
FEBRUARY CURRENT AFFAIRS - 2020

NATIONAL NEWS

1. Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has taken over the process of issuing and managing International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) numbers of 15 digit from Mobile Standard Alliance of India (MSAI).
 - DoT will change the IMEI and rename it as "Indian Counterfeited Device Restriction" (ICDR) to ban the import of fake IMEI numbers.
 - It has been prepared by the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT).
 - ICDR has been launched on the Central Equipment Identity Register's (CEIR) web portal.
2. According to the 9th annual Traffic Index report released by TomTom (Dutch navigation and mapping company), India has 4 out of top 10 most congested cities in the world.
 - It covers 416 cities across 57 countries on 6 continents.
 - Parameter - free-flow travel times of all vehicles on the entire road network all time.
 - Bengaluru is at the top position.
3. Google has given \$1 million grant to Internews (non-profit organization) for promoting news literacy in India. (this is covered in Jan spotlight).
4. Andhra Pradesh has launched the 'YSR Pension Kanuka' - a doorstep pension delivery - scheme to deliver pension at the doorsteps of the beneficiaries aged 60 years.
 - Disabled people will get Rs 3,000 per month and people affected with Dialysis will receive Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 per month.
5. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced that Ministry of Civil Aviation will launch the Krishi Udan scheme to assist farmers in transporting agricultural products.
6. Indian Navy has conducted the exercise 'Matla Abhiyaan' (named after Matla River in West Bengal) in West Bengal to spread awareness about coastal security.
7. In 2019, Uttar Pradesh had launched the one product one district scheme to promote MSME products to make UP a \$1 trillion economy by 2024.
 - Under the scheme, every district of a state has been developed into a specialized signature industry.
8. India and Maldives have signed five MoU for establishing the Addu Tourism zone in five islands of Addu (Maldives) at a cost of \$2.49 million.
 - Also, sixth MoU to set up a bottled water plant in Hoarafushi (Maldives) was also signed.
9. Madhya Pradesh has organized the Amarkantak Narmada Mahotsav 2020 on the occasion of Narmada Jayanthi.
 - During the Mahotsav, one day will be reserved for all women activities under the theme of "Beti Bachao - Beti Padhao".



10. Madhya Pradesh is at the first position in implementing the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, according to Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Irani.

- Indore district has won the first position for better performance of the scheme.
- In the category of state/UT with less than 1 crore population, Dadar and Nagar Haveli has won 1st prize.

Note: - the scheme is covered in ESI >> govt scheme>> Ministry of Women and Child Development document.

11. CSIR-CFTRI and APEDA have signed an MoU to set up a Liaison Office in Guwahati, Assam to provide technical support to the food industries in the North East region.

- CSIR-CFTRI stands for CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute.
- APEDA stands for Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority.

12. Supreme Court has directed the states to set up 'Gram Nyayalayas' within four weeks under the Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 (the act was enforced in 2009).

- Currently, Gram Nyayalayas are only functional in Kerala, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

13. Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) has developed a Classical Swine Fever (CSF) cell culture vaccine to treat the swine fever in pigs.

- The CSF is one of the deadliest diseases of pigs causing a loss of Rs 400 crores to India annually.
- Pigs contribute 10% to the total meat production of India.

14. The expert panel, headed by N K Singh (Chairman of 15th Finance Commission), is looking into ways to raise money for defence capital acquisition.

- It is considering suggestion such as raising money through long-term defence bonds, creating a Rs 25,000 crore special fund, monetizing the surplus land available with the armed forces.
- While a cess of 2-3% on income tax to purchase new weapons for defence is also one of the suggestion.

- Rs 1.15 lakh crore has been allotted to defence capital acquisition fund by the budget 2020.

15. Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region, Dr Jitendra Singh, has chaired a meeting to fast-track the implementation of Ujh Multipurpose (National) Project.

- Purpose: for enhanced utilization of waters of Eastern Rivers allotted to India as per the Indus Water Treaty that presently goes across border unutilized.

- Ujh river (flowing in Kathua district) is the major tributary of river Ravi in Jammu and Kashmir.

Flow of Ravi River (origin in Himachal Pradesh; destination in Pakistan):

About Indus Water Treaty:

Signed - 1960

Purpose - Treaty Between India and Pakistan for utilisation of the waters of the Indus system of rivers.

16. President Ram Nath Kovind opened the annual Udyanotsav in Mughal garden in Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

17. Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewed Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and suggested to create a digital platform for settlement of claims under the schemes.

- PMJJBY is a life insurance and PMSBY is an accident insurance scheme launched in 2015.
- PM also directed the Department of Financial Services to "revisit the criteria and policy of the lien period" in both the policies.

Note: Both the schemes are covered in detail in ESI >> Govt schemes >> Ministry of Finance document.

18. According to the Greenbone Networks (German Security Firm), nearly one million medical files and 107 million related medical images of Indian patients have been leaked in India and are easily accessible on internet.

- Doctors use Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine (DICOM) to store medical images. DICOM use Pictures Archiving and Communications System (PACS) to store them.
- Maharashtra has topped in terms of medical data leak followed by Karnataka.
- Data of around 120 million Indian patients were leaked and was freely available on the internet.
- The report classified countries based on 3 categories namely "good", "bad" and "ugly" based on the actions taken by government after the release of the 1st report in October 2019. India has been ranked second in the "ugly" category after USA.

19. International Sugar Conference was organized in Pune.

20. Rajasthan police and Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation have flagged off Mukti caravan to create awareness about child trafficking.

21. GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL) has signed a concession agreement with Karnataka govt under the UDAN scheme to commission, operationalise and maintain the Bidar airport in North Karnataka.

- Bidar will be connected with Bangalore.

Note: UDAN scheme is covered in ESI >> Govt scheme >> Ministry of Civil Aviation doc.

22. BOILER INDIA 2020 - an industrial expo - will be organized by Orangebeak Technologies Pvt Ltd in association with Directorate of Steam Boilers (Maharashtra) in Pune.

- Global India Business Forum is the association partner of the event.

23. India and South Korea have held a meeting to enhance bilateral security cooperation.

- Both countries exchanged a roadmap for Defence Industries Cooperation which seeks to promote investment in Defence Industrial Corridors in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

- South Korea's Defence Minister - Mr Jeong Kyeongdoo

South Korean currency - South Korean won South Korean capital – Seoul

24. Department of Science and Technology has launched a scheme called "Sophisticated Analytical & Technical Help Institutes (SATHI)" in September 2019.

- Purpose: to enable academia, start-ups, manufacturing, industry and R&D labs to access the science & technological instruments at one place. It also aims to reduce dependency on foreign sources.
- Govt has planned to set up five SATHI Centres every year for the next four years.
- The govt will provide Rs 500 crores to 100 top-performing departments in universities and IITs etc to improve their research facilities to global benchmarks.

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25. IIT-Madras has developed an AI-technology to convert brain signals of speech-impaired humans into language.
26. L&T MBDA Missile Systems' has set up a missile integration facility at Defence Industrial Corridor — Coimbatore (in Tamil Nadu).
- L&T MBDA Missile Systems' (Chairman - JD Patil) is a joint venture between L&T and MBDA Systems which owns 49%.
27. India's biggest rural technical festival titled 'Antahpragnya 2020' was organized at Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies-Basar (RGUKT-Basar) in Telangana.
- Theme: Spot and encourage rural tech innovators.
 - RGUKT is the first institute in India to implement block-chain technology.
 - The team of Antahpragnya, in collaboration with Society for Space Education, Research and Development (SSERD), is organizing an Astrospace camp to create awareness about the career in the space.
28. India has organized the 4th East Asia Summit (EAS) Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation in Chennai.
- Organizer: Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with the Governments of Australia and Indonesia.
 - Knowledge Partners of the Conference: National Maritime Foundation and Research and Information System for Developing Countries.
 - PM Modi had announced to host the EAS conference in India during the 14th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Bangkok in November 2019.
29. Karnataka has launched 'Janasevaka' scheme in a few municipal corporation wards to provide home delivery of various govt services like ratio cards, senior citizen identity and health cards.
- The scheme has been launched under the Sakala program of Karnataka. Sakala was launched to provide in-time delivery of government services to citizens.
30. Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has partnered with Ministries of MSME, agriculture and food processing along with NITI Aayog to stimulate innovation in various sector in India.
- AIM will give demo sessions to these ministries and various stakeholders to help them adopt innovative solution to increase their yield.
31. Union Cabinet has approved Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020 to give the status of institute of national importance to 5 IITs in Surat, Bhopal, Bhagalpur, Agartala and Raichur.
- It will allow IITs to issue Bachelor of Technology or Master of Technology or PhD degree.
32. According to a report submitted by National Productivity Council (NPC), the application of Soil Health Card scheme's recommendations has led to a decline in the use of chemical fertiliser by 8-10% and increased the productivity by 5-6%.
- Note: - Details of Soil Health Card Scheme has been covered in ESI » Government scheme » Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare Part 2.

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33. India and Norway have signed 4 MoU in the field of research and higher education.
34. YSR Pension Kanuka (also known as 'Intivadhakey Pension' programme) has covered 90% of the 60 lakh pensioners with 6 days of its launch.
- Andhra Pradesh govt launched this first of its kind scheme on February 1 to provide doorstep delivery of pension at an outlay of Rs 1,320 crore.
35. According to the Minister of state for home affairs Nityanand Rai, West Bengal and Tripura witnessed highest number of illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries.
- He cites NCRB's Crime in India 2018 report to mention that West Bengal witnessed the highest number of crimes by foreigners at 661 followed by Manipur.
36. Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan, has informed Rajya Sabha that the LPG connection have reached 96.9% (27.5 crore) households as on January 1, 2020.
- Out of this, 8 crore connections were made under PM Ujjwala Yojana.
37. Justice Amitava Roy committee, formed by Supreme Court to suggest measures for prison reforms, has submitted its report (300 page).
38. According to the World Cancer Report released by International Agency for Research on Cancer (a specialized unit of WHO), 1 in 10 Indian will develop cancer during their life-time and 1 in 15 Indians will die of cancer.
- Reason: "socio-economic inequalities" is a major cause for the rapidly increasing burden of cancer in India.
 - Together, the six common types of cancer accounted for almost half (49%) of all new cases in both men and women.
 - India accounts for about 1/5th of the global burden of cervical cancer.
 - According to WHO, the cancer cases in the world will rise by 60% by 2040. Low and Middle-Income Countries will see an increase of 81% in new cancer cases if current trends continue.
 - World Health Organization has also released the "Report on Cancer: Setting priorities, investing wisely and providing care for all" which provides measures to save 7 million lives from cancer.
 - Tobacco is the biggest risk factor for cancer, with about 80% of the world's smokers in low and middle-income countries.
 - 64% of the world's daily smokers live in 10 countries, and half of the world's male smokers live in just three countries - China, India, and Indonesia.
39. Rajya Sabha committee chaired by Bhupender Yadav has presented its 15 recommendations on the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2019.
- Major recommendations - allow single woman (divorcee or widow) to conduct surrogacy; increase insurance cover for surrogate mothers from 16 months to 36 months; delete the definition of infertility.
 - Definition of infertility in the bill - "inability to conceive after 5 years of unprotected intercourse".
40. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has finalized the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisement) (Amendment) Bill 2020 which makes false advertisements punishable.

- It increases the number of disorders and diseases (caused by faulty drugs and cosmetics) in the list from 54 to 78.

41. First ever India-Central Asia Business Council has been organized in New Delhi to promote trade and investment between India and Central Asian countries.

- Under the India-Central Asia Dialogue, the governments have committed to create a vibrant partnership.
- 5 central Asian countries namely Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic along with India have joined the council.

42. 12th Bengaluru International Film Festival has started in India.

43. Russian Helicopters has signed a road map with Indo-Russian Helicopter Ltd (IRHL) for assembling the Ka-226T helicopters in India.

- IRHL is a joint venture between Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd and Russian Helicopters.

44. Indian Navy will get the delivery of 3rd Scorpene submarine named Karanj by Dec 2020.

- In 2005, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd and Naval Group got the project of manufacturing 6 Scorpene sub-marines by 2022.
- INS Kalvari (1st scorpene submarine) was commissioned in 2018 and INS Khanderi (2nd Scorpene submarine) was inducted in 2019.

45. Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) has announced to modernize 25 fishing harbours in India beginning with Nizampatnam in Andhra Pradesh and Thoppumpady in Kochi, Kerala.

- Purpose: to increase the value of marine products.

46. DRDO's High Energy Materials Research Laboratory has signed an agreement with Rosoborn export of Russia to develop Advanced Pyrotechnic Ignition Systems for missile propulsion.

47. Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) has organized the 22nd India International Sea Food Show (one of Asia's largest food fair) in Kochi, Kerala.

- Theme: Blue Revolution: Beyond Production to Value Addition
- MPEDA has set a target to reaching exports of marine products to \$10 billion by 2022 from \$6.7 billion in 2018-19.
- MPEDA chairman K S Srinivas has suggested about a three-pronged strategy - increase productivity, expand area under cultivation and diversification of species - for promoting the fisheries sector in India.
- India is currently the fourth largest producer of seafood in the world.

48. Andhra Pradesh govt will establish 18 Disha Police Stations in the state by the end of February 2020 to counter the crimes against women.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 23RD NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON E-GOVERNANCE

A) Mumbai Declaration on e-Governance was adopted during the 23rd National Conference on e-Governance that was held in Mumbai.

- Theme of the conference: India 2020: Digital Transformation



- Organizers of the conference: Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Maharashtra govt and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- Purpose: The declaration will help to improve the e-governance and service delivery systems in India to achieve a good rank in the UN's E-Governance Development Index.
- Goals: The declaration has 10 goals, the Declaration seeks to take forward the roadmap for e-Governance outlined in the Shillong Declaration of 2019.

B) National E-Governance awards were also distributed during the conference:

C) During the conference, the 1st National e-Governance Service Delivery Index Assessment (NeSDA) was released by the Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension to assess states/UTs on the basis of delivery of e-governance services.

- States were divided into four categories - Union territories, remaining states, north-east and hill states and central government ministries websites.

- 7 Parameters: accessibility, content availability, ease of use, information security & privacy, end service delivery, integrated service delivery and status & request tracking.

The parameters were covered under the six sectors.

- 6 sectors are: -

- Rankings were given on two basis - first is the overall portals and second is the service portals.

Overall portals (Top rankers)

- Portals of Ministry of health & family welfare, and Ministry of human resource development have emerged leaders across "all parameters".

D) During the conference, it was announced to develop Mumbai as the fintech capital of India. India Fintech Festival will also be held in Mumbai in March 2020.

- According to Satej D. Patil (Minister for Information Technology of Maharashtra), Maharashtra is the first state to have launched a fintech policy.

49. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has announced to pair up 20 best performing smart cities with 20 least performing cities to work as "sister cities".

- The pairing has been done on the basis of culture and region.

- Purpose: to improve the performance of cities under the Smart Cities Mission (launched in 2015).

50. Union Cabinet has given exemption to Alliance Air (Air India's subsidiary) from the '5/20 rule' for operating international flights between India and Sri Lanka.

- Under the 5/20 rule of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, an airline can conduct international flight operations only when it has 5 years of experience and minimum 20 aircraft.

51. According to the government's response to an RTI query, for every 100 anganwadi (or day-care centre) beneficiaries in India, only 7 belong to urban areas.

52. Ministry of Defence has announced to create 10 more defence attaches posts to 10 different countries.

- An Export Promotion and Investor Cell has been set up under the Department of Defence Production to access and manage defence exports.

53. Ministry of Food Processing Industries has sanctioned 39 mega food parks and 298 Integrated Cold Chain Projects under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY).

Note: - details of the scheme has been covered under the ESI >> Govt scheme >> Ministry of Food Processing document

54. Sports Authority of India and Hockey India will establish High-Performance Centers in 7 places in India that are Karnataka, Delhi, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Maharashtra, Jharkhand.

- Purpose: to train the young hockey players (14 to 24 years of age) to participate in 2024 and 2028 Olympic games.

55. Duff & Phelps has released the celebrity brand evaluation report for 2019, which ranks Virat Kohli (with a 39% jump in his brand value) at the top position for a third consecutive time.

- Akshay Kumar is at the 2nd position.
- Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone are both at the 3rd position.

56. 5 Indian banks - State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Canara Bank, Exim Bank & Union Bank of India - and two Nepalese banks (Everest Bank and NABIL Bank) have provided a loan of NR 100 billion for the Arun-3 hydropower project (the largest Indian- backed project in Nepal).

- It is being developed on the Arun River in Nepal.
- India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) is building it through its subsidiary SJVN Arun- 3 Power Development Company.
- In 2008, SJVN had signed an MoU with the government of Nepal for execution of project.

57. First train from North-east India to Bangladesh (Agartala- Akhaura route on the Gangasagar-Nischintapur railway track) will be constructed by 2021.

- The project is developed by IRCON International Ltd.
- Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region of India is financing the project for the Indian side and Ministry of External Affairs of India is funding the project for Bangladesh side.
- As part of the project, first transshipment yard of the Northeast Region will be developed in Nischintapur, Tripura.

58. India's first glass floor suspension bridge will be built on river Ganga in Rishikesh (Uttarakhand) to replace the Lakshman Jhula.

59. Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) has set a target to increase exports of marine products to \$15 billion in the next 5 years.

- During 2018-19, the exports were \$6.7 billion as per provisional figures.

60. Madhya Pradesh's revenue department has signed an agreement with Survey of India to use drones for mapping villages.

- This is the first time, the state is using drones for mapping villages.
- Survey of India is the country's national mapping agency under the Ministry of Science and Technology.

61. Ministry of HRD and UNESCO have signed an agreement in the field of education during the visit of UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay in India.

- Also, they signed the Operational Agreement extending the presence of Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) for a further period of 5 years.

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- MGIEP is a New Delhi based UNESCO's Category 1 Research Institute that focuses on SDG 4.7 (education for building peaceful and sustainable societies).
62. IIT-Hyderabad has found a molecule - "AIM-4" - to help in the treatment of "Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis" (a rare neurodegenerative disease that can lead to paralysis and death) known as "Lou Gehrig's disease".
63. Jammu and Kashmir administration has renamed the Public Health Engineering and Irrigation and Flood Control Department as the 'Jal Shakti Department'.
- J&K has also implemented the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to provide piped water supply to all households in the UT by December 2021.
 - Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide the piped water supply to every households by 2024.
64. Uttar Pradesh govt has allotted 5 acres of land to the Sunni Central Waqf board for the construction of mosque in Dhannipur village in Ayodhya.
65. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched two indices for the year 2019 for cities - Municipality Performance Index and Ease of Living Index - which will be conducted during Feb 1-29, 2020.
- Purpose: both these indices will assess the quality of life of citizens in 100 smart cities and 14 other million plus cities.
66. Hyderabad metro network has become the second largest metro network in India after Delhi metro.
- Hyderabad Metro Rail Project has been constructed by L&T and it has become the world's largest public-private partnership (PPP) project in the metro sector with an outlay of Rs 20,000 crores.
67. IIT-Madras and AIIMS- Mangalagiri (Andhra Pradesh) have signed an MoU for improving the patient safety and providing quality healthcare.
68. Minister of Textiles has mentioned that the govt has released a total of Rs 6,700 crore under the Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS) during 2015-16 to 2019-20.
- About ATUFS:
Implemented - 2016
Purpose - to improve the competitiveness of Indian textile sector by providing subsidies. Ministry - Minister of Textiles
69. According to a study conducted by the Centre for Wildlife Sanctuaries and Wildlife Institute of India, population of leopards in India has decreased by 75-90% in India in the past 120 to 200 years.
- The research has been published in PeerJ journal.
 - Leopards live in the Western Ghats, the Deccan plateau's semi-arid region, the Shivalik hill-region in north India and the Terai region along the Gangetic plains.
 - There is no dedicated census for the leopard in India. The leopard population was ascertained during the tiger census 2014 was around 12,000 to 14,000.



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70. Northern Coalfield Ltd (subsidiary of Coal India), in collaboration with IIT-Banaras Hindu University, has set up a Research and Development centre named as 'SARAS' (Science and Applied Research Alliance and Support) to increase the coal production.
- World Confederation of Productivity Science seminar has been organized in New Delhi.
 - The CMD of Northern Coalfield Ltd - Prabhat Kumar Sinha - has been elected as the member of World Academy of Productivity Science for his significant contributions to the coal sector.
71. As part of the "Abhedya" project of the India Army, Major Anoop Mishra has developed the world's 1st bulletproof helmet that can an AK-47 bullet attack from a distance of less than 10 meters.
- Indian Army's College of Military Engineering (Pune) has also developed India's first and world's cheapest gunshot locator named as 'Parth' to detect the exact location of the bullet from a distance of 400 meters.
 - Mishra had also developed the sniper proof jacket.
72. Haryana has launched the Mukyamantri Parivar Samridhi Yojana at a budget of Rs 1500 crores to provide financial aid.
- Financial assistance - Rs 6000 per annum along with a crop insurance.
 - Income eligibility - up to Rs 1.80 lakh and land holding should be less than 5 acres.
 - The amount of Rs 6000 can be used to pay premiums in various central govt schemes.
73. Kerala govt has announced in its budget 2020-21 that 1,000 'Kudumbashree' hotels will provide subsidised meals at Rs 25.
74. Kaamya Karthikeyan (aged 12) from India has become the world's youngest girl to climb Mt Aconcagua (highest peak in Andes Mountain Range in South America).
- By 2021, she aims to complete "Explorers Grand Slam" (campaign to summit 7 highest peaks of the world).
75. Tamil Nadu govt has announced Cauvery Delta as the Protected Special Agricultural Zone where non-agricultural activities will not be allowed without govt permission.
- Cauvery is an interstate river which originates in Karnataka and falls into Bay of Bengal through Tamil Nadu.
76. Beti Bachao Beti Padho scheme had its anniversary on National Girl Day on January 24. The scheme was first launched in Haryana in January 2015. All India expansion of the scheme was done in 2018.
77. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has organized the "Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat Campaign" across India to build cultural harmony among states.
About Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat:
Launched - 2015
Ministry - Ministry of Human Resource Development is the nodal agency for implementing the program.
78. For the first time, Tripura has observed the Hornbill festival (which is observed by Nagaland).
- Purpose: - to conserve the striking forest bird "Hornbill" and to boost the livelihood of the people through tourism.

- Last month, the Barmura hill (in western Tripura), one of the biggest hill ranges of Tripura was renamed as "Hathai Kotor" (meaning "big hill" in the tribal language Kokborok).

79. Uttarakhand and Ministry of Civil Aviation have launched the first-ever helicopter services on the Sahastradhara-Gauchar-Chinyalisaur route under the Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (Regional connectivity scheme - UDAN).

- Heritage Aviation private limited will operate the helicopter on this route.

Note:- the scheme has been covered in ESI folder >> govt scheme >> Ministry of Civil Aviation doc.

80. DRDO Chief G Satheesh and NITI Aayog member VK Saraswat have inaugurated EPluto 7G vehicle manufactured by Pure EV.

81. According to a report "Uncompensate Victims" compiled on the basis of RTI queries filed by 5 lawyers from 25 states and 7 UTs, only 82 trafficking victims have received relief in last 8 years (2011-19).

- This is the 0.2% rate of compensation in proportion to the total number of survivors.
- The report has been released by Sanjog organization.
- State-wise: Delhi has the highest number of compensated survivors at 47.
- In 2012, the govt created Nirbhaya Fund of Rs 1,000 crore which is currently used for funding the Victim Compensation Scheme (to compensate survivors of rape, acid attack and trafficking).
- Reasons for low compensation rate: lack of awareness among victims, lack of initiative on the part of legal services authority etc.

82. Department of Science and Technology is drafting the mission to build a 50 Qubits 'Quantum Computer' indigenously at a cost of Rs 8000 crores in the next 4-5 years.

- The quantum technology would significantly reduce the time taken in decoding other systems and implementing commands.
- The quantum technology stores data in bits - either 0 or 1 - whereas quantum technology stores data in quantum bits (qubits) - i.e., both in 0 and 1 - which increases the speed of a computer manifold.

83. According to a study by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) named as 'Missing Women and Children in India', Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh (particularly Indore) have shown the highest number of missing women and children respectively in the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

- The study is based on the Crime in India Report compiled by NCRB for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.
- In Madhya Pradesh, Indore showed the highest number of missing children.
- City-wise: - Kolkata has the highest number of missing women during 2018. Mumbai also witnessed the highest incidence of trafficking.
- West Bengal was second both in number of missing children and women from 2016-18.

84. India will host the BIMSTEC Disaster Management Drill 2020 in Bhuvneshwar, Odisha.

- BIMSTEC - Bay of Bengal initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.
- BIMSTEC has seven members which are India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand.

85. Rajasthan govt has announced to set up one agro-processing unit of cooperative sector in each district of the state to increase preservation and processing of agricultural produce.

- For this purpose, a fund of Rs 500 crore has been created in Apex Cooperative Bank by the state govt.
- Additionally, the govt has also announced to sanction 25% higher crop loans during the Kharif season w.e.f. April 1, 2020.

86. Department of Justice has celebrated the 1.5 lakh registrations under the Tele-law initiative and an MoU was signed between CSC Academy and Capgemini.

- Tele-law initiative, launched in 2017 by the Ministry of Law and Justice, aims to provide pre-litigation advice to the needy people. The program is being implemented in collaboration with Common Service Centers.
- Till now, this scheme has been expanded to 115 Aspirational Districts in 100 days programme of the Central Government.

87. For the first time, Jerusalem-Mumbai Festival will be organized in Mumbai by the Jerusalem municipality.

- Purpose: - to strengthen ties between India & Israel and create a platform for cooperation among artists, tourism, cinema. The festival also aims to provide youth with exposure to different cultures.
- Israeli film The "Mossad" (directed by Alon Gur Arye) will be screened at the event.

88. Indian Air Force has planned to phase out the Kiran Mk II fleet and replace it with an intermediate jet trainer (IJT) which is developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd.

89. The Parliamentary Standing Committee, headed by Bhartruhari Mahtab, has submitted its recommendations on reforming some of the provision of 'Labour Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions of Workers' to include unorganized workers under the aegis of the bill.

- The committee has recommended to use 'workers' for everyone in the workforce to safeguard against any of them being excluded from the benefits of the code.
- The committee has given several recommendations apart from this.

90. Central govt is planning to roll out a National Action Plan for a 'Nasha Mukta Bharat' (expected to be completed in this year) worth Rs 336 crore to curb the increasing drug abuse.

- Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has identified a total of 272 worst affected districts mostly located in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, UP, and the North-east.
- The prevalence of Opioid use in India is three times the global average.
- The new policy would aim to scale up the treatment centres as well as trained personnel.
- The national plan is based on the AIIMS first ever "National Survey on Extent and Substance Use in India" which was published in June 2019 (covered in Spotlight).

91. 5th edition of AJEYA WARRIOR 2020 - joint military exercise of Indian Army and United Kingdom Army will be conducted at Salisbury Plains, UK.

92. Central govt is planning to declare all SC/ST as 'backward' to pave the way for their reservation in promotion.

- The govt is also planning to remove Article 16 (4A), introduced through the 77th amendment act, which provides for reservation in promotion if the states feel SC/ST are not adequately represented.

93. Ministry of Coal has launched a web portal for rating the coal mines to ensure safe and sustainable mining practices.

- The mines that score from 91 to 100% will get 5 star, 81 to 90% 4 star, 71 to 80% 3 star, 61 to 70% 2 star, 41 to 60% 1 star and mines that score from 0 to 40% will get No star on the portal based on star rating policy of Coal Mines of India.
- Opencast Mines will be evaluated on 50 parameters and Underground Mines will be assessed on 47 parameters under 7 broad modules which are:

94. Haryana has launched the 'Reading Mission- Haryana' to inculcate reading habits among students.

95. Gaurela-Pendra-Maewahi has been established as the 28th district of Chhattisgarh.

96. USA has approved to sell the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) to India for \$1.86 billion.

- IADWS includes Air Defence Weapon System, AMRAAM Missiles among other things to counter the threats posed by air attacks.

97. 6th edition of the Global Business Summit will be organized in New Delhi by Yes Bank and the Economic Times.

- Theme: - 'Collaborate to create: Sustainable Growth in a Fractured World'.

98. Indian Army plans to procure over 2,000 anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) from domestic firms including both public and private.

- The 3rd generation of ATGM missiles will replace thousands of Milan and Konours missiles that are currently in service.

99. GMR Airports has signed a concession agreement with the GEK TERNA (Greek firm) to develop and operate a new airport in Greece.

100. Ananth Technologies has become the first private aerospace firm in India to build six satellites for foreign countries Sweden and France, in India.

- CMD of Ananth - Subba Rao Pavuluri
- Central govt had set up New Space India Ltd in 2019 to commercialize the ISRO's research and development work.

101. 3rd International Conference on Arbitration has been organized in New Delhi by the Indian Council of Arbitration and FICCI.

- The conference focussed on "Arbitration in the Era of Globalization".

102. USA will monitor air quality in municipal locations across North India to help control pollution level.

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- USA will distribute 58 low cost air quality monitors and 14 weather stations to the Society for Indoor Environment, which will be installed in educational institutions.
103. United States Trade Representatives (USTR) has removed India and other nations such as Brazil, Indonesia, Hong Kong, South Africa and Argentina from its list of developing nations under its countervailing duty act (US-CVD Act).
- Reason: - USA alleges that India and other nations mentioned above have a share of more than 0.5% in the world merchandise trade and also a member of G20.
 - India's share in the global exports was 1.67% in 2018. In global imports, the share was 2.57%.
104. Punjab's Mahatma Gandhi State Institute of Public Administration has signed an MoU with the National Institute of Smart Government for capacity building on e- government services in the state.
105. West Bengal govt has presented its budget for 2020-21, which grants Rs 2,500 crore for the Bandhu Pralpa scheme for providing a monthly pension of Rs 1000 to SCs who are above 60 years of age.
- Rs 500 crore has been allocated for the Jal Johar Pralpa pension scheme for STs.
 - Under the Hasir Alo Scheme, no electricity bill will be charged from customers whose monthly consumption is less than 75 units.
 - Rs 500 crore was allotted for the Chaa Sundari scheme for providing houses to tea garden workers.
106. Minister of Tourism informed Parliament that tourist arrivals in India and country's foreign exchange earnings from them grew at the slowest pace in a decade in 2019.
- Around 10.89 million foreign tourists visited India in 2019 which is an increase of 3.1% against 5.2% growth in 2018.
 - Forex earning from tourists in 2019 grew 8.2% in 2019 against 9.6% in 2018.
 - In 2019, Bangladesh accounted for the highest number of foreign tourists arrivals at 21.37% followed by USA and UK respectively.
107. Supreme Court will convene an International Judicial Conference on "Judiciary and the Changing World" in New Delhi.
- During the International Judicial Conference 2020, the theme of 'Gender Just World' has been introduced.
 - Representatives and heads of 22 countries, International Court of Justice and East African court of justice are likely to participate.
108. Government has given approval to NTPC, REIL and EESL for setting up 2600 e-vehicle charging stations in big cities within a year.
- Actual sanctions of contracts will be given only after these PSUs will sign MoU for lands.
109. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has set up an investment facility centre for easing the process of investing in wind and solar energy projects.
110. 6th International Conference on Climate Services was held at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune (IITM).



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- Ministry of Earth Sciences is planning to conduct a 'decadal forecast of climate' to ascertain a more accurate forecast.
 - The new climate forecast system would be explored as a research programme to be taken up by the IITM along with collaboration from the Indian Meteorological Department and other entities.
111. Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment has informed Lok Sabha that the number of people died by cleaning septic tanks and sewers has increased by 62% from 68 to 110 in 2019.
- Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 prohibits human employment as manual scavengers.
 - According to a National Survey was conducted in 194 districts in 18 states where 48,345 manual scavengers were identified till January 31, taking the total to 62,904.
112. A Supreme Court bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao has announced that an individual cannot claim reservations in promotion as a fundamental right.
- As per the judgement, a state is not bound to give promotion on the basis of reservation and the court cannot issue a writ to the state govt for providing it.
113. Aam Aadmi Party has won 62 seats out of the 70 legislative assembly seats. Delhi CM - Arvind Kejriwal.
114. Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has informed Parliament about the Pension to Meritorious Sportspersons scheme that is providing a pension between Rs 12,000- Rs 20,000 to 627 sportspersons.
- The sportspersons who have won medals in international or Paralympic events are eligible for the lifelong pension under the scheme.
115. A group of ministers, headed by Rajnath Singh, will set up the threshold for deciding the creamy layer criterion for OBCs.
- The panel will decide on to increasing the income limit of Rs 8 lakh. It will also decide whether there should be different criterion for classifying creamy layers in OBCs in rural and urban areas.
 - Last time in 2017, the limit was raised to Rs 6 lakh.
116. National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Science (NICFS), in collaboration with AIIMS, RML and other hospitals, has released a first of its kind study in India which requests for increasing the time collection for sperms from female genitals in cases of rape from the present 48 hours.
- Reason: to avoid injustice to rape survivors.
 - The report has been submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs.
117. Union Cabinet has announced to include pending litigation in debt recovery tribunals (DRT) in the Direct Tax Vivaad se Vishwas Bill, 2020.
- The disputes of search and seizures where the recovery is below Rs 5 crore can be taken in this scheme.
 - Cabinet has also approved to infuse Rs 2500 crore into 3 PSU insurers - National Insurance Company, Oriental Insurance Company and United General Insurance Company (which are also going to merge).

- Major Ports Authority Bill 2020 has also been approved to provide a greater operational autonomy to major ports in India. The bill will amend Major Ports Act, 1963.
- Cabinet has also upgraded some provisions of the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Sri Lanka to strictly curb tax avoidance.

118. Odisha govt has formed the Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes (OSCBC) under the chairmanship of Justice Raghunath Biswal to protect the interest of OBCs in the state.

119. A technical committee headed by NITI Aayog vice chairman Rajiv Kumar has been formed to prepare an integrated social protection framework to reduce inequality and lift more and more people out of poverty.

120. A group on defence and internal security under the chairmanship of NK Singh has been formed for setting up a separate mechanism for funding internal defence and security.

- Also, a separate fiscal committee will be formed with a few days to help the 15th finance commission address its terms of reference.

121. President's colour has been awarded to INS Shivaji (India's premier naval training center).

122. L&T will deliver the 1st high speed patrol boat built for Vietnam by September 2020.

- In 2014, India has granted a \$100 million line of credit to Vietnam under which 12 high speed patrol boats will be built by L&T for Vietnam.
- In 2016, India had extended an LoC of \$500 million to Vietnam in defence sector.

123. Government has notified Medical Devices Amendment Rules 2020 under which medical devices (used for human treatment) will be considered as drugs under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

- Now, registration of these devices will be mandatory.

124. World's largest cricket stadium - Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium also known as the Motera Cricket stadium - will be inaugurated in Ahmedabad by US President Donald Trump during his visit to India.

125. Ministry of Minority Affairs has organized 20th edition of the Hunar Haat was organized in New Delhi on the theme of "Kaushal Ko Kaam".

- It aims to showcase the handmade indigenous products of master artisans and craftsmen.
- It is organized in different parts of the country and the next session will be organized in Ranchi from 29th February - 8th March and in Chandigarh in March.

126. Central Government has renamed the National Institute of Financial Management (NIFM) in Faridabad as "Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management" (AJNIFM).

127. "CLIMISHCON" - the international conference on changes in hydrological cycle, ocean ecosystem, fisheries and food security due to global climate change has been organized in Kochi, Kerala.

- Organizers - Department of Fisheries, Kerala and CUSAT's School of Industries Fisheries.

128. Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) will develop India's largest air quality monitoring network at 90 locations in Mumbai.

129. Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) has partnered with Zonal Cultural Centres of Ministry of Culture to prepare the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

- The ministry is planning to launch the National Culture Mapping portal.
- SNA, an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Culture is the nodal agency for the Scheme for 'Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India'.

130. Uttar Pradesh cabinet has approved the Ground Water Act-2020 to reduce the depletion of ground water.

- Through this act, online registration of submersible pumps has been made mandatory.
- Now, it has been made mandatory to install rainwater harvesting system in all private and government schools and colleges.
- People who would contaminate the groundwater will be punished.

131. Andhra Pradesh govt has signed an MoU with 11 agricultural institutions in India to revolutionize the agriculture sector through technology and to increase farmers' income by using organic and natural farming processes.

- More than 11,000 Rythu Bharosa Kendras will be set up across the state by June 2020 to guide farmers.
- Quality seed, fertiliser and pesticides will be made provided to the farmers through centres.

132. Ministry of HRD and Ministry of Health have jointly launched the School Health Ambassador Initiative under Ayushman Bharat.

- The teachers will act as the School Health Ambassadors for children to provide information about healthy habits.
- The School Health Programme (SHP) under Ayushman Bharat was jointly launched by Ministry of HRD and health in 2018.

133. National Water Conference was held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh to finalize the guidelines of "Water Rights Act" or Right to Water Act.

- After implementation of the act, MP will become the first state in India to implement the Right to water act.

134. Union Cabinet has approved the Pesticide Management Bill, 2020 (to be tabled in Parliament) for the benefit of farmers.

- The bill will prevent the use of spurious pesticides and will regulate the sector by fixing prices and set up an authority for regulating the sector.
- It will replace the Insecticides Act, 1968.
- It provides for imprisonment of up to 5 years, up from 2 years at present, for pesticide companies for violating rules and regulations.
- Creating a corpus fund of Rs 50,000 crore to compensate farmers for pesticide- related crop failure.

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- If the bill is cleared, farmers will receive compensation directly in their bank accounts linked to the fertiliser subsidy through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
135. Union Cabinet has also approved MoU signed between India and Iceland for developing sustainable fisheries sector. This MoU was signed in Sept 2019.
136. Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has received 55 Bhabha Kavach (India's lightest bullet-proof jacket developed by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre).
137. Puducherry has become the first UT to pass a resolution against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, National Register of Citizens and National Population Register (NPR).
138. Ghaziabad police station (UP) has launched the "Operation Nakail" to prevent harassment of passengers by auto-rickshaw drivers.
139. UP govt and eGov foundation of Bengaluru have signed an MoU for strengthen the accounting systems of the govt and to implement the municipal financial accounting system.
140. INS Jamuna, under the commandment of Captain HA Hardas, has reached Colombo to conduct the Joint Hydrographic Survey off the South West Coast of Sri Lanka.
141. BIMSTEC 'Conference on Combating Drug Trafficking' was held in New Delhi.
- Organizer: - Narcotics Control Bureau (operating under Ministry of Home Affairs).
 - 5th edition of the BIMSTEC summit will be held in Sri Lanka.
 - India has so far signed 26 bilateral agreements, 15 MoU and 2 security pacts with other countries to fight the drug.
142. INS Dega (naval Dornier aircraft) has conducted an anti-hijack exercise at Visakhapatnam Airport, Andhra Pradesh.
143. Ministry of External Affairs has announced to rename The Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra as Sushma Swaraj Bhawan and The Foreign Service Institute as Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service.
144. During the National Workshop on e-office held in New Delhi, the Centralized Public Grievance Redress And Monitoring System reforms (CPGRAMS) were launched for quick redressal of grievances.
145. For the first time in India, a five-star hotel will be built above the railway tracks in the Gandhinagar railway station in Gujarat.
- Being built by Leela Hotel, the hotel is expected to be completed by Dec 2020.
146. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has informed that it received 38% more notifications of Tuberculosis (TB) cases in 2019.
- It is an increase from 17.36 lakhs in 2017 to 23.98 lakhs in 2019.
 - National Strategic Plan to eliminate TB was launched in 2017 to 2025. Govt aims to reduce TB incidence up to 80% and mortality rate up to 90% by 2025 under this plan.

147. Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State for Shipping (Independent Charge), Chemical, and Fertilizers has informed that as part of the Aarth-Ganga project, cargo volume on Ganga will be increased by 4 times with special focus on developing inland waterways.

- Aarth-Ganga project aims to derive economic benefits from Ganga river basin in a sustainable manner.
- Almost 1/2 of the Indian population lives around Ganges River belt in which about 1/5th of all India's freight originates and 1/3rd terminates in the states around Ganges Belt.
- As part of this project, National Waterway - 1 (NW-1) from Banaras (UP) to Haldia (West Bengal) will be strengthened.
- Ministry of Shipping is also developing Varanasi Freight Village and Sahibganj (Jharkhand) Industrial Cluster-cum-Logistics Park at the cost of Rs 200 crores to create synergy with Inland Waterways.
- India is allowing Nepal to use inland waterways, particularly NW-1 for transporting cargo under the Treaty for Transit of Cargo between India and Nepal.

148. Vice-President of Vietnam, Ms Dang Thai Ngoc Thinh visited India to hold bilateral talks with the Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu.

- Both countries launched direct flights between India & Vietnam.
- An agreement to open a resident office of Voice of Vietnam in New Delhi was also signed.
- Vietnam is the chair of ASEAN for 2020.

149. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has released a draft of the Visionary Perspective Plan (2020-2030) to conserve ecosystems, habitats, avian diversity and landscapes of India.

- According to the draft, there are 1,317 bird species in India. Out of these 72 are endemic, 100 are threatened, 17 are critically endangered, 63 are vulnerable and 20 are endangered.
- Around 270 species (21% of avifauna) of birds fall under the "rare" category. Around 219 bird bio-diversity areas are under severe pressure generated by human activities.
- A total of 2,01,503 lakh wetlands spread across 2.25 hectares in India are under stress mainly due to agricultural run-offs and urbanization.

150. Ministry of MSME has launched "Apiary on Wheels" to transport beekeeping boxes in an easy way.

- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has launched the concept as a part of National Honey Mission (mission was launched in 2017).

151. Central Government has issued draft rules for setting up and operations of the International Arbitration Centre in New Delhi under the New Delhi International Arbitration act, 2019.

- The new act amends the Arbitration and Conciliation act, 1996 to make Delhi an international arbitration centre to facilitate easy arbitration process.

152. India has announced to partially open the India's poultry and dairy market for US imports.

- The tariff on Chicken legs will be cut from 100% to 25%. US negotiators want that tariff cut to 10%.
- On Dairy products, 5% tariff will be levied on selected item.



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- India is the world's largest producer of milk. Opening the dairy market could have negative repercussions for 80 million rural households.
153. First of its kind, National Organic Food Festival (to give an opportunity to women entrepreneurs) will be organized in New Delhi by the Ministry of Food Processing to boost production of organic products.
- Theme: Unleashing India's Organic Market Potential
 - India is the world's 9th largest agricultural organic market. India aims to increase of the size of the organic sector to Rs 75,000 crores by 2025.
 - Organizers: - National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM) with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) as the Industry Partner.
154. Central govt has approved to set up 2 AIIMS institutes and 9 medical colleges in Jammu and Kashmir under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).
- PMSSY has been launched in 2006 to set up AIIMS like institutions and upgrade Government medical college institutions to correct the regional imbalances in availability of medical services.
155. India and Portugal have signed 14 agreements in the field of culture, transport, investment, industrial and intellectual property rights during the Portugal President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa visit to India.
- As part of the agreement on culture, India and Portugal will develop National Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal, Gujarat.
 - Portugal President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has been chosen as the President of European Council for 2021.
156. India's first inter-city electric bus has been launched between Mumbai and Pune by the Minister of Road Transport Nithin Gadkari.
157. A memorial of the Pulwama attack was inaugurated at the Lethpora camp, Pulwama, J&K.
158. Global Investors Summit 2020 will be held in Jammu and Kashmir in April.
159. Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat is planning to set up an first integrated tri-service command for handling the air defence of India by June 2020. This command will be headed by an Air Marshal.
- Western and the Eastern Command of the Indian Navy will be merged into a single command, to be called the Peninsular Command.
 - Theatre commands will be completed by 2022.
160. South Central Railways zone has become India's first railway zone to have 13 energy-neutral stations which can generate 100% electricity through renewable resources.
161. UDISE +, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development have released the 'Gender Parity Index 2018-19' (GPI).
- It is a socioeconomic index usually designed to measure the relative access to education of males and females and participation of girls in the school system.
 - GPI for the year 2018-19 at different levels of School Education is as under: -

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- As per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Report 2018-19, there is an increase in Gender Parity Index in Higher Education across the country. It has increased during the last five years from 0.92 in 2014-15 to 1.0 in 2018-19.
162. Bihar govt has launched the 'Pyaar ka Paudha' initiative under the Jal Jeevan Hariyali campaign to promote the practice of planting trees in the state.
163. Manipur has prepared a Rs 260-crore project to provide irrigation facilities by pumping ground water and is awaiting the Centre's approval.
- The state has also launched the 'Anganphou Hunba' (Early Paddy Crop) programme to provide irrigation water.
164. Naga tribes of Manipur celebrate the seed sowing festival known as 'Lui-Ngai-Ni'. It is the biggest festival of Naga community.
- Theme - Oneness through Culture.
165. PM Narendra Modi has unveiled the 63 feet tall statue (made from Pancha Loha) of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay and also inaugurated Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Memorial Centre in Varanasi. It is the largest statue of Upadhyay in India.
- PM Modi inaugurated more than 34 projects worth Rs 1000 crores in Varanasi.
166. Portugal's President Mr Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has visited Goa and signed various MoU in sectors like education, ship-building, water and sewage management.
- Portugal will be the partner country of India at the Technology Submit 2020 to be held in New Delhi.
 - Portugal President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has inaugurated the Chai-chai art work exhibition at the National Museum in New Delhi during his visit to India.
167. 13th Asian Business and Social Investor Forum 2019-20 and the 4th Asia's Greatest Brands and Leaders 2019-20 event were organized in Bangkok, Thailand to promote investment in India and Asia.
- AsiaOne Magazine & URS Media, in partnership with the Indo-Thai Chamber of Commerce (ITCC), had organized a networking meet called 'India-Thailand: Today, Tomorrow, Together'.
168. As per ISRO's annual report, ISRO is planning to launch 10 earth observation satellites, including first ever Geo Imaging Satellite GISAT-1, during 2020-21.
- Apart from this, ISRO is also planning to launch 36 missions consisting of 6 Earth Observation satellites.
 - It also plans to add 8 Earth Observation satellites in 2021-22.
169. Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan has launched "Yodhav" mobile app to curb the menace of drug abuse in the state.
170. Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association of India (CREDAI - apex body of Private Real Estate Developers Associations) has launched 'Credai Awaas' app to connect homebuyers with its member developers to purchase properties.
- Credai President - Satish Magar

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171. Haryana has announced rewards of Rs 6 crores for players who will win gold medals, Rs 4 crores for silver medallists and Rs 2.5 crores for bronze medallists at the Olympics Games under 'Haryana Physical Activities and Sports Policy-2015'.
172. Ambala City bus stand (in Haryana) has been renamed as the Sushma Swaraj Bus Stand.
173. Punjab has launched the 'Appreciate and Commend' scheme for boosting the confidence of police officers by awarding the best cops every month.
174. North India's first bird ringing station for migratory birds will be established at Bhagalpur, Bihar.
- It is India's 4th state to have a bird ringing station after Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Orissa.
 - Bihar govt has signed an MoU with the Bombay Natural History Society for setting it up.
 - Assam, Cambodia and Bihar are the only three breeding places of Greater Adjutant bird in the world.
175. Indira Gandhi International Airport (Delhi) has become the 1st airport in India to become completely free of single-use plastic usage, according to the Delhi International Airport's information.
176. Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in India to implement the Performance Regulation Act 2019 for the power department to provide timely and hassle-free service to electricity consumers.
- Consumers will get compensation for delay in resolving their complaints by the department.
177. Delhi Police has launched the "Himmat Plus app" at the Indira Gandhi International airport, in association with Uber, to ensure the safety of the people travelling in cabs.
178. Central Government has renamed the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) after Manohar Parrikar (former defence minister and Goa CM) as the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.
179. A Supreme Court bench led by DY Chandrachud has given permanent commission to the women officer in the Army's noncombat support units.
- Implication - it means that the women officers, inducted through short-service commission will now be able to serve longer than 10 years and get pension after retirement.
180. Ethnologue (research center for language intelligence) has mentioned that Hindi is the 3rd most widely spoken language in the world with 615 million speakers.
- Over 88% of people speak one of these languages as their native tongue, and many hundreds of millions more speak them as second languages.
181. Government has set a target of doubling the milk processing capacity in India from 53.5 million tonnes to 108 million tonnes (MT) by 2025.
- During the last 5 years, the milk production has grown by 6.4% from 146.3 million MT in 2014-15 to 187.7 million MT in 2018-19.
 - Out of the total production of milk, about 54% is marketable surplus and remaining 46% is retained in villages for local consumption.

- Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying is also working to intensify the Quality Milk Programme for both cooperative and private sector with fund sharing basis.

182. All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) has banned all the universities, govt or private, from conducting both PGDM and MBA courses simultaneously in one universities and will have to choose either of the two.

- AICTE is the regulator of technical and management education under the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

183. Worldwide Educating for the Future Index (WEFFI) 2019 has been released by The Economist Intelligence Unit, which ranks countries based on their abilities to equip students with skill-based education.

- The index and report are commissioned by the Yidan Prize Foundation.
- It is the first comprehensive global index that focuses on the development of future-oriented skills. The index concentrates on the 15-24 age band in 50 developed and developing economies.
- Parameters: - policy environment, teaching environment and overall socio-economic environment.
- Top Ranker - Finland at 1st place (overall score - 84.8) followed by Sweden at 2nd.
- Bottom Ranker - Democratic Republic of Congo with overall 50th rank.
- India's Rank - 35th with a score of 53. In 2018, India was ranked 40th.
- India's growth has been attributed to the new education policy 2019 introduced by the government.

184. Andhra Pradesh's government has launched the Nadu-Nedu scheme for transforming the government hospitals in 3 years with a budget of Rs 15,337 crore. [the state govt had also launched the Nadu-Nedu scheme for transforming govt schools in Nov.]

- The scheme will be implemented in three phases.
- The state govt will open 16 new medical colleges and 16 new nursing colleges.
- Also, the 3rd phase of Kanti Velegu scheme was launched to deliver free spectacles, medicines and perform surgeries of eyes for free of cost for the needy till 31 July. [1st phase of YSR Kanti Velugu began on October 10, 2019]

185. Times Higher Education's (THE) Emerging Economies University Rankings 2020 which ranks a total of 533 universities from 47 countries.

- Out of the total 56 Indian universities, only 11 institutes from India were ranked among top 100 universities.
- Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore has been ranked at 16th position and emerged as India's top-ranked institution.
- For the first time, IIT-Ropar (at 63rd rank) and Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai (at 73rd rank) have been ranked for the first time in the rankings and both are in the top 100.
- Tsinghua University in China has been ranked at 1st place. Only China has more universities than India in the top 100 at 30.
- Countries were ranked on total 13 performance indicators.

186. India and Russia are set to cross \$16 billion worth of defence deals including S-400 air defence systems, production of Kalashnikov rifles and Kamov Ka-226 helicopters.



187. According to an EY report, 'Today for tomorrow: realising the potential of Life Sciences 4.0' which was released at BioAsia 2020 (Asia's largest Life-sciences and Health-tech convention), the average drug manufacturing utilisation rate in India is roughly 75% across both active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and formulation production facilities.

- The remaining 25% of the capacity is unused due to the inherent variability in processes.
- Indian pharma industry has a strong network of nearly 10,500 manufacturing sites.
- On an average, 15-20% capacity can be realized through initiatives such as reducing cycle time variability, quality check turn-around time, changeover, lead times, etc.
- Globally, India is the largest provider of generic drugs and is also the supplier of over 50% of global demand for vaccines and 80% of global demand for antiretroviral drugs for AIDS.
- India is expected to capture about 8% of the global \$62 billion biosimilar market by 2025.

188. Northeast frontier railway has constructed India's tallest railway pier bridge as part of 111 km Jiribam-Imphal railway project (to be completed by 2022) across the Makru river in Manipur.

189. Minister of Coal and Minister of Mines, Pralhad Joshi, has mentioned that India will stop importing thermal coal from 2023-2024 during a two-day national workshop called 'Chintan Shivir' at kevada in Gujarat.

- Coal India Ltd. (CIL) has a production target of achieving 1 billion tonnes by 2023-24.
- CIL is also expected to generate 5 GW of solar power by 2023-24 and could diversify into coal gasification with a target of 50 Million Tonnes by 2030.
- Ministry of Coal has also announced to introduce a "Coal Minister's Award" soon to recognize and appreciate best practices in coal production, productivity, safety, sustainability etc. by the coal companies.

190. 8th Ganga Kayak festival (a water sport) was held in Uttarakhand.

191. According to the 2nd Advance Estimates of production of major crops for 2019-20 released by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, total food grain production is likely to be 291.95 million tonnes (mt).

- The estimated production is higher by 6.74 million tonnes than 285.21 million tonnes production achieved during 2018-19.
- In terms of average production of food grains in the last 5 years (2013-14 to 2017-18), the production in 2019-20 is higher by 26.20 million tonnes.
- Reason: - good monsoon.

192. India and Myanmar have signed an MoU to facilitate regular passenger bus service between Imphal and Mandalay.

193. Minister for Food Processing Industries, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, has inaugurated India's Pavilion at the 25th GulFood 2020 exhibition held in Dubai, UAE.

194. Dr S. Jaishankar (Minister of External Affairs) has inaugurated the India pavilion at the 70th Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) held in Germany.

- Dr Jaishankar also invited Berlinale participants to participate at the 51st India International Film Festival to be celebrated in Goa in 2020.

- Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry, is participating in Berlinale.

195. BAE systems in collaboration with Prismatic Ltd. has developed the Persistent High Altitude Solar Aircraft (PHASA)- 35 which is a High Altitude Long Endurance vehicle (HALE) powered by solar energy.

- It is the First ever long endurance solar-powered unmanned aircraft which has successfully completed its maiden test flight.

196. Tamil Nadu CM Edappadi K. Palaniswami has announced to celebrate 'State Girl Child Protection Day' on the birth anniversary of former CM Jayaram Jayalalithaa on February 24.

- The state govt has also announced 5 schemes for the welfare of girl children including Annadhanam scheme (free meals) in various temples.

197. Union cabinet has approved to upgrade the Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG) as the Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics in Gandhinagar (Gujarat).

- It will function under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

198. Union Cabinet has approved SEBI and the UK's Financial Conduct Authority to sign the updated Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive (AIFMD) agreement.

- The AIFMD agreement was signed in 2014.

199. Union Cabinet has approved the Phase II of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) to be implemented from 2020-21 to 2024-25 with a total budget of Rs 1.41 crores.

- Open defecation free (ODF) campaign will be continued with focus on ODF Plus and Solid & Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) will also be promoted.

- SLWM will be monitored based on the following four indicators - Plastic waste management, Bio-decomposed solid waste management (including animal waste management), Grey water management, Sewage sludge management.

- Fund sharing ratio: -

200. Union Cabinet has approved the Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Regulation Bill, 2020 to keep in vitro fertilisation, embryo transfers and sperm banks in check.

- It proposes a fine of up to Rs 10 lakh for indulging in sale/trafficking of embryo at the first instance, and jail term of up to 12 years after that.

201. Union Cabinet has approved to create a 12-member "Technology Group" to advise ministries, departments and PSUs on technology implementation.

- The committee will be headed by Dr K Vijay Raghavan, principal scientific advisor to PM Modi.

202. Union Cabinet has approved to constitute the 22nd Law Commission, which advises the government on complex legal issues.

- The law ministry will notify its new panel, which will have a three-year tenure. The panel will have a full-time chairperson, 4 full-time members, and law and legislative secretaries in the law ministry as ex-officio members.

203. Nature Ranking Index-2020 has ranked Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) at the 1st position followed by Indian Institute of science (IISc), Bangalore at 2nd position and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research at 3rd position.

- The index ranks institutions on the basis of total research output which the institutions have carried out from December 01, 2018 to 30th November, 2019.
- The index has ranked institutions on the basis of counts (C) - which means total citations in numbers and a share percentage (SP) - means sharing percentage per article.

204. Cabinet Committee on Security has cleared the procurement of 24 MH-60R Seahawk multi-role helicopters (also known as 'Romeo') worth \$2.6 billion from USA for the Indian Navy.

- Lockheed Martin (US-based company) will deliver the helicopters through the foreign military sales (FMS) route of the US government.
- The helicopters will take the position of Sea King helicopters, which were phased out in 2000.

205. Indian Railways has launched the HRMS mobile app to allow the employees to see the data related to their service.

- The app has been developed by the Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS).

206. Indian Railways, in partnership with University of Birmingham, has launched the 'Joint Masters programme in Railway Systems Engineering and Integration in academic year 2020-2021' at National Rail Transportation Institute.

- The initiative has been taken under the Centre of Excellence for Next Generation Transportation Systems that had been set up by an MoU between the National Rail Transport Institute with the University of Birmingham (signed in 2019).

207. India's first floating jetty (a landing stage at which boats can be docked) has been launched on the banks of Mandovi river in Goa.

- Also, an immigration facility has also been opened at a cruise terminal in Mormugao Port in Vasco city, Goa.

208. Ministry of MSME has launched a National Level Awareness Programme (NLAP) 2020 from Feb 17 to Feb 28, 2020 to create awareness about the schemes and activities undertaken by the Ministry and its attached organisations amongst students of colleges and educational institutes.

- The drive will also encourage students/youth to take up entrepreneurship as their career.

209. Indian Army will get a new headquarters building to be known as 'Thal Sena Bhawan' in New Delhi.

- Navy, Air force and Army all have their headquarters in Delhi.

210. Minister of Minority Affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, has informed the Lok Sabha about the progress of the "Jiyo Parsi scheme" which was launched in 2013 to stop the declining population of Parsi community.

- He informed that Parsi population in India has increased by 233 since 2013.
- Parsis (Zoroastrians) are a notified minority community under National Commission of Minorities Act 1992.
- Their population had declined from 1,14,000 in 1941 to 57,264 in 2011, as per census data.

211. India's first ever squat machine has been installed at Anand Vihar Railway Station in Delhi by the Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation (IRSDC) to promote the central govt's "Fit India" initiative.

212. First-ever Bharat-Bangla Paryatan Utsav (tourism festival) has been organized in Agartala, Tripura.

- Purpose: - to commemorate the contribution of Tripura in 1971 Bangladesh liberation war and to boost the tourism sector of Tripura.

213. India and Sri Lanka have signed an MoU for up-gradation of infrastructure in 9 plantation schools for estate workers of Indian origin with the help of an Indian grant assistance of Rs 30 crores.

- India's overall commitment to Sri Lanka for development purpose is around \$3.5 billion dollars, out of which \$560 million dollars are in the form of grants.

214. Indian Railways Catering & Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) has upgraded the ASK-DISHA (Digital Interaction to Seek Help Anytime) chatbox in Hindi language.

- In order to solve the queries of passengers, IRCTC had launched ASKDISHA chatbox in 2018 in English language.

215. Odisha government has presented a Rs 1.5 Lakh crore paperless budget 2020-21, which is also known as the 'green budget'.

- 'Samruddha Krishi Niti-2020' has been proposed in the state budget to increase income of farmers in the state.
- Odisha, has become the first state in the country to introduce the nutrition budget document, climate budget document.
- Odisha has become the first state in the country to introduce a strategic budget- making process to improve budget credibility.

216. Union Territory of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir will be brought under the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT).

- Until the government sets up CAT in the UTs, CAT of Chandigarh will take the responsibility of J&K and Ladakh.
- Under the Article 323A, the central govt has the powers to establish CAT to solve the disputes of persons in public services.

217. Ministry of Textiles has organized "Kala Kumbh" exhibition to promote geographical indication handicrafts in various cities.

- These exhibitions are sponsored by the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts.

218. Minister of Agriculture has announced that the government will launch the 'Tilhan Mission' to make India self-reliant in oilseed production.

219. NITI Aayog will organize the Sustainable Development Goals Conclave 2020: Partnerships, Cooperation and Development of North Eastern states in Guwahati, Assam.

- Purpose: SDG localization in the north eastern region.

220. India and Norway have signed a Letter of Intent to develop a new framework for collaboration on Integrated Ocean Management and Research.

- 'India-Norway Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development' also held their 3rd meeting in New Delhi.
- The Task Force was launched jointly in 2019 to develop and follow up joint initiatives between the two countries in the field of ocean management.

Other discussions between India and Norway: -

Note:- Montreal Protocol has been covered in detail in ESI » Growth and Development section » Environment Convention and Treaties.

221. Government will set up a Consumer Protection Authority to implement the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 w.e.f., April 2020.

222. Maharashtra govt has decreed to destroy the Thai Mangur (also known as Thai Catfish/ African Mangur/foreign Mangur) fish breeding centres because of the unhygienic cultivation of fishes.

223. 4th anniversary of the Shyama Mukherji Rurban Mission was observed. It was launched in February 2016 by Ministry of Rural Development.

- Theme of the celebrations - Aatma Gaon ki, Suvidha Sheher Ki.

Note: - details of the scheme is covered in ESI » govt scheme » Ministry of rural development doc.

224. Union cabinet has proposed changes in the PM Fasal Bima Yojana and the "Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme" (RWBCIS).

- RWBCIS was launched in 2016, administered by Minister of Agriculture, to provide insurance cover to farmers against the potential financial loss.

Changes proposed under the schemes: -

Note:- PM Fasal Bima Yojana is covered in ESI folder» Govt schemes » PM Fasal Bima Yojana PDF.

225. Union Cabinet has increase the interest subvention under the Dairy Processing and Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF) scheme to 2.5% from 2% per annum.

- Total outlay of the scheme - Rs 11,184 crore
- Funding period - FY19 to FY23 (earlier the period was FY18 to FY20)
- Repayment period - extended up to 2030-31 with spill over to first quarter of the 2031-32.
- Previous Outlay - Union Budget 2017-18, had announced DIDF scheme with an outlay of Rs 10,881 crore for the period from 2017-18 to 2028-29.

• Altogether 37 sub-projects have been submitted with estimated cost of Rs.4458 crore to promote the dairy sector to benefit about 95 lakh milk producers in about 50,000 villages.

- Milk drying capacity will be increased to 210 metric tonnes per day. 28,000 bulk milk coolers will also be established.

226. Telangana govt, Software Technology Park of India and the Ministry of Electronics and IT have jointly set up first incubation centre of India for firms focused in the VFX, AI, gaming technologies in Hyderabad.

- IMAGE Centre of Excellence in Hyderabad has signed MoU with 5 partners including International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad for providing training to the start-ups.

227. Ministry of Skills development is preparing a roadmap to make India - the skills capital of the world. [all the schemes mentioned below have been covered in detail in ESI » Govt scheme » Ministry of Skill Development's doc]

GOVT SCHEMES FOR SKILL ENHANCEMENT

228. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology will organize the first-ever summit on Artificial Intelligence - 'RAISE 2020' (Responsible AI For Social Empowerment 2020) in New Delhi from April 11-12.

- Purpose: - to exchange ideas to use AI for social empowerment, inclusion and transformation.
- Govt has also launched the AI-Start up Challenge and the website of Raise 2020 event.

229. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, the central govt has disbursed Rs 50,850 crore to farmers under the PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi) scheme.

- Total budgetary allocation for the scheme for 2019-20 was Rs 75,000 crores.
- The scheme was launched in February 2019 with retrospective effect from December 2018 to provide income support to all landholding farmers' families.
- In June 2019, the scheme has been extended to all farmers.
- As per the estimates of the Agriculture Census 2015-16, the total number of beneficiaries covered under the scheme is about 14 crore.

Note: - the scheme has been covered in detail in the ESI >> Govt schemes >> Govt schemes 2019 PDF.

230. Government has planned to increase the sales of tribal products to Rs 10,000 crores in the next 3 years from Rs 300 crore last year.

- 'Go-tribal campaign' was launched in June 2019 to promote tribal products.

231. Geological Survey of India (GSI) has declared that gold deposits of 160 kg have been extracted in Sonbhadra district (in Son Pahadi and Hardi areas) of Uttar Pradesh.

232. World's largest airport-based 'Export Cold Zone' has been set up in Mumbai airport (which is run by a joint venture between Airports Authority of India and GVK).

- Purpose: - for processing and storage of agro and pharma products.
- It can hold over 700 tonnes of cargo at one time with a combined annual capacity of 5.25 lakh tonnes.
- Mumbai airport is the first airport in India and the 3rd in Asia to obtain "IATA CEIV Pharma" accreditation.

IATA CEIV:

International Air Transport Association (IATA) has created the Center of Excellence for Independent Validators in Pharmaceutical Logistics (CEIV Pharma), to help pharmaceutical organizations and the

entire air cargo supply chain to achieve excellence in handling pharmaceuticals.

233. India has assumed the Presidency of Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) for the next three years.

- As the president of CMS, India will focus more towards conservation of Central Asian Flyway, which passes through India.
- There are three Asian flyways - West Pacific Flyway, East Asian-Australasian Flyway, and the Central Asian Flyway, stretching across 22 countries.
- India's National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031) has also emphasised the necessity of conserving globally threatened migratory birds and their critical habitats along the flyways.
- Giraffe has become extinct in 7 African countries. Now, only 1 lakh giraffes are left across the African continent.

234. Andhra Pradesh has launched 'Jagananna Vasthi Deevana' scheme to provide financial assistance to over 11 lakh students who are pursuing higher education after 12th.

- Total Rs 2,300 crore would be distributed to all students (of A.P. who are pursuing higher education) in two instalments, in February and July every year. The amount will be directly credited into the bank accounts of the students' mothers.
- Purpose: - to improve the gross enrolment ratio in higher education, which is just 23% in the state right now.

235. National Bulk Handling Corporation (NBHC) has released its first advance estimate for "Rabi" cereal crop production for 2019-20.

- NBHC is an Indian commodity and collateral management company.

236. During Norwegian Climate and Environment Minister - Sveinung Rotevatn's visit to India, both countries have agreed to jointly exert pressure on all countries for quick climate action.

237. India will install body scanners at 84 airports by March 2020 to detect threats which metal detectors cannot.

238. National Bulk Handling Corporation (NBHC) has released its final advance estimate for "Kharif" crop production for 2019-20.

- Total oilseeds production will be 16.2 million metric tonnes, which is 23.78% less than the last year production of 21.2 million metric tonnes.
- Production of most of the crops are expected to decline except cotton (which is expected to increase 3.28% over the last year) and jowar (which is expected to increase 1.07% over the last year).
- Total production of kharif crops for 2019-20 will fall by 17% to 484.8 million metric tonnes (MMT) from 589.6 MMT in 2018-19.

POOR FORECAST

Note: - Rice production is 93.7 MMT.

239. Maharashtra govt has announced to withdraw Rs 10,000 crore from its contingency fund to implement the Jyotiba Phule farmer loan waiver scheme (launched in 2019).

- Presently, the contingency fund is of Rs 150 crore which will now be increased by Rs 10,000 crore, taking the total size of the fund to Rs 10,150 crore.
- The scheme, which provides a loan waiver of up to Rs 2 lakh for farmers, will be implemented from February 22 to March 5.
- The state cabinet has also announced to conduct health check-up of schoolchildren under the National Child Health program which is a component of the National Health Program (launched in 2005).

240. India has proposed to include 10 wetlands in the Ramsar Convention (1971).

- Haryana and Uttarakhand will get their first Ramsar Sites if the proposal is accepted.
- Two wetlands in bird sanctuaries in Sultanpur and Bhindawas in Haryana have been considered for the first time for Ramsar accreditation.
- Lonar from Maharashtra, which is a unique wetland and the only crater lake in India, is also being proposed for Ramsar accreditation.

241. Red Throated Thrush and Plumbeous Water Redstart are the two new bird species that have been found in Ladakh for the first time during the Great Backyard Bird count.

- The bird count exercise was undertaken by the Wildlife Conservation and Birds Club of Ladakh.

242. Central govt has formed a Special Task Force to study the issue of minimum age of girls entering motherhood and suggest measures to improve it.

- In 1978, the govt has raised the marriageable age of girls from 15 to 18 by amending the Sharda Act, 1929.

243. Rajasthan govt, in its budget for 2020-21, has proposed to create a Nirogi Rajasthan Management fund of Rs 100 crore to make Rajasthan a disease-free state.

- The budget proposes to establish a Board of Investment to grant investment approvals at one platform.
- Also, Nehru Child Protection Fund will be established for protecting child rights, stop human trafficking and child labour besides checking adulteration. Fast-track courts will also be established to resolve these cases.
- Rajasthan, in its budget, announced Saturdays to be 'no- (school) bag' days for children.
- Rajasthan CM - Ashok Gehlot.

244. In a meeting of RBI officials with Minister of Finance Nirmala Sitharaman, RBI highlighted the inefficient implementation of the PM-Kisan Sammna Nidhi Yojana (PM- Kisan).

- RBI highlighted that the scheme's benefits are not reaching to the tillers.
- Govt has so far spend Rs 55,000 crores out of the budgeted Rs 75,000 crore in the 2019-20 financial year.
- The scheme, which was launched in 2019, has so far covered around 9 crore farmers.
- Orissa has managed to efficiently reach agri-workers by opening the scheme for all.

Note: - the scheme is covered in ESI >> Govt scheme 2019 document.

245. Haryana govt has announced to celebrate '2020' as the 'Sushashan Sankalp Varsh' (year of good governance).

246. National Human Rights Commission (Chairperson - H.L. Dattu) has asked all State Human Rights Commission to join the common portal - HRC Net - to avoid duplication of complaints.

247. US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has released a fact sheet on the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA), raising concerns over CAA.

- Rankings - USCIRF ranked India as a Tier 2 country in terms of religious freedom (the second poorest ranking group) and China as a Tier 1 'Country of Particular Concern' (the category that fares poorest in terms of religious freedoms).

About UNCIRF: -

Launched - through the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA).

Purpose - USCIRF is the first of its kind independent commission in the world that monitors countries on basis of freedom of religion or belief.

Headquarters - USA

Chair - Tony Perkins (term ending in May 2020)

248. According to data compiled by the CHILDLINE India Foundation (CIF) - the nodal agency appointed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to manage CHILD helpline 1098 - 3 lakh cases of children seeking help were reported in 2018-19.

- Total number of calls in 2018-19 was 62 lakh, out of which 17% calls were made for reporting child abuse.
- Out of the total abuse cases, 13% reported sexual abuse, 37% of the complaints reported child marriage, and 27% were about physical abuse.

249. According to the IQAir company's report 'World Air Quality Report 2019', Ghaziabad (UP) is the world's most polluted city in 2019.

- 21 of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India. The report ranked cities on the basis of PM 2.5 pollutants (which includes pollutants such as sulfate, nitrates and black carbon).
- In 2019, India had launched the National Air Quality Program (NAQP) to reduce air pollution by 30% in 102 cities by 2024.
- National level of air pollution decreased by 20% in 2019 with 98% of cities experiencing improvement.
- On average, India exceeds the WHO's target for annual PM 2.5 exposure by 500%.
- CEO of IQAir - Frank Hammes

250. Prashant Kishor (Poll Strategist and a former member of the Janata Dal (United)) has launched "Baat Bihar Ki" campaign to ensure that Bihar is counted among the top 10 states in India.

- The campaign aims to connect 10 million youth in the next 100 days to develop Bihar.

251. According to environmentalists, Arunachal Pradesh government's East-West Industrial Corridor (being built in the state to connect West Kameng district with Manmao) will impact the species in the Nadampha National Park (India's easternmost tiger reserve) and Pakke Tiger Reserve in the state.

- This corridor will be a threat to the adjoining Nameri Tiger Reserve in Assam as well.

252. Justice Dharmadhikari Committee (1-man committee) was set up to ensure fairness in allocation

of power sector employees between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana under the A.P. Reorganization Act, 2014.

253. ISRO will launch India's first Earth imaging satellite in a geostationary orbit – GISAT 1- on GSLV launcher named F10 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

- GSLV stands for Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle.

254. Maharashtra Assembly has passed the 'Maharashtra Compulsory Teaching and Learning of Marathi Language in Schools Bill, 2020' to make teaching of Marathi language compulsory in classes 1-10 in all schools starting from 2020-21.

- Violating institutions will be punished with Rs 1 lakh penalty.

255. Bihar's Education Minister K N Verma had launched "Unnayan Bihar" scheme in 2019 to provide quality education in schools with the application of technology.

- Now, Bihar CM Nitish Kumar has announced to launch an awareness drive against pornography in schools under Unnayan scheme.
- In order to promote higher education after 12th, Bihar had launched "Bihar Student Credit Card Scheme" (BSCCS) in 2016 to provide education loans to poor students.
- BSCCS intends to boost the gross enrolment ratio to 30% in 5 years.

256. Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has launched its 3rd corporate passenger train - Kashi Mahakal Express between Varanasi (UP) and Indore (MP) - after two Tejas Express trains between New Delhi-Lucknow and Mumbai- Ahmedabad.

- The train, which connects three Jyotirlingas, also has a seat reserved for lord Shiva.

257. IIT-Palakkad has announced to set up a top-class Centre For Research And Education In Data Science on its campus at Kanjikode.

- Also, IIT-Ropar has launched a Post Graduate Program in Data Science, in collaboration with Canada-India Centre for Excellence at Carleton University, Canada and International School of Engineering (India) for Senior and Middle Management roles.

258. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change will organize the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

- Theme of COP 13 - Migratory species Connect the Planet and Together We Welcome Them Home

- Mascot of COP 13 - Great Indian Bustard

• India has been appointed the Chair of the conference. CMS is the first biodiversity summit organized in India.

- India has started 2020 as the "Super year for Nature and Biodiversity" at the COP 13 of UN's Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) to meet the 21 targets of SDGs.

- 2021-2030 is the UN's Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

• For the first time, animal culture — studying the social behaviour of animals — has been linked to the conservation of animals at the COP 13.

- CMS Ambassadors Program was re-launched to promote conservation of migratory animals.

Ambassadors: -

About the Conference:

- UN's Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), also known as the Bonn Convention, aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory animals and their habitats.
- As of November 1, 2019, CMS has 130 Parties.
- Secretariat - Bonn, Germany
- Signed on - Adopted in 1979 and entered in to force in 1983.
- During the conference, discussion on Gobi Bear, Persian Leopard and Urials were also held.
- First ever State of India's Birds report 2020 has been released during the COP 13.
- Great Indian Bustard, Asian Elephant and Bengal Florican have been classified as "endangered migratory species" by the CMS COP-13.

259. Madhya Pradesh has become the India's first state to launch the unified vehicle registration card. Both cards will have a QR code.

- MP has become the 2nd state in India to launch unified driving license (1st state was Uttar Pradesh) that will have all information about the driver.
- In 2019, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways had directed to bring uniformity in driving licenses and vehicle registration cards across the country.

260. Indian Air Force and the British Royal Air Force have started the 5th edition of Exercise Indradhanush at Hindan Air Force Station (Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh).

- Theme: - 'Base Defence and Force Protection'
- India and UK Navies conduct Konkan exercise and Armies conduct Ajeya Warrior.

261. According to 'Catch Them Moving' report by Knight Frank India, Indira Gandhi International Airport (New Delhi) has the highest duty-free revenue per passenger at \$10 to 11 per passenger in India.

- The share non-aeronautical revenue of the airport is 70% (against the global average of 40%). Out of this 70%, retail, food and beverage, and duty free components contribute 34%.
- Upcoming Jewar International Airport in Uttar Pradesh will add significant value and volume to Delhi's transit retail market.
- Delhi is the only Indian city to feature in world's top 10 business metro rails.
- Delhi Metro has the lowest percentage share of non-fare box revenue at 12% when compared to London and Hong Kong.

262. ISRO and Xiaomi have partnered to bring NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) technology on Xiaomi's smartphones.

263. Union Cabinet has announced that the Department of Public Enterprise's guidelines will not be applicable on India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) for a period of 5 years to develop Chabahar port in Iran at a faster rate.

- In 2016, India and Iran signed the agreement to develop the port which is India's first overseas port for strategic purposes.
- In 2018, India and Iran signed another agreement to lease Shahid Beheshti Port (Phase 1 of Chabahar port) to IPGL for conducting interim operation on the port.
- Chabahar port consists of two port complexes - Shahid Kalantari port and Shahid Beheshti port.

264. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has proposed the National Technical Textiles Mission for a budget of Rs 1,480 crore for 2020-21 to 2023-24.

- Purpose: - to reduce imports of technical textiles in India.
- The mission will help the industry take advantage of the growing demand in the domestic market.

265. Government has abolished the anti-dumping duty on PTA (a chemical important for textile fibres and yarns).

266. Union Cabinet has agreed to form a joint working group on petroleum with Myanmar to enhance trade in this area, during President of Myanmar - U Win Myint's visit to India.

- India and Myanmar signed an MoU to deepen energy cooperation in refining, stockpiling, blending and retail.
- Both nations signed 10 agreements out of which 4 were aimed at ensuring better development of Rakhine state of Myanmar.
- In 2019, India agreed to provide 250 prefabricated houses and relief material for displaced persons in northern Rakhine.
- Both countries will increase the progress of 12 development projects under the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation mechanism.

267. Cabinet has also cleared the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2020 which promotes altruistic surrogacy and bans commercial one.

268. 'Access to Nutrition Spotlight Index 2020', released by Access to Nutrition Initiative (a not-for-profit organisation), assesses companies on the basis of their efforts for improving nutrition.

- First rankers - Hindustan Unilever Ltd and Nestle India.
- PepsiCo (US based company) is the 2nd ranker.
- A total of 16 food and beverage manufacturers were evaluated for policies, practices and performance related to improving nutrition in their products.
- All the 16 companies improved their score from 3 to 4.2 on 10 since the 1st and last rankings released in 2016.

269. India and US signed three MoU, during US President Donald Trump's first visit to India, in the field of safety of medical products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) access in India, and mental health.

- Mutual trade between the India-US is worth \$150 billion annually.
- India signed deal to acquire six AH-64E Apache helicopters from USA for \$800 million. In 2015, Indian ordered to procure 22 Apache from USA.
- Both countries decided to strengthen the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership to deepen defence and security cooperation.

Note: - ExxonMobil is a global company with group's head office located in USA.

270. Celebrations of Losar Festival - Tibetan New Year - were held in Himachal Pradesh.

271. National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), State Program Management Group- Uttarakhand (SPMG-UK) and Indorama Charitable Trust (ICT) signed a tripartite MoU to develop the Ghat at Badrinath and Ghats and Crematoria at Gangotri in Uttarakhand at a total cost of 26.64 Crore.

- The MoU is a step towards the govt's initiative of 'Har Kaam Desh Ke Naam'.
- The MoU will be effective for a duration of 7 years.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 11TH DEFEXPO 2020: -

Held in Lucknow, UP

Theme- 'India: The Emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub'

A. For the first time, India-Africa defence conclave was conducted during the Defexpo where a joint declaration - Lucknow Declaration - to fight terrorism and preserve maritime security was adopted by India and several African countries,

- The declaration mentioned to strengthen UN Counter-terrorism mechanism.

B. India has signed 200 agreements including 71 MoU and transfer of technologies agreements during a ceremony called 'Bandhan'.

- Uttar Pradesh has signed 23 MoU of worth Rs 50,000 crores.

C. PM Narendra Modi has announced to increase the exports of defence goods to \$5 billion (about Rs 35,000 crore) in the next 5 years.

Some important MoU signed during the DefExpo: -

- i. Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) and UK-India Business Council
- ii. (UKIBC) have signed an MoU to strengthen partnership between Aerospace and Defence sector of both countries.
- iii. 5th edition of India-Russia Military Industrial Conference was held alongside DefExpo.
- iv. 14MoU were signed between Indian and Russian companies under the 'Make in India' initiative to manufacture the defence products.
- v. HAL has signed an MoU with Israel Aerospace Industries and Dynamatic Technologies Ltd for manufacturing and marketing IAI's unmanned aerial vehicles for Indian customers.
- vi. HAL signed MoU with IIT Kanpur for providing logistic support to the Institution's 'Cloud Seeding' projects through the Do-228 aircrafts.
- vii. HAL has signed an MoU with Rosoboronexport (Russian company) to export spare parts and services to countries for which license has been given to HAL.
- viii. Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) has signed a tripartite MoU with Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd (GRSE) and Elbit Systems for customizing Elbit's Unmanned Surface Vessels (USV) according to the needs of Indian Navy.
- ix. Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL) has launched Amogha-3 (anti-tank guided missile) and Varunastra (anti-submarine torpedo), manufactured by BDL with the help of DRDO. DRDO has started developing a surface-to-surface ballistic missile with a strike range of 200 km, known as 'Pranash'.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1. Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the University of Pennsylvania has released the 2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report which ranks world's top think tanks.

- Parameters - think tank's leadership, staff reputation, quality and reputation of the research and analysis produced, ability to recruit and retain elite scholars, analysts, academic performance, reputation, the impact of a think-tank's research and programs on policymakers and reputation with policymakers.

Other details:

2. World's largest solar telescope - Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope (DKIST)- has produced its first ever high resolution image of sun.



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- It is located in Hawaiian island of Maui.
3. Maldives has become the 54th member of Commonwealth of Nations.
 - Commonwealth Secretary-General: Patricia Scotland
 - Commonwealth of Nations - formed in 1931
 - Maldives President - Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
 4. NASA has decommissioned its Spitzer Space Telescope (one of the greatest observatories of NASA).
 - It was launched in 2003.
 5. Mo O'Brien (aged 60) has become the first deaf person in the world (of either gender) to row Atlantic ocean.
 6. WHO has released a report which mentions that cancer cases in the middle and low income countries would increase by 81% by 2040.
 - For high-income countries, it might rise by 60% by 2040.
 - High-income countries have, through better care and prevention, reduced the cancer mortality by 20% between 2000 and 2015. While, low income countries could reduce it by just 5%.
 - WHO suggested that an investment of \$25 billion over the next decade could save 7 million lives from cancer.
 7. Bhutan has passed the 'Tourism Levy and Exemption Bill of Bhutan 2020' to end the free-entry of tourists from India, Bangladesh and Maldives.
 - As part of the policy, tourists from these countries will have to pay a Sustainable Development Fee of Rs 1200 (\$17) and a permit processing fee.
 - Earlier, tourists from India, Bangladesh and the Maldives didn't pay any fees or carry visa.
 8. Pakistan Parliament has passed a resolution urging India to revoke its decision of abrogating Article 370 of the constitution.
 - The resolution was passed on February 5, which is observed as the Kashmir Solidarity Day in Pakistan every year.
 9. US-based Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation has released a report on pneumonia on the side lines of the First-Ever Global Forum on Childhood Pneumonia held in Barcelona, Spain (in January).
 10. Somalia has declared a national emergency to tackle the menace of locusts. It has become the first country in East African region to declare an emergency over the infestation.
 - Pakistan has also declared national emergency to tackle the locusts destroying crops.
 11. UAE has discovered a new natural gas field - Jebel Ali gas field - containing 80 trillion standard cubic feet of gas in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.
 - Abu Dhabi National Oil Company and Dubai Supply Authority will develop the shallow gas.
 12. US Senate has acquitted President Donald Trump from impeachment in the case of Ukraine call controversy.



13. Bangladesh, India and Nepal (BBIN countries) have signed an MoU to implement the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement to regulate personal, passenger and cargo vehicular traffic.

- BBIN countries are Bangladesh, India, Nepal with Bhutan.
- The BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement was signed in 2015 but Bhutan could not ratify it.
- Asian development Bank is funding the BBIN Motor Vehicular Agreement.

14. Britain's Prince Charles has disclosed a new Children's protection fund for India as part of British Asian Trust.

- He also announced Katy Perry (American singer) as the new ambassador for the British Asian Trust Children's Protection Fund for India.
- British Asian Trust had been working with business, government and civil society, to remove child labour as part of the Child Labour Free Jaipur Initiative.
- British Asian Trust is chaired by Manoj Badale.

15. USA has launched the International Religious Freedom Alliance consisting of 27-nations to protect and preserve the religious freedom of people across the world.

- Reason: More than eight in ten people in the world live in a place where they cannot practice their religion freely.
- Poland will host the next ministerial in Warsaw in July 2020 to take this alliance forward.

16. During the UN Security Council meeting in New York, UN has provided \$30 million to Syria for conducting humanitarian work in its Idlib province.

- UN's Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator - Mark Lowcock

About Syria:

Capital: Damascus

Currency: Syrian pound

17. WHO has mentioned that treatment of the victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) can cause \$1.4 billion per year globally.

- Globally, 200 million women and girls undergo FGM.
- Many countries spend about 10% of their total health expenditure annually on treatment of FGM. In some Central Asia or African countries, the expenditure is up to 30%.

18. US-based Global Innovation Policy Centre has released the 8th edition of its 'International Intellectual Property Index' 2020.

- Title of the report - "Art of the Possible"
- Total Countries - 53
- Top Ranker - USA (95.28% score)
- Bottom Ranker - Venezuela (24.06% score)
- India's Rank - 40 (38.46% score). India's score is 19.23 out of 50. In 2019, India was ranked at 36th position.

Parameters of the index: - Total 50 indicators were used in this index (including 5 new indicators and 2 additions to existing indicators). These indicators were classified into 9 categories.

19. MOOCLab's Business School Rankings 2020 measures the performance of top business schools which are offering open online courses on 3 major MOOC platforms - Coursera, edX and FutureLearn.

- Parameters - School's performance across the number of MOOCs provided; facilities of learning pathways; provision of credit-granting credentials; school's teaching quality; provision of MOOC-based degrees.
- Total - 16 business schools
- Top Rankers - HEC Paris, France at 1st position, Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, USA at 2nd position, IIM-Bengaluru, Karnataka at 3rd.

20. African Union Summit was organized in Addis Ababa (capital city of Ethiopia) on the theme of "Silencing the Guns" to counter terrorism.

- South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has taken over the chair of African Union from Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.
- Recently, 50 African countries have signed Lucknow Declaration with India to counter terrorism.

About AU:

Formed - 2002

HQ - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Members - 55 countries

21. Iran's Revolutionary Guards (Iranian Army) has launched "Raad-500", a short-range ballistic missile.

- Raad is equipped with 'Zoheir' engine.

22. Mastercard has been allowed to set up a bank card clearing business in China as part of the Phase 1 of the US-China trade deal.

23. According to the World Bank's data, 44% adults (more than 2 billion) worldwide are obese or overweight and over 70% of them live in low and middle income countries.

- In the category of children U-5, 79% of the obese children live in middle income countries and 10% live in low and 11% live in high income countries.
- In the category of children aged 5-19, 73% of the obese children live in middle income countries and 9% live in low and 18% live in high income countries.
- In the category of adults above 20 years, 71% of the obese children live in middle income countries and 4% live in low and 25% live in high income countries.

24. According to the first-ever report released by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) and Greenpeace Southeast Asia, the global cost of air pollution caused by fossil fuels is \$8 billion a day which is a 3.3% of the world's economic output.

- It is the first report assessing the global cost of air pollution specifically from burning oil, gas and coal.
- China, USA and India bear the highest costs of air pollution from fossil fuels at \$900 billion, \$600 billion and \$150 billion per year.
- Air pollution causes 4.5 million premature deaths each year around the globe, including 1.8 million in China and a million in India.
- As per World Health Organization, 4.2 million deaths each year are caused by air pollution.
- The global cost for 2018 was \$2.9 trillion.

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25. "The Future for Earth 2020" report has been released by the South Asia Future Earth Regional Office, Divecha Centre for Climate Change and the Indian Institute of Science.
- The report has analysed 5 global risks which are : - i) failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation, ii) extreme weather events, iii) biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, iv) food crisis, v) water crisis.
26. According to the World Meteorological Organization, Antarctica has recorded its hottest temperature ever at 20.75 Degree Celsius for the first time since 1982.
- Antarctic region stores more than 70% of world's fresh water.
27. 43rd Annual Governing Council meeting of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) 2020 was held at the headquarters of Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) in Rome, Italy.
- Theme - "Investing in sustainable food systems to end hunger by 2030"
 - During the meet, it was announced that the UN will not be able to achieve its SDG targets by 2030 due to the lack of funds.
 - It will achieve the goals only by 2040 with an annual investment of more than \$115 billion.
 - By 2030, around 100 million people will be pushed to poverty due to the climate change.
- About IFAD -
HQ - Rome, Italy
President - Gilbert Houngbo
28. Munich Security Conference is being conducted in Germany.
- Other events alongside the conference are Cyber Security Summit and Energy Security Summit.
29. According to the "Military Balance 2020" report released by the International Institute of Strategic Studies, total global spending on defence has increased by 4% in 2019 (it is the highest increase in 10 years).
- China and US have increased their spending by 6.6% which led to overall increase in the spending at the global level.
30. Pakistan has issued visas to Indian Hindu pilgrims for visiting Katas Raj temples in Pakistan's Punjab province under The Pakistan-India Protocol on visits to Religious Shrines (1974).
31. United Arab Emirates has become the first Arab country to operate a nuclear power plant named as Barakah nuclear power plant.
- It is being built by the Korean Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO).
32. According to the World Population Review (US think tank), India has become the 5th largest country in the world with a GDP of \$2.94 trillion.
- India has overtaken United Kingdom (\$2.83 trillion) and France (\$2.71 trillion) in 2019.
 - USA is the world's largest country followed by China, Japan and Germany are at the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th positions respectively.
 - In terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), India's GDP is \$10.51 trillion, exceeding that of Japan and Germany.

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- India's GDP per capita is \$2,170 because of India's high population.
33. Pakistan has conducted a successful flight test of Ra'ad-II - air-launched nuclear-capable cruise missile - with a range of 600 km.
34. Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has decided to continue to put Pakistan in its grey list during its plenary meeting held in Paris.
- Pakistan has been given time till June 2020 to improve its actions against money laundering and terror financing otherwise it will be put on FATF's blacklist.
 - At present, only Iran and North Korea are on the FATF's blacklist.
35. According to a report, A future for the world's children? released by WHO - UNICEF - Lancet assesses the capacity of 180 countries to ensure that the children of a country can survive and thrive.
- The index ranks countries on two parallels - flourishing index (which ranks countries on the basis of children's survival, health, education and well-being) and sustainability index (which ranks countries on per capita carbon emissions and ability of children in a country to live healthy)
 - About 250 million children under 5 years in low and middle income nations are at risk of not reaching their developmental potential.
 - 124 million children and adolescents were obese in 2016 as against 11 million in 1975.
36. Pakistan has organized the 9th Defence and Security Expert Working Group (EWG) meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
- All SCO member nations - China, Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and India, and Pakistan participated in the meet whereas Belarus attended the meeting as the observer state.
 - This was the first meeting of the working group under the "SCO Defence & Security Cooperation Plan - 2020".
37. 3rd High-Level Global Conference on Road Safety for Achieving Global Goals 2030 was organized in Stockholm, Sweden.
- World Health Organization, World Bank along with Swedish govt have jointly organized the conference.
 - Minister for Road and Transport Nitin Gadkari has represented India here.
 - 2020-2030 is the UN Decade of Action to achieve the SDG.
 - 2011-2020 was the UN's Decade of Action for Road Safety.
 - Road Accident in India report 2018 was released in November 2019. (covered in spotlight of November in National news >> Pg - 60)
- 46.1) During the conference, World Bank released the report "Delivering Road Safety in India" which mentions that India needs to invest an estimated extra \$109 billion in road safety over the next decade to halve its road crash fatalities.
- The report noted that this investment will bring economic benefits equivalent annually to 3.7% of GDP.
 - The India road safety report is part of a regional report 'Road Safety in South Asia: Opportunities for Shared Regional Initiatives'.
 - According to the World Bank, India has one of the highest rates of road crashes in the world with 1.5 lakh deaths almost every year, and more than 5X that number are injured or maimed for life.

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- Road crashes also cost the economy between 3% to 5% of GDP in a year.
 - The report mentions about the Geographic Information System - GIS-based program in Tamil Nadu launched to map road accidents state-wide.
38. Swedish Central Bank - Sveriges Riksbank - has become the world's first central bank to begin testing of its digital currency e-krona.
- Stefan Ingves is the Governor of Riksbank.
39. 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will be held in October 2020 in Kunming, China.
- Theme of the conference is "Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth".
40. 2020 UN Ocean Conference will be held in Lisbon, Portugal.
- 2021 - 2030 is the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.
41. Storm Dennis has hit Britain.
42. Britain has announced to spend £1.2 billion for developing the world's most powerful weather and climate supercomputer.
43. USA has increased tariffs on Europe's aircraft by 15% from 10%.
- Reason: - ongoing fight between US and European Union for offering 'illegal' (alleged by USA) subsidies to Airbus SE (Europe's aircraft company). It made competition tougher for Boeing (US company).
44. According to the data from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Indians accounted for half (or maximum) of employer-sponsored green cards in 2019.
45. G20 Finance Ministers & Central Bank Governors Meeting was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- Theme for G20 for 2020: - Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century For All
 - Saudi Arabia is the first Arab country to hold the presidency of G20 for 2020.
 - Saudi Arabia will host G20 leaders' summit in Nov 2020 under the same theme.
46. 43rd regular session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHCR) was held in its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.
- 44th session will be held in June-July, 2020 and 45th in September-October, 2020.
 - Recently, High Commissioner of the UNHCR - Michelle Bachelet - has filed a plea in Supreme Court of India against the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019.
47. 74th session of UN General Assembly was held in New York, USA (Headquarters of UN).
- 75th session of UNGA will be held in September 2020 in New York.
48. The total number of Indian students who received UK visas for studies has increased by 93% in 2019 in comparison to 2018, according to the UK Immigration Statistics' data.
- Indians are the second most common nationality to be granted the study visas after Chinese.

- Over 57,000 Indians received skilled work visas in 2019 which is a 3% increase over 2018.
- In 2019, UK PM Boris Johnson had allowed the foreign students to work for 2 years in UK after completion of their studies.

49. CORONAVIRUS DETAILS: -

NAME - 'COVID- 19' (given by WHO)

CAUSE (Possible) - Pangolin (most trafficked mammal of Asia)

- There are 8 species of Pangolins all over the world.

THREAT - According to a ranking released by Robert Koch institute (Germany) and Humboldt University, Thailand is the most vulnerable country for coronavirus.

- India was ranked at 17th place.
- Top 10 highly vulnerable countries: Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, USA, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Cambodia.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION - WHO is setting up a conference in Geneva, Switzerland on combating the coronavirus.

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) has given an assistance of \$2 million to Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam to prevent its spread.

INDIA'S ACTION - formed a group of ministers, headed by Harsh Vardhan (Minister of Health and Family Welfare), to monitor India's preparedness for tackling it.

- Kerala govt has announced the outbreak of novel coronavirus as state disaster.
- Department of Biotechnology has partnered with the Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness and Innovations (CEPI) of Norway to develop vaccines for Covid-19.

EVENTS CANCELLED - Asian Olympic wrestling qualifying event scheduled to be held in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan's capital) got cancelled due to Covid-19.

- 2020 Mobile World Congress, to be organized by Global System for Mobile Communication, in Barcelona, Spain.

APPOINTMENTS

1. Arvind Krishna has been appointed as the CEO for IBM (US based technology company).
 - James Whitehurst has been appointed as IBM President.
2. M Ajit Kumar has been appointed as the chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).
3. Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of Iraq.
4. Deepa Malik (para-athlete) has been appointed as the President of Paralympic Committee of India.
5. Pramod Agrawal has been appointed as the new CMD of Coal India Ltd.
6. Sandeep Mathrani has been appointed as the CEO of WeWork.



7. US President Donald Trump has appointed Prem Parameswaran (an Indian American) as a member of the Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.
 - He is the only Indian to be appointed as a member in the 13-member commission.
 - Parameswaran is the President of Eros International's North America operations.
8. Albin Kurti has been elected as the new Prime Minister of Kosovo (country in the Southeast Europe).
 - Kosovo's capital - Prishtina; Kosovo's currency - Euro
9. Indian Olympic Association has invited Sourav Ganguly (BCCI President) to become the Goodwill Ambassador of India at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
10. World Bank has appointed Aart Kraay as its interim chief economist.
 - World Bank's current chief economist Pinelopi Goldberg will resign on March 1, 2020.
11. Jeff Weiner has been appointed as the Executive Chairman of LinkedIn.
12. Thomas Gottstein has been appointed as the new CEO of Credit Suisse (which is headquartered in Switzerland).
13. G Narayanan has been appointed as the Head of the New Space India (NSIL).
 - NSIL is the new unit of ISRO that seeks to commercialize the technologies of ISRO.
14. Rajesh Magow has been appointed as the CEO of MakeMyTrip.
 - Deep Kalra (former CEO of MakeMyTrip) has been appointed as the executive Chairman of the company.
15. Ajay Patel has been appointed as the President of All India Chess Federation (AICF).
 - Bharat Singh Chauhan has been appointed as the secretary of the AICF.
 - Other Appointees - Vipnesh Bhardwaj as vice president and Arun Singh as joint secretary.
16. Rajiv Bansal has been appointed as the CMD of Air India.
 - India aims to sell 100% in the Air India.
17. Rishi Sunak (Indian origin) has been appointed as the new Finance Minister of the United Kingdom.
 - Now, UK has 3 Indian-Origin ministers - Alok Sharma (Secretary of state for business, energy and industrial strategy), Priti Patel (Home Secretary), and Rishi Sunak.
18. Vinay Dube has been appointed as the CEO of GoAir.
19. Alok Sharma (Secretary of business in the UK Cabinet) has been appointed as the Minister-In-Charge of the COP 26 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to be held in Glasgow, UK.

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20. Ashraf Ghani has been elected as the President of Afghanistan for a 2nd time.
 21. Supratim Bandyopadhyay has been appointed as the Chairman of the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).
 22. Sanjay Kothari has been appointed as the new Central Vigilance Commissioner.
 - Bimal Julka has been appointed as the new Chief Information Commissioner in the Central Information Commission.
 - Suresh Patel has been appointed as Vigilance Commissioner and Anita Pandove as Information Commissioner.
 23. Sarbvir Singh has been appointed as the new chief executive officer of policy bazaar.
 - Yashish Dahiya (present CEO and co-founder of policy bazaar) has been appointed as the group CEO in the company.
 24. Sunil Gurbaxani has been appointed as MD and CEO of Dhanlaxmi Bank by RBI.
 25. Mahant Nritya Gopal Das has been appointed as the President of the Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust.
 - Champat Rai has been appointed as its general secretary.
 - Nripendra Mishra has been appointed as the chairman of the Ram Temple Complex Development Committee.
 - Central government has formed this 15-member trust, headed by K Parasaran (Former Attorney General), to oversee the construction work of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.
 - The trust will have 1 individual from Dalit community.
 26. Vijay Advani (CEO of Nuveen) has been appointed as the new chairman of the global board of directors of US-India Business Council (USIBC).
 - Tim Cahill and Mahesh Palashikar (GE South Asia president & CEO) have been appointed as the other members of the council.
 - Headquartered in USA, USIBC is the forum to promote business and investment between India and USA.
 27. Michael Miebach will take over as the President of Mastercard w.e.f., April 1, 2020 by replacing the role of Ajay Banga.
 - Present CEO Ajay Banga will be appointed as the Executive Chairman w.e.f., April 1, 2020.
 28. Rajlaxmi Singh Deo and M V Sriram were re-elected as the president and the secretary general of the Rowing Federation of India for a 5-year term.
 29. Banks Board Bureau (BBB), headed by Bhanu Pratap Sharma, has recommended to appoint Chintala Govinda Rajulu as the next chairman of NABARD.
 - Chintala is currently the MD of Nabfins - it is a non-deposit taking NBFC-subsiary of NABARD. [A formal notification about the appointment will be issued shortly.]

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30. Riek Machar has been appointed as the first-ever Vice-President of South Sudan.
 - South Sudan Capital - Juba; Currency - South Sudanese pound
 31. RBI has approved the appointment of Sumant Kathpalia as the CEO of IndusInd Bank for 3 years.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. 72nd National Martyrs' Day (Shaheed Divas) is observed on January 30 to commemorate the death of Mahatma Gandhi.
 - Digital Gandhi Gyan Vigyan Exhibition Phase-II has been organized by Department of Science & Technology in association with M/s Vizara Technologies Pvt. Ltd and IIT-Delhi.
 - Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has launched an online certificate course on "Relevance of Gandhi in the Contemporary World".
 - Titan, in collaboration with Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), has developed the first ever khadi watches.
2. World Wetlands Day is observed on February 2.
 - Theme: Wetlands and Biodiversity
3. World Cancer Day is observed on February 4. 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the day which was started in 2000.
 - The day is led by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).

About UICC:
Founded -1933
CEO - Cary Adams
Member countries - 173
4. International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation is observed on February 6 by UN.
 - Theme - Unleashing Youth Power: One decade of accelerating actions for zero female genital mutilation.
 - UN aims to end Female Genital Mutilation by 2030.
 - 'A Piece of Me' campaign was also organized by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) to eradicate this practice.
5. RBI will conduct the Financial Literacy Week 2020 from February 10-14, 2020 on the theme of "Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises".
6. National Deworming Day is observed twice in a year on February 10th and August 10th by the National Health Mission to kill the worms in the stomach of children aged 1-19.
 - As per WHO, around 241 million (28% of total children) children in India between 1 to 14 years are affected due to parasitic intestinal worms.
7. 2nd edition of the World Pulses Day was observed on February 10, 2020 by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to highlight the importance of pulses.

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- National Agricultural Cooperative Federation of India (NAFED), in association with Global Pulse Confederation (GPC), has hosted the global celebrations of the day in New Delhi.
 - In the crop year 2018-19 India produced 22 million tonnes of Pulses and for the next year a target of 26.30 million tonnes is projected.
 - A coffee table book named Family pack of NAFED pulses and NAFED Organic pulses (which records the journey of NAFED since inception in 1958 till present) and an FAO's "Global Economy of Pulses" books were launched during the event.

About Global Pulse Confederation:

Established - 1963

Headquarters - Dubai

8. International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed on February 11 by UNESCO.
 - Theme - Investment in Women and Girls in Science for Inclusive Green Growth.
9. World Unani Day is observed on February 11 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Hakim Ajmal Khan (Unani scholar and social reformer).
10. National Productivity day is observed on February 12 to increase the productivity culture in India.
 - It commemorates the establishment of the National Productivity Council (NPC) under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
 - Productivity week will be celebrated from Feb 12 to Feb 18, 2020.
11. National Women's Day is observed on February 13 on the birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu.
 - International Women's Day is observed on 8th March annually.
12. World Pangolin Day is observed on 3rd Saturday of February (9th World Pangolin Day on Feb 15, 2020).
 - For the first time in India, Madhya Pradesh govt radio-tagged the Indian Pangolins to learn about their ecology.
13. World Day of Social Justice is observed on February 20 by the UN on the theme of "Closing the Inequalities Gap to Achieve Social Justice".
14. International Mother Language Day is observed on February 21 by UNESCO.
 - Theme: - "Languages without Border".
 - Indian Ministry of HRD has celebrated the day as 'Matribhasha Diwas' on the theme of "Celebrating our Multilingual Heritage".
 - The theme reflects the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

AWARDS

1. 7th MSME Excellence Awards and summit was organized by ASSOCHAM in New Delhi.
 - Amulya Mica (Purbanchal Laminates Pvt Ltd) was given the Most Promising Brand of the Year 2019 Award. MD of Amulya Mica is Rakesh Agarwal.

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- "ASSOCHAM MSMEs Excellence Awards" were instituted to recognize the contribution of MSMEs in empowering the nation.
 - 2. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has been honoured as the Central Banker of the Year - Asia-Pacific for 2020 by 'The Banker' magazine of London.
 - 3. 16th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF-2020) award winners:
 - 4. Vinod Kumar Shukla has won the first edition of the Mathrubhumi Book of Year Award 2020 (which is given 16 categories) for his book 'Blue is Like Blue'.
 - It is translated from Hindi by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra and Sara Rai.
 - Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters was held at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
 - 5. Waheeda Rehman won the National Kishore Kumar Award for the year 2018 given by Madhya Pradesh government.
 - 6. Association of State Road Transport Undertakings has awarded Delhi's DTC with the Road Safety Award 2018-19 for lowest accident rate.
 - Nagaland's state transport has won the Road Safety Award 2018-19 for the lowest rate of accidents in the hilly area category.
 - The award was given during the 3rd International Conference and Exhibition on Public Transport Innovation (ICEPTI) 2020 in New Delhi.
 - 7. 73rd BAFTA 2020 awards have been announced:
 - 8. Big Bang Boom Solutions Pvt Ltd (India's fastest growing start-up in the defence sector) has won the SKOCH award for developing the 'Boron Nitrate Based Personal Hybrid Combat Armour'.
 - BBBS CEO: Praveen Dwarakanath
 - ABOUT THE AWARD:
 - Established in 2003.
 - It is the highest independently instituted civilian honours in India.
 - Given for best practices in India in the fields of governance, finance, banking, technology, corporate citizenship, economics and inclusive growth.
 - 9. Dinkar Keshav Raikar has been awarded with the lifetime achievement award by the Mantralaya & Vidhimandal Vartahar Sangh of Maharashtra.
 - Reason: for his contribution to journalism.
 - 10. Manoj Das (Odia and English writer) has been chosen for the Mystic Kalinga Literary award in the Indian and Global languages.
 - He will receive the award during the 4th edition of the Mystic Kalinga Festival to be held in Odisha.
 - He has recently won Padma Bhushan 2020 in Odia and English literature.
 - 11. President Ram Nath Kovind presented the International Gandhi Awards for Leprosy to Dr NS Dharmashakti in the individual category and Leprosy Mission Trust in the institution category.

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- Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation has instituted the awards to eradicate the prejudices associated with leprosy.
12. Dr S Krishnaswamy has been awarded with the Dr. V Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award by govt for his lifelong contribution to Indian non-fiction filmmaking at the Mumbai International Film Festival 2020. Awards: -
Note: - Only the important categories have been provided here. You can check the entire list of awards at <https://miff.in/miff-awards-2020/>
13. Pullela Gopichand has become the first Indian coach to receive the Coaches Lifetime Achievement Award for 2019 by International Olympic Committee.
2020 Summer Olympics to be held in Tokyo, Japan.
2022 Winter Olympics to be held in Beijing, China.
14. 92nd Academy awards (also called 'Oscars') for the year 2019 presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.
- Parasite has become the first non-English language film to win best picture.
 - Bong Joon Ho has become the first Asian and South Korean filmmaker to win the Academy Award for original screenplay.
 - Mathew Cherry is the 2nd sportsperson after Kobe Bryant to win an Oscar.
15. ESPNcricinfo Awards for the year 2019 has been given to recognise the best individual batting and bowling performances in cricket over a calendar year.
16. Adi Godrej (Chairman of the Godrej Group) has been awarded with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the EY company.
17. Amit Panghal has been ranked at the number 1 position by the International Olympic Committee's Boxing Task Force. He is the 2nd Indian boxer to be ranked as number 1.
- Vijender Singh was the first Indian to be ranked as number 1 in 2009.
18. Australia Cricket Awards for the year 2019 were given:
- Sharon Tredrea, Betty Wilson and Craig McDermott were inducted in the Cricket Hall of Fame.
19. Indian Bank Association's 15th Annual Banking Technology Conference, Expo and Awards 2020 were held in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- South Indian Bank has won Most Customer Centric Bank Using Technology award.
 - The bank was the runner up in the 'Best Payments Initiative' category for Small Banks
 - South Indian Bank HQ - Kerala; MD and CEO - VG Mathew
20. Telangana government will give Genome Valley Excellence Award of BioAsia 2020 to Dr Carl H June (American immunologist and oncologist) and Dr Vasant Narsimhan (CEO of Novartis) at the Telangana's annual global biotechnology & life sciences forum.
- The award is given to individuals and organizations for their contributions towards the life science research and public health sectors.

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21. Ministry of HRD has presented Indian Achievers Awards 2020 to: -
 - Rajendra Indraman Singh, founder and chairperson of Priyadarshini Group of schools and colleges for his "Outstanding Contribution to Indian Education".
 - Dr Sohini Sastri was awarded with the Best Astrologer of the year award during the Indian Achievers Awards ceremony.

 22. Dan David Foundation (headquartered at Tel Aviv University in Israel) has presented its 'Dan David Prize 2020'.
 - The award is given in 3 categories of Past, Present and Future.
 - From India, Gita Sen has been awarded. She works in the Public Health Foundation of India.

 23. Gully Boy has been named as the Best Film in the 65th Amazon Filmfare Awards 2020.

 24. Ernst and Young (EY) has presented awards.

 25. ESPN Multi-Sport Annual Awards for the year 2019 has been announced.

 26. Ahmer Khan has won the 2019 Kate Webb Prize by the Agence France-Presse for his reporting on Kashmir's condition after scrapping of Article 370.

 27. Shri P. Ramakrishnan (Speaker of the Kerala Legislative Assembly) has been awarded with the Ideal Legislative Assembly Speaker/ Ideal Legislative Council Chairman Award 2019 presented by M. Venkaiah Naidu.

 28. Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances has presented National e-Governance Awards to RailMadad (grievance redressal portal of Indian Railways) for "Excellence in providing Citizen-centric delivery" in category II.
 - The award was presented during the 23rd National Conference on e-Governance held in Mumbai.Note: - National E-Governance awards in other categories have been mentioned in Feb 1-15 current affairs document.

 29. Curt Bergfors Foundation has created the 'Food Planet Prize' - world's largest prize, to be awarded in later 2020, for sustainable food solutions with a worth of \$1 million.
 - Jury will be co-chaired by Johan Rockstrom and Line Gordon.
 - Curt Bergfors Foundation was founded by Curt Bergfors in 2019 to emphasize the challenges in food system.
 - The award will be given in two categories - "an existing scalable solution for sustainable foods" and "innovative initiatives that could transform the global food sector".

 30. BRICS Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BRICS CCI) has organised the 2nd Annual Direct Tax Summit and Awards 2020, in association with Achromic Point.
 - Dharampal Satyapal Limited has won the award for Best In-House Direct Tax Team of the Year.



31. Veteran actor Manoj Kumar has been awarded with the WBR Golden Era of Bollywood honour for his contribution to Indian cinema by the World Book of Records, London.

32. Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2020 were presented: -
Note: - only important awards have been mentioned here. If you want to know the entire list of awardees, you can click on this link -
<https://www.news18.com/news/movies/divyanka-tripathi-to-kiccha-sudeep-complete-list-of-dadasaheb-phalke-international-film-festival-awards-2020-winners-2509463.html>

33. Adline Castelino (from Mangalore) has been crowned as the LIVA Miss Diva Universe 2020. She will represent India at the Miss Universe 2020.

- Aavriti Choudhary was crowned as the Miss Diva Supranational 2020. She will represent India at Miss Supranational 2020.

34. Sahitya Akademi's Translation Prize for 2019 has been given to Susan Daniel for translating 'Kusumabale' Kannada novel into English in the category of translation into English.

- Kusumabale has been written by Devenoora Mahadeva (who is a Padma Shri holder).
- Shashi Tharoor has also won Sahitya Akademi's award in the creative non-fiction category for his novel 'An Era of Darkness'.
- Sahitya Akademy awards 2019 were given in 24 languages.

35. SERB Women Excellence Award 2020 has been won by Dr Niti Kumar (scientist in CSIR- Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow).

- She received the award from the President Ram Nath Kovind on National Science Day on February 28.
- Reason: in recognition of her work on understanding the protein quality control machinery in human malaria parasite.

About the Award

- Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) under the Department of Science and Technology has instituted the award.
- To honour women scientists below 40 years of age.
- Grant - Rs 5 lakh p.a. for 3 years.

36. FIH Hockey awards for the year 2019: -

SPORTS

1. 70th Senior National Basketball Championship 2019 was organized in Ludhiana in the month of December.

- Now, Ludhiana is only city in India to conduct the National Basketball Championship for 9th time since the inception of the Basketball Federation of India in 1951.

2. Indonesia Masters 2020 (Badminton tour) was held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

- Men's Singles: Anthony Sin Ginting
- Women's Singles: Ratchanok Intanon

3. Thailand Masters 2020 (Badminton tour) was held in Bangkok, Thailand.
 - Men's Singles: NG Ka Long Ang
 - Women's Singles: Akane Yamaguchi
4. Ngangom Bala Devi has become the first Indian woman to sign a foreign football club - 'Rangers FC' (a Scotland football club).
5. Christine Sinclair (Canadian soccer player) has become the top scorer in international soccer with 185 goals.
 - She achieved this feat during the CONCACAF Women's Olympic Qualifying Championship 2020 held in USA.
6. ICC Women's Ranking as of 9th March 2020:
 - ICC ODI Ranking:
 - ICC T20I Ranking:
7. ICC Men's Rankings as of 9th March 2020:
 - Test
 - ODI
 - T20I
8. 108th Australia Open 2020 results:
 - Men's Singles: Novak Djokovic (Serbian)
 - Women's Singles: Sofia Kenin (America)
- Extra Facts:
 - It is the 8th Australian Open title won by Novak Djokovic.
 - ATP rank of Novak Djokovic is number 1.
 - WTA rank of Sofia Kenin is number 7. (Ashleigh Barty is number 1.)
9. Flame-throated Bulbul 'Rubigula' - state bird of Goa - has been declared as the official mascot for 36th National Games 2020 to be held in Goa.
 - The games will be organized under the aegis of Indian Olympic Association.
 - CM of Goa - Pramod Sawant
10. National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) has banned Ramshad AR (weightlifter) for 2 years and Ravinder Kumar (wrestler) for 4 years for failing the dope test.
11. India has become the first country in the world to win with a clean sweep in the first T20I 5 match series.
12. Harmeet Desai and Sutirtha Mukherjee have won gold medals in the National table tennis championship held in Gujarat.
13. 35th Senior National Weightlifting Championships 2020 was held in Kolkata, West Bengal.



- Mirabai Chanu was named as the Best Senior Women's Lifter.
 - Jeremy Lalrinnunga became the Best Senior Men's Lifter. He has won his first national gold medal in 67 kg.
 - Indian Railways has won the overall both the men's and women's titles.
 - Rakhi Halder has won gold in the 64kg category.
14. 2020 Senior Asian Wrestling Championships will be organized in New Delhi by United World Wrestling (UWW).
15. Davis Cup 2020 (tennis) will be held in Madrid, Spain in November 2020.
- Rohit Rajpal is appointed as India's non-playing captain for the Davis Cup.
 - Zeeshan Ali will be the coach of the team.
16. International Tennis Federation (ITF) has banned Abigail Spears (American tennis player) for doping.
17. Aditya Mehta has defeated Pankaj Advani to win the men's title at the National Snooker Championship in Pune.
- Vidya Pillai has won the title in women's category
18. Bangladesh team (captain - Akbar Ali) has won the ICC Under 19 Cricket World Cup 2020 in held in South Africa.
- Yashasvi Jaiswal (India) was honoured as the Player of the tournament.
 - From India, Yashasvi Jaiswal, highest wicket-taker Ravi Bishnoi and Kartik Tyagi were named in the ICC U-19 World Cup Team of the Tournament.
 - Indian U-19 cricket team captain - Priyam Garg
19. For the 2nd time, Australia has won the ICC women's championship trophy 2020. Now, Australia has qualified for 2021 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in New Zealand.
- Meg Lanning was the captain of the team.
 - Qualifiers for the other teams for 2021 Women's Cricket World Cup will be held in Sri Lanka in July 2020.
20. Fed Cup Finals 2020 (women's tennis tournament) will be held in Budapest, Hungary.
- Fed Cup qualifier will be held in Dubai, UAE in March 2020.
21. 77th Senior National Squash Championship will be hosted by the Tamil Nadu Squash Rackets Association in Chennai under the aegis of the Squash Rackets Federation of India.
- Joshna Chinappa won in the women's category and Saurav Ghosal won in the men's category.
22. International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) has announced to form the a new format World Table Tennis (WTT) with a series of new events in 2021 to increase the commercial growth for Table Tennis.
23. Armand Duplantis (Swedish) has set a world record in pole vault at 6.17 meters in an indoor championship in Torun, Poland.

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- Previously, Renaud Lavillenie (French vaulter) had held the world record at 6.16 m.
24. World Kabbadi Cup 2020 will be held in Pakistan from February 9-16, 2020.
25. India has won 4 silver and 1 bronze medal at the 64th Bocskai Istvan Memorial boxing tournament 2020 held in Debrecen, Hungary.
- Silver winners: - Gaurav Chauhan, Jyoti Gulia, Manisha, PL Prasad.
 - Bronze winner: - Sachin
26. Sophie Devine (New Zealand) has become the world's first cricketer to hit 5 successive 50-plus scores in T20Is.
27. Indian cricketers - Akash Singh and Ravi Bishnoi and Bangladeshi cricketers - Towhid Hridoy, Shamim Hossain and Rakibul Hasan have been suspended for breaching ICC's code of conduct during the ICC U-19 World Cup in South Africa.
28. All India Football Federation, in collaboration with the Spanish La Liga SmartBank co-leader Cadiz CF, has launched its football management program named as "AIFF Masters".
- The program will enable students to gather knowledge about football by completing their studies in Mumbai, Delhi and Cadiz (Spain).
 - AIFF President - Praful Patel
29. Bengaluru Raptors have won the Premier Badminton League 2020 for a 2nd time in a row in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- Player of the League - Tai Tzu Ying (Taiwan)
 - Emerging Player of the League - Priyanshu Rajawat
 - Indian Player of the League - N Sikki Reddy
30. The official motto of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics is "United By Emotion".
31. Badminton Asia Team Championships 2020 was held in Manila, Philippines.
32. Koneru Humpy (Indian) has won the Cairns Cup Chess Tournament 2020 held in USA.
33. For a 3rd time, FIH Junior Men's Hockey World Cup 2021 will be hosted by India.
- For the 1st time, FIH Junior Women's Hockey World Cup 2021 will be hosted by Potchefstroom, South Africa.
34. First edition of the Khelo India Winter Games 2020 (also known as National Winter Games) will be organized in Ladakh in the first stage and in Gulmarg in Jammu and Kashmir in the second stage.
- Ministry of Sports will finance both games.
 - J&K Sports Council and J&K Winter Games Association will organized the games.
35. National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) has banned Amit Dahiya (Javelin thrower) for 4 years.

36. India will host the AFC Women's Asian Cup in 2022 organized by the Asian Football Confederation.

- India is the first South Asian country to host the AFC Women's Asian Cup in 2022.

37. 20th Laureus World Sports Awards 2020, also known as 'Oscars of Sport', were presented by the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation.

- Tendulkar has become the first Indian sportsperson to win a Laureus World Sports Award.
- Bryan Habana (South African rugby player) has been inducted into the Laureus World Sports Academy.

Note: - The award has been given in a total of 11 categories. Only the important awards have been mentioned here. To know about the complete list of winners, you can click on this link-
<https://www.laureus.com/world-sports-awards/2020>

38. All India Football Federation (AIFF) has received the Asian Football Confederation's "Grassroots Charter Bronze Level" membership to allow AIFF to promote its basic-level events under the label of 'AFC recognised'.

39. Badminton World Federation (BWF) has organized the Brazil Para badminton International 2020 in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

- India has won a total of 10 medals. Pramod Bhagat won two gold medals, Suhas Yathiraj and Nagar Krishna were other gold medal winners.
- China has emerged as the most successful team with 8 gold medals.

40. India will host the FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup 2020 in 5 cities with the finals to be played in Mumbai.

- Official slogan of the world cup is 'Kick Off the Dream'.

41. Pragyanshu Ojha has announced his retirement from international and first-class cricket.

42. Alex Danson-Bennett (Britain) has announced her retirement from hockey.

43. Russia will be the first country to host the new format of AIBA Team World Cup in 2020. Final will be played in the city of Nizhny Novgorod in October.

- The tournament will be coinciding with the 75th anniversary of the victory in World War II under the motto "Boxing for peace".

44. FC Goa has become the first Indian team to qualify for the group stage of the AFC Champions League 2021 (venue not decided yet).

45. Maria Sharapova (Russian tennis player and 5-times grand slam winner) has announced retirement.

46. D Gukesh (13-year old grandmaster from India) has won the 34th Cannes Chess Open held in Cannes, France.

- Gukesh became the world's second youngest grandmaster ever in 2019.

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- Sergey Karjakin (Russian chess Grandmaster) still holds the record of world's youngest grandmaster at 12 years.
47. India has won a total of 20 medals (including five golds, six silver and nine bronze) at the Asian Wrestling Championship 2020 held in New Delhi.
- In women's category, India won 8 medals — three gold, two silver and three bronze their biggest haul at the event.
 - Sunil Kumar has won India's 1st gold in Greco-Roman category in 27 years.
48. Venezuela's Yulimar Rojas has set a new world indoor triple jump record at the final World Indoor Tour 2020 (annual indoor athletics tour) in Madrid, Spain.
- With 15.43m, she surpassed the record of Tatyana Lebedeva (Russian).
 - Ukraine's Inessa Kravets had set the outdoor triple jump record at 15.50m in 1995.
49. New Zealand has won the Royal Stag Trophy in cricket in Christchurch, New Zealand.
- In May 2019, Royal Stag (flagship brand of Pernod Ricard India) had launched the limited-edition cricket world cup pack.
50. Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) and Women's Golf Association of India (WGAI) have signed an "affiliation agreement" to promote golf for both genders in India.
- PGTI President - Gautam Thapar
 - WGAI President - Kavita Singh
51. Asian Football Confederation's women committee (chaired by Mahfuza Akhter Kiron) has finalized India as the host of AFC Women Asian Cup 2022.
- India is also organizing FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup later this year.
52. International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) World Tour (Hungarian Open) 2020 was held in Budapest, Hungary.
- Men's Singles: - Tomokazu Harimoto (Japanese)
 - Women's Singles: - Mima Ito (Japanese)
 - Indian winners: - Sharath Kamal and G Sathiyam won silver in men's double category. Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra have won bronze in mixed doubles.
53. M.R. Hansini (aged 10) won bronze medal in ITTF Mini-Cadet Girls' Singles category at the Swedish Junior and Cadet Open in Orebro, Sweden.
54. Joshua Cheptegei (Uganda) has set a new world of completing 5 km race within 12 minutes 51 seconds.
55. Yash Fadte has won French Junior Squash Open Championship 2020 held at Lille, France.
56. India has won the Fed Cup Asia-Oceania group-1 women's tennis tournament held in Dubai, UAE.
- Sania Mirza and Ankita Raina won the doubles.



57. Haryana has won the 10th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2020 held in Kollam, Kerala.

58. Australia has won the ICC Women's T20I World Cup 2020 held in Melbourne Cricket Ground in Australia.

- Australia's Captain - Meg Lanning
- Indian captain - Mithali Raj

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Rajat Chaudhuri has translated 'Raater Kolkata' into English as the "Calcutta nights".
 - Published in 1923, the book was written by Hemendra Kumar Roy in Bengali.
2. Dr. Peter Wilf from Pennsylvania state university has discovered that the world's oldest bamboo fossil (*Chusquea oxyphylla*) is in reality a Conifer plant.
 - The fossil was first discovered in 1941 in Eocene, Patagonia.
 - It was published in open-access journal Phytokeys.
3. Lord J (Pop singer) has launched his autobiography "Lord J: Lord of Anonymity".
 - He is the world's first and the only anonymous singer.
4. Kirk Douglas (Hollywood actor, director and producer) has passed away.
5. University of California has discovered a monster galaxy named as XMM-2599.
 - This galaxy existed around 12 billion years ago.
 - The discovery has been published in the Astrophysical Journal.
6. P Parameswaran - former RSS member, orator and an author of 21 books - has passed away.
 - 'Marx and Vivekananda: A comparative study' and 'From Marx to Maharshi and Bhagavad Gita - Vision of a New World Order' are some of his famous books.
7. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu has released 'A Child of Destiny' an autobiography of Professor Koneru Ramakrishna Rao (who is the current Chancellor of Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management University in Vishakatapatnam).
8. World's first liquid hydrogen fuelled superyacht named as "Aqua" has been manufactured by Sinot - a Dutch company.
9. "The Thin Mind Map" book has been authored by Dharmendra Rai (Brain Literacy trainer).
10. "Messages from Messengers" book has been written by Priti K Shroff.
11. "A Commentary & Digest on The Air, Act 1981" book has been written by Dr K K Khandelwal and Apoorva Kumar Singh.
 - It was released by Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar.



12. NASA will equip SuperCam among 7 equipment - a new robot - on Mars rover (to be launched in 2020) to study the minerals and chemistry of Mars.
 - NASA is undertaking a Mars Exploration Program in 2020 and the rover is a part of it.
13. Rochester Institute of Technology, New York, USA has discovered the 'baby giant planet', nearest to the Earth at a distance of 330 light-years, called 2MASS 1155-7919 b.
 - The study is published in the Research Notes of the American Astronomical Society journal.
14. Mysterious Yara-virus has been discovered in an artificial lake - Pampulha - of Brazil.
15. Aditya Haksar has translated the famous sayings of Chanakya from Sanskrit to current languages in the book titled as "Chanakya Niti: Verses on life and Living".
16. India's Atomic Energy Commission's researchers have found lithium reserves of 14,100 tonnes in Mandya, Bengaluru, Karnataka.
 - Lithium is important for the manufacturing of e-vehicles.
17. Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar, has released the 64th edition of the "The Reference Annual- India/Bharat-2020" book.
 - The book has been published by the Publications Division (India) along with New Media Wing (under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting).
18. Netherlands has named its newly founded species of snail - *Craspedotropis gretathunbergae* - after Greta Thunberg (Swedish climate activist) to honour her.
 - The discovery of the snail has been published in the Biodiversity Data Journal.
19. Hosni Mubarak (former Egypt President) has passed away.
20. Educationist JS Rajput has written "Gandhi Ko Samajhne ka Yahi Samay" book.
21. For the first time, astronomers led by Junzhi Wang at the Shanghai Astronomical Observatory, have identified molecular oxygen (that is breathable) in a galaxy outside the Milky Way.
 - The oxygen was found in Markarian 231 galaxy which is around 581 million light years away.
 - The discovery has been published in Astrophysical Journal.
22. "Who Is Bharat Mata" book - authored by Purushottam Agarwal - has been translated into Kannada as "Yaaru Bharat Maate" by K E Radhakrishna.
 - The book contains writings and speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru and contains details about the India's freedom movement.
23. Jaggi Vasudev has written "Death: An Inside Story" book.
 - Jaggi Vasudev, aka Sadhguru, is a Yogi, author and founder of Isha Foundation.
24. Ajay Rai Sharma (Former Delhi Police Chief) has written the book "Biting the Bullet".

25. Chitetsu Watanabe - world's oldest person from Niigata, Japan - has died at the age of 112 years.

PLANET.E