

Awards and Honours

Recipient Name	Award Name	Extra Information
Ranjitsinh Disale	2020 Global Teacher Prize	He is the first Indian to win this award, which carries prize money of \$1 million (Rs 7.4 crore).
Gitanjali Rao	Kid Of The Year	The Indian-American young scientist and inventor, Gitanjali Rao, has been named as the first-ever 'Kid of the Year' by the iconic TIME magazine. This is the first time that the TIME magazine has launched the Kid of The Year" award.
Sein Twa	Green Nobel Prize	An indigenous Karen activist who spearheaded establishing a sprawling conservation zone in eastern Myanmar has been awarded the 2020 Goldman Environmental Prize.
Adar Poonawalla	"Asians Of The Year"	Adar Poonawalla, the Chief Executive of the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII), has been named among six "The Straits Times Asians of the Year" for 2020, by Singapore's leading daily, The Straits Times, for their work in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.
Raj Kamal Jha	Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize	Journalist-author, Raj Kamal Jha has won the 3rd Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize for his novel, "The City and The Sea". Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the winner of the \$5,000 prize was announced online in Copenhagen, Denmark.
Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)	2020 King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award	The award was presented annually by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The award was conferred to the ICAR on the occasion of World Soil Day, on December 5.
"Invest in India"	2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Awards.	The United Nations Conference on Trade & Development – UNCTAD recently announced "Invest in India" as the winner of the 2020 United Nations

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		Investment Promotion Awards. The award recognizes the outstanding achievements of investment promotion agencies around the world.
Yulimar Rojas and Mondo Duplantis	2020 World Athletes of the Year	Swedish pole-vaulter Mondo Duplantis and Venezuelan triple jumper Yulimar Rojas are the 2020 Male and Female World Athletes of the Year.
Carolina Araujo	2020 Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians	The year 2020 Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians was awarded to Dr Carolina Araujo, Mathematician from the Institute for Pure and Applied Mathematics (IMPA), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
Bajrang Punia, Elavenil Valarivan	Sportsperson of the Year awards	Indian athletes, Bajrang Punia (Freestyle-Wrestling) and Elavenil Valarivan (Shooting), bagged the top honours at the virtually held FICCI India Sports Awards 2020 on the back of the 10th Global Sports Summit.
Joe Biden, Kamala Harris	Time's 'Person of the Year' 2020	The TIME magazine releases the annual list since 1927, to recognise a person or organisation who affected the news or impacted the country and world the most, for better or worse, during the calendar year.
Ashraf Patel	Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award – India 2020	The Youth Collective (CYC) has been declared as the winner of the Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) Award – India 2020. The award was presented by the Union Minister of Women & Child Development & Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani.
Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)	Golden Peacock Environment Management Award 2020	Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has been awarded with the prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award for the year 2020 in the Steel Sector by the Institute of Directors.
Indian entrepreneur among the 7 winners	2020 Young Champions of the Earth	The list of the winners also includes Vidyut Mohan, a 29 years old entrepreneur from India and co-founder of

		‘Takachar’, an enterprise that enables farmers in preventing the open burning of waste farm residues.
Ratan Tata	‘Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace’ award	Veteran industrialist, Ratan Tata will be honoured by the Indo-Israel Chambers of Commerce for promoting innovation that supports sustainability and peace in the region, including with the Palestinians.
Nehru Zoological Park Hyderabad	ISO certifications	The Hyderabad Zoo has become the first zoo in the country to receive ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Standards Certificate.
Robert Lewandowski and Lucy Bronze	Best of 2020 FIFA awards	The Bayern Munich striker, Robert Lewandowski has been named The Best FIFA Men’s Player 2020, beating off competition from last year’s winner Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.
Lewis Hamilton	BBC’s Sports Personality of the Year 2020	Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton was named as BBC’s Sports Personality of the Year. Hamilton beat Liverpool midfielder Jordan Henderson and British jockey Hollie Doyle to win the prize in a public vote.
Ratan Tata	ASSOCHAM Enterprise of the Century Award	Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the ‘ASSOCHAM Foundation Week 2020’ via video conferencing. The week-long Associated Chambers of Commerce of India (ASSOCHAM) Foundation Week was organised from 15 to 19 December 2020.
PM Modi	‘Legion Of Merit’	US President Donald Trump has presented America’s highest military decoration, ‘The Legion of Merit’, to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
Srinagar’s Amar Singh College	UNESCO Award	The restoration of the Amar Singh College brought back one of the most prominent institutional buildings in Kashmir to its former glory.

NTPC	CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2020	Country's largest power producer, National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) has been conferred "Excellence" in the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2020 in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Domain.
MS Dhoni	ICC Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade	M S Dhoni won the ICC Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade for his gesture of calling back England batsman Ian Bell after a bizarre run out in the Nottingham Test in 2011.
Virat Kohli	ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of Decade	Indian Captain Virat Kohli won two prestigious awards at the ICC Awards of the Decade. The two awards are Sir Garfield Sobers award for ICC Male Cricketer of the Decade and ICC Men's ODI Player of the Decade.
Hemant Kumar Pandey	DRDO's "Scientist of the Year" award	Senior scientist Hemant Kumar Pandey has been honoured with DRDO's "Scientist of the Year Award" for his contribution in developing several herbal medicines, including the popular drug Lukoskin meant for the treatment of leucoderma.
K. Veeramani	Dr. Narendra Dabholkar Memorial Award	The Dr Narendra Dabholkar Memorial Award for this year has been conferred upon Dravidar Kazhagam president K. Veeramani. The award was instituted in the memory of the Maharashtra-based rationalist Dabholkar.
Bihar	Digital India award for transferring money in COVID time	The Chief Minister Secretariat of Bihar, the Disaster Management Department besides the National Informatics Centre (NIC) of the state have jointly been chosen as winners in the "pandemic category" Digital India Awards 2020.
Pt Satish Vyas	Tansen Samman at the World Music Festival	In the inaugural ceremony renowned santoor player, Pandit Satish Vyas was conferred upon the prestigious Tansen Samman.

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V.K. Yadav	Eminent Engineer Award	The chairman & CEO of Railway Board, Vinod Kumar Yadav has been conferred with the prestigious “Eminent Engineer Award for the Year 2020’.
Lewis Hamilton	knighthood in UK New Year honours list	The award comes after an exceptional run this year, as Hamilton won his seventh world title this year, equaling Michael Schumacher’s record.

Appointments

Name	Designation Name	Extra Information
Utpal Kumar Singh	Secretary-General of Lok Sabha	Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has appointed senior IAS officer Utpal Kumar Singh as Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha and Lok Sabha Secretariat.
Varsha Joshi	Chairperson of National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)	She is presently served as Joint Secretary (CDD), Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India.
Sandeep Kataria	Bata CEO	He is the first Indian to be appointed to the global role of Bata (Headquarter-Lausanne, Switzerland). He takes over from Alexis Nasard, who has stepped down after almost five years in the role.
Kuldeep Handoo	“Fit India” movement ambassador	He won 11 gold medals in National and 6 in International stage, is the Wushu coach of Team India.
Rajeev Chaudhry	Director General Border Roads	Prior to this, he held the appointment of ADG LW&E in QMG’s Branch at Integrated Headquarters of Ministry of Defence (Army)
Radhakrishnan Nair	Chief coach of athletics by AFI	Nair has been serving as the acting chief coach since the resignation of Bahadur Singh in July earlier this year.
Anil Soni	CEO - WHO Foundation	US-based Indian-origin health expert, Anil Soni has appointed as the first Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the newly created “The World Health Organization (WHO) Foundation”.
Zena Wooldridge	World Squash Federation President	She will become the 10th WSF President to serve since the Federation’s inception in 1967. She is the second female President after New Zealand’s Susie Simcock.
Annika Sorenstam	President of International Golf Federation	IGF President, Peter Dawson, is stepping down after 10 years of leadership and service. Sorenstam, a 72-time winner

		on the LPGA Tour and former No. 1 from Sweden.
Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid	Prime minister	The move comes two days after Sheikh Sabah submitted his government's resignation in a procedural step following parliamentary polls.
Uday Kotak	MD of Kotak Mahindra Bank	The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the re-appointment of Uday Kotak as Managing Director of Kotak Mahindra Bank for a further period of three years, with effect from January 1, 2021. Kotak is founder managing director and promoter of the bank.
Shashi Shekhar Vempati	Vice President of Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU)	The CEO of Prasar Bharati, Shashi Shekhar Vempati has been elected as the Vice President of Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) for a period of three years. Prasar Bharati is India's largest public broadcasting agency.
Vineet Agarwal	President of The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham).	Managing Director of logistics major Transport Corporation of India Limited, Vineet Agarwal has taken over as the new President of The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham).
Satyendra Garg	Andaman and Nicobar DGP charge	Senior IPS officer, Satyendra Garg has assumed Andaman and Nicobar DGP charge. Garg, a 1987-batch IPS officer was posted as joint secretary in the Union home ministry.

Banking & Finance

ADB Loan for Meghalaya Power Distribution Sector

The Government of India recently signed 133 million USD loan Agreement with the Asian Development Bank. Agreement was signed to strengthen the power distribution sector in the state of Meghalaya.

Also, the loan is to be supplemented with a 2 million USD grant from the Asian Development Bank Japan fund for poverty reduction.

RBI to set up Automated Banknote Processing Centre in Jaipur

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to set up an Automated Banknote Processing Centre (ABPC) in Jaipur for the receipt, storage and dispatch of currency notes. The functions of the ABPC will also include processing of banknotes received from currency chests (CCs) and bank branches and destruction of soiled banknotes in an automated manner.

Canara Bank unveils “FX 4 U” for forex remittance via Internet Banking

Canara Bank has launched FX 4 U that enables its entire internet banking users to handle forex transactions hasslefree. FX 4 U is used for forex remittance through internet banking. With this development, eligible customers will be able to undertake remittance facility in adherence to the FEMA regulations 1999.

RBI imposes Rs 50 lakh fine on Urban Co-operative Bank in Kerala

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 50.00 lakh on The Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd in Kerala. This fine is imposed for non-compliance with directions issued on Income Recognition and Asset Classification (IRAC) norms and on Management of Advances-UCBs.

ADB and India sign \$300 million loan to upgrade power projects in UP

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed \$300 million loan agreement with the Government of India to upgrade rural power distribution networks in Uttar Pradesh.

GoI and ADB sign 4.21 million dollar PRF facility for Tripura

The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a US \$4.21 million project readiness financing (PRF) facility for the preparation of infrastructure development projects to improve urban amenities and develop tourism infrastructure in Tripura.

BoB signs MoU with defence forces named “Baroda Military Salary package”

Bank of Baroda (BoB) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard under which the bank would offer customised services along with a host of facilities to account holders. The bank has also renewed its existing MoU with the

Indian Army to offer specially customised banking services through "Baroda Military Salary Package".

RBI cancels the Licence of the Subhadra Local Area Bank, Maharashtra

The Reserve Bank of India has cancelled the banking licence issued to Subhadra Local Area Bank Ltd., Kolhapur, Maharashtra to carry on banking business in India. The Reserve Bank cancelled the licence of the Subhadra Local Area Bank Ltd as it had breached the minimum net worth requirement for two quarters in the financial year 2019-20.

ICICI Bank and Google Pay collaborate to bring digital registration of FASTag

ICICI Bank has announced that it is collaborating with Google to issue FASTag. It has become the first bank to join hands with Google Pay for the issuance of FASTag. Customers will now be able to order, track and recharge ICICI Bank FASTag via the Google Pay app.

AU Small Finance, ICICI Pru Life tie up to offer life insurance solutions

AU Small Finance Bank has announced a strategic partnership with ICICI Prudential Life Insurance to offer life insurance solutions. The tie-up aims to deliver "paperless, secure, and hassle-free life insurance".

RBI Monetary Policy: Policy Rate unchanged

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), headed by Governor Shaktikanta Das, has decided to maintain the status quo on policy rate amid sticky rate of inflation. At this point, the repo rate or the rate at which RBI lends to banks stands unchanged at 4 per cent. The reverse repo rate also stayed unchanged at 3.35 per cent. The MPC committee members voted unanimously in favour of the decision.

Liquidity Adjustment Facility

Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to extend liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) to Regional Rural Banks (RRB) to make liquidity management more efficient. The LAF was introduced in RBI in 1998 based on the recommendations of Narasimham Committee on Banking Sector Reforms.

It is a monetary policy tool that enables banks to resolve temporary cash shortages through repurchase agreements or repos. It can also make loans to RBI through reverse-repos to raise cash.

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India Post Payments Bank unveils new digital payment app 'DakPay'

The India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) along with Department of Posts (DoP) launched a digital payment application called ‘DakPay’ on 15 December 2020, in an effort to provide Digital Financial inclusion at the last mile across India. The app was launched by Union Minister for Communications, Electronics & Information Technology and Law & Justice, Ravi Shankar Prasad.

India and World Bank sign \$400 million project to protect India’s poor

The Government of India and the World Bank have signed a \$400 million project to protect vulnerable groups in urban and peri-urban areas across the country impacted by COVID-19.

GoI inks \$1-bn loan pact with NDB to support Indian Economy

The Government of India and the New Development Bank (NDB) have signed a loan agreement worth \$1,000 million for ‘supporting India’s economic recovery from COVID-19’. The loan has a tenor of 30 years, including a 5-year grace period.

RBI extends restrictions on PMC Bank for 3 months

Reserve Bank of India has further extended the restrictions on crisis-ridden Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank by three months till 31 March 2021. The bank has also received four Expression of Interest (EoI) for its revival. To examine them, the bank would need some more time.

ICICI Bank launches online portal ‘Infinite India’

ICICI Bank has launched an online platform ‘Infinite India’ to support foreign companies to establish or expand business in India.

The one-stop portal will offer banking solutions as well as value-added services such as the incorporation of a business entity, corporate filings, licences and registrations, HR services, compliances and taxation among others.

ADB announces Rs 2100 crore loan to Tripura

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced to provide Rs 2,100 crore loan to the Tripura government for the development of urban areas and tourism in the northeastern state. From the total fund of Rs 2,100 crore, Rs 1600 crore will be for urban development and Rs 500 crore for the tourism sector.

India, World Bank sign USD 500 million project to build Green national Highway Corridors

The Indian government on December 22, 2020, signed a loan pact of \$500 million with the World Bank for the development of safe and green national highway corridors in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh.

ICICI Bank Launches iMobile Pay to offer Payments

The private lender ICICI Bank has launched a new version of its mobile payment app called iMobile Pay, to offer payment and banking services to customers of any bank. The latest version of the app is interoperable and will now allow payments and other banking services to even those customers who do not hold an ICICI Bank account.

ADB approves Rs 2.5 mn in technical assistance for biofuel development in India

The Manila-based multilateral lending agency Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 2.5 million (about Rs 18 crore) technical assistance to support advanced biofuel development in India.

The grant will be funded from the Asia Clean Energy Fund, financed by the Government of Japan under the Clean Energy Financing Partnership Facility, and the Republic of Korea's e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund.

RBL Bank, ICICI Prudential join hands for Bancassurance partnership

RBL Bank and ICICI Prudential have joined hands under a bancassurance partnership. 398 RBL Bank branches across 28 states will distribute ICICI Prudential Life's protection and savings products.

The protection products of ICICI Prudential Life will help the bank's customers to develop a strong financial plan and its long-term savings products will help the customers of the bank to achieve their financial goals.

ADB launches \$9 bn "APVAX" for Developing Countries

The Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) has launched an initiative called, the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX), for its developing member countries. The bank has allocated USD 9 billion for APVAX.

BSE launches e-agricultural spot market platform 'BEAM'

Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) Ltd. has launched an electronic spot platform, "BSE E-Agricultural Markets Ltd (BEAM)", for agricultural commodities through its subsidiary BSE Investments Ltd.

The platform aims to boost the competitiveness of the Indian agricultural market by enhancing the strength of the BSE in financial markets, market technology and its vibrant ecosystem.

Indian Affairs

International Sand Art Festival & Konark Festival 2020 begins

The 9th edition of the International Sand Art Festival and the 31st edition of the Konark Festival has kicked-off in Odisha. International Sand Art Festival is being held at the Chandrabhaga Beach of Konark in Puri district of Odisha. About 70 artists from across the country are taking part in the festival. The world-renowned sand artist and Padmashree Awardee, Sudarsan Pattnaik, has been appointed as Chief Curator of the festival.

A Panel Formed To Oversee India's Paris Climate Goals

The Union Environment Department has established a high-level inter-ministerial supreme committee responsible for implementing the “Paris Agreement” (AIPA), chaired by the MoEFCC secretary. Ensure that India is “on track” in fulfilling its obligations under the Paris Agreement.

Parthiv Patel announces retirement from all forms of cricket

India's wicketkeeper-batsman Parthiv Patel has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket. The 35-year-old left-hander, who made his international debut in 2002, played 25 Tests, 38 ODIS and two T20Is for India.

India Water Impact summit

The first India Water Impact Summit began on December 10, 2020. This year the Summit is being held under the following theme- Theme: Comprehensive analysis and Holistic management of rivers and water bodies with a focus on Arth Ganga.

Association of Buddhist Tour Operator (ABTO) International Convention

The Union Minister of state for tourism and culture Shri Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the Association of Buddhist tour operators International Convention in New Delhi. The convention is to be held in partnership with Ministry of Tourism.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurates Koilwar bridge in Bihar

The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated the 1.5 km long Koilwar bridge over Sone river in Bihar through Video Conferencing. This newly inaugurated bridge is a part of the six-lane bridge being made in place of the existing two-lane bridge, for both rail and road traffic, which is 138 years old.

9th Sustainable Mountain Development Summit held in Dehradun

The 9th edition of Sustainable Mountain Development Summit (SMDS) held in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. The four-day-long summit was organised by Indian Mountain Initiative (IMI) and hosted by Sustainable Development Forum Uttaranchal (SDFU), Dehradun.

The theme for 2020 SMDS was ‘Emerging Pathways for Building a Resilient Post COVID-19 Mountain Economy, Adaptation, Innovation and Acceleration’.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Telecom Skill Excellence Awards announced

Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has presented the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Telecom Skill Excellence Awards, including a cash award of Rs 50,000 and Rs 30,000 respectively, to both awardees. The nominations were called for the first time for the year 2018.

India’s 1st CoE for Skill Development in Power Sector inaugurated in Gurugram

The Minister of State for Skill Development, Raj Kumar Singh has inaugurated the first Centre of Excellence (CoE) for ‘skill development in the power sector’ in Gurugram. The CoE has been established in the campus of National Institute of Solar Energy, Gurugram, Haryana.

Nation Observes 49th Vijay Diwas on 16 December 2020

In India, Vijay Diwas (also called Victory Day) is celebrated every year on December 16. The country is celebrating the 49th Vijay Diwas in 2020. Vijay Diwas is observed to commemorate the service, valour, and sacrifices of the gallant men of the Indian Armed Forces’ victory over Pakistan in 1971 war.

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India’s First Driverless Train

The first driverless train operations in India were initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 28, 2020. The train is operated on the Delhi Metro’s Magenta Line.

The train was rolled out on the 38-kilo metre long line, called the Magenta Line. It is a part of the 390-km long network spread across the national capital and the adjoining cities such as Gurugram, Noida, Ghaziabad, Faridabad and Bahadurgarh.

PM Modi flags off 100th Kisan Rail from Maharashtra to West Bengal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today flagged off the 100th Kisan Rail from Sangola in Maharashtra to Shalimar in West Bengal through video conferencing. Mr Modi said, under Atmanirbhar Abhiyan Package 10 thousand crore rupees have been approved for micro food processing industries.

Sahifasal Campaign Initiated by The National Water Mission

The SahiFasal campaign was initiated by the National Water Mission in 2019 that aims to promote farmers in water-scarce areas to plant crops that do not consume water but use water very efficiently; they are economically rewarded; healthy and nutritious; suitable to the agro-climatic and hydrological characteristics of the area; and environmental friendly.

India's first pollinator park opens in Uttarakhand

The country's first pollinator park with over 40 species of butterflies, honeybees, birds and insects has been developed over four acres at Haldwani, Uttarakhand.

The objective behind developing the park is to conserve various pollinator species, create awareness among people in general about the importance of conservation of these species and to promote further research on various aspects of pollination, including a threat to habitat and impact of pollution on pollinators.

India's First Hot Air Balloon Safari

The Forest Minister of Madhya Pradesh recently launched the first hot air balloon safari of India in the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve of India in MP. There are several hot air balloon rides in the country. However, this is the first hot air balloon safari.

Niti Aayog launches Cloud Storage Service 'DigiBoxx'

NITI Aayog has launched indigenously developed India's first Digital Asset Management and Storage platform, called 'DigiBoxx'. The initiative will give a boost to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', as India now has its own cloud storage platform.

India's largest hockey stadium to be set up in Odisha

Odisha Chief Minister, Naveen Patnaik has announced that India's biggest hockey stadium is being set up in Rourkela city of Odisha. The stadium will be constructed in the Biju Patnaik University of Technology campus, Rourkela.

India's first Lithium refinery to be set up in Gujarat

India's first Lithium refinery is soon going to be set up in Gujarat. Manikaran Power Limited, one of the country's largest power trading and renewable energy company will invest around Rs 1,000 crore to set up this refinery. The refinery will process Lithium ore to produce battery-grade material. Lithium is a rare element and is usually not found in India.

India's First Social Impact Bonds

The Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal corporation (PCMC) and United Nations Development Programme, India signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create the first Social Impact bond of India.

Yogasana recognized as a competitive Sport in India

The Sports Ministry has formally recognized Yogasana as a competitive sport. This will enable the ancient practice to avail Government funding. This was done to spread awareness about Yoga and its benefits and help improve physical and mental wellbeing of the people.

Govt approves inclusion of four indigenous sports in Khelo India Youth Games 2021

The Sports Ministry has approved the inclusion of four indigenous Games to be a part of Khelo India Youth Games 2021, scheduled to take place in Haryana. The games include, Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-Ta and Mallakhamba.

Prakash Javadekar releases ‘Status of Leopards in India 2018’ report

The Union environment minister, Prakash Javadekar has released a report titled the ‘Status of Leopard in India 2018’. As per the report, the population of leopard in India has increased by 60 per cent in four years since 2014.

Rajnath Singh inaugurates advanced “HWT” test facility in Hyderabad

Union Minister of Defence, Rajnath Singh has inaugurated the advanced Hypersonic Wind Tunnel (HWT) test facility of the DRDO in Hyderabad, Telangana. The state-of-the-art HWT Test facility has made India as the only third country in the world, after the US and Russia, to have such a huge facility in size and capability.

Indian Railways Authority issued a Draft National Rail Plan

The Indian Railways Authority issued a Draft National Rail Plan to address the deficiencies in capacity restrictions and increase its modal share. The Indian Railways has proposed a Draft National Rail plan to address the deficiencies in capacity restrictions and increase its modal share in the country’s total freight ecosystem.

E-Sampada: Government launches new web portal and mobile app on Good Governance Day

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on December 25, 2020, launched a new web portal and mobile app, e-Sampada to boost transparency and accountability while ensuring ease of living for the citizens of India.

India’s 1st Testbed TiHAN launched at IIT Hyderabad

Union Minister of Education, Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ has virtually laid the foundation stone of “TiHAN-IIT Hyderabad”, India’s first Testbed for Autonomous Navigation Systems (Terrestrial and Aerial) at IIT Hyderabad. The Technology Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation Systems (TiHAN) for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Remotely Operated Vehicles at IIT Hyderabad.

Indian Railways’ new Vistadome coach successfully completes 180 kmph speed trial

Indian Railways successfully completed the 180 km per hour speed trial of its new design Vistadome tourist coaches. These Vistadome coaches will make train journeys memorable for the passengers, as well as give a further boost to tourism.

Harsh Vardhan inaugurates India's highest meteorological centre at Leh

Union Minister of Earth Sciences, Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the meteorological centre (MC) of the India Meteorological Department at Leh in Ladakh via video conferencing. The centre would provide localised weather forecasts in the region, which would result in strengthening the weather-related early warning system for the region.

Cabinet Affairs

Cabinet approves setting up of Public Wi-Fi Networks by Public Data Office

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has given its approval for the proposal of DoT for setting up of Public Wi-Fi Networks by Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs) to provide public Wi-Fi service through Public Data Offices (PDOs) spread across length and breadth of the country to accelerate proliferation of Broadband Internet services through Public Wi-Fi network in the country.

Cabinet approves Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY) to boost employment in the formal sector by encouraging the businesses to do fresh hiring amid the pandemic. ABRY will also incentivize the creation of new employment opportunities under Atmanirbhar Bharat Package 3.0.

Assam's Bill to abolish State-run Madrassas

The Assam Government recently tabled a bill that will abolish all the state-run Madrassas and will convert them into schools from April 1, 2021. The bill is called Assam Repealing Bill, 2020.

Cabinet approves export of indigenously-developed Akash Missile System

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the proposal to export indigenously-developed Akash Missile System. The Cabinet has also approved to set up of a committee for faster approvals of exports.

Union Cabinet approves historic PM-WANI Scheme

The Union Cabinet has approved a scheme called the Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Initiative (PM-WANI), to improve wireless connectivity and pave the way for free wireless internet in public spaces across the country.

The scheme will allow anyone, from an individual in a residential area to a Kirana shop owner to a tea shop vendor, to set up public Wi-Fi hotspot and deliver wifi services. It aims to promote the growth of public wi-fi networks in the country.

Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020

The Union Ministry of Power recently drafted the Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020. These rules are being drafted for the first time in the Indian history. The consumers can pay the bills in cash only if their bill amount is less than Rs 1000. Bills greater than Rs 1000 are to be paid online.

Parliamentary Panel calls for Public Health Act

The Parliamentary Standing Committee under the leadership a senior congress leader, Anand Sharma recently submitted its report, “Management of COVID-19 pandemic and related issues”. The report was submitted to the Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu.

Cabinet approves 100% FDI in DTH sector

The Union Cabinet recently approved revised guidelines for Direct to Home (DTH) broadcasting services. The guidelines allow 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in DTH. Also, it has increased the license period to twenty years. Earlier, it was ten years.

Assam Official Language Amendment Bill

The Assam Cabinet recently approved the bill to make Bodo an official language of the state. The bill has been framed in accordance to the Bodo Peace Accord signed between the Government of India, Assam Government, four Bodo rebel groups and two Bodo organizations.

Cabinet approves the merger of four Govt film media units

The Cabinet approved the merger of four government-run film and media units — the Films Division, the Directorate of Film Festivals, the National Film Archives of India and the autonomous body Children’s Film Society, with the National Film Development Corporation.

Madhya Pradesh Religious Freedom Bill, 2020

The Madhya Pradesh cabinet recently approved the Religious Freedom Bill, 2020. Under the bill, forcing religious conversions will attract fine of Rs 25,000 and one to five years of imprisonment.

Cabinet approves Industrial Areas and Logistics Hub

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently approved Industrial Areas and Logistics Hub. The projects approved by the Cabinet are as follows:

- Construction of various trunk infrastructure components for Krishnapatnam Industrial Area in Andhra Pradesh
- Tumakuru Industrial Area in Karnataka
- Multi-modal Logistics Hub and Multi-modal transport hub at Greater Noida

State Related Affairs

West Bengal launches massive ‘Duare Sarkar’ outreach campaign

West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee has launched a massive campaign titled ‘Duare Sarkar’ (government at doorsteps) to aware people about the 11 state-run welfare schemes and help them avail its benefits.

The two-month-long outreach programme has been launched keeping in view the 2021 state assembly elections which are due in April-May.

Bihar migratory bird festival

Bihar is planning its first ever migratory bird festival this year. This is a three-day festival to be organised in Bhagalpur District. It is to be jointly organised by Bhagalpur forest division, Bombay Natural History Society and the local Mandar Nature Club.

The region houses a large number of migratory birds between November and March every year. The festival is intended to check cases of poaching in the region.

Gwalior, Orchha in UNESCO world heritage cities list

The historical fort cities of Gwalior and Orchha in Madhya Pradesh have been included in the list of UNESCO’s world heritage cities under its The World Heritage Cities Programme. Under the plan, UNESCO will suggest best measures and resources for the development and beautification of these places as per the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape recommendations.

Karnataka unveils “FRUITS” portal for farmers

Karnataka government has unveiled the Farmer Registration and Unified beneficiary Information System (FRUITS), an e-governance portal, to create a repository of farmland information and farm loan details on a single platform. All farmers will be registered and given an identification number on the portal.

Punjab Govt launches mobile app and web portal ‘PR Insight’

Punjab Chief Minister Captain, Amarinder Singh has launched Mobile Application and web portal called ‘PR Insight’, to improve the delivery of citizen-centric services, based upon the feedback of its citizens on government policies.

Himachal CM unveils 18-foot statue of Vajpayee in Shimla

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has unveiled an 18-foot tall statue of late former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the occasion of his 96th birth anniversary at the historic Ridge in the state capital.

Kerala’s Arya Rajendran becomes India’s youngest mayor from Thiruvananthapuram

The 21-year-old college student, Arya Rajendran has been elected the new mayor of Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, of Kerala. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader, Arya is the youngest person in India to occupy the post of mayor anywhere in the country.

Lakshadweep declared 100% Organic

The Union Territory of Lakshadweep has been declared as Organic Agricultural Area by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's welfare. The UT is second after Sikkim to achieve the status of 100% organic region. It is first in the Union Territories of India to achieve the status.

Odisha to host 2023 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) had announced that the 2023 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup will be hosted in Odisha, for a second consecutive time. The tournament will be held at two venues, Bhubaneswar and Rourkela. The Men's Hockey World Cup 2018 was also hosted by Odisha.

Ola to set up world's largest scooter factory in Tamil Nadu

The SoftBank-backed mobility platform, Ola has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Tamil Nadu government, to set up its first factory in the state, at an investment of Rs 2,400 crore. Upon completion, the Ola factory in Tamil Nadu will be the largest scooter manufacturing facility in the world. Initially, the factory will have an annual manufacturing capacity of 2 million units.

Maha Govt introduces Unified Development Control Rules for Real Estate

The Government of Maharashtra has approved the Unified Development Control and Promotion Regulations, (UDCPR), to strengthen and bring uniformity in the real estate construction laws of the state. This uniform set of regulations will specify everything from the height of buildings to the width of roads and the size of amenity spaces.

Gujarat Land Grabbing Prohibition Act comes into force

The Gujarat Land Grabbing Prohibition Act came into force in the state on December 16, 2020. This was informed by Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani.

A special committee will be formed to ensure comprehensive scrutiny of complaints received under the Act. The committee will comprise seven officers and will be chaired by the District Collector

PM Modi inaugurates world's largest renewable energy park in Gujarat

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the 30,000 megawatt (MW) capacity hybrid renewable energy park in Kutch district of Gujarat. It will be the largest renewable energy park of its kind in the world.

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launched 'Pareshram' Portal

Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik through a video conference, launched 'Pareshram' Portal along with 22 online services of Labour and Employees State Insurance Department. The Portal and the Online Services shall be helpful in "Ease of Doing Business" and contribute significantly to the industrial development of the State.

"Varasat" campaign launched in Uttar Pradesh

The Uttar Pradesh government has launched a special campaign 'Varasat' (natural succession) to curb property & land-related disputes in rural areas.

This is a first of its kind campaign in the state which aims to put an end the land-related issues in the rural areas and eradicate the exploitation of the villagers over succession rights by land mafias, who generally target disputed properties.

PM Modi to launch 'SEHAT', Health Insurance Scheme for J&K

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch 'SEHAT' – Health Insurance Scheme for the entire Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir on 26th December.

This scheme will cover the remaining One crore population which was not covered under Ayushman Bharat Scheme. Under Ayushman Bharat PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), eligible beneficiaries were covered under Health Cover of Rs 5 Lakh.

UN Women and Kerala govt tie-up for India's 1st Gender Data Hub

The UN Women and Kerala government have collaborated to establish India's first Gender Data Hub. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in this regard in the presence of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

International Affairs

New Military Deal between China and Pakistan

General Wei Genghe of the People's Liberation Army visited the Pakistani army headquarters located at Rawalpindi. During the meet the countries discussed matters of regional security, mutual interest and enhance bilateral defence collaboration. They also discussed about the China Pakistan Economic Corridor in which the Pakistani army has a greater role.

Azad Pattan Hydropower Project

The Azad Pattan project is a hydropower project that is to be constructed in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. It is to be built on the Jhelum River and will have the capacity to generate 700 MW of hydroelectricity.

This is a 1.35 billion USD project that is to be jointly undertaken by China and Pakistan as a part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The CPEC is a flagship project of the Chinese government that connects Gwadar Port of Pakistan and Xinjiang of China.

Last Solar Eclipse of the Year is On 14 December

The Total Solar Eclipse on Monday – December 14, 2020, will be the last solar eclipse of this year. Apart from Chile and Argentina, people living in southern parts of South America, Southwest Africa and Antarctica will be able to witness partial solar eclipses.

China becomes second nation to plant flag on the Moon

China has become the second country in the world to unfurl its national flag on the moon surface. Earlier this feat was achieved only by the USA when it planted its flag on the Moon during the Apollo mission in 1969. China achieved the historic feat when 'Chang'e 5' probe of China, which was launched to collect soil and rock samples of the lunar surface, took off from the moon to return to earth after planting the national flag on 3rd December 2020.

Bangladesh signs maiden Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)

Bangladesh has signed its first Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Bhutan, which will allow duty-free access to a range of goods between the two countries and hence boost bilateral trade between them. Under the PTA, 100 Bangladeshi products will get duty free access to Bhutan, while 34 items from Bhutan will get duty free access into Bangladesh.

HL-2M Tokamak Reactor

The HL-2M Tokamak reactor is China's largest and most advanced nuclear fusion experimental device. Located in southwestern Sichuan province, the reactor is often called an "artificial sun" because of the enormous heat and power it produces. It was completed last year and it has the potential to unlock a powerful clean energy source. China has successfully powered up this reactor for the first time, marking the advances made in the nuclear power research capability.

Sri Lanka to host Asia Cup in 2021

Sri Lanka will host the Asia Cup in June 2021 while Pakistan has earned the rights to host the tournament in 2022. As per the original schedule, the tournament was supposed to be hosted by Pakistan in 2020, however, it got postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now the event has been moved forward to June 2021, with Sri Lanka Cricket taking the hosting rights from PCB.

World Economic Forum 2021 to be held in Singapore

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has decided to host its 2021 annual meeting in Singapore, which earlier was scheduled to take place in Lucerne-Burgenstock, Switzerland from 13-16 May 2021. The decision to shift the annual forum from Switzerland has been taken in view of the Covid-19 situation in Europe.

Madagascar replaces Maldives as host of 2023 Indian Ocean Island Games

Madagascar has replaced the Maldives as the host of the 2023 Indian Ocean Island Games due to concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic. The event had been awarded to the Maldives last year, but members of the Indian Ocean Island Games Federation voted to move the Games to Madagascar.

IOC gives Olympic status to Breakdancing

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has registered 'Breakdancing' as the newest entry into Olympics and an official Olympic sport, with the aim to attract a new and younger audience. Breakdancing will be known as 'Breaking' in Olympics event.

Mt Everest declared 86 cm taller by Nepal and China

The world's highest mountain peak 'Mount Everest' has become taller by 86 cm, as per a survey conducted jointly by Nepal and China. The Government of Nepal and China jointly conducted an exercise to measure the world's highest peak.

The new height of Mt Everest has been calculated at 8,848.86 metres, which is 0.86m more than the previous measurement done by India in 1954. In feet, the new elevation is about 29,031 ft, or about 3 ft higher than Nepal's previous claim.

In Tibetan language, Mount Everest is known as Mount Qomolangma while in Nepalese language it is famous as Sagar-Matha.

Singapore Agency Approves Sale Of Lab-Grown Meat

The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) has approved the sale of a lab-grown meat product.

This is the 1st time that cultured meat can be sold anywhere in the world. SFA approved products are cultured chickens produced by East Just in the United States.

The latter is made from plant sources (such as soy or pea protein), while the cultured meat is grown directly in cells in the laboratory.

Qatar to host 2030 Asian Games, 2034 edition in Saudi Arabia

The 2030 Asian Games were awarded to Doha, Qatar and the 2034 event went to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia after a deal was struck between the rival nations. Doha beat Riyadh for the 2030 Games in the vote at the Olympic Council of Asia's (OCA) general assembly.

Singapore's Hawker culture gets UNESCO recognition

The UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has recently recognized "Hawker" culture of Singapore and has included it under the list of intangible cultural heritage. The list also includes Chinese Calligraphy, Yoga and Flamenco.

Singapore's street food added to UNESCO heritage list

Singapore's street food has been added to the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The nation's hawker culture will now join the likes of Yoga and Tango from India and Argentina respectively.

European Union approves Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine

The European Union has approved the use of Pfizer and BioNTech's COVID-19 Vaccine for individuals 16 years of age or above. The first phase of the mass vaccination in the 27-nation bloc will begin later this week.

US plans to set up a Nuclear Reactor on Moon

USA's plan to set up the first nuclear reactor on the moon by the end of 2026. In early 2021, the US Department of Energy in collaboration with NASA intends to solicit industry design proposals. It also got an impetus with a recent White House directive.

UK-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement

The United Kingdom and Vietnam recently signed an agreement on trade. The agreement is to eliminate 99% of tariffs within seven years. With the elimination of 99% of tariff, Vietnam is to benefit from tariff savings of 114 million pounds, that is 151 million USD on its exports and British will benefit 36 million pounds on its exports. The agreement is being negotiated since August 2018

Foreign Relation

India & USA signs MoU on Intellectual Property Cooperation

The Government of India and the United States of America (USA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the field of Intellectual Property Cooperation.

As a part of this MoU, the two sides will develop Biennial Work Plan to implement the MoU which will include the detailed planning for carrying out of the co-operation activities including the scope of action. The Union Cabinet had approved the signing the MoU for the same on 19 February 2020.

India, Mongolia held 7th meeting of joint committee on cooperation to focus on bilateral ties

India-Mongolia 7th Meeting of Joint Committee on Cooperation was held on November 3, 2020, in a virtual mode. The meeting was between the Minister of External Affairs, S Jaishankar, and L Oyun-Erdene, Chief Cabinet Secretary of Mongolia.

India-Uzbekistan virtual Summit

India and Uzbekistan held virtual summit to discuss bilateral relations. The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with his Uzbekistan counter part during the summit. The summit mainly focused on extremism, terrorism and radicalism.

UK PM Boris Johnson to be Republic Day Chief Guest

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has accepted the invitation to be the Chief Guest for next year's Republic Day parade, UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said. Raab, who is on a visit to India, held talks with Foreign Minister S Jaishankar. "I'm pleased that PM Johnson has invited PM Modi to join the UK-hosted G7 summit next year," Raab added.

India-Austria Cooperation in Road Infrastructure sector

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between India and Austria on Technology Cooperation in Road Infrastructure Sector in New Delhi. The MoU seeks to create a framework for the countries' mutual cooperation in the field of Road Transportation, Road/Highways infrastructure development, management and administration, road safety and intelligent transport systems. This is to enhance trade and regional integration between the two countries.

Prime Minister Modi holds virtual summit with Vietnamese counterpart

PM Modi held a virtual summit with the Prime Minister of Vietnam, Nguyen Xuan Phuc on December 21, 2020, to discuss the future development of the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two nations.

5th India – Myanmar bilateral meeting on Drug Control Cooperation

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), India and the Central Committee on Drug Abuse Control, Myanmar conducted the 5th edition of the India- Myanmar Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation. The Indian delegation was led by the Director-General Narcotics Control Bureau, Shri Rakesh Asthana.

India and Austria inks MoU on Technology Cooperation

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology of the Republic of Austria on Technology Cooperation in the Road Infrastructure Sector.

India and Uzbekistan inks 9 Agreements to strengthen strategic partnership

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev co-chaired the virtual Summit held between the two countries, to strengthen strategic partnership among them.

The Government of India also approved a US \$448 million Line of Credit for four developmental projects in Uzbekistan in the fields of road construction, sewerage treatment and information technology.

‘Swadhinata Sarak’ between India and Bangladesh to be opened on March 26, 2021

The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, Dr. A K Abdul Momen has informed that ‘Swadhinata Sarak’ between Bangladesh and India will be opened on March 26, 2021. He added that the road remains functional in India while it will be connecting through Meherpur, Mujibnagar district in Bangladesh.

Norway signs MoU with Clean Ganga Mission in India

The Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO) has signed an MoU with cGanga, a think-tank of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) for development of sludge management framework in India. Through this initiative, Norway intends to deepen the relationship with India especially in the prevention of climate change and conservation of the environment.

35th edition of India-Indonesia CORPATs

The 35th edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Indonesian Navy is being conducted from 17 to 18 December 2020. The 35th IND – INDO CORPAT will contribute towards the Indian Navy’s efforts to consolidate inter-operability and forge strong bonds of friendship across the Indo Pacific.

Sixth India-Japan Samwad Conference

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently addressed the sixth India-Japan Sanwad Conference through video conferencing.

The main objectives of sixth Samwad Conference are to encourage dialogue and debate, vary forward the ancient tradition of spiritual and scholarly exchanges and to highlights shared values between India and Japan.

India-Bhutan MoU in use of outer space

The Union Cabinet recently approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Bhutan for peaceful use of outer space. The MoU was signed between the countries on November 19, 2020.

Ranks & Indices

Reliance Industries tops Fortune India-500 list second year in a row

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries has topped the Fortune India-500 list for the second straight year, accounting for seven per cent of cumulative revenues and 11 per cent profit of the companies featured.

This year, ICICI Bank, ranked nine and Larsen & Toubro at 10 made it to the top 10, as Coal India and Tata Steel slipped out; Tata Steel had ranked eighth on the 2019 list and Coal India ninth.

US Air Quality Index

According to the recently released US Air Quality Index, Lahore has once again topped the list of world's most polluted cities in the world.

The report says that the particulate matter rating of Lahore was 423. Lahore was followed by New Delhi with a particulate matter rating of 229. Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal ranked third with a particulate matter rating of 178.

Climate Change Performance Index

The Global Climate Change Performance Index was recently released by the New Climate Institute, Germanwatch and CAN (Climate Action Network). In 2020, India slid a position to the tenth. India was at 31st rank in 2014.

According to the index, only two G20 countries India and UK were among the high rankers. The rest of the six such as Saudi Arabia, USA, South Korea, Australia and Russia were at the bottom of the index.

None of the countries were in top three ranks. This was because none of the countries were in the path of meeting their Paris Agreement commitment. Sweden was at fourth place followed by UK, Denmark, Morocco, Norway, Chile.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at 41 on Forbes 2020 list

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has grabbed the 41st spot in the 2020 list of Forbes 100 most powerful women in the world. This is the second time she features in the list, in 2019 ranked at 34 and ranked 41st in 2020.

India's leading Businesswomen, Kiran Mazumdar-shaw, Chairman of Biocon Limited also featured in the list at 68th position. The list also saw the biggest jump in ranking to 3rd position by Kamala Harris, Vice President-Elect of USA, and Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina Wajed is ranked at 39.

Sonu Sood tops 50 Asian Celebrities in The World list 2020

Indian actor, Sonu Sood has topped the first-of-its-kind '50 Asian Celebrities In The World' 2020 list, published by UK based Eastern Eye newspaper. The 47-year-old talented Bollywood star has been honoured for his inspiring philanthropic work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, especially helping migrant workers reach their hometowns.

Latest rankings for Test batsmen announced, 3 Indians in top 10

The ICC released the latest rankings for Test batsmen. New Zealand captain Kane Williamson dropped one place to be ranked third, while Team India vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane jumped one place to enter into the top 10. Rahane (tenth), Cheteshwar Pujara (seventh) and Virat Kohli (second) are the three Indians in the top 10.

Human Development Report, 2020

The United Nations Development Programme recently released the Human Development Report. According to the report India slipped to 131st rank among 189 countries in the Human Development Index. Human development index of India was 0.640. In 2019 India ranked at 130.

Kylie Jenner tops Forbes' list of highest-paid celebrities of 2020

American media personality and reality TV star, Kylie Jenner has been crowned the highest-paid celebrity of 2020 by Forbes. The top-earning stars in the world earned a combined of \$6.1 billion in 2020 with Kylie Jenner.

Setting aside Kylie's history with Forbes, the financial experts there calculated her earning this year to be at \$590 million after she sold a majority of her beauty brand's stake to Coty Inc.

India ranks 111 in Human Freedom Index 2020

A worldwide ranking of civil, economic and personal freedom, the Human Freedom Index 2020 was released. India was placed at the 111th spot out of 162 countries. In 2019, India ranked 94 on the index.

The first three spots have been bagged by New Zealand, Switzerland and Hong Kong. The United States and the United Kingdom are tied at the 17th spot on the index. War-torn Syria ranked the last on the list.

HDFC Bank ranks top among 100 BFSI Firms in India

HDFC Bank is the top-ranked company among the 100 Banking, Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI) companies in the country, as per the BFSI Movers and Shakers 2020 report by Wizikey. HDFC Bank has topped because of its customer service, monetary management, and innovative offerings amid the coronavirus pandemic.

India pushed back to being world's sixth-largest economy, to retake 5th place by 2025

India is expected to become the world's 5th largest economy by 2025, by again overtaking the United Kingdom, as per the annual report published by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) on December 26, 2020.

Vishakhapatnam: Best Performing Civic Body in Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Awards

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has selected Vishakhapatnam Municipal Corporation as the best performing civic body. Vishakhapatnam was placed under the Annual Awards for Excellence that recognises outstanding contribution of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban in 2019. The award is to be presented on January 1, 2021.

Business Affairs

Mega leather park with Rs 5,850 cr investment to come up in Kanpur

Mega leather park to come up in Ramaipur village of Kanpur with an investment of Rs 5,850 crores. The park, part of the mega leather cluster project will create 50,000 direct jobs & indirect employment for 1.5 lakh people.

DFC to invest USD 54 million in India to support critical infrastructure projects

The United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) has announced to invest \$54 million in India to support the development of critical infrastructure projects in the country in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The DFC will invest this \$54 million in equity for the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) in India.

KVIC Commissioned the Monpa Hand-Made Paper Mill

Khadi and the Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has commissioned the Monpa hand-made paper mill in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh. Monpa handmade paper in Arunachal Pradesh is a traditional art that has been passed down and extinct. The art of making Monpa handmade paper originated 1,000 years ago

Adani Ports becomes 2nd Adani company to cross ₹1 trillion in m-cap

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited crossed ₹1 trillion in market capitalisation after its shares hit a record high, up more than 34% so far this year. This is the second Adani company after Adani Green Energy to have crossed the mark. Adani Ports also recently acquired Krishnapatnam Port for an enterprise value of ₹12,000 crore.

Defence News

BSF Celebrates its 56th Raising Day on December 1, 2020

The Border Security Force (BSF), is observing its 56th Raising Day on 01 December 2020. BSF was formed on December 1, 1965, as a unified central agency, after the Indo-Pak and India-China wars, for ensuring the security of the borders of India and for matters connected therewith.

BSF has been termed as the First Line of Defence of Indian Territories.

PASSEX conducted by Indian Navy and Russian Navy

The Indian Navy (IN) and the Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) are undertaking Passage Exercise (PASSEX) in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

The exercise will help in enhancing interoperability, improving understanding and imbibing best practices between both the friendly navies.

Indian Coast Guard's OPV 'Sujeet' commissioned in Goa

Indian Coast Guard's (ICG) Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) 'Sujeet', which is second in the series of 5 OPVs was commissioned at the Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) in Vasco Town, Goa by Raj Kumar, Secretary (Defence Production).

GRSE Kolkata launches 'Himgiri', its 1st Ship of Project 17A

Himgiri, which is the first of the three Project 17A ships being built at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata was launched. The launch of 'Himgiri' has showcased GRSE's commitment towards the building of three state-of-the-art warships of P17A for Indian Navy.

India's First Maritime Theatre Command

The first Maritime Theatre Command (MTC) of India is to be launched in 2021. The MTC will look after the 7,516-km long coastline, the entire Indian Ocean Region and the 1,382 islands. China has the largest Navy with 350 warships and submarines.

Myanmar Navy formally commissions INS Sindhuvir submarine

The Myanmar Navy has officially inducted the submarine INS Sindhuvir, which was handed over by the Indian Navy to the country in October 2020. This is the first submarine in the Myanmar Navy's arsenal.

Navy, DRDO conduct maiden trial of air dropped container 'SAHAYAK-NG'

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) along with the Indian Navy conducted the successful maiden test trial of 'SAHAYAK-NG' India's first indigenously

designed and developed Air Dropped Container from IL 38SD aircraft (Indian Navy) off the coast of Goa.

Science & Technology

BSNL launches World's 1st Satellite-based Narrowband-IoT Network

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has partnered with Skylotech India (Skylo), a global machine connectivity solutions company, to launch satellite-based narrow band-Internet of things (NB-IoT). This initiative is the world's first satellite-based NB-IoT network.

ISRO to launch communication satellite CMS-01

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch a communication satellite CMS-01, formerly named GSAT-12R, on December 17, using its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) rocket's XL variant numbered as PSLV-C50. The CMS-01 will be a replacement for GSAT-12 that weighed 1,410 kg and was launched on July 11, 2011, with a mission life of eight years.

NASA selects Raja Chari as commander of SpaceX Crew-3 mission

NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) have selected Indian-American Raja Chari to be the Commander of the SpaceX Crew-3 mission to the International Space Station. Presently Raja Chari, is a colonel in the US Air Force.

ISRO sets up dedicated control centre 'NETRA' for SSA

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has set up a dedicated Space Situational Awareness (SSA) Control Centre named "NETRA", at its ISTRAC campus at Peenya, Bengaluru. The ISRO SSA Control Centre 'NETRA' was formally inaugurated by ISRO Chairman K Sivan.

Pneumosil: India's First Pneumonia Vaccine

The Serum Institute of India recently unveiled the first indigenously developed Pneumococcal Vaccine called Pneumosil. The vaccine was launched by the Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan.

Books

A book titled ‘Future of Regional Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific’ by ADB

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has released a new book titled ‘Future of Regional Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific’. The book provides insight on how stronger regional cooperation strategies, including in health, trade, finance, and disaster risk, can help governments in Asia and the Pacific accelerate economic growth and robust recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ministry of I&B release booklet on birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji

A booklet titled ‘PM Modi and his Government’s special relationship with Sikhs’ was released, on the occasion of birth anniversary of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. It has been produced by Bureau of Outreach Communication under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and is released in three languages Hindi, Punjabi and English.

Vice President releases a book on Former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam

The Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu has released the book titled “40 Years with Abdul Kalam- Untold Stories”, a book on the life of the former President of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. The book was authored by Dr A.Sivathanu Pillai. The book is published by Pentagon Press LLP and the foreword was written by Pranab Mukherjee, former president of India.

A book titled ‘Dharma’ authored by Amish Tripathi

The 2nd non-fiction book by author Amish Tripathi is titled “Dharma: Decoding the Epics for A Meaningful Life”. The book offers practical, philosophical lessons drawn from ancient Hindu epics. It is co-authored by his sister Bhavana Roy. It is to be published by Westland. His last non-fiction book ‘Immortals India’ was launched in 2017.

Devendra Fadnavis releases book ‘Ayodhya’ written by Madhav Bhandari

Maharashtra former Chief Minister and present leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, Devendra Fadnavis has released the book ‘Ayodhya’ written by Madhav Bhandari. The book will serve as a key reference document summarising the protests held for the cause of a Ram temple in Ayodhya.

A new book titled ‘Covid-19: Sabhyata ka Sankat aur Samadhan’ released

Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi’s new book titled ‘Covid-19: Sabhyata ka Sankat Aur Samadhan’ (Covid-19: Crisis of Civilisation and Solutions) was launched by former Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra and Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh. The Hindi book, published by Prabhat Prakashan.

Union Minister Shripad Naik Releases book “Sutranivednachi sutra- ek anbay”

Union Minister of State (I/C) for AYUSH and Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik released a Konkani book “Sutranivednachi sutra- ek anav”, by Dr Roopa Chari on 26 December, 2020. It is published by Sanjana Publications .

Late Justice Rajindar Sachar’s Autobiography: ‘In Pursuit of Justice’

The family of Late Justice Rajindar Sachar in association with The Indian Society of International Law and The Indian Law Institute is organizing the book launch “In Pursuit Of Justice: An Autobiography” written by Late Justice Rajindar Sachar. The book has been posthumously published.

Om Birla releases book on 19th anniversary of Parliament attack

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has released a book on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of the Parliament attack on 13 December. He released the book ‘The Shaurya Unbound’ (English Version) and ‘Samundar Samawe Boond Mein’ (Hindi Version) was released on the 2001 incident. As many as 14 people including the five terrorists died during the incident.

Sports

Name	Tournament name	Extra Information
Lewis Hamilton	Bahrain Grand Prix	The race was the fifteenth round of the 2020 Formula One World Championship. This is the 11th victory for Hamilton of the season, and 95th F1 win of his career.
Dawid Malan	Highest-ever rating points in T20I	The 33-year-old Malan has reached 915 points, and thus became the first player to cross the 900-point mark in the format.
Jehan Daruvala	Formula 2 race	Jehan Daruvala created history by becoming the first-ever Indian to win a Formula 2 race during the Sakhir Grand Prix in Bahrain on December 6, 2020.
Sergio Perez	Sakhir Grand Prix 2020	Sergio Perez (Mexico-Racing Point-BWT Mercedes), won the 2020 Sakhir Grand Prix at the Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir, Bahrain.
Ankita Raina	ITF doubles title in Dubai	Indian Tennis player, Ankita Raina clinched her third doubles title of the season after she won the 2020 Al Habtoor Tennis Challenge jointly with her Georgian partner Ekaterine Gorgodze in Dubai.
Max Verstappen	2020 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix	Max Verstappen (Red Bull – Netherlands) won the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2020, held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. This was his second victory of the season and 10th victory of his career.
Anshu Malik	silver at Individual Wrestling World Cup in Serbia	The 19-year-old won a silver medal in the women's 57kg category to claim first international medal of the tournament for the country. She lost to Moldova's Anastasia Nichita 5-1 in the final.

Obituary

Name	Associated Field
Papa Bouba Diop	Senegal World Cup footballer
Narinder Singh Kapany	Renowned PHYSICIST, businessman and Sikh activist
Kamatham Ram Reddy	Telangana Rashtra Samithi party's senior leader
Ravi Patwardhan	Veteran Marathi actor
Madhukar Gangadhar	Eminent Hindi writer
Paolo Rossi	Italy's 1982 World Cup hero
Roddam Narasimha	Aerospace scientist and Padma Vibhushan awardee
Sripati Khanchanale	'Hind Kesari'-winning wrestler
Eric Freeman	Former Australian Test cricketer all-rounder
Shri Roddam Narasimha	Aerospace Scientist
MG Vaidya	Veteran Journalist and first official RSS Spokesperson
Sugathakumari	Renowned poet and activist
John Edrich	Former England batsman
Shamsur Rahman Faruqi	Legendary Urdu poet
Luke Harper	Former WWE Wrestler

Important Days

Days	Date	Theme
World AIDS Day	December 01	Global solidarity, shared responsibility
International Day for the Abolition of Slavery	December 02	
National Pollution Control Day	December 02	
World Computer Literacy Day	December 02	
International Day of Banks	December 04	
Indian Navy Day	December 04	Indian Navy Combat Ready, Credible & Cohesive
International Volunteer Day	December 05	Together We Can Through Volunteering
World Soil Day	December 05	
Mahaparinirvana Divas (Death anniversary of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar)	December 06	
Armed Forces Flag Day	December 07	
International Civil Aviation Day	December 07	Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development
International Anti-Corruption Day	December 09	
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	Recover Better-Stand Up for Human Rights
International Mountain Day	December 11	Mountain biodiversity
UNICEF Day	December 11	
International Universal Health Coverage Day	December 12	Health For All: PROTECT EVERYONE
International Day of Neutrality	December 12	
National Energy Conservation Day	December 14	
Arabic Language Day	December 18	
International Migrants Day	December 18	Reimagining Human Mobility
Goa Liberation Day	December 19	
International Human Solidarity Day	December 20	
National Mathematics Day	December 22	
National Farmer's Day	December 23	
National Consumer Rights Day	December 24	The Sustainable Consumer
International Day of Epidemic Preparedness	December 27	