



Current Affairs - Dec 2019

Month Type



- **148** Current Affairs were found in Period - **December 11 - 20, 2019** for Type - **All**

Appointments

- ▶ Abdelmadjid Tebboune has been elected as New President of Algeria (North Africa).
- ▶ Boris Johnson got re-elected as Britain's prime minister for his 2nd term, after 3rd general election in Britain in four years was won by Conservative Party.
- ▶ D Choudhury is appointed as new Commandant of National Defence College (New Delhi), the highest seat of strategic learning for officers of Indian Armed Forces and Civil Services of India.
- ▶ Devesh Srivastava has been appointed as Chairman and Managing Director (MD) of General Insurance Corporation India (GIC Re).
- ▶ Govt. appointed Shrikant Madhav Vaidya as new Chairman of Maharatna PSU Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.
- ▶ Manoj Mukund Naravane is appointed as New (28th) chief of Indian army, replacing Bipin Rawat whose 3 year term is coming to end. Lt General Navarne is current Vice Chief of the Army.
 1. Indian Army Chief reaches superannuation upon three years in office or at age of 62 years, whichever is earlier.
- ▶ Manuel Marrero Cruz has been appointed as Prime Minister of Cuba, as Cuba's first PM in 43 years.
 1. Last time Cuba had a Prime Minister, it was revolutionary leader Fidel Castro (1959 to 1976). The position was abolished in 1976 when Castro transitioned to presidency, after country's constitution was restructured.
- ▶ Misc. Secretary Level Appointments -
 1. Chandan Sinha - Director General in National Archives of India.
 2. Subhas Chandra Lal Das - Director General of Hydrocarbons, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
 3. Ravi Mittal - Secretary in Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.
 4. Sunil Kumar - Secretary in Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
 5. Praveen Kumar - Secretary in Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
 6. Sushil Kumar - Secretary in Ministry of Mines
- ▶ Nagaland Governor R.N Ravi has been given additional charge as Governor of Meghalaya, in wake of *absence of leave of* Governor of Meghalaya Tathagata Roy.
- ▶ National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), India's anti-doping body selected Bollywood actor Suniel Shetty as its brand ambassador.
- ▶ Telangana government appointed C V Ramulu and V Niranjan Rao as Lokayukta and Upa-Lokayukta respectively.

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Awards

- ▶ *International Changemaker Olympiad*, an annual international competition program founded by Rahul Adhikari from IIT Roorkee, has won Wharton-QS Stars Reimagine Education Award 2019, popularly known as the "Oscars" of education under "Sustainability" category at 2019 Reimagine Education Conference & Awards in London.
- ▶ 2019 ICC Women's Cricket Awards -
 1. Women's Cricketer of the Year - Ellyse Perry (Aus). She is also named for Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year AND Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Award.
 2. Women's T20I Cricketer of the Year - Alyssa Healy (Aus)

3. Women's Emerging Cricketer of the Year - Chanida Sutthiruang (Thailand)

3. ► BBC Sports Awards 2019 -

Award	Awardee	Country	Sports
Sports Personality of the Year 2019	Ben Stokes	England	Cricket
Helen Rollason Award	George Wilson Doddie Weir	Scotland	Rugby
Lifetime Achievement	Tanni Grey-Thompson	United Kingdom	Wheelchair racing
Coach of the Year	John Blackie	England	Athletics
Team of the Year	England's Cricket World Cup team	—	—

4. ► Gurugram-based startup *blue Sky Analytics*'s application 'Zuri' won Copernicus Masters Award also called Space Oscars, under Social Entrepreneurship category. Award was given by Earth observation program managed by European Commission (EU) and European Space Agency (ESA).

1. Application uses satellite data to provide improved monitoring, supply chain and pricing analysis and allocation of crop waste to be used as raw materials in other industries.

5. ► Indian Author Amitabha Bagchi won \$25000 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2019, for his novel 'Half the Night is Gone'. Novel is largely based in old-forgotten world of scheming zamindars, dubious morals and a man lamenting lost opportunities.

1. Winner was announced during IME Nepal Literature Festival in Nepal. International jury panel was chaired by Harish Trivedi.

6. ► Odisha received *World Habitat Award*, a global recognition for its ambitious initiative - Jaga Mission. It is given by World Habitat, a UK-based organization, in partnership with United Nation - Habitat. Jaga Mission is a slum land titling project, benefiting a million urban-poor living in the slums.

7. ► Restoration of Dignity and Human Rights of Indigenous Tribal Community in Karnataka project has been bestowed with gold prize in 2019 World Habitat Award, given by World Habitat, a UK based organization, in association with the United Nations (UN)-Habitat.

1. Also, Odisha received *World Habitat Award*, a global recognition for its ambitious initiative - Jaga Mission. Jaga Mission is a slum land titling project, benefiting a million urban-poor living in the slums.

8. ► Sahitya Akademi Awards 2019 announced for 23 languages. It contains prize money of 1 Lakh INR. Awardees -

1. Assamese - Joysree Goswami Mahanta (Novel)
2. Bengali - Chinmoy Guha (Essays)
3. Bodo - Phukan Ch. Basumatary (Poetry)
4. Dogri - Om Sharma Jandriari (Essays)
5. **English - Shashi Tharoor (Non-Fiction)**
6. Gujarati - Ratilal Borisagar (Essays)
7. Hindi - Nand Kishore Acharya (Poetry)
8. Kannada - Vijaya (Autobiography)
9. Kashmiri - Abdul Ahad Hajini (Short Stories)
10. Konkani - Nilba A. Khandekar (Poetry)
11. Maithili - Kumar Manish Arvind (Poetry)
12. Malayalam - V. Madhusoodanan Nair (Poetry)
13. Manipuri - L. Birmangol Singh (Beryl Thanga) (Novel)
14. Marathi - Anuradha Patil (Poetry)
15. Odia - Tarun Kanti Mishra (Short Stories)
16. Punjabi - Kirpal Kazak (Short Stories)
17. Rajasthani - Ramsawroop Kisan (Short Stories)
18. Sanskrit - Penna Madhusudan (Poetry)
19. Santhali - Kali Charan Hembram (Short Stories)
20. Sindhi - Ishwar Moorjani (Short Stories)
21. Tamil - Cho. Dharman (Novel)
22. Telugu - Bandi Narayana Swamy (Novel)
23. Urdu - Shafey Kidwai (Biography)
24. **Nepali is to be announced later**

9. ► Toni-Ann Singh of Jamaica won Miss World 2019 (69th edition) Beauty pageant, hosted in London (UK). This is Jamaica's fourth Miss World title, and its first since 1993.

1. Toni-Ann Singh is born to Indo-Caribbean father Bradshaw Singh and African-Caribbean mother Jahrine Bailey.
2. France's Ophely Mezino named first runner-up and India's Suman Rao declared second runner-up.
10. ▶ WTA (Women's Tennis Association) Awards 2019 -
 1. Player of the Year - Ashleigh Barty (Australia). Her coach Craig Tyzzer named coach of the year.
 2. Doubles Team of the Year - Tímea Babos (Hungary) AND Kristina Mladenovic (France)
 3. Most Improved Player of the Year - Sofia Kenin (US)
 4. Newcomer of the Year - Bianca Andreescu (Canada)
 5. Comeback Player of the Year - Belinda Bencic (Switzerland)
11. ▶ World Economic Forum (WEF) announced Winners of 26th Annual Crystal Award for 2020, hosted by World Economic Forum's World Arts Forum. Recipients -
 1. Jin Xing (China) - for her leadership in shaping inclusive cultural norms
 2. Theaster Gates (Chicago, US) - for his leadership in creating sustainable communities
 3. Lynette Wallworth (Australia) - for her leadership in creating inclusive narratives
 4. **Deepika Padukone (India)** - for her remarkable leadership in raising mental health awareness.
 5. Awardees will honoured at opening session of World Economic Forum's 2020 Annual Meeting in Davos-Klosters (Switzerland).

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Books

1. ▶ Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot released Braille Edition of book "Exam Warriors" authored by PM Narendra Modi, for benefit of blind readers.
2. ▶ Noted Chess Player Viswanathan Anand launched his autobiography 'Mind Master : Winning Lessons from a Champion's Life'.
3. ▶ Urdu author, Saadat Hasan Manto's book Shikari Auratein has been translated to English by Indian author Saba Mahmood Bashir as 'Women of Prey'.

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Committees

1. ▶ Govt. updated composition of Group of Ministers (GoM) on Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST), with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman opting out as head of GoM. It will now be headed by Bihar Deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi.
2. ▶ IRDAI (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India) constituted a working group (WG) headed by IRDA member T. L. Alamelu to make recommendations for loss prevention & minimization in the general insurance industry.
3. ▶ Securities and Exchange Board of India revamped its 8-member advisory committee on Investor Protection and Education Fund (IPEF), advising on issues related to investor education and protection activities.
 1. Chairman of committee is IIM Ahmedabad's Abraham Koshy. Now, the panel additionally includes 3 Sebi officers - Nagendraa Parakh, V S Sundaresan and N Hariharan.
4. ▶ Supreme Court (SC) formed two-Judge Committee to speed up the disposal process of rape cases across country, comprising Subhash Reddy and MR Shah.

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Days

1. ▶ Dec 11 is observed as UN International Mountain Day, being observed since 2003. 2019 Theme is *Mountains matter for youth*.
 1. Dec 11 is also formation day of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), established on this day in 1946.
2. ▶ Dec 12 is observed as UN Universal Health Coverage Day, designated by UN in 2017. 2019 theme is *Keep the promise*.
 1. The day marks anniversary of UN's unanimous endorsement of universal health coverage (UHC) and providing affordable, quality health care in 2012. On 12 December 2017, UN proclaimed 12 December as International Universal Health Coverage Day (UHC Day).
 2. Dec 12 is observed as UN International Day of Neutrality, proclaimed by UN in 2017. The resolution was put up by Turkmenistan.
3. ▶ Dec 14 is observed as National Energy Conservation Day every year, observed by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under Ministry of Power, since 1991. BEE also observed National Energy Conservation Week from 9-14 December.

1. Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) conducted an International Workshop on 'Energy Efficient Cooling' at Scope Convention Centre in New Delhi.
2. On the occasion, Star Labelling Programme for Solar Water Heater was launched and a Handbook for Implementation of Provisions of Energy Conservation Act 2001 was released.
4. ▶ Dec 15 is observed as International Tea Day, observed since 2005.
 1. Update - In October 2015, India moved a proposal at UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), on expanding observance of International Tea Day through UN FAO. Thereby, UNGA accepted India's proposal and designated May 21 as International Tea Day.
5. ▶ Dec 16 is observed as Vijay Diwas, commemorating Indian victory over Pakistan in war of 1971. India fought against Pakistan helping Bangladesh obtain its freedom and won the war. On the same day, Bangladesh celebrates its independence.
6. ▶ Dec 18 is observed as UN International Migrants Day. On this day in 1990, UNGA adopted a resolution on International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.
 1. Dec 18 is also observed as Minorities Rights Day in India.
 2. Dec 18 is also observed as UN Arabic Language Day.
7. ▶ Dec 20 is observed as International Human Solidarity Day, proclaimed in 2005.

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Defence

1. ▶ 4th edition of International Seminar cum Exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems 'NAVARMS-19' held at Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), Development Enclave, New Delhi. Theme for 2019 edition is: "Make in India – Fight Category: Opportunities and Imperatives".
 1. NAVARMS is only international seminar and exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems conducted in India.
2. ▶ CAPF Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) started a dedicated matrimonial site for its staff, as first-ever dedicated matrimony portal among Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF). It has been done after Home Ministry stated that about 25 % bachelors are serving in all CAPFs that have combined strength of about 10 lakh personnel, and it becomes a tough task for serving personnel to find the right match, after joining services.
3. ▶ Indian Navy (Southern Naval Command) and Indian Coast Guard at Cochin port conducted large scale anti-hijacking exercise, called **Apharan**.
 1. Indian Coast Guard also conducted regional level pollution response exercise named 'Swachh Samundra NEW-2019' at sea off Vadinar in Gulf of Kutch(GoK), Gujarat.
4. ▶ Joint tri service exercise between India and Russia, INDRA 2019 Held in Pune and Goa. The event included all three armed forces - Army, Navy and Air force. INDRA exercises between India and Russia began in 2003. However, first joint tri service exercise was held in 2017.
5. ▶ Land-attack and air version of the surface-to-surface supersonic cruise missile BrahMos successfully test fired from Chandipur district of Odisha. Air attack version was test fired from Su-30 MKI fighter aircraft. It has range of upto 300 kilometers.
 1. Pinaka missile system also test fired by DRDO, with 75 kilometre range.
 2. DRDO also test fired Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) successfully, developed by DRDO in association with Bharat Electronics Limited and Bharat Dynamics Limited.
6. ▶ Warship builder Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) delivered a Landing Craft Utility (LCU) to Indian Navy. This amphibious ship is seventh of eight such vessels being built for Navy by GRSE.

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Economy

1. ▶ Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) mandated other telecom operators to pay 6 paise per minute for every mobile call they receive on their networks or interconnect usage charges (IUC) till 31 December, 2020.
 1. Rate was reduced from 14 paise to 6 paise from 1st October 2017 and was proposed to zero from 1st January 2020. Now after this extension, from 1st January 2021, the charges of wireless to wireless calls will be made zero as proposed by TRAI.
2. ▶ According to annual Report of Ombudsman Schemes for 2018-19 released by RBI -
 1. Complaints received by RBI's 21 Offices of Banking Ombudsman (OBOs) increased to 195901 complaints in 2018-19, up by 19.75%.

2. Resolution of complaints increased to 70.40 % in 2018-19 from 65.82 % in 2017-18.
3. ▶ British subsidiary of Punjab National Bank lost its UK High Court appeal in a USD 45-million deceit claim against seven individuals and two companies, based in India and US.
 1. Issue was whether High Court of England and Wales should accept jurisdiction to try claim by London-based PNB International Limited, involving 8 loans it made between March 2011 and December 2014 for oil re-refining and wind energy generating projects in US.
 2. PNBIL had claimed that it had been defrauded by actions of defendants following granting of loans amounting to USD 45 million to companies in US and India controlled by the individual defendants.
4. ▶ CPPIB (Canada Pension Plan Investment Board) Credit Investments Inc agreed to invest US\$225 million in India Resurgence Fund platform (IndiaRF), a distressed assets buyout platform set up by Piramal Enterprises Ltd and Bain Capital Credit.
5. ▶ Edelweiss Asset Management Company (AMC) launched India's 1st Corporate Bond ETF (exchange trade fund) called Bharat Bond ETF.
 1. ETF is a government initiative and Edelweiss AMC was given mandate to design and manage it.
 2. Edelweiss aims to raise initial amount of Rs 3,000 crore through this bond from institutional players with a greenshoe option of Rs 2,000 crore in 3-year maturity period (2023) and 4,000 crore with a greenshoe option of 6000 crore in 10-year maturity bucket (2030).
 3. Small retail investors will have to invest at least Rs 1,000 in this fund. Here they can invest up to 2 lakhs. At the same time, the minimum amount for anchor investors has been fixed at Rs 10 crore.
 1. ETF is a basket of bonds issued by CPSE/CPSU/CPFI/any other Government organization Bonds (Initially, all AAA rated bonds).
6. ▶ GST Council Meeting in New Delhi -
 1. For the first time, council used voting process and voted to tax lotteries under highest slab of 28%. It also rationalized the rates of woven and non-woven bags to 18% (up from 12%).
 2. Finance Ministry has set a monthly target of Rs 1.1 lakh crore collection of GST for the remaining four months of this Fiscal.
7. ▶ Govt extended mission period of its flagship initiative Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) by 2 more years, after it was Unable to meet set targets for urban renewal in 500 cities.
 1. Launched in June 2015, AMRUT completes its mission period in March 2020. It promises 139 lakh water connections, 145 lakh sewer connections, LED streetlights and other developments with outlay of 77640 crores (with central assistance of 35990 crores).
 2. Seeing the poor progress, it has been extended by 2 years.
8. ▶ HDFC Bank became 3rd Indian Company (and 1st bank) to attain 7 lakh crore market capitalisation (M-cap), after Reliance Industries and Tata Consultancy Services.
9. ▶ India secured a USD 277 million (about Rs 1,900 crore) loan from Germany to establish an energy-efficient housing programme in country. Loan agreement has been signed between State Bank of India and German development bank KfW. It is under financial cooperation pact signed between India and Germany recently.
10. ▶ India signed \$250 million loan agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB), to expand energy efficiency investments in India that will benefit agricultural, residential and institutional consumers. It will be provided to Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL). Additionally, \$46 million financing will be provided from Clean Technology Fund (CTF), to be administered by ADB.
 1. ADB had previously approved a \$200 million loan to EESL, a public sector energy service company, in 2016 for Demand Side Energy Efficiency Sector Project that focused on efficient lighting and appliances.
11. ▶ India signed \$490 million loan with Asian Development Bank, for public-private partnership (PPP) project to upgrade about 1600 km of road infrastructure in Madhya Pradesh. An additional \$286 million investment will be mobilised through private sector. Project will upgrade 750 km of state highways and 850 km of MDRs to two-lane and all-weather standards with road safety features.
12. ▶ Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and National Board of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) signed MOU, to facilitate research and technologies to develop climate resilient practices in agriculture sector and hi-tech farming practices.
13. ▶ NPCI will set up a subsidiray to export UPI (Unified Payments Interface), after large scale success seen by UPI service, also gaining global praise. The subsidiary will take the technology to foreign markets.
 1. Based on UPI's performance, Google recommended similar service called FedNow to US Federal Reserve Board.

14. ▶ National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) issued its first audit report of IL&FS Financial Services Limited for 2017-18. It is first report submitted by authority since its constitution in October 2018.
 1. Prior to NHRA, audit of IL & FS financial services were conducted by Deloitte Haskins and Sells (DHS), which is said to be inadequate by NHRA. IL & FS is 3 decades old infrastructure projects financing NBFC, which has been facing severe cash crunch recently.
 2. After establishment of NFRA, India is eligible for membership of International Forum of Independent Audit Regulators, a global member organization that includes regulators from 53 jurisdictions.
15. ▶ New Development Bank (earlier BRICS Development Bank) committed \$100 million to India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund's (NIIF) Fund of Funds. Envisioned in budget 2015, NIIF was launched as an alternative investment fund in December 2016 with a target corpus of 40,000 crore.
16. ▶ Patanjali Ayurved completed acquisition of debt ridden soya food brand Nutrela maker Ruchi Soya for Rs.4,350 crores through an insolvency process.
17. ▶ RBI announced to provide an additional collateralized intra-day liquidity (IDL) facility called Liquidity Support, for smooth operation of National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) transactions on a 24x7 basis. LS facility will operate as per same terms and conditions as Intra-Day Liquidity (IDL) facility.
18. ▶ Reliance Industries Topped Fortune India 500 list, ending Indian Oil Corporation's 10-year reign as India's largest company. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) was ranked third, followed by State Bank of India, Tata Motors and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL).
 1. Rajesh Exports climbed one position to be ranked 7th on 2019., followed by Tata Steel, Coal India, TCS and Larsen & Toubro.
19. ▶ Reliance Industries subsidiary Reliance Strategic Business Ventures Ltd (RSBVL) acquired 51.78 % stake in Bengaluru based Asteria Aerospace for Rs 23.12 crores.
20. ▶ Reliance Subsidiary Reliance Industrial Investments and Holdings signed binding agreements with Canada's Brookfield Infrastructure Partners LP and its institutional partners for an investment of Rs 25,215 crore in telecom tower assets of RIL. Reliance Jio Infratel has a portfolio of about 130,000 telecom towers that form the backbone of Reliance Jio Infocomm's network.
21. ▶ Smartphone manufacturer Realme launched its new financial services platform named 'Realme PaySa' in partnership with Oppo-owned fintech startup FinShell. It will provide certain products like loans, mutual funds and credit score reports to consumers. It came few days after rival company Xiaomi had launched financial service 'Mi Credit' in India.
22. ▶ Three combinations get automatic approval under Competition Commission of India (CCI) Green Channel -
 1. Acquisition of IDBI Asset Management (IAML) and IDBI MF Trustee Company (IMTL) by Muthoot Finance Limited (MFL).
 2. Acquisition of Adani Electricity Mumbai (AEML) and Adani Electricity Mumbai Services (AEMSL) by Qatar Holding LLC (25.1% equity involved).
 3. Acquisition of GVK Airport Holdings by Green Rock B 2014 Limited, National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and Indo-Infra Inc.
23. ▶ To boost productivity of small enterprises, Govt approved changes to operational guidelines of interest subvention scheme for MSMEs -
 1. Claim will be settled once by June 30,2020 on basis of audit certificate.
 2. Eligible units of GST have been exempted from requirement of Udyog Aadhar Number (UAN). While Units who doesn't required to obtain GST, can submit Permanent Account Number (PAN) or their loan account categorised as a MSME by concerned eligible institutions.
 3. Trading activities carried out without UAN number will also come under the ambit of scheme.

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International

1. ▶ According to US National Science Foundation (NSF), India is world's third largest publisher of science and engineering articles, after China (1st) and US (2nd). China accounts for 20.67% of all global publications in scientific articles, with US having approx 16 % and India approx 4 %.
2. ▶ Amazon, Apple and Alphabet partnered to lay groundwork for better compatibility among their smart home products, titled 'Connected Home over IP'. Partnership aims to make it easier for device manufacturers to build products that are compatible with smart home and voice services such as Alexa, Siri and Google Assistant.
3. ▶ Canada's Vancouver-based airline Harbour air tested world's first all-electric commercial plane *DHC-2 de Havilland Beaver* , across Fraser River in Richmond (British Columbia).

4. ▶ China launched its 1st indigenously built aircraft carrier “Shandong”, named after the Shandong province, from Sanya, an important establishment in South China Sea. It is 2nd aircraft carrier of China after Liaoning.
5. ▶ Donald Trump became 3rd President to be impeached by US House, after He was accused of enlisting foreign government to investigate political rival before 2020 elections.
 1. US House called for voting process alleging that President pressurized Ukraine to announce investigations against his political rival Joe Biden ahead of 2020 elections. Democrats had majority in house to impeach him. It is necessary to prove charges at the senate as well.
 2. So far only two American presidents have been impeached. In 1998, President Bill Clinton was impeached on charges of sexual relationship with his intern. However, senate acquitted him. Before him, in 1868, President Andrew Johnson was impeached.
6. ▶ Eight years after they partnered to produce hydrocarbons in India, Reliance Industries and British oil major BP Plc partnered to open a nationwide network of fuel retailing outlets, to be set up through a new JV. It will be owned 51% by RIL and remainder by BP. Plan is to set up 5,500 fuel retail stations across country.
7. ▶ Forbes ‘The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women’ List -
 1. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman ranked 34th.
 2. India’s HCL Corporation CEO and Executive Director Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Biocon Founder Kiran Mazumdar Shaw and Indian-Origin Dubai based Businesswoman Renuka Jagtiani (CEO of Landmark Group).
 3. Bangladesh’s Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also featured on the list on the 29th position.
 4. Top 5 and Notable Names -

5.

S.No.	Name	Country
1	Angela Merkel	Germany
2	Christine Lagarde	France
3	Nancy Pelosi	United States
4	Ursula von der Leyen	Belgium
5	Mary Barra	United States
29	Sheikh hasina	Bangladesh
34	Nirmala Sitharaman	India
54	Roshni Nadar Malhotra	India
65	Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw	India
96	Renuka Jagtiani	India
100	Greta Thunberg	Sweden

8. ▶ French carmaker “Peugeot SA” and US-Italian “Fiat Chrysler” signed an agreement to create world’s fourth largest automaker, in a 50-50 merger. It will be 4th largest global automotive original equipment manufacturer by volume and third largest by revenue. Combined group would be headquartered in Netherlands.
9. ▶ Global Gender Gap Report 2020 by World Economic Forum -
 1. India ranked 112th in the list, down from 108th rank in 2018.
 2. Top 4 - Iceland (1), Norway (2), Finland (3), Sweden (4)
 3. Neighbors - Bangladesh (50), Pakistan (151), Sri Lanka (102), Nepal (101)
 4. As per WEF, it will take another 99.5 to attain Gender equality.
10. ▶ India will renew its pact with Kazakhstan for supply of uranium from 2020 to 2024. Kazakhstan has so far supplied 9000 tonne of uranium to India. India sources nearly 80 per cent of its uranium requirement from Kazakhstan.
11. ▶ India's National Rail Transport Institute (NRTI) signed MoU with University of Birmingham (UK), to set up its first Centre of Excellence for Next Generation Transportation Systems.
12. ▶ Indian Embassy signed agreement with Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), India for post-earthquake reconstruction of 11 Cultural Heritage sites in Nepal.
13. ▶ Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP) has been recognised formally by National Department of Regulation of Medicines and Health Products of Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan. With this, Afghanistan became first country to recognize IP pursuant to efforts of Department of Commerce and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (India).
14. ▶ Jammu and Kashmir administration signed MoU with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India to strengthen the immunization supply chain system in UT.
15. ▶ Japan's Kawasaki Heavy Industries launched tanker Suiso Frontier at Kobe Works yard, as World’s first liquefied hydrogen carrier. It aims at tapping carbon-free energy potential of lightest element. Ship will demonstrate international hydrogen energy

supply chain, by shipping fuel from Australia to Japan.

16. ▶ MoU signed between India's Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and France's National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), to establish a framework for cooperation between the two towards promotion and support of scientific and technological research. CNRS is largest fundamental research organization in Europe.
17. ▶ Pakistan and World Bank signed a project agreement worth \$406.6 million for financing the Khyber Pass Economic Corridor (KPEC) project with an aim to promote economic development.
18. ▶ Poland left 2050 Climate Neutrality Agreement of European Union as Union demanded for more funds to support nuclear power and for economic transition. Poland's 80% energy needs are relied on coal currently. Poland had requested to extend plan execution deadline to 2070.
 1. European Union 2050 Climate Neutrality Plan is a key commitment under 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It is a 100 billion Euro plan for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
 2. Under Paris Agreement, the EU had committed to reduce its emission by 40% by 2030 as compared to 1990. There were no goals set for 2050 initially. Under new plan, 2030 target is increased to 50% and a new 100% target has been set for 2050.
19. ▶ Reliance Industries signed agreement with UAE's Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) to explore a joint venture for building an ethylene dichloride (EDC) facility in Ruwais (UAE). EDC is a basic building-block for manufacture of PVC, a polymer product in increasingly higher demand globally. ADNOC would supply ethylene and RIL will deliver operational expertise and entry to Indian vinyls market.
20. ▶ Russia and Ukraine sagreed to implement a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine by year-end, following their first meeting in Paris mediated by France and Germany. The two nations also agreed on exchange of Prisoners.
21. ▶ South Pacific Archipelago of Bougainville voted to become independent of Papua New Guinea., with 98% of 1.8 Lakh voters voting to get independent from Papua New Guinea.
 1. Bougainville is largest island of Solomon Islands Archipelago, and has world's largest copper deposits.
 2. Country is yet to prove its recognition in United Nations. By international law, a country should recognize other for later to become an independent country, which be proved by new country through United Nation Resolution. If majority of countries vote in favour of membership of country. 195 countries are currently by United Nations.
22. ▶ Sri Lankan government formally released its new National policy Framework meant to guide government ministries / departments in implementing their policies, titled 'Vistas of Prosperity and Splendor'.
 1. Among main objectives are maintaining a 6.5 % or higher GDP growth rate, per capita income over 6500 US dollar by 2025.
 2. Policy elaborates to keep unemployment under 4 % and inflation under 5 %, and budget deficit below 4 % of GDP.
23. ▶ UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) removed 'Carnival of Aalst' of Belgium from its Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List, amid carnival featuring a parade float that included racist and anti-Semitic representations which mocked Orthodox Jews. The carnival was added to the Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2010.
 1. Also, Thailand's famous 2000-year-old massage, **Nuad Thai** has been added to UNESCO's heritage list. It originated in India and brought to Thailand about 2,500 years ago by doctors and monks who carried its secrets for generations.
24. ▶ US Congress approved to designate India's Indigenously developed satellite navigation system, NAVIC (NAVigation with Indian Constellation) as "allied" navigational satellite system along with Galileo of European Union and QZSS(Quasi-Zenith Satellite System) of Japan. It would mean that India's regional navigation system NAVIC will be treated at par with European Union's(EU) Galileo and Japan's QZSS.
 1. US Congress also designated Russia' GLONASS and Chinese Beidou as a "non-allied system". This means US satellite navigation system of GPS (Global Positioning System) will not co-operate or exchange data with these two satellite navigation systems.
25. ▶ US surpassed Kuwait to become India's 6th largest oil supplier. Iraq continues to be top crude oil supplier to India. Iraq supplied 26 million tonnes of crude oil to India during April to September 2019. India is 83% dependent on oil imports to meet its oil needs.
 1. Top 7 Oil Suppliers to India - Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, UAE, Venezuela, US, Kuwait.
 2. India stopped importing crude oil from Iran following the reimposition of economic sanctions in May 2019 by US.
26. ▶ US, Mexico and Canada signed revamped version of their regional trade pact after several months of negotiations. US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) will now go to each countries' legislatures for final approval. It is meant to replace North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a deal in place since 1994.

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Meetings

1. ▶ 1st ever Global Refugee Forum held in Geneva (Switzerland), hosted by UN Refugee Agency. 2nd Global Refugee Forum is scheduled in 2023.
2. ▶ 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP25), held in Madrid (Spain), under presidency of Chilean government.
 1. Conference incorporates 25th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 15th meeting of parties for Kyoto Protocol (CMP15), and 2nd meeting of parties for Paris Agreement (CMA2).
 2. Conference was planned to be held in Brazil, which later changed to Chile. In October 2019, Chile refused to host, due to social unrest. Later, Spain became the host. Next, COP 26, is expected to be held in November 2020, in Glasgow, Scotland (UK).
 3. Key issue that was aimed to get resolved was regulation of carbon market. However, no conclusion was reached and issue is to be taken at next summit to at Glasgow in 2020. Summit failed to reach an agreement on implementation of Article 6 of Paris Agreement, which aims at promoting approaches to implement NDC (Nationally Determined Contributions) through voluntary international cooperation.
 1. This year majority of members are not willing to reduce their emissions at pace suggested by conference. According to World Resources Institute NDC tracker, only 80 countries have so far submitted proposals to enhance their NDCs. These nations represent only 10.5% of world population.
 4. International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) added 1840 new species to its updated "Red List of Threatened Species", a catalogue of plants and animals that risk extinction. List now contains over 30,000 species under threat of disappearing.
 5. Report on oceans titled "Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate" was also released. According to report, global mean sea level increased from 1.4 mm (1901-1990) to 3.6 mm (2006-2015). Also, report says that Between 1993 and 2017, 700 to 2000 metres of ocean layers have warmed up.
 6. Chile launched Climate Ambition Alliance. It also establishes a trading system where in the countries with low emission are allowed to sell their exceeding allowance to countries with larger emissions.
 7. Around 73 countries joined Climate Ambition Alliance (CAA) at COP25, led by Chile and was launched at Climate Action Summit in New York in 2019.
 1. CAA will focus on Nationally Determined Contributions in order to achieve Net Zero by 2050. The alliance is important to enhance the Nationally Determined Contributions of countries all over the world.
 2. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in its Emissions Gap Report 2019 (Issued in Nov 2019) warned that in order to achieve goal of 1.5°C increase in temperatures over pre-industrial levels, it is essential to reduce emissions by 7.6% between 2020 and 2030. Report says that the global temperature will increase by 3.2 degrees by 2100 as compared to pre-industrial levels.
 3. Report suggests that minimum of 1.58 billion USD of annual investment in renewable sector is required for efficient energy use.
 4. It also says that solutions like coal phaseout, decarbonization of transport and industries and increased access to electricity will help tackle climate change.
 5. Also, report of Global Carbon Project was presented.
 8. Climate Change Performance Index 2019 was presented during the summit, measuring renewable energy share, emissions and climate policies of 57 countries and European Union.
 1. India ranked 9th in the ranking, in "high category", where countries have ambitious 2030 targets. However, despite a high rating for its Climate Policy performance, report says that India is yet to develop a roadmap to reduce high dependence on coal.
 2. Report noted that as none of countries assessed is already on a path compatible with Paris climate targets, causing first three places of ranking to remain unoccupied.
 3. Top 10 - Top 3 Places Unoccupied, Sweden (4th), Denmark (5th), Morocco (6), UK (7), Lithuania (8), India (9), Finland (10).
 4. Worst Performers - **US (61st)**, Saudi Arabia (60th), Chinese Taipei (59th), South Korea (58th), Iran (57th), Australia (56th).
 5. Largest global emitter China slightly improved to 30th place.
 9. India at the summit -
 1. Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar represented India at the summit.

2. India called upon more countries to join International Solar Alliance (ISA) to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, during a Ministerial Plenary on “SOLAR AND THE SIDS – Making the Sun Shine Brighter”.
3. Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) will set up a dedicated Green Window to serve the unserved segments of renewable energy. India's aim is to install 450 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy capacity. Allocation of approximately USD 20 million is being considered for Green window, with plans of leveraging USD 80 million from other agencies.
4. Indian IT Firm Infosys received UN Global Climate Action Award 2019 in ‘Climate Neutral Now’ category for its efforts to combat climate change. Through its carbon offset drive, Infosys implemented energy efficiency proceedings and transitioned to renewable energy for all its electricity needs. Since 2008, It has decreased its per capita energy consumption by over 51 %.
3. ▶ 2nd 2+2 Dialogue of India and US held in Washington D.C., attended by US secretary Mike Pompeo and defence secretary Mark Esper on US' Behalf and external affair minister Jai Shankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on India's Behalf.
 1. India and US signed an agreement to facilitate the transfer of defence technology.
4. ▶ 3 day “International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming systems” held in New Delhi, attended by all 7 BIMSTEC countries. It includes Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Thailand and Myanmar.
5. ▶ *BioAsia 2020* will be held in Hyderabad in February 2020, with Switzerland as partner nation and Theme *Today for Tomorrow*.
6. ▶ India hosted 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) and Delhi Dialogue XI in New Delhi.
 1. Theme for 2019 Indian Ocean Dialogue is- ‘Indo-Pacific: Re-imagining Indian Ocean through an Expanded Geography’. IOD is Indian Ocean Rim Association’s (IORA’s) premier 1.5 track forum for dialogue between academia and officials on strategic issues of interest and concerns facing the Association.
 2. Theme for 2019 Delhi Dialogue is- ‘Advancing Partnership in Indo-Pacific’.
 3. India announced to soon expand its Indo-Pacific policy. So far, Indo-Pacific covered Indian Ocean and Arabian sea. With expansion, region will also include Gulf states and Africa. It will help India in its Act East Policy.
7. ▶ India will host 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) in New Delhi during March 2020, with theme ‘Geosciences: The Basic Science for a Sustainable Development’.
 1. IGC is popularly described as ‘Olympics of Geosciences’, being held once in 4 years.
 2. India is only Asian country to host IGC event twice, after its first hosting in 1964.

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National

1. ▶ Chennai Corporation (Tamil Nadu) launched India’s first waste exchange platform namely “Madras Waste Exchange” to buy and sell municipal solid waste online. It will run on a pilot basis for the first three months.
2. ▶ 2019 rankings on gram panchayats on implementation of development programmes under Mission Antyodaya scheme -
 1. As per ranking, Tamil Nadu’s (TN) Molugamboondi gram panchayat topped the ranking for 2019.
 2. Gujarat has most top 10 entries with 99 gram panchayats in list.
3. ▶ 532 km Long Thiruvananthapuram–Kasargode Semi High Speed Rail Corridor (SHSR) proposed high-speed rail corridor is to be completed by 2024, with an investment of 56000 Crores INR. Named Silverline, it is envisaged to cut travel time between Thiruvananthapuram and Kasaragod from 12 hours to 4 hours.
4. ▶ **Winter Session of Parliament** held from November 18 to December 13, 2019.
 1. **Facts -**
 1. It observed 70th anniversary of enactment of Constitution. This was also the 250th session of Rajya Sabha.
 2. 17 Bills were introduced in Parliament (excluding an appropriation Bill). 14 Bills were passed by Parliament.
 2. **Bills Passed by Parliament (Passed by Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) -**
 1. **Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019 -**
 1. Citizenship Act 1955 regulates who may acquire Indian citizenship, and prohibits illegal migrants from acquiring Indian citizenship. Illegal migrants may be imprisoned or deported under Foreigners Act 1946 and Passport (Entry into India) Act 1920.
 2. In 2015 and 2016, government exempted certain groups of illegal migrants from provisions of 1946 and 1920 Acts. These groups are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, who arrived in India on or before December 31, 2014. This implies that these groups of illegal migrants will not be deported or imprisoned for being in India without valid documents.

3. 2019 Bill seeks to make illegal migrants who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship. It exempts certain areas in the North-East from this provision.
4. Bill also makes amendments to provisions related to OCI cardholders. A foreigner may register as an OCI under 1955 Act if they are of Indian origin. This will enable them to travel to India and work and study in India.
5. The Bill has been passed and became Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, but has been seeing widespread protests across country amid misinformation being spread by several unsocial elements. The act is accused of violating Article 14 of constitution that guarantees equality to all persons, including citizens and foreigners. It only permits laws to differentiate between groups of people if the rationale for doing so serves a reasonable purpose.
6. Bill classifies migrants based on their country of origin to include only Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Statement of Objects and Reasons in the Bill (SoR) states that India has had historic migration of people with Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and these countries have a state religion, which has resulted in religious persecution of minority groups.
7. This bill will not be applicable in Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura (about 70%) and almost entire Meghalaya because of Inner Line Permit in these states. President Ram Nath Kovind had earlier signed an order to extend Inner Line Permit (ILP) to Manipur. In Assam, Bodo, Karbi, and Dimasa areas fall under 6th Schedule of Constitution, so this law will not apply there too.
 1. Inner Line Permit is a document that allows an Indian citizen to go or live in a protected state under ILP system for a specific period of time. It is currently applicable in 4 northeastern states - Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram. It is important to get an ILP to travel to these states.
 2. Concept of inner line permit was formulated during British Government. An inner line permit is a travel document issued under Eastern Frontier Regulations in 1873. Purpose of British was to protect their business interests by preventing Indians from doing business in these areas.
 3. Government of India changed it in 1950, to a protective system to protect local population from attacks of mass exodus.
 4. Now, people need a permit who are not 'natives' in these states despite they are long-term residents. Such people have to renew their permits every six months.
 5. Those states fall under ILP will not affect by Citizen Amendment Bill (CAB). Most affected states with illegal migration are Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya.

2. Constitution (126th Amendment) Bill 2019 -

1. Constitution provides for reservation of seats for SCs and STs and representation of Anglo-Indian community by nomination, in Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies of states. This has been provided for a period of 70 years since enactment of Constitution and will expire on January 25, 2020.
2. Bill seeks to extend the reservation for SCs and STs by another 10 years till January 25, 2030.

3. Arms (Amendment) Bill 2019 -

1. It seeks to amend Arms Act 1959. It decreases number of licensed firearms allowed per person and increase penalties for certain offences under the Act. It also introduces new categories of offences.
2. License for acquiring firearms -
 1. Under the Act, a license must be obtained to acquire, possess, or carry any firearm. A person can obtain a license for up to three firearms.
 2. Bill reduces number of permitted firearms from three to one. Bill provides 1 year to deposit excess firearms with competent authorities.
 3. Bill increases duration of validity of a firearm license from 3 to 5 years.
3. Ban on firearms -
 1. Bill prohibits obtaining or procuring un-licensed firearms, and conversion of one category of firearms to another without a license.
4. Increase in punishment -
 1. Bill amends punishment in relation to several offences, increasing punishment to between 7 years and life imprisonment, along with a fine.
5. New offences -

1. Bill adds news offences. These include forcefully taking firearm from police or armed forces, using firearms in a celebratory gunfire.
2. Bill also defines offences committed by organised crime syndicates and illicit trafficking. *Organised crime* refers to continuing unlawful activity by a person, using unlawful means.
6. Tracking of firearms - Government may make rules to track firearms and ammunition from manufacturer to purchaser to detect, investigate, and analyse illicit manufacturing and trafficking.

4. Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill 2019 -

1. Bill provides for merger of UTs of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu into a single UT.
2. Amendment of the Constitution -
 1. First Schedule to Constitution specifies territories that come under various states and UTs. Bill amends First Schedule to merge territories of two UTs - Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.
 2. Merged territory will form UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.
3. First Schedule to Representation of People Act 1950 provides 1 seat in Lok Sabha to each of two UTs. Bill amends the Schedule to allocate 2 Lok Sabha seats to merged UT.
4. Bill provides that jurisdiction of the High Court of Bombay will continue to extend to merged UT.

5. NCT of Delhi (Recognition of Property Rights of Residents in Unauthorised Colonies) Bill 2019 -

1. It provides for recognising property rights of residents of certain unauthorised colonies in Delhi.
2. Bill provides that government may regularise transactions of properties held by residents of certain unauthorised colonies. Any resident of an unauthorised colony having these documents will be eligible to obtain right of ownership.
3. An unauthorised colony is defined as a colony or development comprising of an adjoining area, where no permission has been obtained for approval of layout or building plans.
4. Residents will be required to pay certain charges to obtain such ownership, to be notified by government.

6. Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill 2019 -

1. It amends Special Protections Group Act 1988, which provides for constitution of Special Protection Group (SPG) to provide security to Prime Minister, former Prime Ministers, and their immediate family members (for 1 year from when they cease to hold the office).
2. Bill amends this to state that SPG will provide security to Prime Minister and his immediate family residing with him at his official residence. It will also provide security to any former Prime Ministers and his immediate family members residing with him at residence allotted to him. Security will be provided for 5 years from when they cease to hold office.

7. Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill 2019 -

1. It Replaces Taxation Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2019 which was promulgated in September 2019, to amend IT Act and Finance (No. 2) Act 2019. It provides lower tax rate options to domestic companies to promote growth and investment and attract fresh investment in manufacturing sector.
2. Currently, domestic companies with turnover up to 400 crore pay income tax at rate of 25%. For other domestic companies, tax rate is 30%. Bill provides domestic companies with an option to pay tax at the rate of 22%, provided they do not claim certain deductions under Income Tax Act.
3. Bill provides new domestic manufacturing companies with an option to pay income tax at rate of 15%, provided they do not claim certain deductions. These companies must be set up after September 30, 2019, and start manufacturing before April 1, 2023.
4. A company can choose to opt for new tax rates in FY 2019-20 or in any other financial year in future. Once a company exercises this option, chosen provision will apply for all subsequent years.
5. Domestic companies pay surcharge at 7%, if income is between one crore rupees and Rs 10 crore, and at 12%, if income is more than Rs 10 crore. Companies opting for the new rates have to pay a 10% surcharge. Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) is tax to be paid by a company in case its normal tax liability after claiming deductions falls below a certain limit. Bill adds that provisions regarding MAT credit will also not apply to companies opting for new rates.
6. Ordinance reduces MAT rate (applicable for companies not opting for new tax rates) from 18.5% to 15%, from FY 2019-20. Bill amends this provision by making it effective from financial year 2020-21.

7. Bill clarifies that certain businesses will not be considered as manufacturing businesses. These include businesses engaged in development of computer software, printing of books, production of cinematograph film, mining.
8. A surcharge is levied on top of the tax paid on income. This surcharge is applicable at rate of -
 1. 10% of tax, for income between Rs 50 lakh and one crore rupees
 2. 15% of tax, for income between one crore rupees and two crore rupees
 3. 25% of tax, for income between two crore rupees and five crore rupees, and
 4. 37% of tax, for income more than five crore rupees.
9. Bill separates surcharge on capital gains from that on all other income. Income excluding capital gains will be subject to surcharge as per the above slabs. Capital gains will also be subject to surcharge as per the above slabs, if the total income does not exceed one crore rupees. Otherwise, a flat 15% rate of surcharge will be applicable for capital gains.

8. Recycling of Ships Bill 2019 -

1. It restricts use of hazardous material on ships and regulates the recycling of ships.
2. Bill defines ship recycling as dismantling of a ship at a facility to recover components for reuse, and taking care of the hazardous material so produced.
3. The owner of every new ship must make an application to the National Authority to obtain a certificate on the inventory of hazardous materials. Existing ship owners must apply for the certificate within five years, to be renewed every 5 years.
4. Using hazardous materials in a ship will be punishable with imprisonment of up to three months, or a fine of up to five lakh rupees, or both.
5. These requirements will not apply to any warship, or other ship operated by an administration and used on government non-commercial service, and ships with internal volume less than 500 tonne.
6. Ships will be recycled only in authorised recycling facilities. Existing facilities must apply for authorisation within 60 days.

9. International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill 2019 -

1. It provides for establishment of an Authority to regulate financial services market in International Financial Services Centres in India, applicable to International Financial Services Centres set up under Special Economic Zones Act 2005.
2. Bill sets up the International Financial Services Centres Authority, with 9 members. Members will have term of 3 years.
3. Bill sets up the International Financial Services Centres Authority Fund, to manage finances of IFSCs.
4. Authority will constitute a Performance Review Committee to review its functioning. Review Committee will consist of at least two members of the Authority.
5. As per the Bill, transactions of financial services in IFSCs will be in such foreign currency as specified by Authority.

10. Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage, and Advertisement) Bill 2019 -

1. It replaces an Ordinance promulgated in September 2019, seeking to prohibits production, trade, storage, and advertisement of electronic cigarettes.
2. Bill defines electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) as electronic devices that heat a substance, which may contain nicotine and other chemicals, to create vapour for inhalation.
3. Bill prohibits the production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution and advertisement of e-cigarettes in India.
4. It provisions jail up to 3 years and fine up to 5 lakhs, for offenders.

11. Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill 2019 -

1. It amends Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act 1951, which provides for erection of a National Memorial in memory of those killed / wounded on April 13, 1919, in Jallianwala Bagh. It also creates a Trust to manage the Memorial.
2. Under Act, Trustees of Memorial include PM as Chairperson, President of Indian National Congress, Minister in-charge of Culture, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Governor of Punjab, Chief Minister of Punjab, and 3 eminent persons nominated by government. Bill removes President of Indian National Congress as a Trustee.

3. Act provides that three trustees nominated by government will be trustees for a period of five years and will be eligible for renomination. Bill allows government to terminate term of a nominated trustee before expiry of period of his term without assigning any reason.

12. National Institute of Design (Amendment) Bill 2019 -

1. It seeks to amend National Institute of Design Act 2014, which declares National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad as an institution of national importance.
2. Bill seeks to declare four National Institutes of Design in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, and Haryana as institutions of national importance. Currently, these are registered as Societies under the Societies Registration Act 1860 and do not have the power to grant degrees or diplomas.

13. Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2019 -

1. Bill prohibits discrimination against a transgender person, including denial of service or unfair treatment.
2. Every transgender person shall have a right to reside and be included in his household.
3. No government or private entity can discriminate against a transgender person in employment matters, including recruitment, and promotion.
4. Educational institutions shall provide inclusive education, sports and recreational facilities for transgender persons, without discrimination.
5. A transgender person may make an application to the District Magistrate for a certificate of identity, indicating the gender as 'transgender'.
6. Government will take measures to ensure full inclusion of transgender persons in society.
7. Bill recognizes several offences against transgender persons. Penalties for these offences vary between six months and two years, and a fine.
8. National Council for Transgender persons (NCT) will be formed with Union Minister for Social Justice as (Chairperson) and other designated members.

14. Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill 2019 -

1. It Bill seeks to amend Chit Funds Act 1982, that regulates chit funds, and prohibits a fund from being created without prior sanction of state government. Under a chit fund, people agree to pay a certain amount from time to time into a fund. Periodically, one of subscribers is chosen by drawing a chit to receive the prize amount from the fund.
2. **Act** specifies various names which may be used to refer to a chit fund. These include chit, chit fund, and kuri. **Bill** additionally inserts 'fraternity fund' and 'rotating savings and credit institution' to this list.
3. **Act** defines certain terms in relation to chit funds - 'chit amount', 'dividend' and 'prize amount'. Bill changes names of these terms to 'gross chit amount', 'share of discount' and 'net chit amount', respectively.
4. Under the **Act**, the 'foreman' is responsible for managing chit fund, who is entitled to maximum commission of 5% of chit amount. **Bill** seeks to increase the commission to 7%.
5. Under the **Act**, chits may be conducted by firms, associations or individuals. Maximum amount of chit funds which may be collected - 1 lakh for chits conducted by individuals and firms with under 4 partners and 6 lakh rupees for firms with four or more partners. **Bill** increases these limits to three lakh rupees and 18 lakh rupees, respectively.
6. **Act** does not apply to any chit started before it was enacted and any chit (or multiple chits being managed by the same foreman) where amount is less than Rs 100. **Bill** removes limit of Rs 100, and allows state governments to specify base amount over which provisions of Act will apply.

3. Bills Introduced -

1. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill 2019 (Introduced in Lok Sabha).

1. It amends Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016, which provides process for resolving insolvency in companies / individuals.
2. Minimum threshold for initiating resolution process -
 1. Under the **Code**, a creditor may file an application before the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for initiating insolvency resolution process. **Bill** amends this to provide minimum thresholds for certain class of creditors to initiate insolvency resolution process.
 2. Application should be filed jointly by at least 100 creditor, or 10% of the total number of such creditors in the same class, whichever is less. The rule applies to real estate projects also, requiring 100 allottees of same

project, to initiate insolvency.

3. Restriction on persons allowed to make applications -

1. **Code** restricts certain debtors from making an application to initiate resolution process. Bill clarifies that these corporate debtors will be allowed to initiate the resolution process against any other corporate debtor.
4. Bill states that any existing licence, permit, registration, quota, concession, or clearance, given by government or local authority, will not be terminated on grounds of insolvency. However, there should be no default in payment of current dues for use of such grants.
5. Bill provides that corporate debtors will have immunity against offences committed by them prior to commencement of resolution process. Such immunity will be granted if resolution plan approved by NCLT results in change of promoters, or management of corporate debtor. However, any person in charge of corporate debtor, will continue to be held liable for such offences.

2. **Personal Data Protection Bill 2019** (introduced in Lok Sabha) -

1. Bill governs processing of personal data of Individuals by government / companies. Bill categorises certain personal data as sensitive personal data, such as financial, biometric, caste, religious or political beliefs.
2. A data fiduciary is an entity who decides purpose of processing personal data. Additionally, data fiduciaries must undertake certain transparency and accountability measures. They must also arrange for age verification and parental consent when processing sensitive personal data of children.
3. Bill sets certain **rights** of individual, such as right to obtain confirmation from fiduciary on whether their personal data has been processed, seek correction of personal data, have personal data transferred to any other data fiduciary, and restrict continuing disclosure of their personal data by a fiduciary.
4. In certain circumstances, personal data can be processed without consent by fiduciary. These include if required by State for providing benefits to individual, legal proceedings and to respond to a medical emergency.
5. Bill sets up a **Data Protection Authority** which may take steps to protect interests of individuals, prevent misuse of personal data, and ensure compliance with the Bill. It will consist of a chairperson and six members.
6. Sensitive personal data may be **transferred outside India** for processing if explicitly consented to by individual. However, such data should continue to be stored in India.
7. Bill states several **Exemptions** that may enable government to exempt any of its agencies from provisions of the Act
8. **Offences** include -
 1. Processing / transferring personal data, punishable with a fine of Rs 15 crore or 4% of turnover of fiduciary, whichever is higher.
 2. Failure to conduct a data audit, punishable with a fine of five crore rupees or 2% of the annual turnover of the fiduciary, whichever is higher.
 3. Re-identification and processing of de-identified personal data without consent is punishable with imprisonment of up to 3 years, or fine, or both.
9. Government may direct data fiduciaries to provide it with any non-personal data and anonymised personal data for better targeting of services.
10. Bill amends IT Act 2000 to delete provisions related to compensation payable by companies for failure to protect personal data.

3. **Code on Social Security 2019** -

1. It replaces nine laws related to social security, including Employees' Provident Fund Act 1952, Maternity Benefit Act 1961 and Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act 2008.
2. It states that central / state government may notify specific schemes for workers, which also includes unorganised sector workers to provide various benefits, such as life and disability cover.
3. Code specifies different applicability thresholds for the schemes. For example, EPF Scheme will apply to establishments with 20 or more employees. ESI Scheme will apply to certain establishments with 10 or more employees, and establishments which carry out hazardous or life-threatening work.
4. EPF, EPS, EDLI, and ESI Schemes will be financed through a combination of contributions from the employer and employee. Schemes for gig workers, platform workers, and unorganised workers may be financed through a combination of contributions from the employer, employee, and the appropriate government.
5. Code provides for the establishment of several bodies to administer the social security schemes. These include -

1. Central Board of Trustees (headed by Central Provident Fund Commissioner) to administer EPF, EPS and EDLI Schemes,
 2. Employees State Insurance Corporation to administer the ESI Scheme.
 3. National and state-level Social Security Boards to administer schemes for unorganised workers.
 4. State-level Building Workers' Welfare Boards to administer schemes for building workers.
 6. Government may appoint Inspector-cum-facilitators to inspect establishments covered by Code, and advise employers and employees on compliance with Code.
 7. Code specifies **penalties** for various offences, such as failure by an employer to pay contributions after deducting employee's share, punishable with imprisonment between 1 - 3 years and fine of 1 lakh rupees, and falsification of reports, punishable with imprisonment of up to 6 months.
4. **Central Sanskrit Universities Bill 2019** (introduced in Lok Sabha) -
1. Presently, there are 3 deemed-to-be Sanskrit universities - Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan (New Delhi), Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth (New Delhi) and Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth (Tirupati). Bill seeks to convert these into Central Sanskrit Universities, with appropriate Authorities and 15 member executive council.
 2. President of India will be the Visitor of the University. He may appoint persons to review and inspect the functioning of the University.
5. **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (Amendment) Bill 2019** (introduced in Lok Sabha) -
1. Bill amends Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007.
 2. **Bill** adds several terms definition of children - step-children, adoptive children, children-in-laws, and legal guardian of minor children. **Act** defines parents to include biological, adoptive, and step parents. Bill expands definition of parents to include parent-in-laws, and grandparents.
 3. **Bill** expands definition of maintenance to include provision of healthcare, safety, and security for parents and senior citizens to lead a life of dignity.
 4. Under the **Act**, state governments constitute maintenance Tribunals to decide on maintenance payable to senior citizens. These Tribunals may direct children and relatives to pay 10000 monthly to senior citizens. Bill removes the upper limit on the maintenance fee.
 5. **Act** requires children and relatives to deposit maintenance amount with relevant senior citizen within 30 days of being ordered to do so. Bill reduces this to 15 days.
 6. **Act** provides for senior citizens to appeal decisions of maintenance Tribunal. **Bill** allows children and relatives also to appeal decisions of Tribunal.
 7. Bill increases penalty for abandonment of a senior citizen to 3 - 6 months, or fine of up to Rs 10000.
 8. **Act** provides for a maintenance officer to represent a parent during proceedings of Tribunal. Bill requires maintenance officers to ensure compliance with orders on maintenance payments, and act as a liaison for parents.
 9. Under the **Act**, state governments may set up old age homes. Bill provides that care homes can be set up by government / private organisation.
 10. **Act** provides for certain facilities for senior citizens in government hospitals. **Bill** requires all hospitals to provide these facilities for senior citizens. Homecare facilities will be provided for senior citizens with disabilities.
 11. **Bill** requires every police station to have at least one officer, not below rank of Assistant Sub-Inspector, to deal with issues related to parents and senior citizens. State governments must constitute a special police unit for senior citizens in every district.
6. **Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill 2019** -
1. Bill provides for prevention of maritime piracy and prosecution of persons for such piracy related crimes. It will apply to all parts of sea adjacent to and beyond limits of Exclusive Economic Zone of India. EEZ refers to area of sea to which India has exclusive rights for economic activities.
 2. An act of piracy will be punishable with imprisonment for life or death, if act of piracy includes attempted murder, or causes death. Offences will be considered extraditable. This means that the accused can be transferred to any country for prosecution with which India has signed an extradition treaty.
 3. Seizure may be carried out only by Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard or ships / aircrafts on government service.

4. Govt may notify Sessions Courts to be Designated Courts under this Bill.
5. Court will not have jurisdiction over offences committed on a foreign ship, unless an intervention is requested by country of origin of ship, ship owner, or any other person on ship. Warships and government ships employed for non-commercial purposes will not be under jurisdiction of Court.

7. Industrial Relations Code 2019 (introduced in Lok Sabha) -

1. It seeks to replace three labour laws - Industrial Disputes Act 1947, Trade Unions Act 1926, and Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act 1946.
2. Under the Code, seven or more members of a trade union can apply to register it. Trade unions with membership of at least 10% of workers or 100 workers, whichever is less, will be registered.
3. Code provides for a negotiation union in an industrial establishment for negotiating with employer.
4. Code prohibits employers, workers, and trade unions from committing any unfair labour practices, including restricting workers from forming trade unions, establishing employer sponsored trade unions and coercing workers to join trade unions.
5. Industrial establishments with at least 100 workers must prepare standing orders on matters listed in Code.
6. Employers of industrial establishments with at least 100 workers are required to take prior permission of the central or state government before lay-off, retrenchment or closure.
7. Industrial establishments with 50 to 100 workers are required to pay 50% of basic wages and dearness allowance to a worker who has been laid off, and give one month's notice and wages for such period to a worker.
8. Government may appoint conciliation officers to mediate and promote settlement of industrial disputes.
9. Code provides for constitution of Industrial Tribunals for the settlement of industrial disputes. An Industrial Tribunal will consist of two members. Central government may also constitute National Industrial Tribunals for settlement of industrial disputes.

4. Withdrawn Bills -

1. Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill 1987
2. National Commission for Human Resources for Health Bill 2011
3. Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill 2013
4. International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill 2019

5. Notable Information provided during Question hour During Winter session 2019 -

1. Government will establish a National Maritime Heritage Museum at Lothal in Gujarat, in association with Portugal. It will also act as an independent research center for archaeology of boat building, reconstruction of maritime history and materials traded. It will hold display of salvaged materials from shipwreck sites in Indian Ocean waters.
2. Under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), 20.84 crore loan accounts totalling an amount of Rs 10.24 lac crore have been sanctioned upto end of October 2019.
3. Under Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWT&T) between India and Bangladesh, Port of Mongla is declared as Port of Call under PIWT&T and Chattogram port is not part of PIWT&T. Mongla and Chattogram are declared as Ports of Call under the "Coastal Shipping Agreement" between India and Bangladesh.
4. Archaeological Survey of India has identified 138 numbers of monuments as Must-See Monuments. There are 38 World Heritage Sites in India.
5. ISRO will set up 5 Space Technology Cells at the premier institutes in order to carry out research activities. It includes IISc, IITs in Kharagpur, Bombay, Madras and Kanpur.
6. MP Sarojni Hembram from Odisha for the first time spoke in a tribal language called Santhali, raising matter of public importance during zero hour. This makes it first ever use of Santhali tribal language in Rajya Sabha.
7. Government has approved seven projects for setting up of FM transmitters in premises of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) for strengthening FM coverage along Indo-Nepal border.
8. UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) in association with WCD Ministry jointly launched "YuWaah- (Generation Unlimited India)", aimed at promoting secondary education and training to build skills young people need for productive lives and work & also boost number of quality work opportunities available to youth.
9. MPs unanimously decided to abolish food subsidy in canteen of Parliament, saving around 15 crores annually.
10. Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned 18 projects under the schemes PRASHAD and Swadesh Darshan, with INR 1456 crores allocated for the same.

11. Government has approved strategic disinvestment of 33 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), with sale of majority stake of Government and transfer of management control.
12. "Indian Ranking Society" was approved by HRD ministry in August 2019, to develop methodologies and systems to rank higher educational institutions in country. At present, educational institutes are ranked according to National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), with 5 broad generic groups of parameters.
13. Railways recorded an operating ratio of 98.44% in 2017-18, worst in last 10 years. Operating ratio is a measure of expenditure against the revenue. It shows the operating efficiency of the railway and the health of its finances.
5. ▶ Amazon's audiobook company Audible launched a new app "Audible Suno" in India, featuring original audio series which aims to expand Audible's reach in India's highly competitive digital entertainment and streaming space.
6. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Cabinet approved **Disha** Bill that proposes harsh punishment for crimes against women, also known as the Andhra Pradesh Criminal Law (Amendment) bill.
 1. Cabinet also approved establishment of special courts for offences against women and children under Women and Children Act 2019.
 2. Act specifies that judgement for every case registered should be pronounced within 21 days.
 3. Act also includes strict actions against persons uploading degrading posts against women on social media. In this case, the first-time offenders will be punished with 2 years of jail term and 2nd term offenders will be punished with 4 years of jail term.
7. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Dec 11, 2019) -
 1. MOUs -
 1. Japan - Cooperation in Steel Sector and Electricity Distribution
 2. Saudi Arabia - Medical Products Regulation.
 3. Brazil - Social Security.
 2. General Approvals -
 1. Approved *Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme* to be offered by Government to Public Sector Banks (PSBs) for purchasing high-rated pooled assets from financially sound Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) / Housing Finance Companies (HFCs).
 1. Amount of guarantee is limited to first loss of up to 10 % of fair value of assets being purchased by banks under Scheme, or 10000 crores, whichever is lower.
 2. Window for one-time partial credit guarantee offered by Govt will remain open till 30th June, 2020 or till such date by which 100000 crores assets get purchased by Banks, whichever is earlier.
 3. Earlier in Union Budget 2019-20, it was announced that - *For purchase of high-rated pooled assets of financially sound NBFCs, amounting to a total of Rupees one lakh crore during the current financial year, Government will provide one time six months' partial credit guarantee to Public Sector Banks for first loss up to 10%.*
 2. Approved providing additional equity support to IIFCL to tune of 53000 crores in 2019-20 and 10000 crore in 2020-21. Cabinet also approved increasing authorized capital of IIFCL from 6000 crores to 25000 crores.
 1. This will enable IIFCL to create requisite headroom for borrowing, thus enabling it to finance big ticket infrastructure projects in line with Government's target to invest 100 lakh crore in infrastructure sector over 5 years.
 3. Approved amendments in Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016 (code), through Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill 2019, aiming to remove certain difficulties faced during insolvency resolution process.
 1. Amendment Bill seeks to amend sections 5(12), 5(15), 7, 11, 14, 16(1), 21(2), 23(1), 29A, 227, 239, 240 and insert new section 32A in IBC 2016 (Code).
 4. Approved authorizing National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to set up Infrastructure Investment Trust(s) (InvIT) as per InvIT Guidelines issued by SEBI.
 1. This will enable NHAI to monetize completed National Highways that have a toll collection track record of at least 1 year and NHAI reserves right to levy toll on identified highway. InvIT as an instrument provides greater flexibility to investors.
 5. Approved revision in funding pattern of 3 approved priority corridors of Delhi Metro Phase-IV projects, with sharing of land cost in the ratio of 50:50 between Government of India (GoI) and Government of Delhi (GNCTD). Total cost of project would stay same - 24948 crores. Contribution from GoI increases from 4154 to 4643 crores.

6. Approved introducing Aircraft (Amendment) Bill 2019 for carrying out amendments to Aircraft Act 1934. Bill enhances limit of fine from 10 lakhs to 1 Crore. It also enlarges the scope of the existing Act to include regulation of all areas of Air Navigation.

1. Amendments would fulfil the requirements of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). This will enable the three regulatory bodies in the Civil Aviation sector in India, namely Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security and Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau to become more effective.

3. CCEA Approvals -

1. Approved extension of timeline upto 31.03.2022 and revision of approved components of PMs Development Package for development of Horticulture in UTs of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture.

1. To extend timeline for implementation of PMDP approved in 2016 beyond 31st March 2019 by 3 years i.e. up to 31st March 2022. Additional 12 months may be provided, if required.
2. Revision of earlier approved components of PMDP within outlay of 500 crore between UTs of J&K and Ladakh (40 crore for Ladakh and 460 crore for Jammu & Kashmir). Additional provision of up to 500 crores, if required.
3. Earlier in, PM's special package for J&K for 500 crore with Rs. 450 crore Gol Share towards development of horticulture in State of Jammu & Kashmir was approved, for implementation over 3 years, upto 31.03.2019.

8. ▶ Coal Ministry will establish "Sustainable Development Cell" (SDC) to promote environment friendly and sustainable coal mining, to address environmental concerns that arise during closure of mines.
9. ▶ Data networks Firm Sterlite Technologies partnered with IIT Madras for conducting research and developments in 5G technology. STL will sponsor a Chair Professorship in 5G technology at the institute.
10. ▶ Department of Social Justice and Empowerment launched *National award for outstanding services in the field of Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug abuse*, to be given to institutions / individuals working in field of prevention of alcoholism and drug abuse. The award will be presented on *International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking* on 26th of June next year.
11. ▶ Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) approved Google-backed hyperlocal delivery startup Dunzo and Bengaluru-based drone maker Throttle Aerospace Systems to test long-range and autonomous drone use. These drones can significantly enhance logistic services.
12. ▶ EChO Network has been launched, as a national program to provide a template for cross-disciplinary leadership in India with the specific focus of increasing research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and environment.
 1. EChO Network would develop a national network to catalyse a new generation of Indians who can synthesize interdisciplinary concepts and tackle real-world problems in medicine, agriculture, ecology, and technology.
 2. Network will identify gaps in knowledge regarding selected topics in human and environmental ecosystems. It will then train postdoctoral leaders in research and outreach on these topics, while also incorporating current public and private efforts into a national network.
13. ▶ Food regulator FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) and IT Industry Body Nasscom Foundation signed MoU to jointly build a technology platform to prevent food wastage and encouraging food donation by developing an app for the same. A 24x7 helpline number and a mobile application 'Food Donation in India' will be launched, to enable donating food to the needy.
14. ▶ Forbes' Indian celebrities List 2019 -
 1. Cricketer Virat Kohli became first sportsman to be ranked at top, with annual earnings over 252 crores.
 2. Top 5 - Virat kohli, Akshay Kumar, Salman Khan, Amitabh Bachchan, M S Dhoni
15. ▶ General Conferences (Dec 11 - 20, 2019) -
 1. 37th National Symposium of Heads of Police Training Institutions held in New Delhi, organized by Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D).
 2. Andhra University's First Virtual Police Station launched at Andhra University, as a pilot project.
 3. First Ever Karanji lake Festival held in Karnataka.
 4. Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired first meeting of National Ganga Council in Kanpur (UP). Council was constituted in 2016 to oversee cleaning of Ganga and is supposed to meet at least once a year.
 5. Government e-commerce portal GeM has launched a national outreach programme called 'GeM Samvaad', to bring on-board more local sellers. It will take place from 19 Dec 2019 to 17 Feb 2020.
 6. Govt. extended deadline for Accessible India Campaign to March 2020, which makes to make public spaces friendly for persons with disabilities. Targets include making at least 50% of government owned buildings as disabled-friendly.
 7. Shuttle train service between Lahore and Wagah railway station (Pakistan) resumed operations, after a gap of 22 years.

8. Indian Railways announced to grant 50% concession for youth participating in the “Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat” programme (with earnings under 5000 rupees per month), for travelling between states to take part in the programme.
9. Confederation of Indian Industry organized “Steeling India 2019” conference in New Delhi.
10. Madhya Pradesh Govt. organized Cultural Festival ‘Namaste Orchha 2020’ in Orchha.
11. National Tribal Dance Festival held in Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur.
12. Haryana Police Department adopted a unique barcoding software called *Trakea*, used to ensure that digital forensic reports are stored safely. It offers a foolproof security to the samples collected from the crime scene.
13. Government for the first-time invoked Drug Price Control Order 2013, to increase prices of 21 medicines to ensure their availability. The prices were increased by 50% amid up to 88 % price rise of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API). These ingredients constitute 40% to 80% of formulation cost.
14. FICCI ARISE Conference 2019 held in New Delhi, based on theme ‘Future Ready Learners and Schools’.
15. Maharashtra Govt approved to name under-construction Mumbai Nagpur Super Communication Expressway also known as Maharashtra Samruddhi Mahamarg after Shiv Sena party founder late Bal Keshav Thackeray.
16. Home Ministry sent alert to all States warning them about vulnerability of Android operating system to a bug called ‘StrandHogg’, which allows real-time malware applications to pose as genuine applications and are able to access user data of all kind.
17. Odisha government brought Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment Department under its flagship initiative 'Mo Sarkar'. Earlier, Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik had announced Mo Sarkar initiative, to ensure transparency in governance focusing fully on common public. Govt. will work to ensure that people get their rights with help of 5T mantras - Technology, Transparency, Teamwork, Transformation and Time
18. 1st Pashu Kisan credit cards (Animal husbandry Credit Card) in India distributed to 101 animal farmers in Bhiwani district of Haryana. Under this, banks will provide credit for 101 livestock types, to pay for animal feed, etc. The scheme is expected to help the livestock owners in improving their dairy business.
16. ▶ Government approved first SEZ (Special Economic Zone) of Tripura at Sabroom, with primary focus on agro-based food processing. As per rules, minimum of 25 hectares of land is required to set up a new SEZ in the North Eastern States. The SEZ is expected to generate 12,000 skilled jobs..
17. ▶ Govt announced 436 crores outlay for skilling 4 lakh professionals in futuristic areas such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and cybersecurity over 3 years, under "Future Skills PRIME" programme, to be jointly rolled out by IT ministry and industry body Nasscom.
18. ▶ Gujarat police has been presented ‘President’s Colours’ by Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, making Gujarat 7th state to receive prestigious President’s Colours, also called as Nishaan, an emblem which all police officers of Gujarat would wear on left-hand sleeve of their uniform.
19. ▶ IIT Hyderabad Fellow Jigneh Patel launched a ‘Vaccination on Wheels Clinic’ in Pune (Maharashtra), as one of its kind service started in collaboration with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He had received a grant under Foundation’s ‘Grand Challenges Explorations’, and founded Jivika Healthcare to provide this vaccination service.
 1. Grand Challenges Explorations is a US \$100 million initiative funded by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).
20. ▶ India Design Council (IDC) launched 2 initiatives - Design Education Quality Mark (DEQM) and Chartered Designs of India (CDI), to support and set standards for design profession.
 1. DEQM will benchmark design education programmes on predetermined standards and will accord a quality mark to institutions that meet standards.
 2. CDI is an institution that will establish and uphold professional standards of design practice in India.
21. ▶ Infosys launched 3 three blockchain-powered distributed applications for government services, supply chain management and insurance domains. These applications are equipped with predictive return on investment (ROI) analytics for business investments that can be tailored to meet numerous industry-specific needs.
22. ▶ Kerala State Chalachitra Academy (KSCA) organized 24th edition of International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) 2019 in Thiruvananthapuram -
 1. Japanese film, ‘They Say Nothing Stays the Same’, directed by Joe Odagiri, won Suvarna Chakoram award 2019 (Golden Crow Pheasant) for best film. Other Awards -
 2. Rajatha Chakoram (Silver Crow Pheasant) award for the best director - Allan Deberton, for the Brazilian film Pacarrete
 3. Lifetime Achievement Award 2019 - Fernando Solanas, a filmmaker from Argentine.

23. ▶ Meghalaya Assembly adopted a resolution urging Central Government to implement Inner Line Permit in state under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation 1873, amid demand by indigenous residents of the state for implementation of the ILP.
24. ▶ Minister for Communications, Law & Justice and Electronics and Information Technology, Ravi Shankar Prasad launched National Broadband Mission (NBM) in New Delhi. It aims to fast track growth of digital communications infrastructure and provide affordable access of broadband for all. Some objectives -
 1. Broadband access to all villages by 2022.
 2. Laying of incremental 30 lakhs route km of Optical Fiber Cable and increase in tower density from 0.42 to 1.0 tower per thousand of population by 2024.
 3. Develop a Broadband Readiness Index (BRI) to measure the availability of digital communications infrastructure and conducive policy ecosystem within a State/UT.
 4. Creation of a digital fiber map of the Digital Communications network and infrastructure, including Optical Fiber Cables and Towers, across the country
 5. Investment from stakeholders of USD 100 billion (Rs 7 Lakh Crore) including Rs 70,000 crore from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).
25. ▶ Ministry of Culture and Tourism launched Indian Culture web portal at URL <http://www.indianculture.gov.in>, which brings together all the cultural resources of country on one platform. It has been jointly developed by IIT Bombay and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).
26. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs and Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) will investigate illegal plantations of marijuana plantations and destroy them deploying drones before plants are harvested. India is following modus operandi adopted by US to deal with marijuana plantations, which uses airplanes and drones to detect illegal plantations of marijuana.
27. ▶ Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued a draft notification titled *Regulation of vintage motor vehicles order 2019*, to regulate registration of old vintage vehicles. It also says that any car that is older than 50 years is a vintage car.
 1. Registration plates of vehicles will bear letters "XXVAYY", where VA stands for Vintage, XX stands for state code and YY stands for numbers between 1 and 9.
 2. 1 time fee of Rs 20,000 has to deposited by owners with state transport authorities, valid for 10 years.
28. ▶ Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launched 'Jalsathi' programme which will ensure supply of safe drinking water to all households in state, under 5T initiative of State Govt (Transparency, Teamwork, Technology, Time and Transformation). MoU was signed between Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO) and women federations in Bhubaneswar (Odisha Capital) for implementation of 'Jalsathi' programme.
29. ▶ Puducherry UT government unveiled a start-up policy, aiming to create a corpus fund of 10 crores to support the setting up of start-up incubators and develop co-working spaces. The department plans to provide a grant of 3 lakh to projects recommended by incubators as a start-up grant.
30. ▶ Rajasthan government launched new schemes and policies to promote industrial development, investment, solar energy, wind energy and small scale industries in state.
31. ▶ Research and consulting Firm Coeus Age Consulting released 2nd edition of report titled "Digital States of India – A Comparative Analysis" -
 1. It is about mapping States / UTs as per their policy and infrastructure readiness and mission mode project's performance.
 2. As per report's mapping, Chhattisgarh has emerged as the top state, followed by Maharashtra, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
 3. Haryana made biggest leap in ranking, moving from 10th place in 2017 to 3rd place in 2019.
32. ▶ Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launched Phase-III of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in New Delhi to further enhance connectivity of villages with hospitals, schools and agricultural markets.
 1. Phase-III of PMGSY aims at consolidation of 1 lakh 25 thousand Kilometers, with estimated cost of 80250 crore rupees for the period 2019-20 to 2024-25. Central Share will be 53800 crore rupees. Funding pattern will be 60:40 between Centre and States (90:10 for North-East and Himalayan States).
33. ▶ Supreme Court ordered Government to hasten pilot project of setting up smog towers at Connaught place (New Delhi), giving 3 months for the same.
 1. Smog Towers are air purification structures designed to work as air purifiers. China has fitted two smog towers in Beijing and Xi'an.
 2. Tower is being developed in Delhi by Kurin systems, as 20-feet wide and 40-feet tall. It has capacity to clean 32 million cubic metres of air in a day.

34. ▶ To motivate differently-abled persons, state Government of Kerala launched 2 social welfare schemes – ‘Vijayamritham’ and ‘Sahachari’.
 1. Vijayamritham is one-time cash award to meritorious differently-abled persons who score high marks in high education courses. Support is between 8000 - 10000 INR.
 2. Sahachari scheme aims to provide encouragement to NCC/NSS/SPC units functioning in schools who offer assistance to differently-abled students with over 40% disability in their studies as well as other extra-curricular activities.
35. ▶ UNESCO MGIEP (Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace) and Dell Technologies will launch a new education programme to train 4,000 Indian teachers in Artificial Technology, in 3 phases. In the first phase, teachers in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka will be trained. In second phase, face-to-face familiarization training will be provided. In third phase, teachers will be provided 12 months training.
36. ▶ World Design Organization will launch its new global programme World Design Protopolis in Bengaluru, aimed at implementing holistic progress in megacities across world and thus making them sustainable.

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Persons

1. ▶ Swedish Teenager Climate Activist Greta Thunberg is named as Time magazine's 2019 Person of the Year. Other honors
 1. Athlete of the Year - US Women's Soccer Team
 2. Guardians of the Year - US Public Servants
 3. Entertainer of the Year - Singer Lizzo
 4. Business Person of the Year - Disney CEO Bob Iger
2. ▶ Visits from India (Dec 11 - 20, 2019) -
 1. Raoshahab Patil Danve, Minister of state for Consumer affairs, Food and Public distribution Visited Australia for taking part in phase two of Australia-India Collaborative Consumer Protection Project under Sydney University.
 2. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited USA
 3. Navy Chief Karambir Singh visited Sri Lanka.
3. ▶ Visits to India (Dec 11 - 20, 2019) -
 1. Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Hiroshi Kajiyama Visited India.
 2. External Affairs Minister of Maldives, Abdulla Shahid Visited India, to attend 6th Joint Commission Meeting between India and Maldives.
 1. Maldives government signed a contract with a joint venture of Indian companies, to prepare project report and development of Addu, second biggest city in Maldives. Contract was signed L & T engineering limited and Lea associates south asia. Financing of project will be done by EXIM bank of India through line of credit of USD 800 million.
 3. Prime Minister of Portugal Antonio Costa visited India -
 1. Portugal announced be launching a Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize, inspired by M K Gandhi's thoughts and quotes. First edition of this prize will be dedicated to animal welfare.

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Science

1. ▶ American and British Scientists discovered remnants of a 386-million-year old world's oldest fossil forest in a sandstone quarry in Cairo, New York, United States (US). This forest is around 2 or 3 million years older than the current world's oldest forest at Gilboa, which is around 40 kilometres away from the Cairo site.
2. ▶ Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) will set up a task force on gene therapy. It aims to explore gene editing based therapeutic approaches that will treat illness, by working on genetic diseases affecting brain, eye disorders, muscles, heart, retina, cornea and blood disorders.
 1. ICMR believes that many inherited disorders are not treated by existing drugs and therapies. Around 70 million Indians suffer from rare diseases whose cure can be achieved through gene therapy.
3. ▶ India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV-C48 launched RISAT-2BR1 along with nine commercial satellites from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota
 1. RISAT-2BR1 is a radar imaging earth observation satellite weighing about 628 kg. The satellite will provide services in the field of Agriculture, Forestry and Disaster Management. The mission life of RISAT-2BR1 is 5 years.

2. The nine customer satellites of Israel, Italy, Japan and USA were precisely injected into their designated orbits. It Included *Duchifat-3* satellite made by an Israeli student. It is a remote sensing satellite through which students from all schools across country will be able to experiment and carry through Earth observation.
3. This is 50th mission of PSLV and also 75th vehicle mission from Sriharikota.
4. ▶ International Astronomical Union (IAU) announced names of newly discovered stars and planets, where name "Sharjah" was chosen for a star with "Barjeel" being name of one of its planets, As a tribute to contributions of Emirate of Sharjah to the global scientific community.
5. ▶ International Astronomical Union (IAU) named a white yellow star in Sextans Constellation as "Bhibha" and its planet as "Santamasa", honoring Indian Woman Scientist Bhibha Choudhury who discovered subatomic particle pi-meson.
 1. Bhibha is an ageing star that is 6.2 billion years old and Santamsa is its only planet.
 2. In particle physics, pi meson or pion is a subatomic particle. They are unstable and existing with positive, negative and neutral charges. It means that they are present in proton, neutron and electron of an atom.
6. ▶ NASA scientists mapped global wind circulation patterns in upper atmosphere of Mars. Circulation patterns were mapped 120 to 300 kilometers above Mars's surface showing "ripple effects".
 1. Study noted that average circulation patterns from season to season were very stable on Mars. But, shorter-term variability of winds in upper atmosphere was greater than anticipated.
7. ▶ University of California Scientists discovered world's deepest land canyon beneath Denman Glacier in East Antarctica, described as most accurate portrait yet of contours of land beneath Antarctica's ice shelf. Researchers found deepest point on continental Earth. The Antarctica topography map project is dubbed *BedMachine*.
 1. Lowest exposed point on land is located at Dead Sea shore which is 413 meters (about 1,355ft) below sea level. But lowest point on land goes even deeper, as revealed by new *BedMachine* data.
 2. At about 3500 meters (about 11500 feet) below sea-level, world's deepest canyon on land was found beneath Denman Glacier in East Antarctica.

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Sports

1. ▶ BWF World Tour Badminton Finals 2019 (Guangzhou, China) -
 1. Men's Singles - Kento Momota(Japan)
 2. Women's Singles - Chen Yufei (China)
 3. Men's Doubles - Mohammad Ahsan(Indonesia) AND Hendra Setiawan (Indonesia)
 4. Women's Doubles - Chen Qingchen (China) AND Jia Yifan (China)
 5. Mixed Doubles - Zheng Siwei (China) AND Huang Yaqiong (China)
2. ▶ FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry) India Sports Awards 2019 Winners -
 1. Sports Person of the Year (Female) - Rani Rampal (Hockey).
 2. Sports Person of the Year (Male) : Saurabh Chaudhary (Shooting).
 3. Best National Sports Federation - National Rifle Association of India
 4. Best Company Promoting Sports (Public Sector) - Railway Sports Promotion Board
 5. Best Para-athlete - Sandeep Chaudhary (javelin).
 6. Breakthrough Sports Person - Amit Panghal (boxing)
 7. Lifetime Achievement (Administrator) - Govindaraj Kempareddy
 8. Lifetime Achievement - Pankaj Advani (cue sport)
 9. Best State promoting sports - Odisha
 10. Best Sports Journalist - Kamesh Srinivasan
3. ▶ Indian Wrestlet Deepak Punia is named 2019 'Junior Freestyle Wrestler of the Year' by United World Wrestling (UWW).
 1. Punia is first Indian wrestler in 18 years to win a junior world title at Junior World Championships held in Talinn, Estonia in August 2019.
4. ▶ International Tennis Federation (ITF) named Australia's Ashleigh Barty and Rafael Nadal (Spain) as 2019 ITF World Champions in Female and Male categories respectively. Barty is the first Australian to be named ITF Women's World Champion, while Nadal is named ITF World Champion for 4th time.
 1. Timea Babos of Hungary and France's Kristina Mladenovic will receive award in women's doubles category.
 2. Men's doubles World Champions are Colombia's Juan Sebastian Cabal and Robert Farah.



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