	Brand Ambassador – Pepsico	Bollywood star Salman Khan is returning to the cola space after a gap of three years, this time to endorse brand Pepsi, a move that has surprised a few experts. The two-year deal is estimated at Rs 15 crore, two external industry officials said.
Ravi Mittal	I&B Secretary	Ravi Mittal will be the new Information and Broadcasting Secretary. Mr Mittal, who belongs to 1986 batch of Bihar Cadre of Indian Administrative Service, will replace Mr Amit Khare who has been appointed as the new secretary of the Department of Higher Education.

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

Shrikant Madhav Vaidya	Indian Oil Corporation Chief	Vaidya is presently the Director (Finance) at IndianOil. He is slated to take over from Sanjiv Singh, who retires in June 2020.
TV Somanathan	expenditure secretary in the finance ministry	Somanathan will replace Girish Chandra Murmu, who was named the first lieutenant governor of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir in October.
Ankur Garg	Air Asia - Chief Commercial Officer	AirAsia India has appointed Ankur Garg as its Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) to manage operations related to network and revenue management, marketing and sales, and cargo.
Angarai Natarajan Sethuraman	additional director on Reliance Capital board	Sethuraman, who is currently Group President of Reliance Group, and handles corporate and regulatory affairs, has been appointed an additional director with effect from December 13.
RJ Duckworth	Senior Air Staff Officer , Western Air Command , IAF	He has over 3000 hours of experience on various fighter and trainer aircraft and is a Qualified Flying Instructor . He is also an alumnus of Defence Services Staff College Wellington and the National Defence College.
Aditya Mittal	chairman of Essar Steel	ArcelorMittal holds 60% of Essar Steel while Nippon Steel owns the rest. Essar Steel's CEO Dilip Oommen will continue to run the operations of the company.
Mallika Srinivasan	Global Board of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's U.S.- India Business Council	This appointment takes immediate effect as she joins a prestigious list of CEOs and executives on USIBC's 35-member board.
Kathrin Frauscher	BMW Financial Services - MD & CEO	BMW India has appointed Kathrin Frauscher as the new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of BMW Financial Services India.

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

Anand Mahindra	Non-Executive Chairman of M&M	Billionaire Anand Mahindra will transition to the role of Non-Executive Chairman at Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) with effect from April 1, 2020, to comply with SEBI guidelines.
CV Ramulu	Telangana – Lokayukta	Governor Tamilisai Sounderarajan has issued the orders to this effect. Former Law Secretary V Niranjan Rao has been appointed as Upa Lokayukta.
Devesh Srivastava	Chairman and Managing director of General Insurance Corporation of India	Srivastava name was recommended by Banks Board Bureau in August this year, and the government issued notification for his appointment.
Manuel Marrero Cruz	Cuba – Prime Minister	In Cuba, President Miguel Díaz-Canel has appointed Manuel Marrero Cruz as the country's first prime minister in more than 40 years.
Monisha Ghosh	Chief Technology Officer (CTO) at US' Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	She will advise the Commission and its Indian-American Chairman Ajit Pai on engineering and technology issues. Ghosh has been the Program Director at the National Science Foundation since 2017.
Gulzar Ahmed	27th Pak Chief Justice	He takes over from Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, whose tenure came to an end after serving the country's top judge from January this year.
Harsh Vardhan Shringla	Foreign secretary	The Appointments Committee of the cabinet officially announced Shringla's appointment, making him the 33rd foreign secretary of the country.
Niranjan Hiranandani	Assocham president	Hiranandani Group Managing Director Niranjan Hiranandani has taken over as the new president of industry body Assocham. Hiranandani succeeds Welspun Group Chairman Balkrishan Goenka.

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

PR Ravi Mohan	ESAF Small Finance Bank – Chairman	Mohan comes with a rich experience of top leadership in Indian and international banking sectors and was engaged in providing technical assistance on banking supervision and financial stability to 13 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.
Sangita Reddy	FICCI president	Sangita Reddy, joint managing director, Apollo Hospitals Group will succeed Sandeep Somany as the president of industry chamber Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in 2020.
Hemant Soren	Jharkhand CM	In Jharkhand, Grand Alliance leader Hemant Soren will take oath as Chief Minister on the 29th of this month.
Bipin Rawat	first Chief of Defence Staff	CDS will function as a single-point Adviser to the government on matters related to the military and will focus on better synergy between the Army, Air Force and the Navy. General Rawat retired as Army Chief.
Manoj Mukund Naravane	28th Chief of Army Staff	In his 37 years of service, General Naravane served in numerous command and staff appointments in peace, field and highly active counter-insurgency environments in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast.

Banking and Finance

DHFL becomes 1st financial services firm to be taken to NCLT

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has referred Dewan Housing Finance Corp. Ltd (DHFL) to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for insolvency proceedings, making it the first financial services player to go NCLT for a possible debt resolution.
- DHFL has a debt of Rs.83,873 crore. As per the statutory inspection of DHFL conducted by the National Housing Bank, the DHFL showed a serious deterioration in its finances. It had public deposits of Rs.6,188 crore as on 6 July 2019, down from Rs.10,166.72 crore as on 31 March 2018.

MobiKwik and Aditya Birla health insurance introduce Cancer Protect Cover

- Aditya Birla Health Insurance Co Limited (ABHICL), the health insurance subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL), a significant non-bank financial services conglomerate, announced its strategic alliance with MobiKwik, India's leading fintech platform to offer simple sachet health insurance products to a Billion Indians.

IFC to invest USD 200 million in Mahindra Finance

- World Bank Group arm IFC on Monday said it has anchored an investment round of USD 200 million (about Rs 1,433 crore) in Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services NSE -0.42 % to create a dedicated pool of financing for MSMEs in low-income states.
- At least USD 100 million will be earmarked for women-owned micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), according to a release.

Walmart launches credit card in partnership with HDFC Bank

- Walmart India, in partnership with HDFC Bank, launched a co-branded credit card exclusively for members of its Best Price Modern Wholesale "B2B Cash & Carry" stores, offering "free credit up to 50 days."
- The card was launched here at Best Price Store by Krish Iyer, president and CEO, Walmart India and Parag Rao, Country Head, Payments Business and Marketing, HDFC Bank.

HDFC Life's strategic tie-up with Paytm aims to increase life insurance penetration

HDFC Life, one of India's leading life insurance companies, announced its tie-up with Paytm. This partnership will enable Paytm customers to purchase innovative life insurance products offered by HDFC Life, via the mobile commerce platform.

This tie-up is yet another milestone in HDFC Life's ongoing journey to form strategic partnerships thereby making life insurance easily accessible to every Indian.

SBI cuts external benchmark-based rate by 25 bps

The country's largest lender, State Bank of India, today announced a reduction in its external benchmark-based rate by 25 basis points to 7.80 per cent from 8.05 per cent.

The Reserve Bank of India has adopted the Repo rate to be the External Benchmark rate. And the Repo rate is the interest rate, at which the RBI lends funds to the banks.

RBI buys Rs 10,000 cr worth long-term govt securities in 2nd special OMO

The Reserve Bank of India bought 10,000 crore rupees of long-term government securities and sold 8,501 crore rupees of three short-term bonds. RBI announced to purchase and sell government securities simultaneously under Open Market Operations (OMO) for 10,000 crore rupees each.

The RBI offered to sell four securities in the auction. Open Market Operations (OMO) An open market operation (OMO) activity by the central bank to give liquidity in its currency to a bank or a group of banks.

Ashok Leyland joins hands with Yes Bank for vehicle financing

Hinduja group flagship firm Ashok Leyland said it has inked a pact with Yes Bank for vehicle finance for a period of two years. The companies have inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) regarding the partnership.

Government to infuse Rs 8,655 crore to Allahabad Bank, IOB and UCO Bank

The government of India approved the release of Rs 8,655 crore as fresh capital to three public sector banks. The bank includes Allahabad Bank, Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) and UCO Bank. The infusion did for preferential allotment of shares.

The Fresh capital amounting to Rs 2,153 crore allocated to Allahabad Bank, Rs 2,142 crore to UCO Bank and Rs 4,630 crore to Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) for preferential allotment of shares.

Ashok Leyland, Citicorp Finance join hands for financing commercial vehicles

Hinduja Group's flagship firm Ashok Leyland on Thursday said it has partnered with Citicorp Finance India Ltd for financing commercial vehicles.

The company has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Citicorp Finance to enter into a strategic financing partnership for two years, to offer customised financial solutions to customers across India, Ashok Leyland said in a statement. Under the MoU, Citicorp Finance will be a preferred financier for providing finance to the customers buying Ashok Leyland vehicles, it added.

RBI directs large co-op banks to report all exposures above Rs.5 crore

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has directed large cooperative banks to report all aggregate exposures of Rs.5 crores and more to Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC). The move is aimed at **early recognition of financial distress**.

SBI to launch OTP-based ATM cash withdrawal from January 1

With ATM-related frauds on the rise, banks are introducing ways to protect their customers from tricksters. The country's largest public sector lender, the State Bank of India (SBI), via a tweet on December 26, said that it will introduce a one-time password (OTP)-based cash withdrawal system for its ATMs. The bank said that this facility will be available for transactions above Rs 10,000 between 8 pm and 8 am.

Mastercard acquires RiskRecon to boost AI-based cyber security

Mastercard announced an agreement to acquire RiskRecon, a provider of artificial intelligence and data analytics solutions to help customers enhance their cyber security capabilities.

RiskRecon's scanning and evaluation technologies will help companies better protect payment data and intellectual property. Beyond working with Mastercard, the firm will continue to provide solutions to companies in other industries, including healthcare and manufacturing.

ADB 490 million dollars loan to upgrade Indian state roads

- Asian Development Bank and the Government of India signed a 490 million dollar loan for public-private partnerships. Around thousand six hundred kilometers of state highways and major district roads from single-lane to two-lane widths in Madhya Pradesh.
- The 286 million dollars investment mobilized through private sector participation under the PPP modality. The rural roads and national highways and up-gradation of these roads under the project will improve rural and peri-urban connectivity in the state and improve access to markets and better services.

Pak signs pact with World Bank for financing Khyber Pass Economic Corridor project

- Isl Pakistan and the World Bank has signed a project agreement worth \$406.6 million for financing the Khyber Pass Economic Corridor (KPEC) project with an aim to promote economic development.
- The signing ceremony was held at the Economic Affairs Division, Islamabad, The Express Tribune reported.

HDFC Bank crosses \$100 bn market cap in intraday trading

- HDFC Bank Ltd crossed \$100 billion market capitalization in intraday trading, becoming only the third company in the country to achieve this milestone.
- However, it closed below the \$100 billion mark at \$99.5 billion. It is now in the league of Reliance Industries Ltd, which has a market value of \$140.74 billion, and Tata Consultancy Services Ltd that has a market capitalization of \$114.60 billion. It now ranks 110th in the world's most valued firms.

RBI to buy, sell govt bonds worth Rs 10,000 crore

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will simultaneously purchase and sell government securities worth Rs 10,000 crore under a special Open Market Operation (OMO).
- Such exercises are done by the central bank when the proceeds from sale of short-term securities are used to buy long-term government securities or bonds in a bid to bring down interest rates on long-term securities.

HDFC becomes the 5th firm to cross Rs 4 lakh crore in market cap

- Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) became the fifth company to cross Rs 4 lakh crore in market capitalisation on December 12, 2019.

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- Oil-retail-to-telecom major Reliance Industries retained its top slot with a market cap of Rs 9.93 lakh crore followed by top Indian IT company TCS (Rs 7.8 lakh crore), second largest private sector lender HDFC Bank (Rs 6.9 lakh crore) and FMCG major Hindustan Unilever (Rs 4.3 lakh crore).

HDFC Bank becomes first bank to cross Rs 7 lakh crore market cap

- HDFC Bank, the country's largest private sector lender, has joined the Rs 7 lakh crore market capitalisation (M-cap) league, making it only the third Indian company to do so after Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries and Tata Consultancy Services. It is the first bank to achieve the feat.

Mastercard ties-up with Federal Bank for identity check security for digital transactions

- Global payments technology major Mastercard has joined hands with Federal Bank to provide an additional layer of security for digital transactions. Mastercard has entered into a partnership with Federal Bank to offer identity check to the bank's cardholders, the company said in an announcement.

SBI announces reduction in one-year MCLR by 10 basis points

- Country's largest lender State Bank of India has announced the reduction in its marginal cost of fund based lending rate (MCLR) by 10 basis points across all one-year products.
- This is the eighth consecutive cut in MCLR by the lender this fiscal. The new one-year MCLR has been cut to 7.90 per cent from 8 per cent.

IEPFA signed MoU with Bank of Baroda for Investor awareness

- The exercise aims to help various investors who often fall prey to tempting offers for investments and Ponzi schemes. The MoU will spread customer awareness and investor education by strengthening ties with IEPFA.
- The MoU is expected to inculcate the habit of educating oneself among the stakeholders and potential investors. It will form a strategic partnership to help people to refrain from falling prey to fraudulent schemes.

NEFT transactions to be made 24x7 from December 16

- Bank customers will be able to transfer funds through NEFT around the clock on all days including weekends and holidays from December 16, the Reserve Bank of India announced on Friday.
- These transactions after the usual banking hours are set to be automated initiated using 'Straight Through Processing (STP)' modes by the banks. The existing discipline for crediting the beneficiary's account or returning the transaction within 2 hours of settlement to the originating bank will also continue, the central bank said in a press statement.

ManipalCigna Health Insurance Launches Value-For-Money 'Super Top Up' Plan

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- ManipalCigna Health Insurance Company Limited, a joint venture between Manipal Group, an eminent player in the field of healthcare delivery and higher education, U.S. based global health service leader, Cigna Corporation (NYSE: CI), and Indian conglomerate TTK Group, announced the launch of 'ManipalCigna Super Top Up' health insurance plan.
- The product is specially designed to suit an individual's and a family's additional healthcare needs especially in times when medical expenses are getting beyond everyone's reach.

Axis Bank CFO Jairam Sridharan resigns

- Axis Bank said that its group executive and chief financial officer (CFO) Jairam Sridharan has resigned. "He would like to pursue other career opportunities and as such has resigned from the services of the bank," the bank said in a statement.
- Mr Sridharan will continue to serve as the group executive & chief financial officer of the bank under his notice period of three months, Axis Bank added. The private bank said it has initiated a succession plan for finding a replacement.

IRDAI Approves True North's Stake Purchase In Max Bupa Health Insurance

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has approved Max India's divestment of 51 per cent stake in Max Bupa Health Insurance Company to private equity firm True North.
- The all-cash transaction announced in February valued Max Bupa at an enterprise value of Rs 1,001 crore. Bupa, the existing joint venture partner in Max Bupa, remains committed to the joint venture and will continue to play an active role as before through its board positions and knowledge exchange initiatives, according to an official statement.

RBL Bank to raise ₹826 cr. from 5 investors

- The board of private sector lender RBL Bank has decided to raise ₹826 crore equity capital from five investors to boost its capital base. The bank will issue 24.24 million shares to these investors at ₹340.7 a piece, the bank said in a communication in the stock exchange.

Indian Affairs

DPIIT invites applications for first ever National Startup Awards 2020

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry has announced institution of first ever National Startup Awards. The award was launched by Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry and Railways. The applications for the awards are open till 31 December 2019.

PM Modi extends greetings to BSF personnel on its Raising Day

- On the occasion of BSF Raising Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has extended greetings to Border Security Force personnel for diligently protecting the borders.
- Taking to Twitter, Modi tweeted, “Greetings to all BSF personnel and their families on BSF’s Raising Day. This force has been diligently protecting our borders.
- During natural disasters and crisis situations, BSF personnel have always worked hard to serve our citizens. Best wishes to the BSF family.

South Asian Games begins in Kathmandu

- On December 1, 2019, the President of Nepal Bidya Devi Bhandari opened the South Asian Games in Kathmandu. The event is scheduled to be conducted for 10 days. Around 487 athletes are participating from India.

India becomes first country to make entire Haj process digital

- India has become the first country to make the entire process for pilgrims going on Haj completely digital. Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi today said this after signing the bilateral agreement for next year’s pilgrimage with the Saudi Haj Minister in Jeddah.
- Mr Naqvi said, an online application, e-visa, Haj mobile app, ‘e-MASIHA’ health facility, “e-luggage pre-tagging” providing all information in India itself regarding accommodation and transportation in Mecca and Madina will be provided to 2 lakh Indian Muslims going for Haj in 2020.

AIR organises National Symposium of Poets 2020

All India Radio (AIR) organized the National Symposium of Poets 2020 on 27 December 2019. This edition of poet symposium was attended by select poets from all corners of country, who gave their presentations and captivated the hearts of people.

Centralised Access Control System and e-BCAS Project launched to digitise employee movement process at airports

Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (I/C) for Civil Aviation, launched the biometric-enabled Centralised Access Control System (CACS) and ‘e-BCAS Project Training Module. The two projects launched are important milestones to enhance security and ease of doing business at airports. CACS project is to digitize the employee movement process at the airports.

This multi-layered security system encompasses the uniqueness of the Airport Entry Permit (AEP) users, biometric authentication in addition to PIN-based identity verification through contactless smart card technology. The cost of the card is Rs. 225 valid for three years. Biometric ID (Biometric enabled Centralised Access Control System having chip-embedded smart AEPs) thus issued, is non-duplicable.

Assam CM launches torch relay of Khelo India Youth Games

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and officials of the Khelo India Youth Games launched the torch relay of the competition in Guwahati.

The tournament will be held between 10 January 2020 to 22 January 2020. Chief Minister Sonowal asked the people of Assam to create a fantastic environment for all the athletes who will be participating in the third Khelo India Youth Games.

World Design Organization to launch World Design Protopolis in Bengaluru

- World Design Organization (WDO) will be launching its new global programme 'World Design Protopolis' in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The announcement regarding World Design Protopolis was made at ongoing 3-day Kochi Design Week (KDW), India's largest design conclave that kicked off at Bolgatty Island in Kerala.
- The mega event, which concluded on 14 December 2019, witnessed convergence of policymakers and government officials, design professionals from India and abroad, architects, interior designers, heads of various companies, thought leaders, besides general public.

ICC T20I rankings: Radha retains 2nd position in bowlers' list as Deepti, Poonam slip

- Left-arm Indian spinner Radha Yadav remained at the second spot but compatriots Deepti Sharma and Poonam Yadav slipped a place each to the fifth and sixth positions in the latest ICC Women's T20I players rankings.
- Among the batters, Jemimah Rodrigues continued to occupy the fourth spot, while Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur too remained static at the seventh and ninth positions.

India gearing up to host World Dairy Summit in 2022

India is working on developing a smart backyard dairying model near Delhi to showcase it to the world at the World Dairy Summit, which the country will host in 2022.

The annual flagship Summit of International Dairy Federation (IDF) is a platform for dairy stakeholders, including farmers, processors, researchers, and marketers, to exchange knowledge and ideas and experiments on better dairying practices.

BEML signs pact with IRCON to explore overseas market

BEML Ltd, a defence public sector, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with IRCON International Ltd to explore opportunities in the overseas market by synergising each other's strengths for large infrastructure projects in the transportation sector.

At a function held in New Delhi, MoU copies were exchanged in the presence of DK Hota, CMD, BEML and SK Chaudhary, CMD, IRCON International Ltd, said a company release.

Moody's keeps India GDP growth forecast at 5.6%

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- Moody's Investors Service reiterated India's gross domestic product growth forecast for 2019 at 5.6%, which it had lowered from 5.8% in October, on slow consumption demand.
- The rating company expects economic growth at 6.6% in 2020 and 6.7% in 2021.

R. K. Singh Inaugurated the 29th National Energy Conservation day and Presented the Awards

- Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under the guidance of Ministry of Power, Government of India, organised the 29th National Energy Conservation Awards. Shri R. K. Singh, Minister of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship was the chief guest on this occasion.
- This year, Energy Conservation is celebrated through a weeklong activities culminating on the National Energy Conservation Day i.e. 14th December at VigyanBhawan. The concluding event witnessed awards distribution to the winners from different industries and establishments, and the winners of National Painting Competition for students.

India's first 3D 'trick art' museum is located in Chennai

- India's first interactive three-dimensional art museum is located in Chennai and houses paintings designed to 'trick' the eye. Called 'Click Art Museum', it holds 3D paintings such as 'Mona Lisa' reaching outside the frame to grab someone's shirt, a chimpanzee taking selfies and Charlie Chaplin poking a visitor with his cane. The museum was created by renowned artist AP Shreethar.

Prez Kovind releases mobile app of Red Cross Society of India in Hyderabad

- He inaugurated the mobile app formally at a dinner hosted by Telangana governor Tamilisai Sounderarajan at Rajbhavan in his honour. Developed by the Telangana Centre for Good Governance in less than three months, the mobile app is accessible in all languages.
- So far, 13 lakh members including junior red cross members downloaded the app. The developers informed that the access to blood bank and Red Cross membership will become easy with the launching of the mobile app.

FIFA rankings: India static at 108

- The Indian men's football team remained static at 108th spot in the year-ending FIFA rankings issued. India, however, lost 11 places throughout the year. With 1187 total points, India is placed at 19th spot among Asian countries headed by Japan 28th.

India to host the 36th IGC in New Delhi

- India is to host the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) in New Delhi during the first week of March 2020. It is popularly described as the Olympics of Geosciences.
- In a move to boost the IGC preparation, a half-day interactive workshop was held here on 12 December. It was inaugurated by Dr. M. Rajeevan, the Secretary, Ministry of Earth, and Anil Kumar Jain, Secretary Coal & Mines.

ICAR and NABARD sign MoU to develop Climate Resilient Technologies for farmers

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and National Board of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) signed Memorandum of Understanding on December 13, 2019. The agreement was signed to facilitate the research and technologies to develop climate resilient practices in the agriculture sector and hi-tech farming practices.

Centre launches EChO Network to catalyze cross-disciplinary leadership in India

- Government of India launched EChO Network, a national program to provide a template for cross-disciplinary leadership in India. The network specifically focuses on increasing research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment.
- It was launched in New Delhi by Prof. K Vijay Raghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to Centre. Currently, no such network is present anywhere in world, thereby, EChO Network establishes a new platform to change how science is embedded in our modern society.

Govt has approved projects worth Rs 7000 cr under Nirbhaya fund: Smriti

- Under the NIRBHAYA Fund, projects of Rs 7,000 crore, including setting up of 1,023 fast-track courts, have been approved by the Modi government, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani said.
- In a tribute to the 23-year-old Delhi gangrape victim, then Congress-led government had announced setting up 'Nirbhaya Fund' of Rs 1,000 crore for safety and empowerment of women in the Budget presented in February 2013.

Maximum age limit for Chief of Defence Staff put at 65

The government has amended rules putting the maximum age limit of 65 years for the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) to serve in the post. The changes have been made in the Army Rules, 1954, according to a notification by the defence ministry.

In a landmark decision, the Cabinet Committee on Security approved the creation of the CDS who will act as the principal military adviser to the defence minister on all matters relating to tri-services.

Intensified Mission Indra Dhanush 2.0 begins

- Government has launched its flagship scheme 'Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0' to focus on full immunization coverage of 272 districts spread over 27 states and 652 blocks of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar among hard-to-reach and tribal populations. The Mission Indradhanush 2.0 will be carried out between December 2019 and March 2020.

India's first Maritime Museum in Gujarat

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- The Government of India is planning to establish a National Maritime Heritage Museum at Lothal in Gujarat. The museum will also act as an independent research center for archaeology of boat building, reconstruction of maritime history and materials traded. It will hold display of salvaged materials from shipwreck sites in Indian Ocean waters.

NITI Aayog: Plans to include eggs, chicken and fish in PDS supply

- The GoI think tank Niti Aayog on December 18, 2019, announced that it is considering options to include fish, chicken and eggs in the PDS (Public Distribution System). The move is expected to be included in Niti Aayog's 15-year Vision Document to be published in 2020 and be effective from April 1, 2020.

MSME Minister launches 'Khadi Rumal' stitched by militancy affected women of J&K

- Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Nitin Gadkari launched the sale of 'Khadi Rumal' stitched by militancy affected women of Nagrota town of Jammu and Kashmir. The aim is to provide employment to the women in the terrorist affected areas as well as create employment opportunities for militancy affected families of J&K.

Government E-commerce Portal (GeM) Launches National Outreach Programme 'GeM Samvaad'

- Government e-commerce portal GeM launched a national outreach programme, GeM Samvaad, to bring on-board more local sellers. The programme was launched by Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan.

Finance Minister launches 'eBkay' auction platform for assets attached by banks

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has launched eBkay, an common e-auction platform to enable online auction of attached assets transparently and cleanly for the improved realization of value by banks. The e-auction platform is now linked on Indian Banks Auctions Mortgaged Properties Information (IBAPI) portal and guidelines have been made available.

India improves Sustainable Development Goals Index score by three positions

India has improved its composite score from 57 in 2018 to 60 in the Sustainable Development Goals Index 2019-20.

This has been achieved due to better works in water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy and industry, innovation, and infrastructure. Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana have topped the list of states on the SDGs Index-2019-20.

FCI draws large banks to raise Rs 8,000 cr via bonds

- Food Corporation of India has raised Rs 8,000 crore in one of the largest bond sales in India this year, to fund the state-run agency's plan to increase storage capacity for food grains.

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- The government-backed bonds offered 7.64% with a 10-year tenure. The sale received 247 bids, worth about two-and-a-half times the issue size.

11th Delhi Dialogue; 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue and associated events (December 13-14, 2019)

- The 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue takes place on December 13, and the theme is “Indo-Pacific: Re-imagining the Indian Ocean through an Expanded Geography”. It is being organized with the assistance of the Indian Council for World Affairs. Delhi Dialogue XI will start on the evening of December 13, and will run through to the evening of December 14.
- The theme for this year’s Delhi Dialogue is “Advancing Partnership in Indo-Pacific”, and is being organized with the assistance of the Research and Information System (RIS) for Developing Countries.

Sterlite Technologies, IIT Madras sign pact for 5G advancement

- Data networks company Sterlite Technologies NSE -7.38 % is partnering with IIT Madras for conducting research and developments in 5G technology, the Chennai-based institute said in a release.
- STL will sponsor a Chair Professorship in 5G technology at the institute. The first occupant of the Chair Professorship will happen in the first quarter of 2020. The Chair Occupant will work towards accelerating the advancements in 5G by unifying IIT Madras’ research and domain knowledge with STL’s.

First tripartite Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) signed under Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Fund (FIDF)

- The first tripartite Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the department of Fisheries Government of India, NARBARD and the Government of Tamil Nadu for the implementation of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Fund (FIDF).
- Speaking on the occasion Shri Giriraj Singh, Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying said that a dedicated fund has been created namely the Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund with a total of Rs. 7522.48 crore to address the infrastructure requirement for fisheries sector.

First Annual Meet of State Nodal Agencies for Ecoclub programme conducted

- In a first, Annual Meet of the State Nodal Agencies implementing the National Green Corps ‘Ecoclub’ programme of the Ministry of the Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), organized by the Ministry’s Environment Education Division, in collaboration with the GEER Foundation, Gujarat was held from 20th to 21st December 2019 in Kevadia, Gujarat.

Cabinet approves Atal Bhujal Yojana

- The Union Cabinet on December 24 approved the Atal Bhujal Yojana, a Rs 6,000 crore scheme for sustainable management of ground water resources, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said.

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- The scheme will cover 8,350 villages of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, he said.

Integrated Command and Control Centre inaugurated in Haryana

- Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated the ambitious Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) in Gurgaon, Millennium City of the country. The ICCC has been developed as nerve centre to provide multifaceted online smart services to people.

Railways completes work for WiFi, 'RailWire' goes live in 5,500 stations

- Railways has successfully completed the work of providing free public WiFi at 5500 stations across the country and Mahua Milan Railway Station of East Central Railway zone, became the 5500th station in the country to have free public WiFi.

Government procured just 3% of pulses, seeds targeted under PM-AASHA scheme

- Less than 3% of this season's sanctioned amount of pulses and oilseeds have actually been procured so far under the once-hyped PM-AASHA scheme, Agriculture Ministry data show. Arrivals of these crops began in October and will end by February.

4th India Water Impact Summit held in Delhi

- The Union Minister of Jal Shakti inaugurated the fourth water impact summit in New Delhi. In 2019, the summit is to focus on integrated management of water resources in rural and urban areas. At the summit, the experts from various fields discuss the biggest problems associated with water.
- Theme: Financing of High Impact projects in the water sector

Artificial Intelligence introduced as a subject in CBSE schools

- The Ministry of Human Resource and Development has introduced Artificial Intelligence in classes VIII, IX and X in CBSE schools. The study materials have already been provided to the schools through official CBSE website

India's Forest Cover Expanded By Over 5,000 Square Km In 2 Years

The forest and tree cover in India risen by 5,188 square kilometers in the last two years. Karnataka is growing the maximum protection of 1,025 sq km. There is an increase of 3,976 sq. Km (0.56 percent) of forest cover and 1,212 sq. Km (1.29 percent) of tree cover compared to the 2017 report. Different States – Forest The three states in terms of forest cover are Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala.

UDAN 4.0: Government launches 4th round of air connectivity scheme

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- The Union Government has launched the fourth round of the regional connectivity scheme, UDAN to boost connectivity to more remote and regional areas of the country.
- UDAN, which stands for 'Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik', aims to make air travel affordable and widespread. The UDAN 4.0 will focus on the priority regions including the northeast, hilly states, Jammu and Kashmir UT, Ladakh and islands.

The 3rd edition of National Public Procurement Conclave is held in New Delhi

- The 3rd edition of National Public Procurement Conclave began held in New Delhi. The conclave was inaugurated by the Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and Railways, Piyush Goyal along with Minister of State of Commerce and Industry, Som Parkash.

ICAI International Conference 2019 inaugurated at Mumbai

- The two day International Conference organised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) was inaugurated on December 6, 2019 at Mumbai.
- The Conference "Accountancy Profession: Catalyzing Reforms, Creating Values" is a part of ICAI's effort to dwell deeper into emerging paradigm of Accountancy Profession and bring the Indian and global perspective together on issues that are of contemporary relevance while ensuring continuous professional development of its members.
- The two day Conference will deliberate on the issues related to Taxation Reforms, Future of Corporate Reporting, Auditing reforms, Creation of Stakeholder Value, Technological Reforms and alike and will provide an apt opportunity for delegates to empathize the challenges and opportunities available while dealing with areas of contemporary and emerging interest in global economy.

Nation pays homage to Dr BR Ambedkar on his 64th Mahaparinirvan Diwas

- President Ram Nath Kovind led the nation in paying tribute to Bharat Ratna Dr BR Ambedkar on his 64th Mahaparinirvan Diwas. The country is observing the 63rd death anniversary of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar. Dr B R Ambedkar is known for his contributions towards drafting the constitution.

The 11th RQC is to be held at Rudrapur

- The 11th Regional Quality Conclave (RQC) was held on 20th December 2019 at, Rudrapur, District Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand. The Conclave will be inaugurated by Madan Kaushik, Minister of Urban Development Government of Uttarakhand. The RQC is organized by the Quality Council of India (QCI) along with PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI).

Organ Donation Awards given by NOTTO

- The autonomous organisation National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) of Union Health & Family Welfare Ministry (MoHFW) conferred, Organ Donation Awards on the occasion of 10th National Organ Donation Day in a programme held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- During the programme, the organs donor families were honoured and Best SOTTO (State Organ Tissue Transplant Organisation), Best Hospital and Best Transplant Co-ordinator awards were presented for outstanding activities in field of organ donation at national and state level.

India Skills Report finds 46.21% of students employable

- About 46.21 per cent students were found employable or ready to take up jobs in 2019, compared with 33 per cent in 2014, and 47.38 per cent in 2018, according to the India Skills Report 2019-20.
- Meanwhile, female employability witnessed an upward trend at 47 per cent this year from 38 per cent in 2017 and 46 per cent in 2018.

Ministry of Tourism sanctions 18 North East Development Project

- The Ministry of Tourism on December 3, 2019 sanctioned 18 projects under the schemes PRASHAD and Swadesh Darshan. The Ministry has also allocated Rs 1456 crores for the projects.
- In order to develop the North Eastern region as a tourist destination several projects are being initiated. The Ministry has released television campaigns on private channels in the country and on Doordarshan.

CSIR Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Test gets US FDA certification

- The CSIR-IICT, Hyderabad on December 3, 2019, announced that the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) cleared the Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Test facility at the centre. The inspection was conducted between August 21, 2019 and August 22, 2019 with regard to Current Good Manufacturing Practices and was certified “No Action Initiated”.

Bharatiya Poshan Anthem launched by Vice President M Venkaiah

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched the ‘Bharatiya Poshan Anthem’ in New Delhi, which aims towards taking message of making India malnutrition free to all corners of country. While launching, Vice president hoped that the ‘poshan anthem’ will lead to a nutrition revolution to transform India into a malnutrition-free country by 2022.
- The anthem was conceptualised by Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) and has been penned by noted lyricist Prasoon Joshi and sung by Shankar Mahadevan.

India plans to boost clean energy sector

- The Government of India is planning to integrate largest lenders to the power sector in order to help clean energy firms clear their dues. It includes Rural Electrification Corporation (REC), Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA).
- The integration will help resolve growing crisis in the clean energy sector and also aid India achieve its ambitious targets in renewable energy.

India to launch 1st debt exchange-traded fund 'Bharat Bond ETF'

- The Union Cabinet approved the launch of India's first debt exchange-traded fund, called the Bharat Bond ETF, comprising bonds of state-run companies and other government entities. The ETF will have a fixed maturity of three and 10 years and will trade on NSE. Retail investors will be able to invest in the bonds with as little as ₹1,000.

Social Security Code Bill introduced in Lok Sabha

- On December 11, 2019, the social security code bill was introduced in Lok Sabha. The bill paves way for universalization of social security of 50 crore workers in the country.

Cabinet approves Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019

- Union Cabinet has approved certain amendments in Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (code), through Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019.
- The amendments aim to remove certain difficulties being faced during insolvency resolution process to realise objects of code, protect corporate debtors, prevent ill-thought-out triggering of bankruptcy proceedings and to further ease doing of business (ADB).

Cabinet approves Aircraft (amendment) bill, 2019

- The Union Cabinet on December 11, 2019 approved Aircraft (Amendment) bill, 2019 to amend the Aircrafts act, 1934. The main objective of the bill is to fulfill the safety requirements of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Cabinet approves MoU between CDSCO and Saudi FDA

- Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval to Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) and Saudi Food and Drug Authority in field of Medical Products Regulation. The MoU was signed on 29 October 2019 during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

BIMSTEC: International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems held in New Delhi

- A three day "International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming systems" is being held in New Delhi. It was inaugurated on December 11, 2019. The seminar is being organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

Cabinet approves Indo-Japan pact in Steel Sector

- Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for signing Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between Government of India and Government of Japan to constitute 'India-Japan Steel Dialogue' to strengthen cooperation in steel sector. MoC will help in capacity building for high grade steel manufacturing in India.

FSSAI, NASVI to organize street food festival in Delhi from Dec 25-29

National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) and Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) will jointly organize national street food festival in the national capital from December 25-29.

The 11th National Street Food Festival will be organised at Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium here. It will have master street food vendors from different regions of India with their signature dishes.

Health Minister inaugurates second edition of Eat Right Mela in New Delhi

Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan has said, the right kind of diet will help to reduce the disease burden in the country. Inaugurating the second edition of Eat Right Mela in New Delhi, the Minister said, healthy eating should become a people's movement.

He stressed upon the importance of having a people's movement, encouraging people to have healthier diets which will help in reduction of the disease burden in the country.

WCD Ministry invites application for Nari Shakti Puraskar for 2019

Ministry of Women and Child Development has invited applications for Nari Shakti Puraskar for the year 2019.

The National Award is given annually to individuals, groups, institutions in recognition of their exceptional work towards the cause of women empowerment, especially for vulnerable and marginalized women.

Cabinet approves transfer of Assam Gas Cracker Project to oil ministry

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the transfer of administrative control of Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited (BCPL), the Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) implementing Assam Gas Cracker Project (AGCP) from Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals (under Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers) to Union Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MOP&NG).

Cabinet approves funds to update National Population Register

Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given in principal approval to clear budgetary allocation of Rs.8,754.23 crore for conducting Census of India, 2021, a Decennial Census (recurring every 10 years) exercise along with Rs.3,941.35 crore for updating National Population Register (NPR) across the country (barring Assam), which is a list of 'usual residents' of India. Both the exercises will be conducted simultaneously through door-to-door enumeration, with commencing from April 2020 to September 2020.

Cabinet approves Atal Bhujal Yojana

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

The Union Cabinet approved the Atal Bhujal Yojana, a Rs 6,000 crore scheme for sustainable management of ground water resources, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said.

The scheme will cover 8,350 villages of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, he said.

PM Modi unveils statue of Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Lucknow

Prime Minister Narendra Modi came down heavily on those who indulged in violence and arson during the protests against Citizenship Amendment Act. The Prime Minister said, they must introspect whether the way they choose was right and the intention was good.

Mr. Modi asked if the public property which was damaged during protests in Uttar Pradesh was of no use for the protesters' children also.

India to get its First Chief of Defence Staff

The Cabinet Committee On Security (CCS) chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the creation of a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) post that will function as a single point of contact for different branches of armed forces.

CCS also approved the report of a high-level committee headed by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, which finalised responsibilities and framework for operation of CDS.

In the present structure, the Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee (CSC) is Chief of Army Staff (CoAS) Bipin Rawat. However, he does not function in capacity of a CDS.

Rohtang pass tunnel named after former PM Vajpayee

On 24 December, 2019, the Union cabinet chaired by PM Modi decided that the strategic tunnel that was constructed under Rohtang Pass will be named after him. This is because the tunnel construction was started in June 2000, during his tenure.

CSIR to develop new drugs for global market

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI) signed an agreement to develop new drugs and repurposing of drugs for India and for global markets. The team research work is also joined by Cipla.

Sign boards in Chinese language put up at 5 ASI sites

Union Tourism Minister Prahlaad Singh Patel informed that sign boards in Chinese language have been put up at five Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) protected Archaeological Sites located in Uttar Pradesh (UP). ASI Sites Include- Sarnath, the Buddhist relics at Chaukhandi Stupa, Kushinagar and the Mahaparinirvana Temple, Piprahwa and Shravasti.

Human Library event in Mysuru on December 8

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- A human library, a concept which seeks to replace books with humans, will be organised in Mysuru on December 8.
- The first event of Human Library, Mysuru Chapter 2, will be held at Mysore Institute of Commerce and Arts (MICA), 123-127, near GRS Fantasy Park at Metagalli in Mysuru from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. on December 8, said a note from Pavithra K., founder of Human Library, Mysuru Chapter.

Indian Railways organizes “Parivartan Sangosthi” in New Delhi

- Accentuating on the agenda of reform & perform, Indian Railways is organizing a twodays conclave “Parivartan Sangosthi” in New Delhi which aims to deliberate on the suggestions received from the officers of various Zonal Railways to take Indian Railways to the next level of reforms.

IndiGo becomes 1st Indian carrier to operate 1,500 daily flights

- Budget carrier IndiGo has become the first domestic carrier to operate 1,500 flights per day, a feat which is in line with its expansion strategy. The 1,500th flight was operated in December, the airline said in a release. IndiGo had flown its 1,000th daily service in December last year.

Dr Jitendra Singh chairs review meeting of Ministry of DoNER

Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (I/C), Prime Minister Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr.Jitendra Singh chaired a review meeting of the activities of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER). The Secretary (DoNER), Dr. Inderjit Singh, and senior officers of the Ministry of DoNER and North Eastern Council (NEC).

Dharmendra Pradhan unveils India’s First CNG Bus which can run 1000 Kms in one fill in New Delhi

Dharmendra Pradhan unveils India’s First CNG Bus newOn December 24, 2019, In order to make CNG as the eco-friendly option for long-distance transport in India and to promote waste-to-wealth efforts, Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel has unveiled India’s first long-distance CNG bus fitted with composite CNG cylinders, which can travel around 1000 km in a single fill.

Developed by Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) in partnership with Mahindra & Mahindra, & Agility Fuel Solutions of USA (United State of America) this newly launched bus has replaced the traditional very heavy Type-I Carbon Steel cylinders with Type IV Composite Cylinders.

National outreach programme ‘GeM Samvaad’ take off in 4 States

A national outreach program ‘GeM Samvaad’, launched by Government e-Marketplace (GeM) has begun from 19th December 2019 in 4 States of Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh (HP) and Andhra Pradesh (AP).

The market through GeM Samvaad aims to get feedback from users, which is the first step towards GeM's 'Voice of Customer' initiative that will be used to improve the system. Through this programme, GeM is said to make the actual users aware about the new features & functionalities of the portal.

Union HRD Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal inaugurates the National Workshop of HRD Ministry

Union Human Resource Development Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank inaugurated the Social Media Outreach and Communication. Nearly 200 Social Media Champions from various Centrally funded educational institutions participated in the workshop.

Every institution to promote their excellent work through multiple media platforms. The scale and quality of research, innovations, and new studies taking place in IITs, IISERs, IISc. The social media champions play a significant role in improving perception.

First-ever university for transgenders to come up in UP

India's first university for transgenders is set to come up in Kushinagar district of eastern Uttar Pradesh to facilitate seamless education of the community from Class-I to postgraduation. They can also pursue doctoral degrees from the varsity, foundation stone.

India set to cross 100 GW wind energy and solar power in 2020

India is set to cross the 100-Gw renewable energy capacity mark in 2020 and can make rapid strides towards the ambitious 175 Gw clean energy target by 2022 provided the government keeps a close eye on key issues and deals with those well in time. The government, however, needs to promote storage to ensure 24x7 clean energy supply as coal fired thermal power still remains the base load in the country.

NPCI offers recharge option for FASTag through BHIM UPI

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), December 26 said that customers can recharge NETC FASTags through BHIM UPI. Any BHIM UPI-enabled mobile app would now give vehicle owners the opportunity to recharge their FASTags on the go and avoid queues at toll plazas, NCPI said in a release.

Losar Festival in Ladakh

The Losar festival marks the beginning of the New year and is considered to be the most important festival of the region Ladakh/Tibet . During this festival, the Ladakhi Buddhists make a religious offering before their deities in the domestic shrines or in the Gompas. A medley of cultural events, ancient rituals and also traditional performances are performed during this festival.

Govt. makes Aadhaar mandatory for PMVKY subscribers

Centre government has made Aadhaar (the unique 12-digit biometric identity number) mandatory for subscribers of Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY) which is a

pension scheme for senior citizens. Finance Ministry notified that an individual eligible for receiving benefit under PMVVY scheme shall now be required to furnish proof of possession of Aadhaar number or else undergo Aadhaar authentication.

Goa to host 2nd edition of Startup India Global Venture Capital Summit 2019

- The 2nd edition of Startup India Global Venture Capital Summit is being organized in Goa on 6-7 December 2019 for Fund Managers and Limited Partners of Top Global Venture Capital (VC) Firms.
- The summit is being organized by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in partnership with Goa Government. Theme for Startup India Global Venture Capital Summit 2019 is- 'India Opportunity- Investing in tomorrow together'.

Citizenship (Amendment) bill, 2019 in Lok Sabha

- On December 4, 2019, the Union Cabinet cleared the Citizenship (Amendment) bill, for the bill to be tabled in Lok Sabha. The bill is being tabled amidst widespread protests in the north eastern states.

National Museum of Indian Cinema signs MoU with Films Division and BookMyShow

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for online ticketing of National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC) was inked between Films Division and BookMyShow (BMS) in New Delhi.
- With this MoU, booking a ticket to visit NMIC will be a click away as it will now be available on BookMyShow, thus benefiting film lovers in India and abroad. The MoU has been part of Museum outreach initiatives aimed at increasing footfalls to NMIC.

Cabinet apprised of Indo-German strategic collaboration on Railways

- Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was notified of Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) between India and Germany regarding strategic cooperation on Railways projects. The Joint Declaration of Intent was signed by Union Ministry of Railways with Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy of Federal Republic of Germany in November 2019.

Digital Exhibition on history of Constitution of India being held in New Delhi

- The 'Digital Exhibition on History of Constitution of India', was inaugurated in New Delhi by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (M/S) for Development of North Eastern Region (I/C), Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space. It will be organised for two days from 9-10 December 2019.

What is Inner Line Permit: President Kovind signs order to extend ILP regime to Manipur

- The President of India Ram Nath Kovind has signed Citizen Amendment Bill 2019 (CAB). Now, it has become law but north-eastern states are protesting against this bill. Union Home Minister Amit Shah made it clear that this bill will not be applicable in Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura (about 70%) and almost entire Meghalaya because of Inner Line Permit in these states.
 - **What is Inner Line Permit (ILP)?**
 - The Inner Line Permit is a document that allows an Indian citizen to go or live in a protected state under the ILP system for a specific period of time.
 - The Inner Line Permit is currently applicable in four northeastern states – Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram. It is important to get an ILP to travel to these states.
 - It has a fixed duration; outside citizens cannot live in these states after that period.
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State Related Current Affairs

Bengal has lowest NPA in SHG portfolio: Official

- West Bengal boasts of having the lowest NPA in the self-help groups (SHGs) portfolio in the country where eight lakh such units are operating, a senior state government official has claimed on Saturday.
- Speaking at the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) event, secretary of the Panchayat and Rural Development department Choten Lama said “West Bengal has the lowest NPA in the country in the SHG portfolio, which is less than 2 per cent. The state has over eight lakh SHGs”.

20th Nagaland Hornbill Festival

- The Nagaland Hornbill Festival began at Naga Heritage Village at Kisama in Nagaland on 1 December 2019. The year 2019 celebrates the 20th edition of Hornbill Festival and the festival this year coincides with Nagaland Statehood Day. The much-awaited festival began with a colourful blend of culture and tradition with a modern twist.

Indigenous Faith Day was celebrated in Tezu

- The Indigenous Faith Day (IFD) 2019 was celebrated on 1 December in Tezu, Arunachal Pradesh. The Day aims to preserve the rich culture and identity of the State. The function was presided by Tezu legislator Karikho Kri. The programme was organized by the Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh (IFCSAP) of Tezu.

Maharashtra to monitor schemes introduced for the welfare of farmers

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray approved Rs.606 crores to monitor all schemes related to farmers on a regular basis.
- The new government aims to introduce new approaches to resolve issues related to cultivators, who have suffered crop losses in unseasonal rains in October. The government said that it will provide any negligible assistance and satisfactory provision for farmers.

Punjab creates land banks to boost industrial production

- The Punjab cabinet on December 2, 2019, approved the amendment of Punjab Village Common Land (Regulation) rules, 1964. It aims at creating land banks in rural areas to boost industrial development in the state.

Odisha govt launches e-certificate project to provide caste, residence and income certificates online

The Odisha government has launched a unique “people-friendly” project to provide official documents such as income, residence and similar other certificates online without any fees.

Without visiting government offices, people can now apply for these certificates online under the e-certificate project launched by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for the Revenue and Disaster Management department on Saturday as part of the 5T model of governance.

Andhra Pradesh CM launched Netanna Nestham welfare scheme for weavers

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the latest scheme in a series of welfare schemes promised during his election campaign. The YSR Netanna Nestham (weaver’s friend) scheme provides an annual incentive of Rs 24,000 for handloom weavers in the state.

CM launched the scheme in Dharmavaram, a town in Anantapur district is known for its handloom sarees and is home to a large community of weavers.

The 2nd Nagaland Honey Bee Day was celebrated on 5 December

- The 2nd Nagaland Honey Bee Day was celebrated on 5 December 2019 at the Heritage, Old DC Bungalow, Kohima, Nagaland. It aims to give more effort to continue on mission for more production of honey and to make Nagaland a Honey destination. Theme: The theme of the Honey Bee Day is Save Bee Save Life.

Haryana Police adopted Trakea to make forensic reports tamper-proof

- Haryana Police has adopted Trakea, a unique barcoding software to make forensic reports tamper-proof. The technique will ensure the thousands of forensic reports that form the backbone of the criminal investigation system and subsequent trials in the courts of law, are not tampered with.

West Bengal tops in a 100-day work programme for promoting livelihoods

- West Bengal has been selected for the 1st prize in 100-Day Work Programme for Promoting Livelihoods. The Rural Development Ministry has selected Bankura and Cooch Behar Districts of the state for 1st and 2nd positions among districts in the country in implementation of rural job scheme.

Assam govt. sets up Anti Depredation Squads to avoid human-wildlife conflicts

- The state government of Assam has set up 15 Anti-Depredation Squads of Forest department to deal with human-wildlife conflicts in state. The squads would help Forest Department to reduce casualties in conflict situations.

Odisha received the 2019 World Habitat Award

- Odisha State government was honoured with the 2019 World Habitat Award. The award recognized the State's ambitious project Jaga Mission. The award was conferred by the World Habitat, a UK based organization, in association with the United Nations (UN)-Habitat. The programme has set a global benchmark to empower the urban poor.

Eleven day long Dhanu Jatra begins at Bargarh in western Odisha

The famous 11-day Dhanu Jatra celebrated as the largest open-air theatre of the world begins at Bargarh in western Odisha. The Jatra based on the mythological story of Lord Krishna and his demon uncle King Kansa.

Dhanu Jatra – Festival Dhanu Jatra is the annual drama-based open-air theatrical performance celebrated in and around Bargarh city considered to be the world's largest outdoor theatrical festival that finds a mention in the Guinness Book of World Records.

Odisha to set up 45 fast track courts

- Odisha Government has decided to set up 45 fast track courts in the State, to expedite the trial of cases relating to women and children. The State government's action comes after Centre has decided to formulate a scheme for setting up 1,023 fast track special courts for expeditious trial and disposal of rape cases.
- For this purpose, the Union Law and Justice Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has asked States and Chief Justices of High Courts to expedite investigation in cases of rape and those registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Telangana: Former HC Judge CV Ramulu appointed as Lokayukta

- In Telangana, former High Court Judge Justice CV Ramulu has been appointed as the Lokayukta. Governor Tamilisai Sounderarajan has issued the orders to this effect. Former Law Secretary V Niranjan Rao has been appointed as Upa Lokayukta.

Andhra police launch 'Abhay' facility to drop stranded woman home late at night

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- The Andhra Pradesh police may soon start dropping stranded women home at odd hours in major cities of the state in order to safeguard them against crime. A pilot of the programme named 'Abhay' kicked off in the Prakasham district with eight four wheelers and 70 two-wheelers on standby to pick up women held up at night.

Jagan launches post-operative sustenance allowance scheme

- Chief Minister Y.S Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the YSR Aasaraa scheme under which postoperative sustenance allowance of Rs. 225 each per day will be paid for the period of treatment to those covered by Aarogyasri.

MadhuApp: Odisha govt. launches smart learning mobile app

- Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha has launched a smart learning phone application 'MadhuApp' for school children. This app is aims to help school students in learning their lessons via videos and tutorials.

International Affairs

China introduces mandatory face scans for phone users

- China will require telecom operators to collect face scans when registering new phone users at offline outlets starting Sunday, according to the country's information technology authority, as Beijing continues to tighten cyberspace controls.
- In September, China's industry and information technology ministry issued a notice on "safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of citizens online", which laid out rules for enforcing real-name registration.

25th U.N. Climate Change Conference Begins In Spain

- As alarm bells ring ever louder worldwide over climate change, some 25,000 delegates will meet for the next two weeks in Spain for COP25, the annual United Nations international conference on a global challenge that shows little signs of being resolved.

Global Migration Film Festival organised in Dhaka

- The Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF) was organised in Dhaka. The day-long festival screened 15 films on the theme of migration and its various aspects. The GMFF started in 2016 and this year it is being organised across many cities in the world between 28 November to 18 December.

World's oldest rhino' dies in Tanzania

- Fausta, a female black rhino, who was believed to be the world's oldest rhino has died at the age of 57 in a Tanzanian conservation area. Fausta died of natural causes in captivity in Ngorongoro Crater, which lies in Ngorongoro Conservation Area of Tanzania.

UN gives green light to draft treaty to combat cybercrime

- UN General Assembly approved it will start the process of drafting a new international treaty to combat cybercrime over objections from the European Union, the United States, and other countries. Russian-drafted resolution was approved by the 193-member world body by a vote of 79-60 with 33 abstentions.

Cuba to name first prime minister in 40 years

- Cuba is to resurrect the position of prime minister in a parliamentary session at the end of the week, with President Miguel Diaz-Canel nominating a candidate to the post which has remained dormant for more than 40 years. The last time Cuba had a prime minister, it was revolutionary hero Fidel Castro.

Russia and Ukraine Sign Preliminary Gas Transit Deal

- Moscow and Kiev have signed a preliminary deal on the transit of Russian gas to Europe via Ukraine, after months of difficult talks but ahead of the looming New Year deadline.
- The current gas transit contract between the two ex-Soviet countries expires at the end of the year and ties between them shredded since Moscow annexed Crimea in 2014 and supported a separatist insurgency in eastern Ukraine.

Afghanistan becomes first country to recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia

- The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has become the first country to recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP) pursuant to the efforts of Department of Commerce and Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The formal recognition came from Afghanistan's National Department of Regulation of Medicines and Health Products of Ministry of Public Health.

Ethiopia launches its first satellite

- Ethiopia launched its first satellite, a landmark achievement for the country's space program that caps a banner year for the African space industry.
- The launch of the Ethiopian Remote Sensing Satellite (ETRSS) took place at a space station in China. The live broadcast was watched by a group of Ethiopian and Chinese officials and scientists who had gathered at the Entoto Observatory and Research Centre outside the capital, Addis Ababa.

World's first fully-electric commercial aircraft completes test flight

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- The world's first fully-electric aircraft for commercial flight has taken to the skies in Canada. The plane flew above the Fraser River outside Vancouver for about seven minutes before touching down at around 8:30 a.m. local time on Tuesday.
- The aircraft — an aging six-passenger DHC-2 de Havilland Beaver seaplane — has been retrofitted with a 750-horsepower electric motor built by U.S. firm magniX.

Saudi Arabia to host first-ever women's golf tournament in March 2020

- Saudi Arabia will host its first ever golf tournament for women from March 19-22 next year at the Royal Greens Golf & Country Club in Jeddah, with 108 professionals set to participate.
- The Ladies European Tour (LET) event will be staged in collaboration with Golf Saudi and the Saudi Golf Federation and will carry a winning purse of \$1 million.

Who are world's highest paid YouTubers of 2019 & how much did they earn?

- Ryan Kaji, an eight-year-old boy who reviews toys on YouTube channel 'Ryan's World' has been named the highest-earning YouTuber for the second year in a row by Forbes with ₹184 crore earnings in a year.
- He's followed by sports-entertainment group 'Dude Perfect' with ₹142 crore earnings. Five-year-old Anastasia Radzinskaya of channel 'Like Nastya' is third-highest paid YouTuber at ₹128 crore.

Portugal sets up Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize

- Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa announced the setting up of a Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize in order to help promote Mahatma Gandhi's ideals. The announcement was made while he was addressing the second meeting of National Committee for Commemoration Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary chaired by President Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

World's first liquid hydrogen carrier ship launches in Japan

- Japan's Kawasaki Heavy Industries debuted the world's first marine carrier that transports liquefied hydrogen, using technology that will vastly expand cargo capacity of the green energy source.
- A crowd of 4,000 people gathered at Kawasaki's shipyard in Kobe for the naming and launch ceremony of the Suiso Frontier — a name adopting the Japanese word for hydrogen. The vessel, measuring 116 meters long, will be fully completed next fall.

WADA bans Russia from international sporting events for four years

- The World Anti-Doping Agency, WADA, banned Russia for four years, from participation in global sporting events, including the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, after accusing Moscow of falsifying data from an anti-doping laboratory.
- WADA spokesman James Fitzgerald, speaking at a meeting of the body's executive committee at Lausanne in Switzerland, said the full list of recommendations has been unanimously accepted.

UAE, US joint military exercise ‘Iron Union 12’ commences

- ‘Iron Union 12’, a joint military exercise between the ground forces of the UAE and the United States, commenced in the presence of Major General Saleh Mohamed Saleh Al Amiri, UAE Commander of Land Forces and Lieutenant General Terry Ferrell, Commander of US Army Central, USARCENT. Spanning a few weeks, ‘Iron Union 12’ will see the two sides take part in joint military cooperation to enhance combat and tactical capabilities.

Grab Launches Asia’s First Numberless Card

- Grab, Southeast Asia’s leading everyday super app announced the launch of GrabPay Card, Asia’s first numberless card that offers users unparalleled card security, access to an expanded rewards ecosystem and hassle-free Grab payments integration in order to bring cashless convenience to millions in Southeast Asia.

US, Mexico and Canada sign revised trade deal to replace Nafta

- Officials from Canada, Mexico and the United States have signed a fresh overhaul of a quarter-century-old trade pact that aims to improve enforcement of worker rights and hold down prices for biologic drugs by eliminating a patent provision.

World’s New Nation: Bougainville gains independence from Papua New Guinea

- On December 11, 2019, the South Pacific Archipelago of Bougainville voted to become independent of Papua New Guinea. Around 98% of 1,81,067 voters voted to get independent from Papua New Guinea.

Poland left out of EU’s 2050 climate neutrality targets

- The European Union has left Poland out of a 2050 climate neutrality agreement after hours of summit haggling with three Eastern European member states that demanded more funds for economic transition and support for nuclear power.
- The Czech Republic and Hungary eventually dropped their resistance after winning a guarantee on Friday that nuclear energy would be recognised as a way for EU states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Poland remained against.

Tahiti to host surfing events at the 2024 Paris Olympics

- The Polynesian island of Tahiti will host the surfing events at the 2024 Paris Olympics. The events will take place at Teahupoo. It was chosen over beaches in southwest France and in Brittany. Tahiti is located in the southern part of the Pacific Ocean. It lies 15,000 kilometres from Paris.

UAE and Oman sign MoU to enhance trade & economic cooperation

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- The UAE federal export credit company, Etihad Credit Insurance (ECI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Export Credit Guarantee Agency of Oman (Credit Oman) to enhance trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

After France, Italy approves digital tax on large tech companies

- Following the footsteps of France, Italy has approved a new tax to be levied on large tech companies, a move that is likely to put more strains on the country's relations with the US, the media reported.
- Passed this week by Italy's Parliament, the new tax will come into force on January 1, the Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday.

China, Russia and Iran to hold joint naval drills

China, Iran and Russia will hold joint naval drills starting in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman, China's defence ministry said on Thursday, amid heightened tension in the region between Iran and the United States.

China will send the Xining, a guided missile destroyer, to the drills, which will last until Monday and are meant to deepen co-operation between the three countries' navies, ministry spokesman Wu Qian told a monthly news briefing.

Climate Emergency named as Oxford's Word of the Year 2019

- Oxford Dictionaries has named 'Climate Emergency' as its 2019 Word of the Year. It has been chosen from an all-environmental shortlist that also included 'climate denial,' 'climate action,' 'eco-anxiety,' 'flight shame' and 'extinction.' Being chosen as Word of the Year, reflects that 'Climate Emergency' was a real preoccupation of the English-speaking world in 2019.

UAE extends 300 million US dollars of development aid to Jordan

The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) announced that it is providing 300 million US dollars as development aid to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

In a statement the UAE government said that "the UAE leadership's decision reaffirms the commitment to standing alongside the brotherly leadership and people of Jordan, reflecting the nation's foreign policy that carries the legacy of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and continues under the leadership of President Sheikh Khalifa."

Russia deploys Avangard hypersonic missile system

Russia's first regiment of Avangard hypersonic missiles has been put into service, the defence ministry says. The location was not given, although officials had earlier indicated they would be deployed in the Urals.

President Vladimir Putin has said the nuclear-capable missiles can travel more than 20 times the speed of sound and put Russia ahead of other nations.

UN ups 2020 budget, includes funds for war crimes probes

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a USD 3.07-billion operating budget which for the first time includes funding for the investigation of war crimes in Syria and Myanmar. The budget represents a slight increase from 2019's figure of USD 2.9 billion.

The increase is due to additional missions assigned to the UN Secretariat, inflation and exchange rate adjustments, according to diplomats.

Foreign Relation

India and Sweden to sign Polar Science Cooperation Agreement

- India and Sweden are to sign their first maritime cooperation agreement during the Swedish Royal couple visit. The agreement includes cooperation between the countries in both Arctic and Antarctic regions and hence the name Polar Science.

BioAsia 2020 to have Switzerland as partner country

- The flagship event of Telangana's pharma and biotech industry, BioAsia 2020, announced that Switzerland will be its country partner this year. BioAsia 2020 will be held on the theme 'Today For Tomorrow' between February 17-19 at Hyderabad.

India and France to begin patrolling mission in Indian Ocean Region

- India and France are to launch joint naval patrolling mission after the Varuna Naval Exercise that was held in May, 2019. The joint mission is to be executed in the Indian Ocean Region to protect the strategic interests of the countries and to check large scale illegal fishing.

6th Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) between India and Maldives

- External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid co-chaired the 6th Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) between India and Maldives on December 13, 2019 in New Delhi. The two Ministers reviewed progress achieved in implementing the vast and ambitious agenda of bilateral cooperation agreed between the two countries.

India, Afghanistan and Iran met to discuss on Chabahar port

- On December 20, 2019, India, Afghanistan and Iran met at New Delhi to discuss the issues in the implementation of Chabahar port in Iran. The port is considered as a gateway of opportunities with Central Asian Nations by all the three countries.

PM Modi and President of Maldives jointly inaugurate development projects in Maldives via video conference

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih jointly inaugurated several key development projects in Maldives via video conference.
- These included gifting of Made in India Coast Guard Ship Kaamiyaab to Maldives, launch of RuPay card, lighting up of Male using LED lights, High Impact Community Development Projects, launch of fish processing plants.

Meteor missiles: India asks for early delivery from France

- India has requested for an early delivery of Meteor air-to-air missiles from France. These missiles will provide India the power to take on US supplied AMRAAM missiles possessed by the Pakistan Air Force.

Annual summit between Modi and Shinzo Abe to be held on 15-17 December

- The annual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe is to take place between 15-17 December 2019. The announcement was made by the External Affairs Ministry. The summit is expected to take place in Guwahati, Assam.

India and US to a defence technology sharing pact at 2 plus 2 dialogue

- India and the US are planning to sign a defence technology-sharing pact. The two countries will sign a deal at the 2+2 dialogue on 19 December in Washington, the US. The Indian side will be led by defence minister Rajnath Singh and external affairs minister S Jaishankar to the dialogue.

India & Australia hold third 2+2 dialogue in New Delhi

- The third India-Australia Secretary-level 2+2 dialogue was held on 9 December 2019 in New Delhi. The Indian side was led by Defense Secretary Ajay Kumar and Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale, while its counterpart delegation was led by Australia's Defense Secretary Greg Moriarty and Foreign Secretary Frances Adamson.

India and France to begin patrolling mission in Indian Ocean Region

- India and France are to launch joint naval patrolling mission after the Varuna Naval Exercise that was held in May, 2019. The joint mission is to be executed in the Indian Ocean Region to protect the strategic interests of the countries and to check large scale illegal fishing.

India and Kazakhstan to renew uranium supply contract for 2020-24

- India will renew its pact with Kazakhstan for supply of uranium from 2020 to 2024, the ambassador of the central Asian country said.
- Kazakhstan has so far supplied a total of 9,000 tonne of uranium, and another 1,000 tonne is yet to be delivered under two five-year contract periods that end this year.

2 plus 2 India-US dialogue to be held on Dec 18: MEA

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- The Second India-US 2 Plus 2 Ministerial Dialogue will be held in Washington DC on 18th of this month. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will lead the Indian delegation.
- Briefing media in New Delhi, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said they will meet their US counterparts for a comprehensive review of cross-cutting foreign policy and defence and security issues in India-US relations.

India, Germany ink pact for Rs 1,958 crore finance to develop energy-efficient housing programme

- India has secured a USD 277 million (about Rs 1,900 crore) loan from Germany to establish an energy-efficient housing programme in the country.
- A loan agreement has been signed between State Bank of India (SBI) and German development bank KfW for USD 277 million to establish an energy-efficient housing programme in India, SBI said in a release.

India-US 2+2 Dialogue held at Washington

- On December 18, 2019 India and United States held security dialogue in Washington. This was their second 2+2 dialogue. The countries signed industrial security agreement allowing defense technology transfer.
- The US secretary Mike Pompeo and defence secretary Mark Esper hosted the meeting for Indian external affairs minister Shri Jai Shankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

India-China discuss border issues in New Delhi

- On December 21, 2019, Indian and Chinese representatives met in New Delhi for the 22nd time to discuss the border issues between the countries. This is the first meeting of the representatives since the second informal summit between PM Modi and President Xi Jinping that was held at Chennai in October 2019.

India-EU Summit: EU President calls on PM Modi

- On December 21, 2019, the EU President called on PM Modi to discuss regarding an early India-EU summit 2020. It is expected that the leaders will discuss on making progress on the issues related to Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA), Europol, counter-terrorism, Euroatom, climate change, etc. The summit is to be held in Brussels.

SEBI signs pact with Kazakhstan's AFSA for mutual co-operation

Markets regulator SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) has signed a bilateral memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kazakhstan-based Astana Financial Services Authority (AFSA) for mutual co-operation and technical assistance. The MoU was signed by

SEBI Chairman Ajay Tyagi and the acting chief executive officer (CEO) of AFSA Mukhtar Bubeyev.

India-Swiss Air Service Pact to be amended, Cabinet approves signing protocol

Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the signing of Protocol to amend the Agreement between Swiss Federal Council, the highest executive authority of Swiss Confederation and Government of India related to air services, as well as to exchange diplomatic notes with Switzerland for bringing amendments in air services agreement into force. The protocol will allow more number of airlines to start flight operations between two countries.

India, Japan vow to deepen maritime ties

India and Japan have vowed to deepen maritime cooperation and also held consultations on disarmament, non-proliferation and export control.

The 5th Round of India-Japan Maritime Affairs Dialogue was held in Tokyo on Tuesday with the Indian delegation led by Indra Mani Pandey, Additional Secretary (Disarmament and International Security Affairs), Ministry of External Affairs, while Japanese delegation was led by Ambassador Yamanaka A Osamu, Deputy Assistant Minister, Deputy Director-General in Foreign Policy Bureau.

India, Sweden join hands to set up Healthcare Innovation Centre in India

- India and Sweden has joined hands to set up a healthcare innovation centre to promote research, broadly in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and help scale-up Indian start-ups in the sector.
- Later, AIIMS, Delhi; AIIMS, Jodhpur, and Swedish Trade Commissioner's Office in New Delhi signed a Memorandum of Intent (MoI) to cement cooperation, to set up a healthcare innovation centre. The signing of MoI marks 10 years of India-Sweden health cooperation.

Ranks

Mumbai Central railway station certified as country's first 'Eat Right'

- The Mumbai Central Terminus of Western Railway has been certified as India's first 'Eat Right Station' with a 4-Star rating awarded by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), as a part of 'Eat Right India' movement launched in 2018. FSSAI is an autonomous body under Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW).

Delhi enters list of top 10 most popular destinations in the world

- The National Capital has been witnessing soaring popularity and wellness tourism across the world. According to Euro Monitor International, Delhi currently ranks 11th in the list of world's top 100 destinations and is to gain 8th rank in 2019. The ranking

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

was released by the organization on December 3, 2019 under the title “Top 100 city destination ranking”

India 5th worst country in terms of invasive use of biometric data

- According to a new report from Comparitech, a Britain-based tech research firm, India is fifth worst country after China, Malaysia, Pakistan and United States in terms of extensive and invasive use of biometric data.

India ranks 5th in Global Climate Risk Index

- India is the fifth most vulnerable country to climate change, according to a report released by Environment think tank, Germanwatch. In the Climate Risk Index 2020, India's rank has worsened from the 14th spot in 2017 to 5th in 2018 in the global vulnerability ladder.

India ranks 73rd in UN index assessing e-commerce readiness

- India has ranked 73rd out of 152 countries in a business-to-consumer E-commerce index that measures an economy's preparedness to support online shopping, moving seven places up in the list.
- The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's Business-to-Consumer (B2C) E-commerce Index 2019 has been topped by the Netherlands for the second consecutive year.

Tamil Nadu Maintains its Position as a Leading State in Frost & Sullivan's 2019 “Growth, Innovation & Leadership Index for Economic Development in India”

- Tamil Nadu was ranked second for the third consecutive year in the “Growth, Innovation and Leadership (GIL) Index for Economic Development in India”, a data-driven framework developed by Frost & Sullivan.
- Frost & Sullivan released the third edition of its GIL Index for Economic Development in India, for 2019. This year, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh, along with Tamil Nadu, were named the top 5 states in overall economic development in the country. Tamil Nadu's high rank was an outcome of its impressive scores across all 10 pillars of analysis.

Aberdeen in Andaman adjudged best police station in country

- Aberdeen in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been adjudged the best performing police station in the country while dealing with property offence, crime against women and weaker sections, the Home Ministry said on Friday.
- Balasinor in Mahisagar district of Gujarat has been selected the second best while Ajk Burhanpur in Burhanpur district of Madhya Pradesh the third best police station in the country.

India climbs one spot to 129th in 2019 human development index: UNDP

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

- India climbed one spot to 129 among 189 countries in the 2019 human development index, according to a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In India, 27.1 crore people were lifted out of poverty from 2005-06 to 2015-16, UNDP India resident representative Shoko Noda said.

Abu Dhabi selected as world's leading sports tourism destination

- Abu Dhabi has been selected as the world's leading Sports tourism Destination at the 26th edition of the World Travel Awards (WTA) being held in Muscat. This is the seventh time in a row that Abu Dhabi has been selected for this coveted award.

Saudi Aramco becomes world's most valuable company at \$1.9 trillion

- Saudi Aramco became the world's most valuable listed company at \$1.9 trillion, nearly \$700 billion more than Apple, after its shares jumped 10% on their trading debut on Wednesday. The Saudi state-run oil company raised \$25.6 billion in the world's largest Initial Public Offering (IPO) beating Alibaba's \$25 billion listing in 2014. Aramco sold a 1.5% stake in the IPO.

India Now World's 3rd Largest Producer Of Scientific Articles: US Report

- India has emerged as the world's third largest publisher of science and engineering articles, according to a latest US report.
- China, which accounts for 20.67 per cent of all global publications in scientific articles, is at the top position, followed by the US at 16.54 per cent, as per the statistics compiled by the US National Science Foundation (NSF).

Kerala tops Niti's Sustainable Development Goal Index, Bihar worst performer

Kerala retained the top rank while Bihar was adjudged as the worst performer in Niti Aayog's SDG India Index 2019, which evaluates progress of States and Union Territories on social, economic and environmental parameters, as per a report released on Monday.

Puducherry tops UTs in good governance

The Union territory (UT) of Puducherry topped the list of seven UTs in the country in the good governance index (GGI) released by the department of administrative reforms and public grievances.

Puducherry scored 4.69 points in the GGI followed by Chandigarh (4.68), Delhi (4.39), Daman & Diu (4.33) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (4.12). Lakshadweep (2.97) fared poorly and was placed at the bottom of the table. Dadra & Nagar Haveli scored 3.12 points.

Ratan Tata Gautam Adani among India's top 10 most Googled business tycoons

Tata Sons chairman Ratan Tata emerged as India's most searched business tycoon on Google in 2019. Google released a Year in Search 2019 report shows what was trending on the world's largest search engine during the year in India.

The Tata Group patriarch Google's most searched Indian business personality in 2019. He heads the Tata Group for 21 years credited with transforming the group from a conventional corporate house into a \$100 billion global conglomerate with high-profile acquisitions abroad.

India may overtake Germany to become fourth-largest economy by 2026: CEBR report

India is expected to become the fourth largest economy by 2026 and the third largest by 2034, according to a report by UK-based Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR). The CEBR report states that India would surpass Germany to take on the mantle in 2026 and further topple Japan in 2034 to become the third largest economy.

The report stated that India would achieve its dream of reaching a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$5 trillion by 2026. It has pegged the achievement a couple of years after the government's target.

CCPI 2020: India ranks 9th, US worst climate change performer

- India joins the top ten countries in this year's Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) for the first time. This is a result of efforts made to bring down India's carbon emission. On the other hand, the United States included in the worst-performing countries for the first time.
- Australia and Saudi Arabia, running their economies on the basis of coal industries, are also among the countries with high carbon emissions. The CCPI report was released at the 'COP 25' climate change conference in the Spanish capital Madrid.

Reliance Industries topples IOC to become India's largest company

- Boosted by its consumer-facing businesses like organised retail and telecom, Reliance Industries ended state-owned Indian Oil Corporation's (IOC) 10-year reign as India's largest company, topping the Fortune India 500 list.
- With a revenue of ₹5.81 lakh crore in 2018-19, the Mukesh Ambani-led conglomerate also became the first privately-held and the only other company to become India's largest corporation apart from IOC for the first time in 10 years, Fortune India said.

India Among top 10 Improvers in EODB; India Ranks 63 RD Among 190 Countries

- India ranks 63rd among 190 countries improving by 14 ranks from its rank of 77 in 2019. India has improved its rank in 7 out of 10 indicators and has moved closer to international best practices.
- The 2020 edition of the Report acknowledges India as one of the top 10 improvers, third time in a row, with an improvement of 67 ranks in 3 years. It is also the highest jump by any large country since 2011.

Business

TCS introduces new insurance benefits that include the LGBT employees

- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has announced changes in its health insurance policy in order to provide benefits to employees involved in LGBT employees, a same-sex relationship. TCS became the first Tata Group companies to bring the change.

SIC & ARAMCO Asia signs MoU for development in Oil & Gas Sector

- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed between National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) and Saudi Aramco (Asia) for the development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Ecosystem in India in Oil & Gas Sector. The MoU will pave a way for accredited Indian MSMEs to carve out a space as vendors in Global space.

Reliance, ADNOC explore JV to build ethylene dichloride facility in Ruwais

- Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has signed an agreement with state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) to explore a joint venture for building an ethylene dichloride (EDC) facility in Ruwais.
- EDC is a basic building-block for manufacture of PVC, a polymer product in increasingly higher demand globally. PVC plays a critical role in the housing and agriculture sectors, and demand for PVC, particularly in the Indian vinyls market, is expected to grow significantly.

ArcelorMittal says it has completed acquisition of Essar Steel

- Global steel giant ArcelorMittal on Monday said it has completed acquisition of Essar Steel and formed a joint venture with Nippon Steel (AM/NS India) to own and operate the debt-ridden firm.
- The deal for acquisition of Essar Steel for ₹42,000 crore by L.N. Mittal-led company was cleared by the Supreme Court last month.

Amazon to host SMBhav Conclave on January 15-16

- Amazon India has conceptualized SMBhav, a first-of-its-kind mega summit for Small and Medium Businesses at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi on January 15 and 16.
- Industry experts, policy makers, solution providers and Amazon leadership are expected to share their views and experience on areas that are most relevant for SMBs today, including e-commerce, logistics, payments, digitization, global trade and web services.

Wipro partners with Nasscom to skill students

- Wipro has partnered with industry body Nasscom to start a training platform on emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, data science, internet of things, cybersecurity.
- Through this platform, Wipro will train 10,000 students from more than 20 engineering colleges in India.

Coal India inks pact with OCPL

- Coal India Ltd (CIL) has joined hands with Odisha Coal and Power Ltd (OCPL) for buying 6,000 tonnes per day from the Manoharpur captive mine of OCPL, owned by the Odisha government.
- Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL), the Odisha-based subsidiary of CIL, and OCPL have entered into an MoU for provisioning of excess coal from Manoharpur coal block to the miner, said a press statement issued by CIL.

MakeMyTrip to offer e-tickets for Hyderabad metro rail

- MakeMyTrip, along with Larsen & Toubro Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Limited, on December 23 introduced QR code-based e-tickets for the metro rail that would provide cashless and connected experience to riders.
- The tech-powered ticket-booking feature would help commuters beat the queues at the metro stations and experience seamless connectivity, a press release from MakeMy Trip, an online travel company said here.

Defence News

Indo-Sri Lanka joint exercise 'Mitra Shakti' to strengthen ties

- India – Sri Lanka joint training exercise Mitra Shakti 2019 is the seventh edition of the exercise aimed to enhance interoperability and operational efficiency amongst the armies of both India and Sri Lanka when deployed as part of United Nations peacekeeping forces. The opening ceremony for the seventh Indo-Sri Lanka joint exercise Mitra Shakti was conducted, at Aundh military station.

Exercise HAND-IN-HAND 2019 to commence from 7 December

- Exercise HAND-IN-HAND 2019 is to be conducted at Umroi, Meghalaya. The 8th India-China joint training is held under the United Nations mandate. The exercise will be held from 7-20 December 2019.
- The aim of the Exercise HAND-IN-HAND 2019 is to practice joint planning and conduct of counter-terrorist operations in semi-urban terrain. The theme of the 14-day long training exercise is Counter-terrorism.

Exercise Indra: Joint tri service Exercise between India and Russia

- The Joint tri service exercise between India and Russia, INDRA 2019 is to be held between December 10-19, 2019 in Pune. The event is planned for 10 days between army, naval and air force forces of both the countries.

Military Literature Festival organised in Chandigarh

- The third edition of coveted Military Literature Festival (MLF) is being held from 13 to 15 December at UT Lake Club, Chandigarh. The military literature extravaganza was inaugurated by Punjab Governor and UT Administrator VP Singh Badnore.
- The festival would bring together the finest men from battle grounds and literary fields to discuss watershed of information on defence issues.

Apharan: Indian Navy's largest anti-hijacking exercise

- On December 18, 2019, the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard at Cochin port conducted large scale anti-hijacking exercise. The exercise was called Apharan. Multiple agencies participated in the exercise. It included 12 ships and helicopters of Cochin Port trust, Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard. This is the first time an anti-hijacking exercise is being conducted at a large scale in India and in the port of Cochin.

Pinaka missile successfully test fired by DRDO

- The Pinaka missile was successfully test fired from Odisha coast on December 19, 2019 from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur. The Pinaka missile is a modified version of Pinaka Mk-II rocket. The rocket was added with integrated navigation, control and guidance system in order to improve the end accuracy. The missile navigation will be aided by the IRNSS (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System).

India constructs Girls Hostel for Nepal Armed Police Force School at Kirtipur

- Govt. of India constructed Girls Hostel for Nepal Armed Police Force School, Kirtipur. Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Dr. Ajay Kumar inaugurated hostel building at Kirtipur in Kathmandu district. Mayor of Kirtipur Municipality, senior officers of Nepal Armed Police Force and political, community leaders also attended the inaugural ceremony.

Space Force: Trump officially launches new US military service

- Describing space as the world's newest war-fighting domain, US President Donald Trump officially launched US military 'Space Force' at an army base near Washington. Trump highlighted that the Space Force will help to deter aggression and control ultimate high ground.

Indian Air Force Bids farewell to MiG 27

MiG-27, an ace attacker during the 1999 Kargil War through the skies for one last time after serving the Indian Air Force for over three decades. The swing-wing fighter the backbone of a ground-attack fleet of the Air Force for several decades to its squadron of seven aircraft from Jodhpur Air Base. Veteran air warriors, along with serving air warriors in large numbers, are taking part in the ceremony.

Pacific Air Chiefs' Symposium 2019 being held in Hawaii

The Chief of Indian Air Force (IAF) Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria is set to participate in Pacific Air Chiefs Symposium 2019 (PACS 2019) being held at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii (a state of USA). Theme for 2019's symposium is: 'A Collaborative Approach to Regional Security'.

Science and Technology

India conducts successful trial of indigenously made Prithvi-2 missile

India has successfully conducted another night trial of its indigenously developed nuclear capable Prithvi-2 missile from a mobile launcher of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur in Odisha coast.

The successful test fires were part of a routine user trial for armed forces and met all parameters. Earlier, the flight test of surface-to-surface missile was carried out barely a 15 days after two back-to-back trials of Prithvi-2 were conducted successfully at night from same base on 20 November.

ISRO Sets Up Space Technology Cells In IITs, IISc And Other Colleges

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced the setting up of five space technology cells (STCs) at India's premier engineering and science colleges to conduct space research, build new applications and high-end technology. ISRO said that STCs have been installed at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) campuses in, Bombay, Kanpur, Madras and Kharagpur, Bengaluru's Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and at the Joint Research Programme with Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU).

Last year, ISRO had announced to launch incubators across India to mentor space startups. The Indian space agency worked closely with startups to build newer solutions in rocketry communication satellites, and various remote sensing data among others. Previously, ISRO was engaged with startups through Antrix Corp, where it worked with space startups such as Bellatrix Aerospace, Aniara Communications, Satsure and Exseed Space.

NASA Parker Solar Probe sends back 1st information from sun's edge

NASA's Parker Solar Probe, which has flown closer to the sun than any other spacecraft, has sent back its first observations from the solar atmosphere's edge. Over the next six years, Parker will follow an elliptical orbit, eventually reaching so near the sun that it will not be sending pictures as pointing the camera towards the sun would melt it.

Duchifat 3: Satellite built by Israeli school students to be launched by ISRO's PSLV C48

Three youngsters Alon Abramovich, Meitav Assulin and Shmuel Aviv Levi, all 17 to 18 years old from Sha'ar HaNegev High school in Israel's southern region will be traveling to India to launch a satellite dubbed as- 'Duchifat 3', designed and built by them aboard PSLV C48 from Sriharikota launch site of ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) on 11 December 2019.

ISRO successfully launches India's spy satellite RISAT-2BR1 with 9 others

ISRO successfully launched India's spy satellite RISAT-2BR1 and nine foreign satellites through Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). The 628 kg radar imaging Earth observation satellite is meant for applications in various fields like agriculture, forestry and disaster management support. The foreign satellites include one each from Israel, Italy, Japan and six from the USA.

A start to be named after Indian Woman Scientist

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has accepted to name a white-yellow star in Sextans constellation and its Jupiter-like exoplanets. Until now, the stars were called HD 86081 and 86081b.

The star will be named Bibha and the orbiting exoplanet will be named Santamasa, a Sanskrit term for clouded. The move by IAU is aimed to bring the attention of the global countries to exoplanet research. Bibha Chowdhuri is a 20th-century Indian woman physicist.

WHO approved a biosimilar medicine for breast cancer

The World Health Organization (WHO) has now approved a biosimilar medicine that is derived from living sources instead of the chemicals. The aim is to make breast cancer treatment affordable to women globally. This approval from WHO is first of such kind.

Scientists find World's oldest Fossil forest

Scientists have discovered the remnants of world's oldest fossil forest- an extensive network of trees around 386 million years old in a sandstone quarry in United States (US). According to the researchers from Binghamton University, and New York State Museum in U.S., the fossil forest in Cairo would have spread from New York all the way into Pennsylvania and beyond. The finding were published in journal Current Biology.

China-Brazil Satellite Launched Into Space to Monitor Amazon Rainforest

An Earth observation satellite jointly developed by China and Brazil was launched into space under a bilateral programme seen as a template for broader cooperation among BRICS nations.

The China-Brazil Earth Resource Satellite-4A was launched on a Long March-4B rocket in the northern Chinese province of Shanxi, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

NPL scientists develop ink to stop fake passports and currency notes

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and National Physical Laboratory (NPL) developed an ink to combat the problem of fake printing of passports and counterfeiting of currency notes. The ink has a new security feature of protecting itself against duplicity

CDRI and Cipla collaboration for development of new drugs

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research- Central Drug Research Institute (CSIR-CDRI) have signed an agreement for collaboration to jointly develop new drugs for treating various medical conditions and repurposing of drugs for India and global markets with Cipla limited.

100th Consecutively Successful Launch of Sounding Rocket RH-200 from TERLS

Space activities in the country started during early 1960s with the scientific investigation of upper atmosphere and ionosphere over the geo magnetic equator that passes over Thumba near Thiruvananthapuram, using small sounding rockets.

Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram has been pioneering the sounding rocket launch for scientific studies. Large numbers of sounding rockets have been developed and launched from Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS).

ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called Rohini series, important among them being RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560, number in the name indicating the diameter of the rocket in mm.

China successfully launches largest carrier rocket

China successfully launched the largest carrier rocket of the country, Long March-5 from Wenchang Space Launch Center in south China's Hainan Province. Long March-5 Rocket The rocket known as CZ-5 blasted off with more than 1,000 tonnes of thrust at 8.45 pm, Xinhua reported.

The Chinese space authorities declared the mission a complete success just over half an hour after the lift-off when the Shijian-20 satellite it carried entered its designated orbit.

Astronaut Christina Koch creates record for longest single spaceflight by woman

NASA Astronaut Christina Koch creates a record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman, surpassing the earlier record of 288 days in space. When she arrives back on Earth in February 2020, she will have spent more than 300 days in space.

ISRO planning to launch satellite Aditya to study sun: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his last 'Mann ki Baat' programme of this year said that the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is planning to launch a satellite called Aditya to study the sun.

"India is quite advanced in the field of astronomy, and we have taken path-breaking initiatives in this field. ISRO has an astronomical satellite called ASTROSAT. Moreover, they are planning to launch a satellite called Aditya, to study the sun," said Modi.

Sports

Name	Title name	Extra Information
Gurpreet Singh, Sunil Kumar	gold medals in Senior National C'ships	Gurpreet defeated two-time world junior championships

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

		medallist Sajan Bhanwal, who was representing the Railways, by a 3-1 margin, in the 77 kilogram category.
Lewis Hamilton	Abu Dhabi GP – Formula 1 race	The Briton had already claimed his sixth career title but demonstrated one last time how dominant both he and Mercedes have been this year.
India	178 medals	India leads the medal tally at the 13th edition of South Asian Games (SAG) with 178 medals, which includes 89 gold, 62 silver and 27 bronze medals. The host nation Nepal stands second with 123 medals and Sri Lanka at third position with 144 medals.
Wasim Jaffer	becomes first ever cricketer to play 150 Ranji matches	Jaffer is followed by Devendra Bundela with 145 appearances between 1995 and 2017 and Amol Muzumdar with 136 appearances between 1993 and 2013. Jaffer is also the highest run-scorer in Ranji Trophy.
Indian women's football team	gold medal at the South Asian Games	The Indian women's football team won its third consecutive gold medal at the South Asian Games after beating hosts Nepal 2-0 in the summit clash.
Kuldeep Yadav	first Indian to bag two international hat-tricks	Wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav on Wednesday became the first India player to claim two hat-tricks in international cricket, joining an elite band that includes pace legend Wasim Akram.
Sweden	U-17 tri-nation tournament final	Sweden Under-17 combined with ease and despite missing a penalty-kick, were good enough to win the final of the Tri-nation Tournament 4-0 on the strength of first-half goals against India Under-17 in Mumbai.
Zeena Khitta	women's national 10m Air Rifle	Himachal's Zeena Khitta stunned West Bengal's Mehuli Ghosh and World No.3 Apurvi Chandela to emerge as the

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

		new national champion in the Women's 10 metres Air Rifle
Mirabai Chanu	gold at Qatar International Cup	Former world champion, weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu won the women's 49kg category gold medal to open India's account at the 6th Qatar International Cup in Doha.
Abhinav Lohan	Bengaluru Open Golf Championship	Lohan shot four-under 68 to take his four-day total to 13-under-275 with seven birdies, a bogey and a double-bogey to show on his card.
Mirabai Chanu	Gold in 6th Qatar International Cup in Doha	Former world champion, weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu won the women's 49kg category gold medal to open India's account at the 6th Qatar International Cup in Doha.
Harinder Pal Singh	men's title in 3rd leg of HCL-SRFI India Tour	Indian squash player Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu clinched the men's title while Hana Ramadan of Egypt won the women's crown in the third leg of the HCL-SRFI India Tour Squash Tournament in Mumbai.
Maisnam Meiraba Luwang	Bangladesh Junior International Badminton Series	Top-seeded Meiraba, who hails from Manipur, beat Ken Yong Ong 21, 14, 21-18 in the final lasting 38 minutes.
Liverpool	FIFA Club World Cup 2019	It is the first time Liverpool have won the competition, which features each continent's champions, and they became only the second English team to lift the trophy after Manchester United in 2008.
Pat Cummins	becomes most expensive overseas IPL player	The Australian pacer Pat Cummins, with a base price of Rs.2 crore, became the most expensive overseas player in Indian Premier League (IPL) as he was sold to Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) for a whopping Rs.15.50 crore(\$2.2 million).

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

Manu Bhaker	gold medals in senior, junior 10m air pistol events	The 17-year-old Bhaker shot 241 in the final of the senior event to claim the gold medal. Bhaker, who is the Youth Olympics gold medallist, also shot 243 in the junior category to finish on top of the podium.
Abhinav Lohan	Bengaluru Open Golf Championship	Abhinav Lohan lifted PGTI title securing a narrow one-shot triumph at the Bengaluru Open golf championship. Lohan shot four-under 68 his four-day total to 13-under-275 with seven birdies.
Virat Kohli	Wisden cricketers of the decade list	South African duo of Dale Steyn and AB de Villiers, Australia's Steve Smith and women's all-rounder Ellyse Perry added in the list.
Virat Kohli	top ranked batsman in the latest ICC Test rankings	With 928 points, Kohli is 17 points ahead of Australia's Steve Smith who occupies the second spot.
Koneru Humpy	Women's World Rapid Champion 2019	Indian grandmaster Koneru Humpy has become the 2019 Women's World Rapid Champion. She defeated China's Lei Tingjie in a dramatic final in Moscow, Russia.
Udayan Mane	TATA Steel Tour Championship	Mane's 67-66-64-65 determined final round effort saw him establish a new PGTI record for the lowest tournament total as he closed the week with a jaw-dropping 26-under-262 at the Golmuri Golf Course.

Obituary

Name	Associated field
D.C. Fontana	a writer and story editor
Ron Leibman	Award-winning American actor
Bob Willis	Former England Cricket Captain
George Laurer	inventor of bar code
Gollapudi Maruthi Rao	Veteran actor and literary
Shriram Lagoo	Veteran actor
Thomas Chandy	Former Kerala Minister and senior Nationalist Congress Party legislator

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

L S Sheshagiri Rao	Veteran Kannada writer and critic Professor
Savita Devi	Indian Classical Music vocalist
Ganga Prasad Vimal	Famous Hindi author
Allee Willis	Grammy-winning and Emmy-nominated songwriter
Vikho-o Yhosu	Nagaland Assembly Speaker

Important Days

Day	Date	Theme
World AIDS Day	December 01	Communities make the difference
National Pollution Control Day	December 02	
International Day for Abolition of Slavery	December 02	
International Day of Persons with Disabilities	December 03	Promoting the participation of persons with disabilities and their leadership: taking action on the 2030 Development Agenda
Navy Day in India	December 04	Indian Navy – Silent, Strong and Swift
International day of Soil	December 05	
International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development	December 05	Volunteer for an inclusive future
Civil Defence Day	December 06	
Armed Forces Flag Day	December 07	
International Civil Aviation Day	December 07	75 years of connecting the World
International Anti-Corruption Day	December 09	United Against Corruption
International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime	December 09	
Human Rights Day	December 10	Youth standing up for Human rights
International Mountain Day	December 11	Mountains matter for youth
International Universal Health Coverage	December 12	Keep The Promise
International Day Of Neutrality	December 12	
World Monkey Day	December 14	
National Energy Conservation Day	December 14	
International Tea Day	December 15	
Vijay Diwas	December 16	
UN Arabic Language Day	December 18	
International Migrants Day	December 18	We Together

CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – DECEMBER 2019

Minorities Right Day	December 18	
International Human Solidarity Day	December 20	
National Mathematics Day (India)	December 22	
National Farmers Day	December 23	
National Consumer Day	December 24	Alternate Consumer Grievance/Dispute Redressal'.
Good Governance Day	December 25	