

Eazyprep

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

COMPILATION

DECEMBER 2020

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1st December

1) Government Schemes

33rd PRAGATI interaction held

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the 33rd PRAGATI interaction to discuss new projects

PRAGATI stands for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.

It aims to provide pro-active governance and timely implementation of projects.

Quick Facts: PRAGATI was launched in 2015.

2) Government Schemes

Mission COVID Suraksha launched

Mission COVID Suraksha has been launched by GoI to accelerate development of vaccines in the country and bring it closer to market.

It is one of announcements made as part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat 3.0

The mission will be supported by India Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (Ind-CEPI) and National Bio Pharma Mission.

Quick Fact: CEPI is headquartered in Oslo, Norway.

3) Government Schemes

Sahakar Pragya Programme

The programme has been launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

It will train the primary cooperative societies in India through 45 new training modules of National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).

The programme will also enhance the training capacity of NCDC via eighteen regional training centres.

Quick Fact: Cooperative societies help in raising farmers' awareness against exploitation by traders.

4) Science and Technology

China's first indigenously developed third generation nuclear power reactor: Hualong One

China has connected its first indigenously developed third generation nuclear power reactor, Hualong One, to its national grid.

Unit 5 of Fuqing Nuclear Power Plant located in Fujian province of China was connected to the grid for the first time.

Hualong one is one of the world's most advanced nuclear power reactors, and the Unit 5 of Fuqing Nuclear Power Plant is the first to adopt its technology.

Quick Fact: This move will help China minimise its carbon emissions.

5) Science and Technology

Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) gets 'Milestone' status from IEEE

The Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope observatory is located in Pune.

It has been awarded the prestigious IEEE milestone status to honour its significant technical achievement, services, and excellence in benefiting humanity.

As per National Centre for Radio Astrophysics, this is India's third IEEE milestone recognition after JC Bose in 1895 and CV Raman in 1928.

Quick Fact: JC Bose is regarded as the Father of Wireless Communication.

2nd December

1) International Affairs

Dubai: Arab Gulf's first coal-based power plant

The first coal-based power plant of an Arab Gulf country is being developed in Saih Shuaib, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The Hassyan clean coal power station has a capacity of 2,400MW

It will produce electricity to meet the needs of at least 2,50,000 households.

2) Economy

ICICI Lombard acquisition of Bharti Axa General approved by IRDAI

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has approved the merger of Bharti AXA General Insurance with ICICI Lombard.

The merged entity will have 8.7 per cent market share of the general insurance market.

IRDAI was founded in 1999 and headquartered in Hyderabad.

Quick Fact: Subhash Chandra Khuntia is the chairperson of IRDAI

3) Economy

YES Bank launches 'SMS Pay' on POS Terminals

YES Bank has launched an 'SMS Pay' functionality on POS terminals.

This will allow merchants to accept contactless and remote payments from customers.

YES Bank has collaborated with French payment services company Worldline to launch the SMS Pay service.

Quick Fact: Prashant Kumar is the MD and CEO of YES Bank.

4) Sports

Virat Kohli becomes the fastest cricketer to reach 22000 international runs

Virat Kohli has broken Sachin Tendulkar's record of being the fastest cricketer to reach 22000 international runs.

He has achieved this feat in his 462nd innings, compared to Sachin's 493rd.

Virat Kohli is also the only batsman with an average of over 50 across all formats.

Quick Fact: Virat Kohli has become the 8th batsman overall and the 3rd Indian (after Tendulkar and Dravid) to reach 22,000 international runs.

5) Person in News

British Actor David Prowse passes away

David Prowse is famous for playing the character of Darth Vader in the original Star Wars trilogy.

The voice of the character was voiced by James Earl Jones.

Prowse was selected as Darth Vader for his imposing physique of 6 ft 7 in.

3rd December

1) Science and Technology

Japan's Hayabusa 2 aircraft nearing Earth after a year-long journey

Hayabusa 2 aircraft was launched by Japan to study asteroid Ryugu.

It is the first time in the history of world space that underground samples have been collected from an asteroid.

It will reach South Australia by 6th December 2020 carrying surface and underground samples from Ryugu.

Quick Fact: The Japanese space exploration organization is called JAXA, Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency.

2) Environment

Gujarat launched PPP project in Leopard rescue and rehabilitation

Gujarat forest department has transferred 12 leopards from Sakkar Baug Zoological Park in Junagadh to the private centre Rescue and Rehabilitation Kingdom in Jamnagar.

These leopards were captured after they encountered conflicts with humans.

This is Gujarat's first of its kind project.

Quick Fact: The project has been implemented in PPP between Gujarat State government and Reliance Industries Limited.

3) Environment

Blue tides spotted in Mumbai beaches

The blue tide phenomenon has been observed in various stretches of Maharashtra coast, like Mumbai's famous Juhu Beach.

Blue tide phenomenon is due to bioluminescence— the emission of light by microscopic marine plants called phytoplanktons.

The light is emitted during a chemical reaction of proteins and can be caused by various factors like climate change, heavy rainfall, low oxygen and high nitrogen in water.

Quick Fact: Bio-luminescence is rare in India and sometimes found in not Lakshadweep, Goa and Maharashtra.

4) Environment

Lahore tops list of world's most polluted cities: US Air Quality Index

Lahore has topped the list of world's most polluted cities again as per US Air Quality Index.

Its particulate matter rating is 423.

It is followed by New Delhi and Kathmandu with particulate matter ratings of 229 and 178, respectively.

Quick Fact: Air Quality Index is calculated based on five major air pollutants— ground level ozone, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter.

5) Miscellaneous

Mysterious monoliths appear in Utah and Romania

Monoliths are large single-standing blocks of stone.

Utah is a remote desert in the USA in which the first recent 9.5 feet tall monolith was found.

After its sudden disappearance, a second taller monolith has been found in Romania.

4th December

1) India and the World

World Malaria Report 2020 released by WHO

The report gives estimated cases of malaria across the globe.

India is the only endemic nation which has reported a decline of 17.6% in 2019 compared to 2018 in the active cases of malaria.

India contributed to the largest drop in cases region-wide from approximately 20 million to about 6 million.

Quick Fact: National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination (2017-22) was launched by the Health Ministry in July 2017.

2) International Affairs

UK approves 'Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19' vaccine for use

The United Kingdom has approved the 'Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19' vaccine which will be available to use starting next week.

Medicines and Healthcare products, a British regulator, has declared that this vaccine offers up to 95% protection and is safe to be used as immunisation against COVID-19.

This makes the UK the first country in the world to formally endorse a vaccine against COVID-19.

3) National Affairs

West Bengal Government launches 'Duare Sarkar' campaign

The campaign has been launched by West Bengal CM Mamta Banerjee.

The Duare Sarkar campaign aims to spread awareness about 11 state-run welfare schemes and its benefits.

The programme will be conducted for two months in four phases bringing the government services at people's doorstep.

4) India and The World

ADB signs Digital Public Finance Reform agreement with India

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a \$50 million policy-based loan agreement with India to improve financial and operational management efficiencies.

The project agreement will help in achieving fiscal savings and promote informed decision making.

As part of this agreement, a Centre for Fiscal Policy and Public Finance and a web-based grievance redressal system will be set up.

Quick Fact: The Asian Development Bank was established in 1966.

5) Person in News

MDH Owner 'Mahashay' Dharampal Gulati passes away

Born in Sialkot on March 27, 1923, Mahashay had moved to India after partition and set up business in Delhi.

Gulati was awarded Padma Bhushan, the country's third-highest civilian award in 2019.

Gulati was undergoing treatment at Mata Chanan Devi Hospital in Delhi where he breathed his last at the age of 97.

Quick Fact: The full form of MDH is 'Mahashian Di Hatti'.

6) Economy

Airtel buys 4.9% stake in Bharti Infratel

Airtel has acquired an additional stake of 133 million shares through Nettle Infrastructure Investments Ltd in tower company Bharti Infratel for 2,882.32 crores.

The stake was acquired from private equity firm Providence Equity Partners

Airtel's investment suggests that it expects Vodafone Idea to survive even if it has a lower market share.

Quick Fact: Sunil Bharti Mittal founded Bharti Airtel on 7 July, 1995.

7) Economy

Lucknow Municipal Corporation bond listed by UP at Bombay Stock Exchange

Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath listed the 200 crore Lucknow Municipal Corporation bond at the Bombay Stock Exchange.

The municipal bond offers 8.5% interest per annum with a tenure of 10 years.

Lucknow becomes 9th city in India to have raised municipal bonds.

8) Person in News

Lt. General Rajeev Chaudhry appointed as Director General Border Roads (DGBR)

Lt. General Rajeev Chaudhary succeeded Harpal Singh as the 27th DGBR.

He was holding the position of ADG LW&G in QMG's Branch at Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defense before assuming charge as DGBR.

He conducted the first-ever Engineer Brigade exercise with the US Engineer Brigade as part of EX YUDH ABHYAS.

5th December

1) Art and Culture

Ninth edition of International Sand Art Festival kicks-off in Odisha

The ninth edition of the International Sand Art Festival has started at the Chandrabhaga Beach of Konark in Odisha's Puri district.

Artists create sculptures based on relevant themes like environment, culture, national and international affairs.

The main themes of the sculptures this year are 'Environment' and 'COVID-19'.

Quick Fact: Sudarsan Pattnaik is a world-renowned sand artist and Padmashree awardee.

2) India and the World

India signs MoU with USA for Intellectual Property Cooperation

India and the US have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Intellectual Property Cooperation.

The agreement between the DPIIT and USPTO aims to facilitate the exchange and dissemination of best practises, experiences and knowledge on IP between the two countries.

The MoU was signed virtually by DPIIT Secretary Dr Guruprasad Mohapatra and USPTO Director Andrei Iancu.

Quick Fact: The full form of DPIIT is 'Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade'

3) Person in News

Olympic Gold medallist Rafer Johnson passes away

Rafer Lewis Johnson, an american decathlete and film actor breathed his last in California, LA at the age of 86.

Johnson was the first Black Captain of a United States Olympic team in the 1960 Rome Olympics and won a decathlon gold that year.

Johnson earned the AAU James E. Sullivan Award as the most outstanding amateur athlete in the US following his achievement in the 1960 Rome Olympics.

4) Person in News

Roshni Nadar tops Kotak Wealth-Hurun wealthy women list 2020

Chairperson of HCL Tech Roshni Nadar Malhotra has topped the list of wealthiest women in India released in the 2nd edition of the report.

The report is prepared by Kotak Wealth Management and Hurun India to understand wealth creation among Indian women and celebrate their success.

The list features top 100 entrepreneurs, professionals and businesswomen in India with the average wealth of women on the list being 2,725 crore.

Quick Fact: Uday Kotak is the Founder and CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank.

5) National Affairs

Ministry of AYUSH to develop Nisarg Gram campus at Pune

Ministry of AYUSH is prepared to develop Nisarg Gram Campus at Pune as the 21st Century abode of Naturopathy.

The development aims to invoke recollections of Mahatma Gandhi's famous Nature Cure campaign of 1946.

The campus will be established in the National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN), Pune and will be incorporated with many novelties and innovations as per the curriculum of Naturopathy.

Quick facts: The full form of AYUSH in the Ministry of AYUSH is 'Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy'.

6) Science and Technology

Government launches AI & Robotics Technologies Park (ARTPARK) in Bengaluru

The AI & Robotics Tech Park (ARTPARK) is launched in Bengaluru to promote technology innovations in AI & Robotics leading to societal impact.

ARTPARK is a unique not-for-profit foundation established by IISc, Bengaluru with support from AI Foundry as a public-private model.

The DST funded 170 crore to the ARTPARK foundation under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber- Physical Systems (NM-ICPS).

Quick Fact: The full form of DST is 'Department of Science and Technology'.

7) Person in News

VSSC former Director Dr S Ramakrishnan passes away

ISRO scientist and Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre's (VSSC) former Director Dr S Ramakrishnan died at the age of 70 in Thiruvananthapuram.

Ramakrishnan, a native of Chennai joined VSSC in 1972 and was appointed as the Director from 2013 to 2014.

Ramakrishnan is a recipient of various awards including Padma Shree which was presented to him in the year 2003 for his contributions in areas of science and technology.

Quick Fact: Kailasavadivoo Sivan is the present Director of the ISRO which is Headquartered in Bengaluru.

8) Miscellaneous

Mysterious monolith appears for the third time in California

The monolith appeared at the top of Atascadero's Pine Mountain in California.

The monolith appeared in Utah and Romania prior to its appearance in California.

The monolith is a three-sided obelisk made of stainless steel featuring a height of 10-feet and width of 18 inches.

7th December

1) Person in News

Veteran Indian-origin activist Rashid 'Ram' Salojee passes away

Dr Rashid Ammed Mahmood, a famous Indian-origin activist breathed his last in Lenasia, South Africa at the age of 87.

Salojee was a leading figure in South Africa's Liberation Movement of 1980s which eventually led to the release of Nelson Mandela from prison.

Salojee served as a Member of Parliament, Senator and Member of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature under the president-ship of Nelson Mandela.

Quick Fact: Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was the first black President of South Africa and a Nobel Peace Prize awardee.

2) Science and Technology

IIT Kharagpur develops AI-based system to inspect quality of MSME goods

IIT Kharagpur researchers developed the portable Artificial intelligence based device for automatic inspection of goods manufactured in MSMEs.

The portable device clicks pictures of products and sends feed to the AI-based software for quality control.

The innovation will immensely benefit MSMEs which rely on manual inspection of goods which lacks effectiveness and increases cost of production.

Quick Fact: The full form of MSME is 'Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises'.

3) Sports

New Zealand cricketer Corey Anderson retires from International cricket

Corey Anderson, the 29- year old all rounder quits from International Cricket after his retirement from New Zealand cricket.

Anderson has signed a 3- year contract with Major League Cricket (MLC) T20 in the USA where he will serve in Major and Minor League and coach cricket academies that come under MLC.

Anderson's biggest achievement was his 36-ball 100 against West Indies in January 2014 which was the fastest hundred in ODIs at that time.

Quick Fact: New Zealand's national cricket team is nicknamed the Black Caps.

4) Summits and Conferences

India-Mongolia Joint Committee on Cooperation held virtually

The seventh meeting of the India-Mongolia Joint Committee on Cooperation was held virtually to focus on strengthening bilateral relations.

External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr S Jaishankar and Chief Cabinet Secretary of Mongolia L Oyun-Erdene headed the meeting wherein the two ministers held comprehensive discussions on a range of issues.

India welcomed the decision of Mongolia to join the ISA promoting use of clean energy and the two sides agreed to establish AYUSH Information Cell in Ulaanbaatar.

Quick Fact: The full form of ISA is 'International Solar Alliance'.

5) Miscellaneous

'Swarnim Sewa' launched at Hyderabad International Airport

Central Industrial Security forces (CISF) in collaboration with GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd. (GHIAL) has commenced 'Swarnim Sewa' at Hyderabad International Airport.

The service was launched by Chief Guest Aditya Mehta and Special Guest Pradeep Panicker in presence of other top officials.

Swarnim Sewa is a unique platform which would provide special service to passengers in need of help at the airport wherein a team of CISF personnel has been deployed to actively help out the passengers.

Quick Fact: Aditya Mehta is a renowned para-cyclist and founder of Aditya Mehta Foundation (AMF).

6) Defense

Government approves creation of New Deputy Chief of Strategy

The government sanction letter for the creation of the new Deputy Chief of Strategy came as a plan first envisaged during the India- China doklam crisis back in 2017.

Lt. General Paramjit Singh will be the first officer to assume charge as the Deputy Chief of Strategy.

The new office of the third deputy chief in the army would be incharge of military intelligence and military operations and reduce the burden on the Vice Chief of Army.

7) Defense

PASSEX conducted by Indian Navy and Russian Navy

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

Indian Navy is being represented by indigenously built guided- missile frigate Shivalik and anti-submarine corvette Kadmat along with integral helicopters.

The exercise aims to enhance interoperability, improve understanding and imbibe best practices between both the friendly nations.

Quick Fact: The President of India is the Supreme commander of the Indian Navy.

8) Economy

Axis Bank launches 'Axis Bank Rupifi Business Credit Card' for MSMEs

Axis Bank Ltd. in partnership with Rupifi and Visa launched the 'Axis Bank Rupifi Business Credit Card' for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

The contactless Co- branded credit card powered by Visa is applicable only to MSMEs businesses that transact on the aggregator platforms partnered with Rupifi PAN India.

The average credit limit offered by the card will be between the range of 1 Lakh and 2 Lakh per month.

Quick Fact: Axis Bank Tagline is “Badhti ka naam Zindagi”.

8th December

1) Summits & Conferences

The Second Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) 2020 Conference inaugurated

The Second Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) 2020 was virtually inaugurated in Delhi by Dr Harsh Vardhan.

The Conference brings together scientists and clinicians from across the globe to build Indian Cancer Genome Atlas (ICGA)

The ICGA aims to make cancer treatment affordable and accessible in India.

Quick Fact: Dr Harsh Vardhan is the Minister of Science and Technology and the Vice President of Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

2) Person in News

Adar Poonawalla among the 6 ‘Asians of the Year 2020’ named by The Straits Times

Serum Institute of India (SII) CEO Adar Poonawalla is among the six people named ‘Asian of the Year 2020’ by Singapore’s leading daily ‘The Strait Times’.

The accolade came as a result of SII’s work in fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic

SII had collaborated with the University of Oxford and the British-Swedish pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca for making the COVID-19 vaccine “Covidshield”.

Quick Fact: The Serum Institute of India (SII) was founded by Cyrus S. Poonawalla in 1966 and is headquartered in Pune.

3) Miscellaneous

Hyderabad’s Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan wins the National Cryptic Crossword Contest 2020 (CCC)

Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, Hyderabad won the grand finale of the 8th edition of the annual National inter-school Cryptic Crossword Contest (CCCC).

V Krishna Sai Gayatri and Nellore Dharshita represented their school in the National CCCC.

Patna-based civil society initiative 'Extra-C' conducted the annual CCCC 2020 where more than 1,500 schools across 110 cities and towns of the country took part in the National contest.

4) Sports

Virat Kohli becomes the first Indian skipper to win T20 series in all SENA countries

Indian cricketer and the current Captain of Indian National team, Virat Kohli becomes the first Indian skipper to win a T20 series in all SENA countries.

Under Kohli's leadership, India began 2020 with a 2-0 win over Sri Lanka followed by the grueling defeat of New Zealand by 5-0.

Kohli became the first Indian captain and the second overall after South Africa's Faf Du Plessis to register series wins in all three formats of cricket in Australia.

Quick Fact: Virat Kohli received the 'Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna', India's highest sporting honour from President Ram Nath Kovind in September 2018.

5) Person in News

Jehan Daruvala becomes first Indian to win a Formula 2 race

Jehan Daruvala became the first Indian to win a Formula 2 race during the Sakhir Grand Prix.

The 22-year-old Indian Formula driver emerged on the top in the Formula 2 race against a thrilling battle with F2 champions Mick Schumacher and Daniel Ticktum.

Jehan driving for Rayo Racing had a good launch from second on the grid and finally took the chequered flag to win his maiden FIA Formula 2 race.

Quick Fact: The full form of FIA is 'Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile'.

6) Economy

PSL acquires Wendell Rodricks label

Mumbai-based luxury fashion house, Purple Style Labs (PSL) has acquired the resort wear label Wendell Rodricks.

The merger will help Wendell Rodricks to scale the resort wear label to leverage ecommerce and its flagship stores.

Prior to this, Purple Style Labs had acquired multi-brand luxury wear marketplace Pernia's Pop Up Shop to expand their business across all modes of retail channels.

Quick Fact: Purple Style Labs was founded by Abhishek Agarwal in 2015.

7) Science and Technology

‘Pixxel’ signs pact with ISRO to launch its first remote-sensing satellite

Space technology start-up ‘Pixxel’ signs pact with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to launch its first remote-sensing satellite on ISRO’s PSLV rocket in early 2021.

‘Pixxel’ has signed an agreement with DOS’s NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) under the newly proposed IN-SPACe entity for this launch and to maximise the benefits of space assets for India.

The first-of-a kind private earth-observation mission will help provide solutions to many environmental and agricultural issues.

Quick Fact: Awais Ahmed is the CEO of Bengaluru-based firm ‘Pixxel’.

8) National Affairs

Ministry of AYUSH to set up AYUSH Export Promotion Council to boost exports

The Ministry of AYUSH and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry have decided to set up AYUSH Export Promotion Council (AEPC) to boost AYUSH exports.

The decision was taken at a virtual review meeting of AYUSH trade by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and AYUSH minister Shripad Naik.

Attended by nearly 50 industry and trade leaders and 2000 stake-holders from the AYUSH sector it was decided that the entire AYUSH sector will work together to achieve price and quality competitiveness to boost exports.

9th December

1) Miscellaneous

Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Nestle named top plastic polluters for third year in a row

Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Nestle have been accused of zero progress on reducing plastic waste after being named world's top plastic polluter for the third year in a row.

Coca-Cola was ranked the world's No 1 plastic polluter by 'Break Free From Plastic' in its annual audit where Coca-Cola branding was found on 13,834 pieces of plastic followed by PepsiCo branding on 5,155 and Nestle branding on 8,633.

The annual audit was carried out by 15,000 volunteers around the world in which they collected 346,494 pieces of plastic waste, 63% of which was marked by consumer brands.

Quick Fact: Asa Griggs Candler is the founder of Coca-Cola.

2) Miscellaneous

Breakdancing gets Olympic status to debut at Paris Games in 2024

Breakdancing, the urban street dance form created in the Bronx will become a gold-medal sport starting in the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) introduced the dance form to the Summer Olympics which would be officially called "Breaking" to attract younger audiences and be more gender biased.

The 2024 "Breaking" competition will be held at Place de la Concorde in downtown Paris.

Quick Fact: The motto of the 2024 Summer Olympics is 'Made for sharing'.

3) India and the World

Invest India wins 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Awards

UNCTAD has declared 'Invest India' as winner of 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award among 180 agencies around the world.

Invest India, the National Investment Promotion Agency of India was presented the award to celebrate and highlight its good practises followed as a response to COVID-19 pandemic.

The United Nations Investment Promotion Award is the most coveted award for Investment Promotion Agencies and it identifies best practices globally.

Quick Fact: The full form of UNCTAD is 'United Nations Conference on Trade and Development'

4) National Affairs

ICAR wins FAO's 2020 King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award

Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) has won the prestigious International King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award (WSDA) 2020 conferred by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

The prestigious global award was conferred to ICAR for its commitment to raising awareness on the importance of healthy soils and addressing soil erosion under the motto 'Stop soil erosion, save our future' which was taken in 2019.

The Global Soil Partnership (GSP) supported by the Kingdom of Thailand gives the WSDA which comes in the form of a medal, USD 15,000 cheque and a trip to Thailand.

Quick Fact: The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is headquartered in Rome, Italy and its motto is "Let there be bread".

5) Economy

ICICI Bank launches iMobile Pay offering Payments and Banking services for all

ICICI Bank launches the iMobile Pay app enabling customers of all banks to download and experience the quick transactions backed by best-in-class security features.

The payment app allows customers to scan a QR code of any payments app and send money to any UPI ID, bank account, self instantly without any cost.

The app also allows customers to open an ICICI Banks Savings account digitally, apply for a credit card at zero joining fee and get instant approval for home and personal loans.

Quick Fact: Sandeep Bakhshi is the MD & CEO of Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI) Bank.

6) Economy

Kotak Mutual Fund launches India's First International REIT Fund of Funds

Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company (Kotak Mutual Fund) has rolled out India's first diversified REIT (Real Estate Invest Trust) named Kotak International REIT Fund of Funds.

Kotak International Fund of Funds offers an opportunity for domestic investors to invest and benefit from growth in the real estate market without actually owning the entire asset.

The scheme will invest in units of 'SMAM Asia REIT Sub Trust Fund', one of the largest Asia Pacific REIT funds investing in listed REITs in the Asia Pacific region.

Quick Fact: Nilesh Shah is the MD & CEO of Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company,

7) Person in News

Indian-origin Anil Soni appointed as CEO of WHO Foundation

World Health Organisation (WHO) has appointed Indian-origin Anil Soni as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the WHO Foundation.

WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus described Soni as a proven innovator in global health who spent two decades in service of communities affected by HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

Soni will assume the role on January 1, 2020 and will accelerate the WHO's work to invest in innovative, evidence-based initiatives that support WHO's mission of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all.

Quick Fact: WHO was founded on April 7, 1948 and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

8) Economy

Cisco agrees to buy UK cloud company

Cisco Systems Inc. has agreed to buy U.K. customer service software maker 'IMImobile Plc' in a deal valued at about 543 million pounds.

The agreement aims to enhance tools to help companies keep track of and improvement of interaction with users.

The deal is Cisco's largest U.K. acquisition in about three years and it seeks to push further into automation to improve the way their customers reach out to their end-users and to make their services more effective.

Quick Fact: 'Cisco Systems' was founded in 1984 by Leonard Bosack and Sandy Lerner.

10th December

1) National Affairs

Government introduces 'CO-WIN' for COVID-19 vaccine delivery

The central government has introduced a new digital platform called 'CO-WIN' for COVID-19 vaccine delivery.

The platform will be used to record vaccine data and will form a database of healthcare workers as well.

The platform will have different modules starting from registration to verification and the beneficiary acknowledgement module would send SMS to beneficiaries and also generate QR-based certificates post vaccination.

2) Sports

Sergio Perez wins Sakhir Grand Prix 2020

Mercedes racer Sergio Perez from Mexico has won the 2020 Sakhir Grand Prix at Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir, Bahrain.

This was the 1st Formula 1 victory for Perez who also became the first Mexican victor in F1 since Pedro Rodriguez in 1970.

The race was the 16th race of the 2020 Formula One World Championship.

Quick Fact: The first Formula 1 race was the 1946 Turin Grand Prix which was held at Valentino Park, Turin, Italy.

3) National Affairs

SJVN signs MoU with IREDA for Green Energy Projects

SJVN Ltd signs MoU with Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) for Green Energy projects through virtual mode.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will assist SJVN in developing an action plan to create and acquire Renewable Energy projects for the next 5 years.

The MoU was signed by Nand Lal Sharma, CMD, SJVN and Pradip Kumar Das, CMD, IREDA through virtual mode and aims to reach the renewable energy target of 175 GW by 2022.

4) National Affairs

NTPC inks MoU with IIFM-Bhopal for Narmada Landscape Restoration Project

NTPC has signed an MoU with Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal for the implementation of Narmada Landscape Restoration Project.

IIFM, Bhopal an autonomous body under MOEF&CC with grant-in-aid from NTPC Ltd. and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will jointly implement the 4-year project with Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI).

The project aims to establish an incentivisation mechanism that can continue to support riparian forests and farm communities of the Narmada basin to maintain sustainable landscape practices while positively impacting water quality in Narmada tributaries.

Quick Fact: The full form of MOEF&CC is 'Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change'.

5) Sports

Sports Minister Kiren Rijju launches 2nd edition of Fit India Cyclothon

Sports Minister Kiren Rijju has launched the 2nd edition of Fit India Cyclothon virtually.

The mega cycling event will run for 25 days till 31st december.

The event will be held across the country in each district and citizens can participate by registering on Fit India website, cycle daily a distance of their choice and share images on social media.

Quick Fact: Fit India Movement was founded by Suparno Satpathy on 29 August, 2019.

6) National Affairs

AYUSH Ministry and AIIMS set up Department of Integrative Medicine & Research at AIIMS

The Ministry of AYUSH and AIIMS have decided to initiate work on setting up a Department of Integrative Medicine and Research at AIIMS.

The decision was taken by Secretary of AYUSH, Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha and Director of AIIMS, Dr. Randeep Guleria.

The Centre for Integrative Medicine and Research CIMR may develop an integrated protocol with Ayurveda and Yoga for study on Post COVID treatment.

Quick Fact: The Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH) was founded on 9 November, 2014.

7) Person in News

Nirmala Sitharaman in Forbes 2020 list of 100 most powerful women

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has secured the 41st spot in the Forbes 2020 list of 100 most powerful women in the world.

The list has been topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel for the 10th year in a row.

US Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, Biocon founder Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and HCL Enterprise CEO Roshni Nadar Malhotra have also been named among the 17th annual list of world's 100 most powerful women by Forbes.

Quick Fact: Kamala Harris is the first woman, first Black American and the first Asian-American to be elected Vice President of the USA.

8) Economy

5paise.com partners with Vested Finance

India's only listed discount broker 5paise.com has partnered with Vested Finance to provide 'zero commission' investing in the US markets for their customers.

Vested Finance is a US Securities and Exchange Commission Registered Investment Adviser that enables investors from India to invest in US stocks and ETFs.

The partnership will allow customers from India to invest and benefit from global markets without being charged any commission for any trade.

11th December

1) National Affairs

Union Ministry of Education releases 'Policy on School Bag 2020'

Union Ministry of Education releases new 'Policy on School Bag 2020' and recommends that the weight of school bags need to be monitored on a regular basis in schools.

According to the policy, school bags should not weigh more than 10% of the body weight of students across classes I to X and there should be no homework till class II.

The policy made 11 recommendations on the weight of the bags, including adequate mid-day meal and potable water to all students.

Quick Fact: Ramesh Pokhriyal is the current Union Minister of Education.

2) Science and Technology

HAL-IISc Skill Development Centre launches its first training programme

HAL-IISc Skill Development Centre in Challakere of Chitradurga district, Karnataka has launched its first training programme offering 5 Courses in virtual mode.

The programmes offered under the training programme are in the niche engineering areas of Aerospace, Mechanical, Electrical and Electronic sectors and in line with the "Make in India" mission.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had formally inaugurated the Skill Development Centre in Challakere on August 13, 2020 and is established in IISc's campus over 75000 sq. feet.

Quick Fact: Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) was founded by Walchand Hirachand in 1940.

3) India and the World

PwC India partners with UNICEF and YuWaah to upskill youth in India

Consulting firm PwC India has collaborated with UNICEF and YuWaah to upskill 300 million young Indians over the next 10 years.

The three-year strategic collaboration aims to bridge the digital gap in education and provide the youth with socio-economic opportunities to navigate education & career trajectories.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), India is staring at a 29 million skill deficit by 2030.

Quick Fact: The full form of UNICEF is 'United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund'.

4) Sports

Former Italy Footballer Paolo Rossi passes away

Paolo Rossi, the footballer who helped Italy win the 1982 World Cup breathed his last at the age of 64.

Paolo Rossi won two Series A titles, a European Cup and a Coppa Italia with Juventus while his most memorable achievement was lighting up the 1982 World Cup in Spain with six goals.

Rossi was awarded the 'Ballon d'Or' in 1982.

Quick Fact: The Italy National football team is nicknamed 'Gli Azzurri' (the Blues).

5) Person in News

Contemporary Indian dancer Astad Deboo passes away

Contemporary Indian Dancer Astad Deboo known for amalgamating Indian and Western dance techniques breathed his last at the age of 73.

With a dance career spanning half a century, Deboo employed his training in Indian classical dance forms of Kathak and Kathakali to create a unique fusion dance form.

In 2002, Deboo founded the 'Astad Deboo Dance Foundation' which provided training to marginalised sections including the differently-abled.

Quick Fact: Astad Deboo was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth-highest civilian award, in 2007.

6) Economy

Bank of Baroda launches 'Atma Nirbhar Women Gold Scheme'

Bank of Baroda (BoB) has recently launched the 'Atma Nirbhar Women Gold Scheme' as part of its Baroda Gold Loan.

The scheme meant to help women to be self-reliant is offering 0.50% concession for a retail loan and 0.25% concession for agri-gold loan.

The scheme was launched at BoB's Ramamurthy Nagar branch in Bengaluru.

Quick Fact: Bank of Baroda is headquartered at Vadodara, Gujarat, India.

7) Economy

'Namura' predicts India to be the fastest growing Asian economy in Financial Year 2021

Japanese research and brokerage house 'Namura' has projected India to be the fastest growing Asian economy in 2021.

Namura has estimated the GDP growth of India for the calendar year 2021 (CY21) at 9.9%.

The factors supporting the positive outlook are-Lag effect of easy financial conditions, Synchronised Global recovery and Vaccine Pivot point.

8) National Affairs

PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate 'Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas' Convention in January 2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 'Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas' Convention on 9th January 2021.

The convention will be held in virtual format where President Ram Nath Kovind will deliver the Valedictory address to the diaspora.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards and the winners of 'Bharat ko Janiye' Quiz will be announced in the inaugural virtual session.

Quick Fact: The website for the 16th 'Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas 2021' was inaugurated by V. Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs.

12th December

1) Science and Technology

BSNL ties up with Skylotech India for satellite-based NB-IoT

BSNL has partnered with Skylotech India to introduce worlds' first satellite-based Narrow Band-Internet of Things(NB-IoT) network in India.

This 'Made in India' solution indigenously developed by Skylo will connect with BSNLs satellite-ground infrastructure and provide PAN-India coverage.

This is the world's first satellite-based NB-IoT network and would help provide critical data for the logistics sector to enable effective distribution of COVID-19 vaccine.

Quick Fact: Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) was founded on 1 October, 2000.

2) Art & Culture

Ladakh Lieutenant Governor virtually inaugurates 2nd edition of Ladakh Literature Festival 2020

Ladakh Lieutenant Governor RK Mathur virtually inaugurated the second edition of Ladakh Literature Festival 2020 in Leh.

The three-day festival will host a series of sessions including discussions involving importance of region, folk music, cultural dance, geology and several interesting topics.

Lieutenant Governor Mathur urged students to participate in the festival to develop a sense of cultural rootedness and identity.

3) Person in News

Sonu Sood tops UK's '50 Asians Celebrities in the World' list 2020

Bollywood star Sonu Sood has topped the '50 Asians Celebrities in the World' 2020 list.

The first-of-a-kind list released by UK-based weekly newspaper 'Eastern Eye' celebrates artists who made a positive impact with their actions and were uniquely-inspiring.

Sonu Sood came out to the rescue of thousands of people in distress throughout the coronavirus pandemic from helping migrant workers to donating food and helping students to reach their home.

Quick Fact: Sonu Sood was awarded the prestigious 'SDG Special Humanitarian Action Award' by the UNDP in 2020.

4) Summits and Conferences

India and Uzbekistan hold first bilateral virtual summit

Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi and President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev participated in the first bilateral virtual summit.

India and Uzbekistan have signed nine agreements and MoUs in various areas including Solar Energy, Digital Tech and HICDP.

PM Modi said that both the nations have similar concerns about Extremism, Fundamentalism and Separatism and that both nations oppose terrorism.

5) Summits and Conferences

Defense Minister addresses ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting plus virtually

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh attended the 14th ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting plus (ADMM-Plus) organised virtually at Hanoi, Vietnam.

ADMM Plus is an annual meeting of the defense ministers of 10 ASEAN countries & eight partner countries to promote dialogue and engagement towards cooperative security order in Asia.

A special commemorative 10th Anniversary of the ADMM Plus forum was celebrated and attended by the Prime Minister of Vietnam, Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

6) Sports

Indian Ocean Island Games 2023 to be hosted by Madagascar

The 11th edition of Indian Ocean Island Games (IOIG) 2023 to be hosted by Madagascar due to concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic.

Maldives was supposed to host the IOIG 2023 but members of the Indian Ocean Island Games Federation voted to move the game to Madagascar.

Over 2,000 athletes, from 7 countries, will participate in the 2023 Indian Ocean Island Games.

Quick Fact: The Indian Ocean Island Games was created by the International Olympic Committee in 1977.

7) Government Schemes

Union Cabinet approves 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana'

The Union Cabinet has approved 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana' (ARBY) to boost employment in the formal sector.

ARBY will incentivize the creation of new employment opportunities under Atmanirbhar Bharat Package 3.0

The cabinet has approved expenditure of 22,810 crores for the entire scheme period of three-years from 2020 to 2023.

8) Economy

SBI General Insurance partners with Mahindra Insurance

SBI General Insurance had partnered with Mahindra Insurance brokers through Sajhedari programme.

The programme is designed to identify, train and certify Point of Sales Persons (POSPs) for insurance distribution and to enable deeper insurance penetration

SBI and Mahindra are already associated with each other to provide insurance for new cars, commercial vehicles, tractors and used cars.

Quick Fact: The State Bank of India (SBI) is the 43rd largest Bank in the world headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

14th December

1) Person in News

Joe Biden and Kamala Harris jointly named TIME's Person of the Year 2020

US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris have been jointly named Time's Person of the Year 2020

TIME Magazine releases the list annually to recognize a person or organisation who affected the news or impacted the world in the span of the whole calendar year.

TIME Magazine also named the Korean Pop group BTS as 'Entertainer of the Year' and basketball star LeBron James as 'Athlete of the Year'.

Quick Fact: The TIME magazine was first published in New York City on March 3, 1923.

2) Economy

Asian Development Bank (ADB) launches APVAX for developing countries

Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) has launched an initiative called the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX) for developing countries.

ADB has allocated USD 9 billion for the APVAX initiative.

APVAX would offer rapid and equitable support to countries who need financing to procure vaccines and offer appropriate knowledge to efficiently manage and deliver COVID-19 vaccines.

3) Summits and Conferences

5th edition of India Water Impact Summit kicks-off virtually

The 5th edition of India Water Impact Summit (IWIS) kicks-off virtually and was inaugurated by Ratan Lal Kataria.

IWIS 2020 has been organised by the 'National Mission for Clean Ganga' (NMCG) and the 'Centre for Ganga River Basin Management & Studies' (cGanga).

The theme of IWIS 2020 is 'Arth Ganga: River Conservation Synchronised Development'.

4) National Affairs

Lakshadweep becomes India's first UT to be declared 100% organic

The Ministry of Agriculture has declared Lakshadweep as India's first Union Territory to become 100% organic.

All farming activity in the Union Territory is carried out without the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides which provides access to safer food choices.

Lakshadweep is second to Sikkim, which was the first state in India to be declared completely organic.

Quick Fact: Kavaratti is the capital of Lakshadweep.

5) Science and Technology

India's launch vehicle PSLV-C50 to launch satellite CMS-01

The launch of communication satellite CMS-01 onboard the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)-C50 is scheduled on December 17, 2020 from SDSC-SHAR, Sriharikota..

CMS-01 is a communication satellite envisaged for providing services in Extended-C Band of frequency spectrum.

CMS-01 is the 42nd Communication satellite of India & its coverage will include India, Andaman & Nicobar & Lakshadweep Islands.

Quick Fact: Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) was formerly called Sriharikota Range (SHAR).

6) International Affairs

AstraZeneca partners with RDIF and R-Pharm

British Firm AstraZeneca has partnered with Russia's Gamaleya research Institute, Russian Investment Fund (RDIF) and R-Pharm to conduct clinical trials for vaccines.

The clinical trials will assess the safety and immunogenicity of a combination of their respective adenovirus-vector vaccines AZD1222 & Sputnik V.

Serum Institute will contract manufacturing up to a billion doses of AstraZeneca's vaccine AZD1222 named 'Covidshield' while Hetero BioPharma Ltd will manufacture million doses of Sputnik V.

Quick Fact: Pfizer's mRNA is the world's first COVID-19 vaccine to receive regulatory approval from UK Medicines and MHRA.

7) National Affairs

UGC and AICTE to be merged in 2021

The Union Government will merge all the higher education regulators including University Grants Commission (UGC) & All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) in 2021.

Several reforms in the educational sector will happen in 2021 including the merger of education regulators and introduction of a single entrance test for admission into all central universities.

Amit Khare, Higher Education secretary announced at the FICCI annual convention that a single Higher Education Commission of India will be established.

8) Miscellaneous

IUCN lists 31 species as 'Extinct'

The International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species has declared 31 animal and plant species extinct.

The extinction includes South China sea's sharks, amazonian dolphins and amphibians which were caused due to overharvesting and destructive fishing methods.

In addition, at least 35,765 species are threatened with extinction including all the species of freshwater dolphins in the world.

15th December

1) Sports

Max Verstappen wins 2020 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix

Red Bull's racer Max Verstappen (Netherlands) won the Formula 1 season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2020 which was hosted in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Max crossed the finish line 15.9 seconds ahead of Mercedes pair Valtteri Bottas and Lewis Hamilton securing the third position in overall ranking of F1 2020

The race was Max's second victory of the Formula 1 season and the 10th victory of his international racing career.

Quick Fact: Max Emilian Verstappen became the youngest driver in history to compete at the age of 17 at the 2015 Australian Grand Prix.

2) Miscellaneous

UNESCO to launch an international prize in the field of 'creative economy'

UNESCO has decided to launch an international prize in the field of 'creative economy' in the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The prize starting from November 2021 will feature a cash prize of USD 50,000 and would be given once every two years for global economic initiatives of the youth.

UNESCO has declared the year 2021 as 'International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development'

Quick Fact: UNESCO is headquartered in Paris, France.

3) National Affairs

NITI Aayog releases 'Vision 2035-Public Health Surveillance in India'

NITI Aayog released a white paper: 'Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India' with the vision to make India's public health surveillance more responsive & predictive.

The white paper was released by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Dr. Rajiv Kumar and CEO Amitabh Kant.

The white paper lays out India's vision 2035 for public health surveillance through integration of a 3-tiered public health system into Ayushman Bharat.

Quick Fact: PM Narendra Modi is the Chairperson of National Institute for Transforming India (NITI Aayog).

4) Summits and Conferences

Climate Ambition Summit 2020 held virtually

The Climate Ambition Summit 2020 held virtually was addressed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

The summit was co-hosted by the United Nations, United Kingdom and France.

The summit marked 5 years of the adoption of the Paris Agreement and is a major step to the next UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26).

Quick fact: The UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) will be hosted by the United Kingdom in 2021.

5) Government Schemes

Programme of socio-economic profiling of PM SVANidhi beneficiaries launched

Secretary of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MHUA) Durga Shanker Mishra launched the programme of socio-economic profiling of PM SVANidhi beneficiaries and their families.

Under this, benefits of various Central Schemes would be extended to the beneficiaries and their family for holistic socio-economic upliftment,

MHUA implemented PM SVANidhi Scheme from 1st June 2020 with an objective to provide affordable capital loan upto 10,000 to street vendors adversely affected by COVID-19.

Quick Fact: the full form of PM SVANidhi is 'Prime Minister Street Vendors AtmaNirbhar Nidhi'.

6) International Affairs

Bangladesh observes 'Martyred Intellectuals Day' to mark brutality by Pakistan forces

Bangladesh observed the 'Martyred Intellectual Day' to mark the brutality when Pakistan forces killed hundreds of intellectuals in Dhaka in 1971.

Pakistan occupation forces with the help of local collaborators went on a torture & killing spree of the most prominent intellectuals of Bangladesh on 14 December, 1971.

President of Bangladesh Abdul Hamid and PM Sheikh Hasina paid tribute to the martyred intellectuals at the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in Dhaka.

7) India & the World

5th edition of India-Myanmar bilateral meeting on Drug Control Cooperation held

NCB, India and the Central Committee on Drug Abuse Control, Myanmar conducted the 5th edition of the India-Myanmar Bilateral meeting on Drug Control Cooperation.

Director-General of NCB, Rakesh Asthana and Commander of Drug Enforcement Division (DED), Pol. Brig. Gen. Win Naing led the Indian & Myanmar's delegation.

India & Myanmar agreed on the exchange of intelligence in a timely manner to conduct follow-up investigations in drug seizure cases.

Quick Fact: The full form of NCB is 'Narcotics Control Bureau'.

8) Economy

BSE launches e-agricultural spot market platform 'BEAM'

Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) Ltd. has launched an e-spot platform 'BSE E-Agricultural Markets Ltd (BEAM)' for agricultural commodities.

The platform aims to boost the competitiveness of the Indian agricultural market by enhancing the strength of BSE in financial markets.

The BEAM platform would help farmers in one state to reach out to markets in other states and auction their produce.

Quick Fact: BSE is Asia's first & world's fastest Stock Exchange with a speed of 6 microseconds

16th December

1) National Affairs

UNESCO Delhi releases State of the Education Report for India 2020: TVET

UNESCO New Delhi has released 'State of the Education Report for India 2020: Technical & Vocational Education and Training (TVET)' virtually.

The 2nd edition of the Report aims to enhance the programs related to skill development in India.

The report has been developed by researchers from Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai under guidance of UNESCO New Delhi.

Quick Fact: UNESCO is headquartered in Paris, France.

2) Person in News

Aerospace Scientist Roddam Narasimha passes away

Renowned Aerospace Scientist and Padma Vibhushan awardee Roddam Narasimha breathed his last at the age of 87.

Roddam was the Director of National Aerospace Laboratories & held various positions at IISc, Bangalore.

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam and Professor Narasimha had together authored a book titled "Developments in Fluid Mechanics and Space Technology".

3) Sports

Odisha to host 2023 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has announced that the 2023 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup will be hosted in Odisha for a second consecutive time.

The tournament will be held at two venues, Kalinga stadium in Bhubaneswar and Biju Patnaik Hockey Stadium in Rourkela.

The 2023 tournament will be the 15th edition of Men's FIH Hockey World Cup.

Quick Fact: Naveen Patnaik is the Chief Minister of Odisha.

4) Defense and Security

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

'Himgiri' is the first of the three Project 17A ships being built at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE), Kolkata.

A total of 7 ships are being built under the Project 17A, four at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. (MDL) and three ships at GRSE.

P17A ships are the first gas turbine propulsion and largest combat platforms with enhanced stealth features & advanced weapons ever built at GRSE.

5) Art and Culture

Ladakh celebrates New Year 'Losar'

People in Ladakh region are celebrating Ladakhi New Year 'Losar' in the last 15 days of the year.

Symbolic Losar celebrations and special prayers are held at Chokanga Vihara in Leh where Traditional Flag 'Tarchen' was hoisted to mark the beginning of New Year.

Ladakh Buddhist Association's Youth Wing and Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh jointly organised symbolic events at Chokanga Vihara.

Quick Fact: Jamyang Tsering Namgyal is the youngest and 8th consecutive Chief Executive Councillor of LAHDC, Leh.

6) National Affairs

Department of Posts & India Post Payments Bank unveil payment app 'DakPay'

The Department of Posts and India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) unveiled a new digital payment app 'DakPay' to provide Digital Financial inclusion PAN-India.

'DakPay' is a suite of digital payment apps and assisted banking services provided by India Post and IPPB.

Besides providing access to banking services and postal products, the app offers a unique service where one can order and avail financial services at doorsteps.

7) International Affairs

COVID-19 vaccination drive begins in the US

The first COVID-19 vaccination in the US began recently as the country gears up for its largest ever immunisation campaign.

Sandra Lindsay, an intensive care nurse in New York is the first in the US to get the COVID-19 vaccine after the Food and Drug administration's authorization.

The US vaccination program targets to reach 100 million people by April 2021.

Quick Fact: The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine received emergency-use authorization from Food & Drug Administration.

8) Miscellaneous

Norway research Institute signs MoU with CGM

Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research has signed an MoU with cGanga, a think-tank of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)

The MoU has been signed for the development of a sludge management framework in India.

The MoU was announced at the 5th India Water Impact Summit.

17th December

1) Defense and Security

PM Narendra Modi pays tribute to bravehearts on Vijay Diwas

PM Narendra Modi paid tribute at the National War Memorial on the 50th Anniversary of Vijay Diwas.

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh unveiled the logo for 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' to mark the anniversary of the War.

Vijay Diwas is observed annually to mark the victory of Bangladesh over Pakistan in the 1971 war that led to the creation of Bangladesh.

2) Economy

Edelweiss General Insurance launches new API gateway

Edelweiss General Insurance (EGI) launches new open API gateway, a first of its kind to facilitate complete digital collaboration with business partners.

The API would help EGI's authorised partners to integrate their systems with the company's robust technology platform.

EGI recently launched SWITCH, an app-based motor product that offers savings and convenience together to customers.

Quick fact: The full form of API is 'Application Programming Interface'

3) Economy

Canara Bank launches forex remittance through a new tech product 'FX4U'

Canara Bank has launched forex remittance through internet banking through a new tech product 'FX4U'.

The tech product enables internet banking users to handle forex transactions seamlessly.

The bank plans to bring more products to digital platforms in the future.

Quick Fact: Lingam Venkat Prabhakar is the MD & CEO of Canara Bank Limited.

4) Miscellaneous

UNEP announces 2020 Champions of the Earth Award

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has announced six laureates of the 2020 Champions of the Earth Award, UN's highest environmental honour.

The six laureates are Frank Bainimarama, Yacouba Sawadogo, Nemonte Nenquimo, Dr. Fabian Leendertz, Mindy Lubber, Professor Robert D. Bullard.

The award recognizes outstanding environmental leaders from the public & private sectors for their efforts to heal the planet amid natural & human-made threats.

Quick Fact: UNEP first presented the Champions of the Earth Award in 2005.

5) Person in News

Former Australian Test cricketer all-rounder Eric Freeman passes away

Former Australian Test all-rounder and leading Australian rules footballer Eric "Fritz" Freeman breathed his last at the age of 76.

Freeman received the 'Medal of the Order of Australia' in 2002 for his services to sport.

Freeman made his Test debut against India at the Gabba in 1968 during which he became the first player to hit a six as his opening score.

Quick Fact: Eric Freeman was also a leading Australian rules footballer with 'Port Adelaide Football Club' between 1964 & 1972.

6) Science and Technology

Fiat Chrysler Automobile to set up a Global Digital Hub in Hyderabad

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) has announced an investment of USD 150 million to set up a Global Digital Hub in Hyderabad, Telangana.

The facility will be the FCA's largest digital hub outside of North America and would attract the best digital talent in India.

The digital hub will create nearly 1,00 new cutting-edge technology jobs by the end of 2021.

Quick Fact: The Fiat Chrysler Automobiles is headquartered in London, United Kingdom.

7) Economy

SBI General Insurance partners with IntrCity RailYatri

SBI General Insurance has partnered with IntrCity RailYatra to provide complimentary travel insurance.

The partnership will provide complimentary travel insurance of INR 5 Lakh to bus commuters opting to travel through IntrCity RailYatri.

SBI General Insurance will provide a wide variety of coverage including accidental death, permanent total disability and medical evacuation.

Quick Fact: Prakash Chandra Kandpal is the CEO of SBI General Insurance.

8) Art & Culture

Vice President virtually inaugurates the 'Yours Truly Margazhi' festival in Chennai

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu virtually inaugurated the 'Yours Truly Margazhi' festival in Chennai.

'Yours Truly Margazhi' is an initiative to uphold Chennai's famed tradition of the December dance and music festival.

Around 500 artists from across 100 events participated in the virtual event.

18th December

1) Science and Technology

ISRO sets up Space Situational Awareness Control Centre 'NETRA'

ISRO has set up a dedicated Space Situational Awareness (SSA) Control Centre 'NETRA' at its ISTRAC campus at Peenya, Bangalore.

The ISRO SSA Control Centre was formally inaugurated by Dr. K Sivan, Chairman of ISRO & Secretary of DOS.

The NETwork for space object TRacking and Analysis (NETRA) has been set up to protect Indian Space assets through effective coordination among ISRO and other space agencies.

Quick Fact: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is headquartered in Bengaluru.

2) India and the World

India and World Bank sign agreement to protect India's poor impacted by COVID-19

The Government of India and the World Bank have signed an agreement of USD 400 Million to protect India's poor and vulnerable from the impact of COVID-19.

The agreement was signed by CS Mohapatra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs and Sumila Gulyani, Acting Country Director, India, on behalf of the World Bank.

The agreement is the second operation in a programmatic series of two, the first operation being approved in May 2020 worth USD 750 Million.

Quick Fact: The World Bank is headquartered in Washington D.C., United States.

3) National Affairs

QCI launches recognition scheme for hygiene rating audit agencies

Quality Council of India (QCI) on behest of FSSAI has come out with 'Food Hygiene Rating Scheme' to allow customers to make informed choices pertaining to food outlets.

The scheme is a certification system for food businesses supplying food directly to customers.

The food agencies are rated on a scale of 1 to 5 in the form of smileys based on hygiene and safety conditions observed at the time of audit.

Quick Fact: The full form of FSSAI is 'Food Safety and Standards Authority of India'

4) India and the World

India signs agreement with New Development Bank for Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

India has signed a loan agreement of USD 1 billion with New Development Bank (NDB) to support Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan through MGNREGA Scheme.

The agreement was signed by Baldeo Purushartha, Joint Secretary in Department of Economic Affairs and Xian Zhu, Vice President of NDB.

The programme will support the Government in mitigating the adverse effects of COVID-19 and enable economic recovery in rural areas through Natural Resource Management (NRM).

Quick Fact: The New Development bank is headquartered in Shanghai, China.

5) Space and Technology

ISRO successfully launches CMS-01 in the intended orbit

ISRO has successfully launched the country's new communication satellite CMS-01 in the intended orbit in space.

The satellite was carried by the workhorse rocket PSLV-C50 and lifted off from the second launch pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.

The new satellite CMS-01 will take over the mantle from ageing telecommunication satellite GSAT-12 that rendered seamless service for 11 years..

Quick Fact: ISRO was founded by Vikram Sarabhai on 15 August, 1969.

6) Sports

AIFF announces candidature to host AFC Asian Cup 2027

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has formally announced its candidature to host the AFC Asian Cup 2027 and deliver a brighter future in India & across Asia.

India's 2027 campaign revealed a logo epitomized by the royal bengal tiger representing ambition, focus and spirit of the bid.

The slogan for the campaign is "Bright Future Together".

Quick fact: The winner of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup 2019 is Qatar.

7) Economy

Yes bank partners with VISA

Yes Bank has announced its partnership with VISA as a payment processor to enhance payments efficiency for Yes Bank account holders.

The partnership will allow customers of Yes bank to get VISA-branded Debit cards.

The new design of Yes Bank debit cards will feature the card number and the CVV at the back of the card improving security and safeguard.

Quick Fact: Yes Bank Limited is headquartered in Mumbai, India.

8) Economy

IndusInd Bank launches its first metal credit card 'PIONEER Heritage'

IndusInd bank in partnership with Mastercard has announced the launch of its first metal credit card 'PIONEER Heritage'.

The card is equipped with features & privileges across an array of categories like travel, wellness and lifestyle to match the requirements of Indian professionals.

IndusInd Bank launched 'PIONEER Banking' its wealth management Platform in January 2020.

Quick Fact: IndusInd bank is owned by Hinduja Group.

19th December

1) India and the World

India contributes USD 1 Million to WADA to support Clean Sport

India has pledged to contribute USD 1 Million to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) to ensure an atmosphere of Clean Sport globally.

India's contribution is the highest among contributions made by other world governments including China, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The funds would allow WADA to develop innovative anti-doping testing and detection methods.

Quick Fact: WADA is headquartered in Montreal, Canada.

2) National Affairs

Government finalises GPS-based technology toll collection across country

The Government of India has finalised GPS-based technology toll collection to ensure seamless movement of vehicles across the country.

The announcement was made by Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari.

The technology would ensure India becomes 'toll booth free' in the next two years.

3) Summits & Conferences

NCB India and National Narcotics Board Indonesia conduct 4th Bilateral JWG meeting

The 4th Bilateral Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting between NCB India and BNN Indonesia was held virtually.

The Indian delegation was led by Rakesh Asthana, Director-General, NCB and the Indonesia delegation was led by Puji Sarwono, Deputy of Legal Affairs, BNN.

The meeting was conducted to strengthen the existing mechanism of coordination & cooperation between India and Indonesia in combating drug trafficking.

Quick Fact: Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) is headquartered in New Delhi

4) Defense and Security

35th edition of India-Indonesia CORPATs conducted

The 35th edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) between Indian Navy & Indonesian Navy was conducted.

The Patrol will improve interoperability and forge strong bonds of friendship between India & Indonesia.

Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kulish along with P81 Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) will undertake coordinated patrol with the Indonesian counterpart.

Quick Fact: Indian Navy was founded on 26 January 1950.

5) Summits and Conferences

PM Narendra Modi holds virtual summit with Sheikh Hasina

The Government of India and Bangladesh held a virtual summit to hold comprehensive discussions on the entire spectrum of bilateral relationship.

The meeting was led by Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina.

The digital exhibition was inaugurated in honour of Mahatma Gandhi & Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rehman.

Quick Fact: The currency of Bangladesh is 'Taka'.

6) Environment

Nehru Zoological Park Hyderabad gets ISO certifications

Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad has acquired ISO 9001:2015 'Quality Management Standards Certification' from ASCB,UK.

The Hyderabad Zoo becomes the first zoo in the country to receive the ISO certification.

The certificate was presented to Telangana Forests Minister A. Indra Karan Reddy.

7) National Affairs

India tests-fires two Prithvi-2 missiles

India successfully test-fired two Prithvi-2 ballistic missiles off the eastern coast of Odisha in Balasore.

The Prithvi-2 missile is capable of carrying 500-1000 kg of warheads and is powered by liquid propulsion twin engines.

The missile was developed by the Defense Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Quick Fact: DRDO is headquartered in DRDO Bhawan, New Delhi.

8) India and the World

Government of Karnataka signs MoU with British Council

The Government of Karnataka and the British Council have signed an MoU to further Bilateral Cooperation in higher education.

The first of a kind three year MoU involves collaboration on leadership development in higher education institutes.

The MoU will create more education and employment opportunities for aspiring students of Karnataka.

21th December

1) Defense

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh hands over DRDO systems to Armed Forces

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh handed over three indigenously developed DRDO systems to the Army, Navy and Air Force at a function held in DRDO Bhawan.

Rajnath Singh handed over the IMSAS to Navy, ASTRA Mk-1 Missile to Air Force and BOSS to the Army.

Rajnath Singh also presented the 'DRDO Lifetime Achievement Award-2018' to Shri V Kadam for his contributions to developing control & guidance systems for missiles.

Quick Fact: The full form of IMSAS is 'Indian Maritime Situational Awareness System'.

2) Economy

Government signs agreement with ADB to set up PRF facility

The Government of India & the ADB have signed an agreement worth USD 4.21 Million to set up Project Readiness Financing (PRF) facility in Tripura.

It will be Asian Development Bank's (ADB) first PRF facility in the northeastern region of India.

The facility will support Tripura's priorities of improving urban services and tourism infrastructure.

Quick Fact: Asian Development bank is headquartered in Mandaluyong, Philippines.

3) Miscellaneous

India's Vidyut Mohan named among the UNEP's 'Young Champions of the Earth'

Vidyut Mohan was one of the "Young Champions of the Earth" winners by the United Nations Environment Programme.

The 29-year-old was given the award for his innovative ideas and ambitious actions to help solve some of the world's most pressing environmental challenges.

The prize is awarded annually to 7 entrepreneurs under the age of 30.

4) Sports

CAS bans Mauritian Badminton Player Kate Foo Kune for two years

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has banned Mauritian Badminton player Kate Jessica Foo Kune for two years for an anti-doping violation.

Foo Kune tested positive for a banned steroid during the 2019 African Badminton World Championships in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

The 27-year-old escaped sanction after contending that the positive test was the result of sabotage and spiking of her water by another individual.

Quick Fact: John Coates is the President of the Court of Arbitration for Sports.

5) National Affairs

Nagaland bans use of flex banners, board and posters

The Government of Nagaland has totally banned the use of flex banners, boards and posters during functions or programmes in government offices.

Flex Banners, boards and posters are made up of Poly-Vinyl-Chloride which is non-biodegradable and releases harmful toxins on burning.

The state encourages use of eco-friendly materials such as cloth bags and lightweight textile fabrics to combat plastic pollution in the state.

Quick Fact: Kohima is the capital of Nagaland.

6) National Affairs

Jammu and Kashmir launches eVIN

Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has launched the 'Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network' (eVIN) to rationalize vaccine flow & distribution.

Training of 689 Cold Chain handlers and uploading of data of 585 Cold Chain Points has been completed and gone live in eVIN.

A total of 20 Vaccine Logistics & Cold Chain Managers, VCCMs have been appointed in each district.

7) Summits and Conferences

Webinar and expo held between India and Maldives

A webinar and expo between India and Maldives was held virtually as a part of Aero India 21 to boost defense cooperation & engagement.

The theme of the webinar was 'Joint Indo Maldives High Level Defence Engagement'

The webinar was organised under the aegis of Department of Defense Production, Ministry of Defense through Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry.

Quick Fact: 'Maldivian rufiyaa' is the currency of Maldives.

8) International Affairs

WHO team expected to visit China in January 2021 to probe COVID-19 origins

The International mission led by the World Health Organization (WHO) is expected in the first week of January 2021 to investigate the origins of the novel Coronavirus.

A team of 12-15 international experts is expected to go to China to examine evidence and samples collected by Chinese researchers.

The first phase of the preliminary research of the origins of SARS-CoV-2 was conducted by China.

Quick Fact: The World Health Organization is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

22nd December

1) Sports

4 Indigenous games approved by Sports Ministry

The Sports Ministry has approved the inclusion of four indigenous sports in the Khelo India Youth Games 2021 scheduled to take place in Haryana.

The four sports include Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-Ta and Mallakhamba.

Kalaripayattu originates from Kerala, Gatka from Punjab, Thang-Ta from Manipur and Mallakhamba from Madhya Pradesh & Maharashtra.

2) Person in News

Sunil Chhetri becomes first Indian to register 50 goals in ISL

Bengaluru FC forward Sunil Chhetri became the first Indian to register 50 goals in Indian Super League (ISL).

Chhetri scored his team's opener against Odisha FC to reach the 50 goal mark in his 80th ISL appearance.

FC Goa star Ferran Corominas is just second to Chhetri in the list scoring 48 goals and 16 assists.

Quick Fact: Sunil Chhetri is a Padma Shri awardee and was honoured with Arjuna Award for Football in 2011.

3) Economy

PayU collaborates with Google Pay

Online payments solutions provider PayU has collaborated with Google Pay to introduce tokenized payments flow for merchants in India.

Google Pay users will now get an option to pay a PayU merchant with their debit cards, credit cards or Google Pay UPI.

One-click payment will allow payments to proceed instantaneously and customers would not be required to re-enter the payment data.

Quick Fact: PayU is headquartered in Hoofddorp, Netherlands.

4) Summits and Conferences

Indian Meteorological Society organizes TROMPET-2020

Indian Meteorological Society in collaboration with North Eastern Space Applications Centre Shillong organised a 4-day Virtual Symposium on Tropical Meteorology (TROMPET-2020).

The theme of TROMPET-2020 was: "Weather and Climate Services over Mountainous Regions".

Secretary of Ministry of Earth Sciences Dr. MN Rajeevan was the Chief Guest while Shri Moses K Chalai was the guest of honor.

5) National Affairs

Skill India establishes 1st Skill Development CoE in Power Sector

Minister of State for Skill Development, Raj Kumar Singh has inaugurated 1st Centre of Excellence (CoE) for skill development in power sector in NISE, Gurugram.

CoE has been set up by 'Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship' in collaboration with 'Ministry of National Education & Youth' and Schneider Electric.

CoE will provide special training to trainers and assessors to increase employability of candidates in the field of Electricity, Automation & Solar Energy Sectors.

Quick Fact: The full form of NISE is 'National Institute of Solar Energy'

6) Culture

Singapore's 'Hawker' culture gets UNESCO recognition

Singapore's 'Hawker' has been inducted in UNESCO's 'Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity'

'Hawker' culture refers to the community of vendors who cook and sell meals in the 114 hawker centres across the city-state.

The culture is a popular Singapore style of street dining & culinary practices in a multicultural urban environment with stalls selling food from various cultures.

7) Science and Technology

Defense Minister inaugurates Advance Hypersonic Wind Tunnel' test facility in Hyderabad

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated Advanced Hypersonic Wind Tunnel test facility in Hyderabad.

India has become the third country after Russia and US to have such a large facility in terms of operating capability & size.

The facility is a pressure vacuum driven enclosed free jet facility which has nozzle exit diameter of 1 metre simulating Mach No 5 to 12.

8) Environment

India's leopard population rises over 60% since 2014

India's leopard population has increased to 12,852 in 2018 from around 8,000 in 2014 according to the 'Status of Leopard in India 2018'.

The "Status of Leopard in India 2018" report was released by Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar.

According to the report, most of the leopards were found in Madhya Pradesh followed by Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Quick Fact: 'Panthera pardus fusca' is the scientific name of Indian Leopard.

23rd December

1) Summits and Conferences

India-Vietnam Leaders' Virtual Summit held virtually

Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi held a virtual summit with the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, H.E. Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

The two leaders welcomed the signing of the Plan of Action for 2021-23 to implement a 'Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity & People' document.

PM Modi expressed special satisfaction about the restoration and conservation work of the 'My Son' temple complex in Vietnam carried out by ASI.

Quick Fact: The full form of ASI is 'Archaeological Survey of India'.

2) National Affairs

Union Power Ministry frames new 'Electricity(Rights of Consumers) Rules 2020'

Union Power Ministry has framed new Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020 to empower consumers with right to get reliable services & 24*7 electricity supply.

Implementation of these rules shall ensure that new electricity connections, refunds and other services are provided in a time bound manner.

The rules will benefit about 30 crores existing and the prospective consumers in the country.

Quick Fact: Raj Kumar Singh is the Minister of Power & Minister of New & Renewable Energy.

3) Miscellaneous

US President presents 'Legion of Merit' award to PM Narendra Modi

US President Donald Trump has presented the prestigious 'Legion of Merit' award to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The award is in recognition of the PM's steadfast leadership and vision for India's emergence as a global power as well as promoting global peace & prosperity.

The 'Legion of Merit' was also awarded to the PM of Australia, Scott Morrison and former PM of Japan, Shinzo Abe.

Quick Fact: The 'Legion of Merit' is the highest degree of the Chief Commander conferred by the President of the US.

4) Sports

Indian Boxers bag 9 medals at the Cologne Boxing World Cup in Germany

Indian boxers have bagged 9 medals including three gold, two silver and four bronze at the Cologne Boxing World Cup 2020 held in Cologne, Germany.

The three gold medals were bagged by Amit Panghal (52kg), Manisha Moun (57kg) and Simranjit Kaur (60kg) in their respective categories.

India finished 2nd overall in the Cologne World Cup 2020 hosted by European Boxing Confederation (EUBC).

Quick Fact: European Boxing Federation (EUBC) is headquartered in Assisi, Italy.

5) Economy

Central Bank of India ties up with NPCI to launch 'RuPay Select'

The Central Bank of India has launched a unique contactless debit card 'RuPay Select' in association with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

'RuPay Select' Debit cardholders will be able to avail complimentary membership and concessional access to golf courses, gyms, spas & restaurants.

The cardholders would be entitled to discounted health check-ups with this National Common Mobility Debit Card (NCMC).

Quick Fact: NPCI and the Central Bank of India are headquartered in Mumbai.

6) National Affairs

Ministry of Food Processing Industries inks MoU with 5 institutions

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries has signed an MoU with 5 institutions and cooperatives for establishing a micro small food processing enterprises scheme.

The ministry signed an agreement with Union Bank of India as nodal bank for PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme. (PM FME)

The ministry also signed a 'Joint Communiqué' with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Quick Fact: Narendra Singh Tomar is the Minister of Food Processing Industries.

7) International Affairs

Russia signs pact with AstraZeneca to test combination of COVID-19 shots

The developers of the Russian COVID vaccine Sputnik V have announced an agreement with AstraZeneca.

The pact will allow to test a combination of the British drugmaker's COVID-19 shots and a component of the vaccine created in Moscow.

AstraZeneca developed its vaccine with Oxford University while The Gamaleya Institute developed Sputnik V.

8) National Affairs

Inter-Ministerial Central team deputed by MHA

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has deputed an Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) to assess damages caused by Cyclone 'Burevi' in Tamil Nadu.

Cyclone Burevi hit Tamil Nadu coast on December 4 killing at least 7 people and damaging houses and agricultural produce.

The team will assess the damage and submit the report to the central government following which funds will be released to the state government.

Quick Fact: Amit Shah is the Union Minister of Home Affairs.

24th December

1) National Affairs

India's first indigenous digital asset management platform launched

CEO of NITI Aayog Amitabh Kant launched the first digital asset management platform 'DigiBoxx'.

The platform provides an easy and secure way to store all the files in one centralised location.

Kant signed up for an account on the platform making him the first user of the Indian digital file storage, sharing & management SaaS product.

Quick Fact: PM Narendra Modi is the Chairperson of NITI Aayog.

2) Science and Technology

6th edition of India International Science Festival (IISF) commences

The 6th edition of India International Science Festival (IISF) was inaugurated virtually by PM Narendra Modi.

The virtual event was organised by the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, the Union Ministry of Science and Technology and Vijana Bharati (VIBHA).

The theme of IISF 2020 is 'Science for Self-Reliant India and Global Welfare'.

Quick Fact: The Ministry of Science and Technology was formed in May 1971.

3) Economy

Indian Army signs an MoU with Bank of Baroda for Baroda Military Salary Package

Indian Army and Bank of Baroda (BoB) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for 'Baroda Military Salary Package'.

The MoU was signed by Lt General Ravin Khosla, DG (Manpower Planning & Personnel Services) and Vikramaditya Singh Khichi, Executive Director of BoB.

The package offers free Personal Accidental Insurance Cover, free ATM transactions at all bank ATMs, Permanent Total Disability Cover and much more.

Quick Fact: The Bank of Baroda is headquartered in Alkapuri, Vadodara.

4) Environment

Environment minister rolls out 'Firefly Bird Diverter' Initiative

The Environment Ministry has launched a unique initiative 'Firefly Bird Diverter' for overhead power lines where Great Indian Bustard (GIB) populations are found in the wild.

The unique initiative was launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) along with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

GIB is one of the most critically threatened species in India with less than 150 birds left in the wild.

Quick Fact: WCS is a non-governmental organisation headquartered at the Bronx Zoo in New York city.

5) Summits and Conferences

12th edition of GRIHA Summit of TERI held virtually

The 12th edition of GRIHA (Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment) Summit was held virtually

The Summit was inaugurated by Vice President of India Venkaiah Naidu.

The theme of the GRIHA Summit was “Rejuvenating Resilient Habitats”.

6) Economy

ADB announces INR 2100 crore loan to Tripura

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced to provide INR 2100 crore loan to the Tripura government for development of urban areas & tourism.

Out of the total funds of INR 2100 crore, INR 1600 crore will be for urban development while INR 500 crore will be for the tourism sector.

The loan will cover all 20 urban local bodies in Tripura along with all tourism destinations and tourist facilities.

Quick Fact: Masatsugu Asakawa is the President of ADB.

7) Sports

8 Khelo India State Centre of Excellence inaugurated

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju virtually inaugurated 8 Khelo India State Centres of Excellence (CoE) across India.

The 8 CoE are established in: Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Kerala, Telangana, Nagaland, Karnataka and Odisha.

The CoE will ensure the development of sports culture and excellence in the country with a vision to see India in top 10 in the Los Angeles Olympics 2028.

8) Defense and Security

51st DG level talks between BSF India and BGB

51st DG level talks between Border Security Force (BSF) India and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) began in Guwahati.

The bi-annual talks were held for the first time between the two Border Guarding Forces in Assam.

The delegation of BGB was led by DG BGB Major General Shafeenul Islam while the BSF delegation was headed by DG Rakesh Asthana.

Quick Fact: Khusro Faramurz Rustmji is the founder of BSF.

25th and 26th December

1) India and the World

WTO to review India's e-commerce and farm policies

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) will be reviewing India's e-commerce policy, farm policies and digital trade policies in January 2021.

In addition, the contentious good & services tax (GST) and change in intellectual property rights law may attract attention to the review.

India's last policy review at WTO was conducted in 2015.

2) Science and Technology

DRDO successfully test-fires surface-to-air missile 'MRSAM'

India has successfully test-fired medium surface-to-air missile 'MRSAM' from Integrated Test Range (ITR) Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

The MRSAM was designed jointly by India and Israel.

MRSAM hit the target named 'Bansi' which was an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV).

Quick Fact: The motto of DRDO is "Strength's Origin is in Knowledge".

3) Summits and Conferences

Global Indian Scientist & Technocrats (GIST) meet begins at IISF 2020

Union Minister of S&T, ES and MoHFW, Harsh Vardhan inaugurated GIST meet as a part of Indian International Science Festival (IISF) 2020.

The GIST meet would enable long term linkages for creating and effectively applying S&T tools for sustainable development.

GIST meet has participants from several countries including USA, UK, Qatar, Angola, Anguilla, Australia, Switzerland and India.

4) Miscellaneous

Government signs MoU with World Bank to build Green National Highway Corridor

The Government and World Bank have signed an MoU worth USD 500 million to build a safe and green National Highway Corridor.

The corridors will be built in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

The project will support Road transport and Highway Ministry to construct 783 km of highway by integrating safe and green technology designs.

Quick Fact: David Malpass is the current President of the World Bank.

5) National Affairs

Union Cabinet approves the merger of four Film Media units with NFDC

Union Cabinet has approved the merger of four Film Media units with National Film Development Corporation (NFDC).

The four Film Media units are: Film Division, Directorate of Film-Festivals, National Film Archives of India & Children's Film Society.

The merger will lead to convergence of activities and resources ensuring synergy and efficiency in achieving the mandate of each media unit.

Quick Fact: NFDC is headquartered in Mumbai.

6) National Affairs

Health Ministry and MeitY launch Grand Challenge for strengthening CoWIN

The Health Ministry along with MeitY has launched a Grand Challenge for strengthening COVID Vaccine Intelligence Network(CoWIN) system.

The challenge invites participation from talented and innovative startups to augment and scale the CoWIN platform.

The Grand Challenge will be launched on 'MeitY Startup Hub MSH Portal'.

Quick Fact: The full form of MeitY is 'Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology'.

7) Miscellaneous

Srinagar's Amar Singh College recognized with UNESCO Award

Srinagar based Amar Singh College has been recognized with the 'Award of Merit' in the 2020 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

The restoration of Amar Singh College brought back one of the most prominent institutional buildings in Kashmir to its former glory.

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) chapter in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir had carried out the conservation work at the Amar Singh College.

8) Person in News

Renowned Malayalam poet Sugathakumari passes away

Renowned Malayalam poet and activist, Sugathakumari breathed her last after being diagnosed positive with COVID-19.

Sugathakumari was one of the most active campaigners of the 'Save Silent Valley Movement' when it took shape in the 1970s.

She wrote a poem 'Marathinu Sthuthi' (Hymn to a Tree) which was recited at every protest to save the Silent Valley.

Quick Fact: Sugathakumari was awarded India's fourth-highest civilian award, Padma Shri in 2006.

9) Miscellaneous

IIT Jodhpur inks MoU with WhizHack

IIT Jodhpur and WhizHack Technologies Private Limited have signed an MoU for the establishment of a new Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Cyber Security, AI and IoT.

The CoE is being set up for the purpose of advancing scientific and technological products and services IPs.

The CoE will launch Certificate Learning Programmes for placement linked skill training in Cyber Defense and part-time Mtech programmes in Cyber Security.

10) Science and Technology

ISRO to open Regional Academic Centre for Space at IIT- Varanasi

ISRO will establish a Regional Academic Centre for Space at IIT-Varanasi to facilitate short and long term projects at the institute.

ISRO signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IIT-Varanasi for the establishment of the centre.

The MoU was signed by IIT-BHU Director Professor Pramod Kumar Jain and Director of Capacity Building Programme Office (CBPO) P V Venkatakrishnan.

Quick Fact: Vikram Sarabhai is the founder of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

11) National Affairs

FGII partners with NGO 'Room to Read' to improve literacy level

Future Generali India Insurance Company Limited (FGII) has partnered with an NGO 'Room to Read' to improve literacy level & inculcate reading habits among underprivileged children.

FGII will use its uniquely designed annual report to raise funds for the NGO-backed schools where a person can order books on Amazon or Flipkart to contribute towards the initiative.

FGII was established in 2007 with the objective of providing retail, commercial, personal and rural insurance to individuals & corporates.

Quick Fact: FGII is a joint venture between 'Future Group' and 'Generali'.

28th December

1) Person in News

Former England Batsman John Edrich passes away

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced that former batsman John Edrich breathed his last at the age of 83.

Edrich, a left-handed batsman, scored more than 5,000 runs for England during 77 Tests over a period of 13 years.

Edrich was also the Honorary Life Member of Marylebone Cricket Club.

Quick Fact: Chris Silverwood is the current coach of the England Cricket Team.

2) National Affairs

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launches 'E-Sampada' web portal & mobile app

Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri launched E-Sampada, a new web-portal and mobile app.

The new application provides a single window for all the services including allotment of government residential accommodation, office space and booking of holiday rooms.

The portal is a significant step towards promotion of e-governance which will minimize human intervention and will lead to greater transparency.

3) Sports

FIFA postpones Under-17 and Under-20 World Cups till 2023

The world football's governing body FIFA has cancelled Under-17 and Under-20 World Cups that were scheduled to be held in 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The World Cups will now be held in 2023 with Indonesia hosting the Under-20s and Peru hosting the Under-17s World Cup.

The decision to postpone the World Cups came as a result of restricted international travel and challenges faced in hosting international events due to COVID-19.

Quick Fact: Brazil won the FIFA U-17 World Cup 2019 while Ukraine won the FIFA U-20 World Cup 2019.

4) National Affairs

India's 1st Hot Air Balloon Wildlife safari launched in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

India's first hot air balloon wildlife safari was launched in the world-renowned Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh by Forest Minister Vijay Shah.

The activity would be restricted to the buffer area and people could watch tigers, leopards, Indian sloth bears and other wild animals.

The hot air balloon service is being operated by Jaipur-based Sky Waltz.

5) Economy

RBI cancels the Licence of Subhadra Local Area Bank in Maharashtra

RBI has cancelled the banking licence issued to Subhadra Local Area Bank Ltd., Kolhapur, Maharashtra restricting it to carry out banking business in India.

The licence was cancelled as the bank had breached the 'minimum net worth requirement' for two quarters in the financial year 2019-20.

The only two remaining Local Area Banks operational in India now are- Coastal Local Area Bank Ltd & Krishna Bhima Samruddhi LAB Ltd.

Quick Fact: Sanjay Agarwal is the MD & CEO of Subhadra Local Area Bank.

6) India and the World

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

The United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) has announced to invest USD 54 million in India to support critical infrastructure projects.

The DFC will invest USD 54 million in equity for the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) in India.

NIIF will use this capital to support economic growth and address critical development challenges in the country in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

Quick Fact: NIIF is headquartered in Mumbai, India.

7) Sports

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

Odisha CM, Naveen Patnaik has announced the establishment of India's Largest Hockey stadium in Rourkela city of Odisha.

The stadium will be constructed in the Biju Patnaik University of Technology campus, Rourkela.

The stadium will have a sitting capacity of 20,000 people and will be spread over 15 acres of land.

8) Summits and Conferences

BCCI holds 89th Annual General Meeting in Ahmedabad

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) held its 89th Annual General Meeting in Ahmedabad.

Electoral Officer AK Joti announced the election of Rajeev Shukla as the Vice President of BCCI.

The general Body authorized the IPL Governing Council to include up to ten teams to the Indian Premier League (IPL).

Quick Fact: Sourav Ganguly is the president of BCCI.

29th December

1) Sports

MS Dhoni named Captain of both ICC Men's ODI and T20I Team of the Decade

Indian-skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni has been named 'Captain of ICC Men's ODI & T20I Team of the Decade' by ICC.

Dhoni was the captain of the Indian squad which had won the ICC ODI World Cup in 2011.

Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma were also featured on the 'ICC Men's ODI Team of the Decade' with Indian having most number of spots in the team of the Decade.

Quick Fact: The motto of International Cricket Council (ICC) is "Cricket for good".

2) Defense

Myanmar commissions submarine INS Sindhuvir gifted by India

Myanmar formally commissioned INS Sindhuvir as UMS Minye Theinkhathu into its Navy.

The Myanmar Navy commissioned the submarine on the occasion of its 73rd anniversary.

INS Sindhuvir is the first submarine to be acquired by the Myanmar Navy and it was handed over by India to the country in October 2020.

Quick Fact: The nickname of the Myanmar Navy is 'Tatmadaw Yay'.

3) National Affairs

India to replace UK as fifth-biggest economy in 2025

UK-based think-tank, the Centre for Economics and Business Research has said that Indian economy will overtake the UK to become the fifth largest economy in 2025.

India had overtaken the UK in 2019 to become the fifth largest economy in the world but has been relegated to 6th spot in 2020.

The organisation forecasts that the Indian economy will expand by 9 percent in 2021 and another 7 percent in 2022.

4) National Affairs

PM flags off India's first driverless train on Delhi Metro's Magenta Line

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has flagged off India's first ever fully-automated driverless train service on the Magenta Line of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)

With the commencement of driverless trains on Magenta Line, DMRC will enter the elite league of 7% of the world's Metro networks which can operate without drivers.

Another major corridor of Delhi Metro, a 57-km long Pink Line will also have driverless operations by mid-2021.

5) Polity and Governance

Physical verification of business premises mandatory for GST registration

Government has introduced mandatory physical verification of business premises for the purposes of obtaining GST registration to control the menace of GST fake invoice frauds.

The move for mandatory physical verification was recommended by GST Council's Law committee.

A nationwide drive against fake GST invoices has led to the arrest of 164 fraudsters including five CAs over the past few months.

6) National Affairs

Bihar wins Digital India Award 2020 in pandemic category

The government of Bihar has won the Digital India Awards, instituted by the central government for innovative steps in e-governance.

Bihar government transferred financial assistance directly to the accounts of 21 lakh stranded migrant workers outside Bihar through 'Bihar Sahayata Mobile App'.

Digital India Awards instituted under the aegis of the National Portal of India, serve the purpose of bringing forth innovative digital solutions.

Quick Fact: Nitish Kumar is the Chief Minister (CM) of Bihar.

7) National Affairs

First Phase of Dry run for Coronavirus vaccination begins in four states

The dry run for COVID-19 vaccination has begun in four states of India- Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab and Assam.

The aim of the exercise is to identify challenges and make required changes in the plan making the final process foolproof.

The focus of the dry run will be on management of any possible adverse events following immunisation.

8) Defense

Indian & Vietnamese Navy conclude two-day naval exercise PASSEX

Indian & Vietnamese Navy concluded the two-day naval passage exercise PASSEX in the South China Sea.

The exercise was conducted in an effort to boost maritime cooperation between the two countries.

INS Kiltan reached Vietnam's Nha Rong Port in Ho CHI Minh City carrying humanitarian assistance delivering 15 tons of relief material under Mission Sagar-III.

Quick Fact: The motto of Indian Navy is 'May the Lord of Water be auspicious unto us'.

30th December

1) National Affairs

Health Minister inaugurates India's first pneumococcal conjugate vaccine

Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has inaugurated India's first pneumococcal conjugate vaccine named 'Pneumosil'.

The vaccine has been developed by Serum Institute of India Private Limited (SIIPL) in collaboration with PATH and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The vaccine has been licenced by Drug Controller General in July 2020 after it was found to be safe & effective in prevention of Pneumonia disease.

Quick Fact: Cyrus Poonawalla is the founder of SIIPL & Chairman of Poonawalla Group of Industries.

2) Science and Technology

Skyroot Aerospace successfully test-fires Kalam-5

Space-tech startup, Skyroot Aerospace has successfully tested fired solid propulsion rocket stages.

This is the first time in India that a private company has successfully designed, developed and tested a full solid propulsion rocket stage.

This is the first of five Kalam series of solid rocket motors and is built with advanced carbon composite structure which is five-times lighter than steel.

Quick Fact: Pawan Kumar Chandana is the CEO & co-founder of Skyroot Aerospace.

3) Person in News

Eminent dance historian and critic Sunil Kothari passes away

Eminent dance historian, critic and scholar Sunil Kothari breathed his last at the age of 87 due to COVID-19 complications.

Kothari completed his Ph.D. on dance drama traditions of South India & Natyashastra in 1977 from M.S. University, Baroda.

Kothari was instrumental in establishing the School of Arts and Aesthetics at the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Quick Fact: Sunil Kothari is a Padma Shri awardee and recipient of Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.

4) National Affairs

Common test for admission in Central Universities from 2021

The government has set up a 7-member committee to recommend a common test for admission to UG programmes in Central University from 2021.

The computer-based common entrance exam will be conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA).

The 7-member committee will be chaired by Professor RP Tiwari, Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Punjab, Bathinda.

Quick Fact: The motto of NTA is 'Excellence in Assessment'.

5) International Affairs

USA plans to set up a Nuclear Reactor on Moon by 2026

The United States of America has planned to set up a Nuclear Reactor on the Moon by the end of 2026.

The US Department of Energy in collaboration with NASA intends to solicit industry design proposals in early 2021.

The nuclear reactor is known as the fission power system that will benefit future robotic and human expedition missions to the moon as well as Mars.

6) Miscellaneous

India unfurls Blue Flags on its beaches

India unfurled 8 Blue Flags on its beaches which showcase a national campaign to safeguard its coastal region.

Indian has become the first country in the world to receive 8 Blue Flag Certifications for 8 beaches in a single attempt.

Blue Flag Certification is a globally recognised eco-label accorded by 'Foundation for Environment Education' in Denmark based on 33 stringent criteria.

7) International Affairs

South Africa registers more than one million Covid-19 cases

South Africa has become the first country on the continent to register more than one million Covid-19 cases.

It comes just days after authorities confirmed that a new, faster-spreading, coronavirus variant had been detected.

A new coronavirus variant- known as 501.V2 is believed to be driving the surge in infections which was identified by a group of South African scientists.

8) National Affairs

Harsh Vardhan inaugurates India's highest Meteorological Centre in Leh

Union Minister of Earth Sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan virtually inaugurated India's highest Meteorological Centre in Leh.

The centre situated at 3500 metres above mean sea level, is the highest Meteorological Centre in the Himalayan region.

The new centre is established to cater to the arid cold deserts and provide Ladakh specific weather forecasts more accurately & consistently.

Quick Fact: Leh and Kargil are the joint capital of Ladakh.

31st December

1) Defense

Cabinet approves export of Akash Missile system export

The cabinet recently approved the export of the Akash missile system which would help India to achieve its target of 25 billion USD turnover in defense manufacturing by 2025.

According to the Defense Ministry, the Akash missiles have more than 96% of indigenous components.

The Akash missile is a short-range surface-to-air indigenous missile developed by DRDO with a range of 25 km.

Quick Fact: The Akash missile is manufactured by Bharat Dynamics Limited.

2) Economy

PCMC and UNDP sign MoU to create first Social Impact Bonds

The Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) and United Nations Development Programme signed a MoU to create the first Social Impact Bond (SIB) of India.

A Social Impact Bond is a contract with public sector authority where it pays for better social outcomes for a specific group of citizens.

The SIB will support the PCMC in improving healthcare services for local residents, especially with respect to the pandemic

Quick fact: UNDP is headquartered in New York, United States.

3) Environment

Digital Ocean Applications launched by Ministry of Earth Sciences

The Digital Ocean Applications were launched by the Ministry of Earth Sciences to share information on marine data and forecast services.

The applications have been launched under the Digital Ocean Platform developed by INCOIS.

Digital Ocean Platform plays a major role in sustainable management of oceans and expanding the “Blue Economy”.

Quick Fact: The full form of INCOIS is “Indian National Centre for Ocean Information”.

4) Economy

AU Small Finance and ICICI Pru Life ties up to provide life insurance solutions

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

The tie up will allow over 18 lakh customers of AU Bank to have easy access to the entire suite of customer-centric protection & long-term savings products of ICICI Pru Life.

AU Bank claims that these products will enable customers to provide financial security to themselves and their families while helping them achieve their financial goals.

Quick Fact: Sanjay Agarwal is the MD & CEO of AU Bank.

5) Miscellaneous

Late Justice Rajindar Sachar’s autobiography ‘In Pursuit of Justice’ launched

The family of Late Justice Rajindar Sachar in association with ‘The Indian Society of International Law’ and ‘The Indian Law Institute’ is organizing the book launch.

The autobiography ‘In Pursuit of Justice’ was written by Late Justice Rajindar Sachar and has been posthumously published

Justice Rajindar Sachar was a socialist, an egalitarian, a defender of civil liberties, a deeply engaged citizen and a humanist.

6) National Affairs

Nitin Gadkari announces Multi-Modal Logistics Park in Assam's Silchar

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari has announced the establishment of a multi-modal logistics park in Silchar, Assam.

The park will be constructed in Silchar and the Balacera-Harengajao section of the Silchar-Saurashtra and will be completed by March 2022.

Nitin Gadkari made the announcement in a public meeting at Zero Point on the East-West corridor at Madhurmurkh at Rangpur.

Quick Fact: Sarbananda Sonowal is the Chief Minister (CM) of Assam

7) Defense

DRDO and Indian Navy conduct successful maiden test trials of SAHAYAK-NG

DRDO along with the Indian Navy conducted successful maiden test trials of India's first indigenously designed & developed Air Dropped Container SAHAYAK-NG.

The container was airdropped from IL 38SD aircraft of Indian Navy off the coast of Goa.

DRDO laboratories, NSTL (Visakhapatnam) and ADRDE (Agra) developed SAHAYAK-NG container along with industry partner M/s Avantel for GPS integration.

Quick Fact: The full form of NSTL is 'Naval Science and Technological Laboratory'.

8) Miscellaneous

President Ram Nath Kovind confers Digital India Awards 2020

President of India Ram Nath Kovind virtually conferred the 6th edition of Digital India Awards (DIA) 2020 via video conferencing.

National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) conducted the biennial DIA to promote innovation in e-Governance.

The Awards have been held for 5 seasons earlier in 2009, 2012, 2014, 2016 & 2018 and were initially known as Web Ratna Awards until 2014.

Quick Fact: Ravi Shankar Prasad is the Minister of Electronics & Information Technology.

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