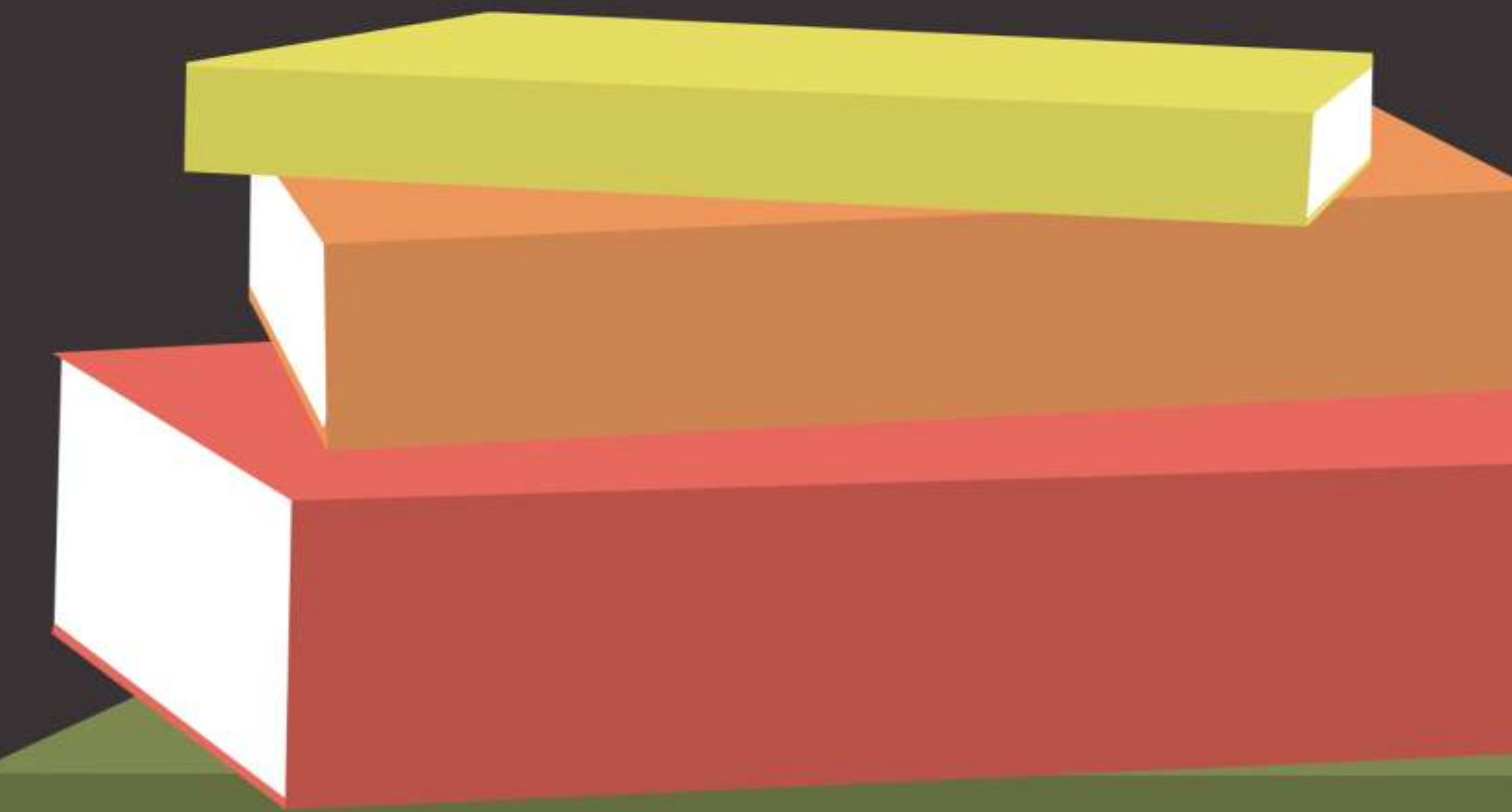
# Monthly Current Affairs GK Digest October 2019



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# MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS GK DIGEST: OCTOBER 2019

## RAILWAY TO LAUNCH PILOT PROJECT TO INTRODUCE INDUSTRY 4.0

**Current context:** The **Modern Coach Factory** in Uttar Pradesh's Raebareli district has launched a pilot project for ushering in Industry 4.0.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The pilot project has been launched by the **Ministry of Railways and the Department of Science and Technology in partnership with IIT Kanpur.**
- The department of Science and Technology has recently launched **'Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (ICPS)'** to enhance research and development work in this field.
- **Industry 4.0 or the 4th industrial revolution** is the current trend of data exchange method, automation, and inter-connectivity manufacturing technologies that are used to increase productivity.
- It **synergises** the production technologies with the Big Data, Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence and Cloud Computing.

## WORLD DIGITAL COMPETITIVENESS RANKINGS

**Current context:** India has been ranked 44th in the IMD world digital competitiveness ranking 2019 (WDCR).

### RANKINGS

- The ranking is **improved by four places (from 48th)** with an improvement in terms of knowledge and future readiness to adopt and explore digital technologies.
- The **USA was ranked as the world's most digitally competitive economy.** The top ten countries in the list are:
  1. USA
  2. Singapore
  3. Sweden
  4. Denmark
  5. Switzerland
  6. Netherlands
  7. Finland
  8. Hong Kong SAR
  9. Norway
  10. Republic of Korea
- The **largest jump** was registered by **Indonesia and China** i.e. from 62nd to 56th and 30th to 22nd respectively.
- The **Index ranks 63 nations** and measures their capacity to adopt digital technologies as a key driver for economic transformation in government, business, and society.
- **WDCR examines three factors:**
  1. Knowledge, the capacity to understand and learn new technologies.
  2. Technology, the competence to develop new digital innovations.
  3. Future readiness, the preparedness for the coming developments.

## BRAHMOS SUPERSONIC CRUISE MISSILE SUCCESSFULLY TEST-FIRED

**Current context:** Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) successfully test-fired BrahMos supersonic cruise missile off the coast of **Odisha** on 1st October 2019.

### ABOUT BRAHMOS MISSILE

- BRAHMOS is a medium range, supersonic cruise missile, made with a joint venture of **DRDO, India and Russian Federation's NPO Mashinostroyeniya.**
- The name BrahMos is formed from combining the names of two rivers, the **Brahmaputra of India and the Moskva of Russia.**
- It can be fired both from **land, aircraft, ships as well as sea- based platforms or submarines,** with a strike range of 290km.

- It is currently under testing phase for submarine-launched versions and the land-launched and ship-launched versions are already in service.
- The first extended version of the missile, having a strike range of 450 Kilometres was **successfully tested on 11th March 2017.**

## SUMIT NAGPAL WON THE TITLE OF ATP CHALLENGER TOURNAMENT

**Current context:** Sumit Nagpal clinched the men's singles title of ATP Challenger Tournament, held on 30th September 2019.

### ABOUT SUMIT NAGPAL

- The tournament was held at **Buenos Aires in Argentina.**
- He defeated **Facundo Bognis** by straight-sets 6-4, 6-2 in an hour and 37 minutes.
- The Haryana Tennis player became the **first Indian** to win on South American clay court.
- It won his 2nd challenger title after winning the **Bengaluru Challenger event in 2017** and grabbed his **Grand Slam debut** last month.
- The winning performance has made him to achieve a **career-best ranking of 135,** with a sudden jump of 26 spots.

## 2ND OCTOBER CELEBRATION

**Current context:** Birth Anniversary of the Father of the Nation **Mahatma Gandhi** and Former Prime Minister **Lal Bahadur Shastri** is being celebrated on 2nd October 2019.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Various events that took place on the occasion of 2nd October to mark the 150th birth anniversary of the Father of the nation are:**
    - **Palestine** released a **commemorative postage stamp on Mahatma Gandhi** in his honour.
    - An **exhibition** dedicated to the mutual influences of **Mahatma Gandhi and Leo Tolstoy** on each other's work is organised by the Indian Embassy in **Moscow** in collaboration with the Russian State Duma.
    - **"Khadi Nepal" fashion show** ensembling Khadi and handloom couture from **India and Nepal** were organised in **Kathmandu on the eve of Gandhi Jayanti.**
    - **'Fit India Plog run'** has been flagged off by the Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju at Indira Gandhi stadium in New Delhi. **Plogging** is a concept in which participants pick up plastic and other waste from the road while jogging that ultimately benefits health and make a clean environment.
    - **NITI Aayog's Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) and UNICEF India,** have launched **'The Gandhian Challenge'.** The contest – open for every child in India from 2nd October to

20th October, gives a platform to every child across India to ideate **innovative solutions for a sustainable India** of their dreams, using Gandhi's principles.

- **'Gandhi Sankalp Yatra'** has been flagged off nationwide by BJP President Amit Shah, from Shalimar Bagh in New Delhi, **to spread the values of Gandhiji to the masses.**

## SCHOOL EDUCATION QUALITY INDEX (SEQI)

**Current context: NITI Aayog released** the School Education Quality Index (SEQI). School Education Quality Index (SEQI) evaluates the **performance of States and Union Territories (UTs) in the school education sector.**

### KEY FINDINGS OF THE INDEX

- The index provides States and UTs with a platform to identify their strengths and weaknesses and aims to bring an **'outcomes' focus to education policy.**
- This is the **1st edition of SEQI** which foster the spirit of competitive and cooperative federalism and consists of 30 critical indicators.
- The index groups the States and UTs as **Large States, Small States and UTs.**
- **Karnataka, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh** has the most noticeable performance differences observed among the **20 large states.**
- **Manipur, Tripura and Goa** has the most noticeable performance differences observed among the **8 small states.**
- **Sikkim** is the only Small State that performs better on the Governance Processes Aiding Outcomes category.
- **Dadra & Nagar Haveli. Delhi, Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep** has the most noticeable performance differences observed among **the 7 UTs.**

## SOVEREIGN GOLD BOND SCHEME 2019 – 20

**Current context:** The Government of India, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, has decided to issue Sovereign Gold Bonds.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The SGB will be issued in **six tranches from October 2019 to March 2020.**
- **The Bonds will be sold through:**
  1. Scheduled Commercial banks (except Small Finance Banks and Payment Banks)
  2. Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL)
  3. Designated post offices
  4. Recognised stock exchanges viz., National Stock Exchange of India Limited and Bombay Stock Exchange Limited
- **The main features of the SGB are:**

1. It will be issued by **Reserve Bank India** on behalf of the Government of India.
2. The Bonds will be restricted for sale to resident individuals, Universities, Charitable Institutions, HUFs and Trusts
3. The tenor of the Bond will be for a period of 8 years with exit option after 5th year to be exercised on the interest payment dates.
4. **The minimum** permissible investment will be **1 gram of gold.**
5. The **maximum limit** of subscribed shall be **4 KG for individual and HUF** each and **20 Kg for trusts and similar entities per fiscal** (April-March) notified by the Government from time to time.
6. In case of **joint holding, the investment limit of 4 KG** will be applied to the **first applicant only.**
7. The investors will be compensated at a fixed rate of **2.50 % per annum payable** semi-annually on the nominal value.
8. Bonds can be **used as collateral for loans.**

## 'CONSUMER APP' LAUNCHED BY MCAFPD

**Current affairs: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution** launched 'Consumer App': A one stop solution for consumer grievance redressal'.

### ABOUT CONSUMER APP

- The App will provide every consumer across the nation, quick access to grievance redressal and help consumers to give valuable suggestions to the Department on consumer related issues.
- It **aims** to provide a one stop solution for consumer grievance redressal via mobile phones.
- The complaint status under the app will be monitored on a daily basis by the ministry.
- The registered consumer will be informed about their complaint via SMS/E-mail with a unique number which can be tracked by the consumer.
- There will be **time bound resolution of all grievances, 20 days** for problems simple in nature while those that elicit a feedback from companies or further enquiries will be resolved within **2 months/60 days.**
- Consumers get **information about 42 Sectors** including e-commerce, Banking, Insurance, Consumer Durables, Electronic Products, etc.
- Consumers can use this app in **Hindi and English** on both Android and IoS platforms.

## DELHI-KATRA VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS

**Current context:** Delhi-Katra Vande Bharat Express is flagged off on 3rd October 2019 from the New Delhi Railway Station.

## ABOUT VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS

- The train with number 22439 is operated between Delhi and Katra, the last station on way to the Vaishno Devi temple.
- The train operation aims the **speedy development of the Jammu and Kashmir** region and make it par with the other states.
- This will also improve **connectivity along with spiritual tourism** of devotees to Vaishno Devi.
- The high speed train will reduce the time between Delhi and Katra to **8 hours from currently 12 hours.**
- The train will run on a daily basis and will depart from New Delhi at 6 am and reach Katra at 2 pm. And will return on the same day, leave the katra station at 3 pm.
- The train has the facilities of GPS Based information system , onboard Wi-Fi internet, CCTV Surveillance and Bio vacuum toilet.
- The **first Vande Bharat Express** train was operated between **Delhi to Varanasi** in February 2019.

## 'PARYATAN PARV 2019'

**Current context:** The Paryatan Parv 2019 was started from 2nd October 2019 and will continue till 13th October 2019.

## KEY FACTS

- The nationwide parv is celebrated to **promote tourism in the country** and is dedicated to the **150th birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.**
- The **aim** is to propagate the message of **Dekho Apna Desh** to encourage people to visit tourist destinations of the country.
- The parv is **jointly conducted** by the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.**
- The tourists data given by the Ministry of Tourism shows that about **1.05 crore tourists** are coming to India **every year.**
- An interactive digital exhibition on - Swachh Bharat, Sashkat Bharat, Bapu Ke Sapno Ka Bharat was also inaugurated at the occasion. It is organized by the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.**

## VAYOSHRESHTHA SAMMAN-2019

**Current context:** President Ram Nath Kovind will confer the Vayoshreshtha Samman-2019 on 3rd October 2019.

### ABOUT VAYOSHRESHTHA SAMMAN

- The award is presented to the **institutions/organisations/individuals** involved in rendering distinguished **service for the cause of elderly persons.**
- It is a scheme of awards gradually upgraded to the status of **National Awards** and is instituted by the **Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry.**
- **International Day of Older Persons was observed on 1st October** and these awards are presented as a part of it.
- International Day of Older Persons is celebrated every year on 1st October since **2005.**
- The award **intends** to shoe-case the government's concern towards the Vulnerable and weaker section and strengthening their legitimate place in the society.

## SARASWATI SAMMAN AWARD

**Current context:** Vice President, M Venkaiah Naidu conferred the prestigious Saraswati Samman award, conferred by the KK Birla Foundation.

### ABOUT SARASWATI SAMMAN AWARD

- The award was given to the **Telegu poet K Siva Reddy** for his collection of poems titled **Pakkaki Ottigilite.**
- **Pakkaki Ottigilite** which was published in **2016,** is an anthology of 104 poems in blank verse. It captures the responses of the poet over the evolution of his own self, the years to social change, and his dynamic relationship with the world.
- Three awards are instituted by the KK Birla Foundation in the field of literature:
  1. Saraswati Samman
  2. Vyas Samman (for Hindi)
  3. Bihari Puraskar (for Hindi and Rajasthani writers of Rajasthan)
- The foundation was founded in **1991** to **promote Indian art and culture.**
- **Chayan Parishad, or selection committee** picks the awardees which includes renowned scholars and writers. The committee was **headed by Subhash C Kashyap,** a former secretary general of the Lok Sabha secretariat.
- Some of the Past recipients of the Saraswati Samman include writers Vijay Tendulkar, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi and Dr Indira Parthasarathy Ramanujar, poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan.

## INDIA AND MAURITIUS JOINTLY LAUNCHED PROJECTS

**Current context:** Indian PM Modi and **Mauritian PM Pravind Jugnauth** jointly inaugurated two landmark projects in Mauritius through video conferencing on 3rd October 2019.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The two projects include **Phase-1 of the Metro Express and a new ENT Hospital.**
- The project will be built in Mauritius and are symbols of India's strong commitment to the development of the Island nation.
- India has granted **$14 million** for the new **Hospital Project** and **$275 million** for the **Metro Express project.**
- The grant (total $353 million) was awarded by the Government of India to Mauritius in March **2017.**
- In 2017, India provided a **Special Economic Package of $353 million** for the execution of five projects in Mauritius, of which the Metro Express project and the ENT hospital are the part.

## BHARAT-22 EXCHANGE TRADED FUND (ETF)

**Current context:** The Government has launched the fourth tranche of the Bharat-22 ETF on 3rd October 2019.

### KEY FACTS

- The **4th tranche of Bharat-22** aimed at mopping Rs 8,000 crore from investors.
- **ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund** manages the Bharat-22 ETF.
- As per the advertisement released by ICICI Prudential MF:
- The government shall disinvest the shares of non-financial sector CPSEs and public sector banks forming part of the S&P BSE Bharat 22 index through the **Further Fund offer 2 (FFO-2).**
- **Shareholding** of GoI post disinvestment is maintained up to **51.5% of the paid-up share capital of those CPSEs and 52% of the PSBs.**
- The investors would get a **3% discount over the issue price.**
- The offer has a base issue size of Rs 2,000 crore along with a greenshoe option to retain another Rs 6,000 crore, making the **total amount to Rs 8000 crore.**
- The total sum raised through Bharat-22 ETF to the GOI amounts to Rs 35,900 crore.
- The amount raised through Bharat-22 would help the government meet its disinvestment target of **Rs 1.05 lakh crore for the current financial year.**
- Public sector enterprises like ONGC, IOC, SBI, BPCL, Coal India and Nalco are the part of Bharat-22.
- **State Bank of India (SBI). Indian Bank and Bank of Baroda** are the only three public sector banks that figure in Bharat-22 index.

## 'SARBAT DA BHALA EXPRESS'

**Current context:** Train 'Sarbat Da Bhala Express' was flagged off at New Delhi railway station on 3rd October 2019.

### DETAILS

- The train will ply from **New Delhi to Lohian Khas via holy city Sultanpur Lodhi.**
- It is the **renamed New Delhi-Ludhiana Intercity Express.**
- Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal requested to rename the train on the occasion of the **550th Parkash Purb** i.e. the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.
- In **Sultanpur Lodhi** only, Guru Nanak Ji spent 14 years of his life and taught that all communities are one.

## RBI CUTS REPO RATE BY 25 BASIS POINTS

**Current context:** Reserve Bank of India has cut the repo rate by 25 basis points in its **fourth bi-monthly policy** on 4th October 2019.

### DETAILS

- The cut has been made to **5.15% from 5.40% earlier,** while the **reverse repo rate has been adjusted to 4.90% and bank rate at 5.40 %.**
- All the six members of the MPC voted in **favour of a rate cut,** which is the **fifth rate cut** in 2019.
- RBI continues with its **accommodative monetary stance** to revive economic growth ensuring inflation remains within the target range.
- RBI has **revised the GDP outlook from 6.9%** in previous Monetary Policy committee meet in August **to 6.1% for 2019-20.**
- RBI has revised the GDP outlook to 7.2% for 2020-21.
- On 1st October, the **foreign exchange reserve stood at $434.6 billion** which shows up of $21.7 billion over March-end 2019.
- RBI retains **retail inflation projection at 3.5-3.7%** for the second half of the year 2019.

## SWACCH BHARAT CLEANLINESS ASSESSMENT 2019

**Current context:** Jaipur railway station has topped the Swacch Bharat cleanliness assessment 2019.

### ABOUT SWACCH BHARAT CLEANLINESS

- The assessment has covered 720 railway stations all over the country.
- The top 3 places in the assessment survey are secured by **Jaipur, Jodhpur and Durgapur** respectively.
- The **parameters** taken for the survey include drinking water and sanitation management at different areas of railway stations, availability and cleanliness of toilets, waste management.
- The **North Western Railways headquartered at Jaipur** has maintained top rank consecutively for the second year.

- **Jaipur Junction and Gandhinagar Jaipur stations** have made the facility to treat single use plastic, and bottle crushing machines have been planted at the station.

## YOUTH CO: LAB JOINTLY LAUNCHED BY NITI AAYOG AND UNDP

**Current context:** Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India has jointly launched Youth Co: Lab in 4th October 2019.

### KEY FACTS

- The **Youth Co: Lab** is launched with the aim of **accelerating social entrepreneurship and innovation in young India and promote youth leadership.**
- The Youth Co: Lab will give a chance to the young entrepreneurs and innovators, to connect with **governments, investors, mentors, incubators etc.** who will help equip them with entrepreneurial skills.
- Youth dialogue series will be convened across the cities to promote entrepreneurship across India.
- **Social innovation challenges** at the national and sub-national level will be convened by Youth Co: Lab that will target to invite young people in the age group of 18-29 years to showcase their ideas to tackle some of the **region's biggest social challenges.**
- It is critical for India to create a robust employment and entrepreneurship ecosystem, with the world's largest youth population entering the workforce every year.
- The first phase of Youth Co: Lab will focus on **six SDGs:**
  1. SDG 5 (Gender Equality)
  2. SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)
  3. SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)
  4. SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)
  5. SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production)
  6. SDG 13 (Climate Action)

## WORLD COTTON DAY

**Current context:** Smriti Irani, Textiles Minister will participate in the World Cotton Day from India, which being observed from **7th October to 11th October 2019 in Geneva.**

### DETAILS

- **World Cotton Day is being organized by the World Trade Organisation (WTO)** in collaboration with the Secretariats of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Trade Centre (ITC) the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) and ) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

- WTO is hosting the event at the request of the **Cotton – 4 countries, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali.** The 4 countries in their official application to WTO had asked for the recognition of 7th October as World Cotton Day by the United Nations.
- The World Cotton Day will be observed with the **significance:**
  1. To celebrate the many advantages of cotton- its production, transformation, trade and consumption.
  2. To shed light on the challenges faced by cotton economies around the world.
- The **objective** of observing October, 7 as World Cotton Day is:
  1. To give exposure and recognition to cotton and all its stakeholders.
  2. To engage donors and beneficiaries and strengthen development assistance for cotton.
  3. Seek new collaborations with the private sector and investors in developing countries.
  4. At the event, a sculpture of Mahatma Gandhi made out of cotton will be displayed to commemorate his **150th birth anniversary.**
- WTO has recognized the Importance of cotton as:
  1. A single tonne of cotton provides year-round employment for five people on average.
  2. Cotton is a **drought-resistant crop ideal for arid climates.**
  3. It occupies **just 2.1 % of the world's arable land, yet it meets 27% of the world's textiles need.**
  4. In addition to fibre, **food products** like edible oil and animal feed are also derived from the seed.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE STATE OF KARNATAKA AND BIHAR

**Current context:** Union Minister for Home Affairs, Shri Amit Shah has approved the advance release of **Rs.400 crore and Rs.1200 crore to the State of Bihar and Karnataka** respectively, from **National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).**

### KEY FINDINGS

- The Ministry has further approved the advance release of 2nd instalment of **centre's share of State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)** amounting to Rs.213.75 crore to the State of Bihar for the year 2019-20.
- During the South West Monsoon 2019, **13 States have been affected** from unprecedented floods/landslide.
- Ministry of Home Affairs constituted Inter **Ministerial Central Teams (IMCTs) for 13 States.** IMCTs has submitted the interim report in respect of Bihar and Karnataka.
- A **State Disaster Response Fund** (SDRF) has been constituted for each State.
- **75% of the SDRF fund** is contributed by the **Central Government** and for **General Category** States and **90% for North-Eastern and Hilly States** in each allocation year.
- The first relief expenditure charge is on **SDRF** and in the cases of severe calamities, it is supplemented from **NDRF.**

## BILATERAL TALKS BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH

**Current context:** Bilateral talks was held between the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 5th October 2019.

### RAIL LINKS BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH

- Both the leaders jointly inaugurated three bilateral projects through video conferencing. The projects include:
  1. **Import of bulk LPG** from Bangladesh.
  2. **Vivekananda Bhavan at Ramakrishna Mission in Dhaka,** which will house more than 100 university students.
  3. **Bangladesh-India Professional Skill Development Institute** for MSMEs at the Institute of Diploma Engineers.
- A total of **seven agreements** were signed between India and Bangladesh in several areas including education, health, defence, trade and connectivity, development cooperation etc.
- Ms Hasina was on a four-day visit to India and has arrived on 3rd October 2019.
- She was the **chief guest at the 33rd India Economic Summit** which was organised by the **World Economic Forum** in New Delhi on 3rd October 2019.

## SWISS BANK SHARED FINANCIAL INFO WITH INDIA

**Current context:** India has got the first set of details from Swiss Bank of its nationals through the **Automatic Information Exchange (AIE) procedure.**

### ABOUT AUTOMATIC INFORMATION EXCHANGE

- **Switzerland Federal Tax Administration (FTA)** has exchanges information on financial accounts with 75 countries, about their nationals within the **AEOI (Automatic Exchange of Information) framework.**
- The next exchange of the details would take place in **September 2020.**
- The exchange on financial account include the currently active accounts as well as those accounts that were closed during 2018 (the year in which the framework agreement became effective).
- However, the AEOI only relates to accounts **that are officially in the name of Indians.** The exchanged details include name, address, information concerning the financial institution, state of residence, tax identification number, capital income and account balance.
- India has received information of about 3.1 million financial accounts.
- In **January, 2017 the AEOI framework** came into force on legal basis.
- The AEOI implementation is reviewed by the **Global Forum of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.**

## EDANT SEVA WEBSITE & MOBILE APPLICATION

**Current context:** Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, has launched eDant Seva website & Mobile application.

### KEY FACTS

- The first ever **oral health awareness website and mobile application** are launched by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (**AIIMS**) in collaboration with the Union Health Ministry.
- The 'e-DantSeva' digital platform will contain the information about the **National Oral Health Programme, list of dental colleges and facility etc.**
- A unique feature called the **'Symptom Checker'** is also available on the app/website.
- It has the facility of GPRS and satellite images for easier access to the people.
- The platform will information about oral health from **authentic scientific resources** and will connect them to experts for advice.

## INDIA INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE TRADE FAIR

**Current context:** The 3-day India International Cooperative Trade Fair is to be held in New Delhi from 11th October 2019.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF IICTF

- The **first ever India International Cooperative Trade Fair** is aimed at enhancing rural and farm prosperity (doubling farmers income by 2022) by promoting cooperative to cooperative trade within India and abroad.
- The event will provide a huge opportunity for Indian industries and business houses to build an alliance, business networking and interact with primary producers across the globe.
- This will be **India's first and the largest international cooperatives trade fair.**
- Over 150 cooperative societies and 35 countries are going to participate in the fair.
- The Fair is organised by the **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)** along with the Ministry of Commerce and Industries and agencies like NAFED, APEDA.

## SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE (SEZ) AT WEST JALEFA, TRIPURA

**Current context:** The government has approved setting up of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) at West Jalefa in Sabroom subdivision of South Tripura on 4th October 2019.

### FEATURES

- The decision was taken during the **92nd meeting of the Board of Approval (BoA)** under the Ministry of commerce.

- The Tripura government submitted a proposal in June this year, to the **Ministry of Industries and Commerce** for the setting of an agro-based SEZ at **Jalefa.**
- An estimated investment of around **Rs. 1550 crore** will be made in setting up **first-ever SEZ.**
- A **special economic zone (SEZ)** is a geographical region that has more liberal economic laws that a country's domestic economic laws and are approved for Agro and Food Processing sectors in India.
- Under the plan, rubber thread, apparel making, bamboo, rubber-based industrial units, and food process units are proposed to be set up.

## 50TH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA 2019

**Current context:** The 50th International Film Festival of India, IFFI 2019, will be held in Goa from 20th to 28th November 2019.

### ABOUT IFFI 2019

- The **Golden Jubilee edition of the festival** will showcase 200 best films from 76 countries, 26 feature films and 15 non-feature films in the Indian Panorama section.
- **Information and Broadcasting Ministry** said that for the **first time,** films with audio deion will be screened for the visually impaired.
- In 2019, the **Feature Film Jury** was headed by filmmaker and screenwriter **Priyadarshan.**
- **Gujarati film HELLARO** directed by Abhishek Shah is chosen as the Opening Feature Film of Indian Panorama, 2019.
- The **Non-Feature Jury** was headed by Filmmaker **Rajendra Janglay.**
- The **film -- Nooreh** -- directed by Ashish Pandey is chosen as the Opening non-feature film of Indian Panorama.

## PM-ASMI TO INTEGRATE EXISTING SCHEMES TO FIGHT AGAINST MATERNAL MORTALITY

**Current context:** Health Minister Harsh Vardhan launched PM-ASMI (Pradhan Mantri – Assured and Safe Motherhood initiative) for infants and mothers.

### KEY FACTS

- The Scheme **aims** to bring down maternal and infant death to zero by providing quality medical service to them in public healthcare.
- Through PM-ASMI both infrastructure and quality of service will be improved with taking care of dignity of women.
- PM- ASMI will do this by integrating following schemes:

1. **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram** which provide free drugs and diagnostics, free provision of blood, free delivery, free diet (during stay in hospital or health institute), free transport from home to hospital etc. to pregnant women and infant.
2. **Pradhan Mantriva Abhiyan** under which free ante-nate check ups by private medical practitioners are provided to women.
3. **LaQshya** which aims to improve the condition of Labour rooms.

## ASSAM LAUNCHED FREE MEDICINES SCHEME FOR TEA GARDEN WORKERS

**Current context:** The Assam Government has launched the Free Drug Scheme for giving medicinal security to the tea garden workers.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The Free Drug scheme will provide medicines including 142 essential drugs, 47 surgical items, 45 consumables/linens and 6 numbers of disinfectants free of cost to 651 tea garden hospitals in the State garden.
- 20 crores will be allotted each year on this scheme. This scheme is similar to already available scheme **Mobile Medical Unit (MMU)** which was operational in 442 tea garden and has a wage compensation of Rs12,000 which given in four instalments to pregnant women working tea garden.
- Add to this Assam government is planning to reduce cost of foods under National Food Security Act i.e. rice from Rs3/kg to free 5kg rice/family and 2kg/family to 4 lakh family.
- Government will also stress on setting up more educational institutes. These all measures are being taken as tea industry is in financial crisis due to price stagnation and overproduction.

## RAMESH PANDEY SELECTED FOR AEE AWARD

**Current context:** Indian Forest Service officer Ramesh Pandey has been selected for the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award.

### ABOUT ASIA ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT AWARD

- The award is given by **the United Nations Environment Programme.**
- The 1996-batch IFS officer, Ramesh Pandey is known for his **investigation and intelligence gathering on poachers** when he was posted as Chief Conservator Forests in Lucknow and Secretary, UP State Bio-diversity Board.
- The selection panel recognized the excellent work done by him in combating trans-boundary environmental crime.
- The award will be given to him on 13th November at **the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok.**

- The Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards **aims** to publicly recognise outstanding achievements by public organisations and individuals in Asia to combat trans boundary environmental crime.

## 2019 NOBEL PRIZE IN MEDICINE

**Current context:** The Nobel committee has announced the Nobel awards in Medicine for 2019 on 7th October 2019.

### ABOUT THE RESEARCH

- Scientists **William G Kaelin, Gregg L Semenza and Jr Peter J Ratcliffe** were awarded the 2019 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine.
- The award was given to them jointly for their discoveries of **"how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability".**
- Their discovery has paved the way for promising new strategies to **fight anaemia, cancer and many other diseases.**
- The sum of 9 million Swedish kronor or **about 9 Lakh 14 thousand US dollar** received as price would be shared between the three scientists.
- They will receive the award on 10th December from **King Carl XVI Gustaf at a formal ceremony in Stockholm.**
- The award has been awarded since 1901, and this is the **110th prize in the category.**

## SURENDER SINGH CREATES THREE WORLD RECORDS

**Current context:** Surender Singh of India created three world records at World Powerlifting Championship 2019.

### KEY FACTS

- The **World Powerlifting Championship** is being held in **Berlin, Germany.**
- Surender Singh has made the world record in:
- Bagged gold medal in **110 kg category Classic Raw.**
- The **Best Lifter Award in Classic Raw and Single Ply.**
- Under the superb guidance of International Coach Dronacharya Bhupender Dhawan, Three-time World Champion **Mukesh Singh** added another gold only to be known as **4-time World Champion.**
- From India, **Nirpal Singh won silver in 110 kg** Classic Raw event and **Manpreet clinched gold in 100 kg category.**

## NATIONAL E-ASSESSMENT CENTRE (NEAC)

**Current context:** FinMin Nirmala Sitharaman is to inaugurate National e-Assessment Centre (NeAC).

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SCHEME

- **The National e-Assessment Centre (NeAC)** is launched for better taxpayer service and promotion of ease of doing business.
- NeAC, **an Income tax department,** will avoid **face-to-face interaction between taxpayers and tax officials** and shall impart greater efficiency, transparency and accountability in the assessment process.
- The step will reduce taxpayer grievances in line with the prime minister's vision of 'Digital India'.
- As per the new system, the taxpayers will receive notices with real-time by way of SMS, on their registered e-mails and accounts web portal www.incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in.
- Replies to the notices can be sent by email to the NeAC by uploading the same on the portal.

## INDIA RECEIVED ITS 1ST RAFALE FIGHTER JETS

**Current context:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh received the set of Rafale fighter jets from France on behalf of the Indian Air Force (IAF) on 8th October 2019.

### KEY FACTS

- India had signed an agreement **worth Rs 59,000 crore with France in September 2016** for the procurement of **36 Rafale fighter jets.**
- This was the formal handover ceremony and the **1st batch of 4 Rafale jets will fly in India by May 2020** and the other sets are expected to arrive by **September 2022.**
- The Rafale is a twin-jet fighter aircraft and is capable of doing operations from both an aircraft carrier and a shore base.
- It can carry out almost all combat aviation missions of in-depth strikes, anti-ship strikes, air defence, close air support, and nuclear deterrence.
- In **2004**, the Rafale entered into the service with the **French Navy.**
- The 1st Rafale jet will have the **tail number RB 001,** where RB demotes the initials of **Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Bhadauria** who has played a big role in getting the deal.

## NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSICS

**Current context:** The Nobel Prize 2019 for Physics has been announced on 8th October 2019.

### DETAILS

- The prize is given to three scientists **Michel Mayor, James Peebles and Didier Queloz.**
- The award is given for their contribution to the **understanding of the evolution of the universe and earth's place in the cosmos.**
- The award is divided into 2 parts:
  1. **One half of the award** was given to **James Peebles** for theoretical discoveries in physical cosmology.
  2. The **other half of the award** is given jointly to **Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz** for the discovery of an exoplanet orbiting a solar-type star (An exoplanet is a planet outside the solar system).
- A **gold medal, 9-million kronor cash award and a diploma** would be shared between the three and is given at a ceremony in Stockholm on 10th December.
- The award was announced by **Prof. Goran Hansson,** secretary-general of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.
- This was the **113th Nobel Prize in Physics** awarded since **1901.**

## WORLD POST DAY

**Current context:** The World Post Day is being observed on 9th October 2019.

### UNION POSTAL UNION

- **1969 Universal Postal Congress in Tokyo,** declared the Ninth of October as the World Post Day to mark the **anniversary of the Universal Postal Union's (UPU)** creation in 1874.
- The union aimed to maintain a free flow of international mail around the world.
- The **aim** of the day is to bring awareness to the Post's role in the everyday lives of people and their contribution to global social and economic development.
- The UPU organises an **international letter writing competition** on the day for young people.
- The establishment of **UPU in 1874** opened the way for uninterrupted postal service and later in **1948, the UPU become an agency of the United Nations.**

## GOVT. ANNOUNCED 5% DA FOR CENTRAL EMPLOYEES

**Current context:** The government in its Cabinet meeting on 9th October 2019, has announced 5% Dearness Allowance for Central Government employees and pensioners.

### KEY FACTS

- It will benefit 50 lakh Central Government employees and 65 lakh, pensioners.
- The DA is added as a Diwali gift from government and will be **paid from July 2019.**
- The government has also sanctioned a relief package for 5,300 **displaced Kashmiri families** in which they will be **given 5.5 lakh rupees per family.**

- The Union cabinet has also decided to relax the date for mandatory requirement of Aadhaar seeding for release of benefits under **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PMKSN)** till 30th November 2019.
- The scheme provides income support of **Rs 6,000 per year to landholding families** and the amount is released in 4 instalments of Rs 2000 each.

## INNOVATION LEARNING PROGRAMME, DHRUV

**Current context:** The **Pradhan Mantri Innovation Learning Programme, DHRUV** was launched by the Union Minister for Human Resources Development Ramesh Pokhariyal Nishank on 10th October 2019.

### SALIENT FEATURES OF DHRUV

- The programme is **started at the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** and will **conclude on 24th of this month at IIT, Delhi.**
- It **aims** to provide skills and knowledge of the students, sharpen innovative imagination to make them capable of bringing solutions to socio-economic, political and environmental issues in the country.
- Under the DHRUV programme, **60 talented students will be chosen from Science, Mathematics and Performing Arts** and they will be mentored in the centre of excellence for 14 days so that they can reach their full potential.
- The programme will conduct workshop seminar and facilitate interaction with experts to discuss on National concern like **climate change agricultural production and technology.**

## DISASTER WARNING DEVICE LAUNCHED BY THE GOVERNMENT

**Current context:** The **Ministry of Earth Science** has launched a device named **GEMINI** to provide information related to disaster warnings to **fishermen.**

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- GEMINI stands for **Gagan Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information.**
- The device will provide information about:
  1. Emergency information and communication on disaster warnings
  2. Potential Fishing Zones, PFZ
  3. The Ocean States Forecasts to fishermen
- It will transfer and receive information/data from **GAGAN (GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation) satellite** to a mobile through Bluetooth Communication.
- The device is developed by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (**INCOIS**) which is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), and Airports Authority of India (**AAI**).

- **PFZ forecasts** was launched by the Ministry that will provide advisories to fishermen along the coast three days in advance.

## MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

**Current context:** The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship along with IIM Bangalore has launched the Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Programme.

### ABOUT MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

- This is a **two-year fellowship programme** to boost skill development at the district level.
- The programme is designed under the **Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP)** which is World Bank loan assisted project for skill development.
- It **aims** to address the challenge of non-availability of personnel for implementation of various programmes at state, district and National levels. It will blend the academic programme with the component of field immersion at the district level.
- The students are made to work with the district administration for strengthening the process of skilling to create a vibrant local district economy.
- The **MGNF programme** will provide the students an in-built component of on-ground practical experience with the district administration.
- It is launched in **75 districts** across Gujarat, Karnataka, and Uttarakhand etc. on a **pilot basis.**
- The **eligible students** should be :
  1. In 21-30 years age-group
  2. Have a graduation degree from a recognized university
  3. Is a citizens of India
  4. Have Proficiency in official language of state

## 'GARBAGE CAFE' IN CHHATTISGARH'S AMBIKAPUR

**Current context:** Ambikapur city of Chhattisgarh has commenced the first-of-its-kind 'Garbage Cafe'.

### KEY FACTS

- The 'Garbage Cafe' is run by the **Ambikapur municipal corporation** and the café provides free food in exchange for one kilogram of plastic.
- The Unique programme is open to everyone and the poor people and rag pickers are benefitted the most.
- Health Minister of Chhattisgarh **T. S. Singh Deo** has inaugurated the café on 9th October 2019.
- The breakfast will be provided only with half a kilogram of plastic, brought to the cafe.
- The collected plastic waste will be sold at **Solid-Liquid Resources Management Centre** which will then be turned into granules and will then be used in the construction of roads in the city.

- **Ambikapur** is the **first dustbin-free city of Chattisgarh** and was ranked as the **2nd cleanest city in the country in Swachhata rankings.**

## NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE

**Current context:** The Nobel Prize 2019 and 2018 in literature has been announced on 10th October 2019.

### DETAILS

- The Nobel Prize 2019 has been given to **Austrian author Peter Handke** and the Nobel Prize 2018 to **Polish writer Olga Tokarczuk.**
- **Peter Handke** was awarded the prize for his work that linguistic ingenuity has explored the periphery and the specificity of human experience.
- "Short Letter, Long Farewell" and "A Sorrow Beyond Dreams" are some notable works of Handke.
- **Olga Tokarczuk** was awarded the prize for a narrative imagination that with encyclopaedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life.
- "The Journey of the People of the Book, was her first novel and was released in 1993.
- Tokarczuk has also won **Booker International Prize** for her 2007 novel **"Flights".**
- Out of 116 literature laureates honoured since 1901, **Tokarczuk is the 15th woman** to have won the prestigious distinction.
- 2018 Nobel Prize in literature was delayed by a year following a scandal that included allegations of sexual misconduct.

## SURAKSHIT MATRITVA AASHWASAN, SUMAN LAUNCHED

**Current context:** Ministry of Health and Family has launched Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan, SUMAN, initiative on 10th October 2019.

### KEY FEATURES

- The initiative is launched at the 13th Conference of Central Council of Health and Family Welfare.
- Under the **SUMAN scheme,** pregnant women, mothers up to 6 months after delivery, and all sick new-borns will be able to **avail free healthcare benefits.**
- In order to end all preventable maternal and newborn deaths, the initiative aims to provide quality health service at no cost for denial of services for every woman and newborn visiting the public health facility.
- Free transport from home to health institutions is also provided under the scheme.
- The step has been taken to reduce the maternal mortality and child mortality in the country

- Several **free services** are also entitled for **beneficiaries visiting public health facilities**, that include:
  1. At least four antenatal check-ups that also includes one checkup during the 1st trimester
  2. At least one checkup under Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan
  3. Iron Folic Acid supplementation
  4. Tetanus diptheria injection
  5. Other components of comprehensive ANC package
  6. Six home-based newborn care visits

## 9TH RCEP INTERSESSIONAL MINISTERIAL MEETING

**Current context:** Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is to attend the 9th RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) Intersessional Ministerial Meeting.

### ABOUT REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP (RCEP)

- The RCEP meeting is beginning from 11th October at **Bangkok, Thailand.**
- This is the last ministerial meeting before the **3rd Leaders' Summit** slated which will be held on 4th November in **Bangkok.**
- The 28th round of negotiations for RCEP was concluded at **Da Nang, Vietnam** this year
- The RCEP negotiations were launched by leaders from:
  1. **10 ASEAN member states-** the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Brunei Darussalam and Cambodia.
  2. **6 ASEAN FTA partners-** India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia, People's Republic of China and New Zealand.
- RCEP was commenced in **2013** with the **objective** is to achieve mutually beneficial economic partnership agreement among the ASEAN member states and ASEAN's FTA partners.

## PRESIDENT'S COLOURS TO THE ARMY AVIATION CORPS

**Current context:** President Ram Nath Kovind has presented the President's Colours to the Army Aviation Corps (AAC) in Nashik.

### ABOUT PRESIDENT'S COLOURS

- The president awarded the **Colours** during the ceremony at the **Combat Army Aviation Training School.**
- **President's Colours** is an acknowledgement of the meritorious service rendered by the Army Aviation Corps over the years.
- The Army Aviation Corps has been conferred with 2 Maha Vir Chakra, 115 Sena Medals, 16 Vir Chakra, 13 Shaurya Chakra and 45 Mention in Despatches.

- President Kovind also inaugurated the **Rudranaad Museum at the School of Artillery in Deolali.** The artillery regimental museum displays vintage war machines, historical information and artifacts.
- The president himself is the **supreme commander** of the armed forces.

## SARAS AAJEEVIKA MELA

**Current context:** SARAS Aajeevika Mela is being organised by the **Ministry of Rural Development** at India Gate Lawns from 10th October to 23rd October 2019.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The SARAS initiative is undertaken by the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission** (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD).
- The marketing arm of the Ministry, **Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)** is administering the Mela.
- The **objective** of the Mela is to bring the rural women Self Help Groups (SHGs) formed with the support of DAY-NRLM, under one platform to showcase their products, sell and help them build linkages with bulk buyers.
- With the Mela initiative, the rural SHG women will get national-level exposure to understand the demand and taste of urban customers.
- The Mela is underway **at India Gate Lawns in New Delhi** and nearly 500 rural SHG craftswomen from 29 States and UTs will show-case products of a varied range.
- The products include handicrafts, a food court with regional cuisines, handlooms and natural food products.

## MOBILE APP, "MHARIYALI" LAUNCHED

**Current context:** Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has launched the mobile app, "mHariyali", on 11th October 2019.

### HARYALI MAHOTSAV

- The mobile app, "**mHariyali**" has been launched for **'Environment Protection in Government Colonies'.**
- The app is **aimed** to encourage Public engagement in planting trees and other such Green drives.
- Facilities provided through the app include:
  1. The app provides the facility to link/upload the information/photos of any plantation done by people and it will be displayed on the website www.epgc.gov.in.
  2. The App provides for automatic **geo-tagging of plants.**
  3. This app will also enable nodal officers to periodically monitor the plantation.
- **"Haryali Mahotsav",** a mass plantation drive was launched in San Martin Park, Chanakyapuri on 28th July 2019 by Secretary HUA in which approx 500 plants were planted.

- 25 Rain Water Harvesting structures were constructed and 307 systems were augmented.

## GEM SIGNS MOU WITH UNION BANK OF INDIA

**Current context:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Government e-Marketplace (GeM) and Union Bank of India (UBI) on 10th October 2019.

### ABOUT GOVERNMENT E- MARKETPLACE

- The MoU will offer **paperless, cashless and transparent payment and procurement system** for government entities on the GeM portal.
- As per the MOU, the **Union Bank of India will offer** services including:
  1. Transfer of funds through GeM Pool Accounts (GPA)
  2. Advising of Performance Bank Guarantees (e-PBG)
  3. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) to the registered users on the GeM portal
- GeM has already signed MoU with **14 Public Sector and private banks** to enable online integration for payments and various banking services.
- GeM through MoU with **TReDs and SIDBI** provide invoice financing and Bill Discounting to the MSMEs registered on GeM.
- **GeM** is a one stop platform for **online procurement of goods and services** required by various government departments, Public Sector Units etc. in a transparent manner.

## 2ND EDITION OF COORDINATED PATROL (CORPAT)

**Current context:** The 2nd edition of the Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) between the navies of India and Bangladesh is commenced in Northern Bay of Bengal on 10th October 2019.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **BNS Ali Haider, BNS Shadinota** from Bangladesh and **INS Ranvijay** (a guided-missile destroyer) and **INS Kuthar** (an indigenously built missile Corvette) from India will participate in the exercise.
- The exercise will be followed by the maiden edition at Visakhapatnam between 12th to 16th October.
- In the current edition, mutual cooperation whilst patrolling near the **International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL)** will be practised.
- The Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) exercise was commenced in **2018** and aims at the development of mutual communication and sharing of best practices between the navies of India and Bangladesh.
- India and Bangladesh share a common territorial boundary of **over 4000 km** and a maritime boundary.

## NOBEL PRIZE FOR CHEMISTRY 2019

**Current context:** The **Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences** has announced the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2019 on 9th October 2019.

### DETAILS

- The 2019 Nobel Prize for Chemistry is given to three scientists **Stanley Whittingham, John Goodenough and Akira Yoshino.**
- The three scientists have been jointly awarded the coveted prize for their **development of lithium-ion batteries.**
- They laid the foundation of a wireless and fossil-fuel-free society, taking a step for making a rechargeable world.
- **John Goodenough** (from University of Texas) is the **oldest laureate ever** awarded a Nobel Prize.
- The foundation of the lithium-ion battery was laid during the **oil crisis in the 1970s.**
- **Stanley Whittingham** started to research superconductors and discovered an extremely energy-rich material made from titanium disulphide having far greater potential.
- **John Goodenough** replaced the cathode in the Lithium-ion battery made of metal sulphide by using a metal oxide to make more powerful batteries.
- **Akira Yoshino** created the first commercially viable lithium-ion battery in **1985**. He used petroleum coke, instead of reactive lithium in the anode, that resulted in a battery that could be charged hundreds of times before its performance deteriorated.

## DHARMA GUARDIAN – 2019

**Current context:** DHARMA GUARDIAN-2019, **Joint Military Exercise** between **India and Japan** is scheduled to be conducted at Vairengte, Mizoram from 19th October to 2nd November 2019.

### ABOUT EXERCISE DHARMA GUARDIAN

- The **aim of the exercise** is to share experience gained during various Counter Terrorism Operations with each other.
- 25 soldiers from each country would be teamed for the **Indian Army and Japanese Ground Self Defence Forces (JGSDF)**, to participate in the exercise.
- DHARMA GUARDIAN exercise is being conducted in **India since 2018** and is an annual training event.
- The scope of the exercise covers counter terrorism operations in **jungle and urban scenario** which is a major security challenges faced by both the nations in the backdrop of global terrorism.

## 10TH RASHTRIYA SANSKRITI MAHOTSAV

**Current context:** The 10th Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav is being inaugurated on 14th October 2019 at **Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh** by the **Ministry of Culture** from 14th to 21st October 2019.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MAHOTSAV

- The Mahotsav is organised under the **Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat initiative** in Madhya Pradesh
- Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav is the **flagship and premier festival of Ministry of Culture,** launched in the **year 2015.**
- The intent of the government is to showcase the **rich cultural heritage of the Country** in all forms i.e. Painting, Sculpture, Handicrafts, Cuisine, and Performing Arts-Folk, Tribal & Classical.
- It will cover a profusion of folk art forms from 22 States and will offer the chance to experience cultural virtuosity to the people-especially the youth.
- The **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat programme** was launched on 31st October, **2016** with the aim to promote engagement and enhance mutual understanding amongst the people of different States/UTs for securing a strong cultural bond.

## 2ND INDIA-CHINA INFORMAL SUMMIT

**Current context:** The 2nd India-China Informal Summit held between the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and President of the People's Republic of China Mr Xi Jinping in Chennai, India.

### ABOUT THE SUMMIT

- The summit took place on **11th and 12th October 2019** at the ancient port town of **Mamallapuram** near Chennai.
- The two Leaders have decided to designate 2020 as **Year of India-China Cultural and People to People Exchanges.**
- The **70th anniversary of the establishment of India-China relations in 2020** will be fully utilized to deepen exchanges at all levels including between their respective legislatures, political parties, cultural and youth organizations and militaries.
- Both the countries agreed to establish sister-state relations between **Tamil Nadu and Fujian Province** which is the link of the age-old commercial and people-to-people contacts between the countries.
- The informal meeting advocated for open and inclusive rule based multilateral trade arrangements that will benefit all countries.
- Both agreed to work on additional Confidence Building Measures to resolve the border issue permanently.
- The **first Informal Summit in Wuhan,** China in April 2018.

## 2019 FIRST GLOBAL DXB CHALLENGE

**Current context: Dubai** will host the 2019 First Global DXB Challenge, which is scheduled to be held 24th to 27th October 2019.

### ABOUT 2019 FIRST GLOBAL DXB CHALLENGE

- The **2019 First Global DXB Challenge** is a large gathering for creative young minds in the fields of robotics and artificial intelligence.
- It **aims** to address the world's most critical environmental issues such as pollution, wastage of water, sustainability etc.
- More than 1,500 youth from over 191 countries will participate in the challenge, having passion for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- The competition is organised by the **Dubai Future Foundation** and the **theme is 'Ocean Opportunities'.**
- The participating team will be given a **robotic kit** and is tasked with assembling a robot able to address various issues related to ocean and marine life.

## MOUS SIGNED BETWEEN INDIA AND SIERRA LEONE

**Current context:** Vice President, M. Venkaiah Naidu on his visit to Sierra Leone has signed 6 agreements with **Mr Julius Maada Bio**, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- This is the first-ever visit of an Indian Vice President to the **African Nation,** Sierra Leone.
- The major agreements signed are:
  1. India will establish a **High Commission** in Sierra Leone.
  2. Both the countries have agreed to enhance cooperation in Information Technology, infrastructure development, agriculture, food processing and capacity building.
  3. Both decided to build on the existing cooperation at **UNSC** (UN Security Council).
  4. India announced a **Line of Credit of $ 30 million** by signing an agreement with the EXIM bank for Irrigation development in Tomabum for rice production.
  5. India has extended **e-Visa facility** to Sierra Leone nationals for ease of mobility.
- India was among the first countries to contribute to the **UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)** with the deployment of the 4000 strong Indian Military contingents.
- India has so far provided the developmental assistance of about $ 217.5 million to Sierra Leone for various sectors including water resources, agriculture, energy and telecommunication.

## BANGLADESH BECOMES 2ND FASTEST GROWING ECONOMY

**Current context:** As per the World Bank report, Bangladesh has become the 2nd fastest growing economy in South Asia after **Bhutan.**

### KEY FACTS

- The World Bank released the report **'South Asia Economic Focus, Making (De) Centralization Work'** on 13th October 2019.
- The report shows that the GDP growth rate of Bangladesh is projected to be **7.2% for the FY 2019 and 7.3% for FY 2020.**
- It also reported that the economic growth will be supported by robust macroeconomic framework, strong public investments and political stability.
- Bangladesh has reduced the **current account deficit of $15.5 billion in 2018** by rising export and remittances.
- The report listed low deposit growth rate, rising bad loans along with low credibility of Letter of credit guarantees in the international market, as the cause for vulnerability in the financial sector.
- The **garment industry of Bangladesh** has benefited from the trade tensions between the United States and China, as per the report and thus the country industrial sector will remains strong in future.

## INDIA-NETHERLANDS BILATERAL TIES

**Current context: King of the Netherlands Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima** came to India on a 5-day visit, at the invitation of Indian President Ram Nath Kovind.

### SALIENT HIGHLIGHTS

- India and the Netherlands have a **bilateral trade turnover of USD 12.87 billion (2018-2019).**
- The Netherlands is **India's 4th largest trading partner in the European Union** with a cumulative investment of $ 23 billion for the period 2000 to 2017 (Dec).
- Dutch companies have a global name in the fields of **port development, agriculture, waste management and urban planning.** President invited Dutch companies to partner India in its growth story.
- Netherlands has supported India's membership to the different **Export Control Regimes** and has claimed for a **permanent seat in the UNSC.**
- King Willem-Alexander's trip would be **his first state visit to India,** following his ascension to the throne in 2013.

## AIR INDIA: 1ST AIRLINE TO USE TAXIBOT

**Current context: Air India** has become the **first airline in the world** to use a Taxibot.

### ABOUT TAXIBOT

- Taxibot is a robot-used aircraft tractor for taxiing an aircraft from parking bay to runway and vice-versa.
- The taxibot was used on an **A-320 aircraft** with passengers on board.
- The bot was flagged off by Air India Chairman and Managing Director **Ashwani Lohani,** at Terminal 3 of the **Delhi Airport - to Mumbai.**
- It is the first such usage on any Airbus aircraft worldwide.
- It is a step towards a cleaner environment and brings down the consumption of fuel by 85%.

## RBI GUIDELINES ON 'ON TAP' AUTHORISATION ON PAYMENT SYSTEMS

**Current context:** RBI has issued guidelines on **'on tap' authorisation of payment systems** on 15th October 2019.

### RBI GUIDELINES

- The **aim** is to encourage innovation and competition.
- RBI has decided to offer on-tap authorisation for:
  1. **Bharat Bill Payment Operating Unit (BBPOU)** - Entities who are desirous to operate or provide platforms for BBPOU, should have a **100 crore rupees** net worth and should be maintained at all times.
  2. **Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS)** - the minimum paid up equity capital should be **25 crore rupees.**
  3. **White Label ATMs (WLAs)** - The minimum net worth for entities should be **100 crore rupees.**
- The authorisation is given based on:
  1. Merits of the proposal
  2. Reserve Bank's assessment of the potential for additional entities in that segment.

## BOOKER PRIZE 2019

**Current context: Bernardine Evaristo and Margaret Atwood** have jointly won the 2019 Booker Prize.

### 2019 BOOKER PRIZE

- Both the winners were at the **tie** and the award was jointly shared by the two.

- As per the existing rules of the Booker's Prize, the prize must not be divided between the winners i.e. there must be a **single winner of the Prize.**
- The rule was made during the last tie in 1992.
- But the judges said, they could not separate **Atwood's - 'The Testament' and 'Girl, Woman, other' by Evaristo,** who is the first black woman to win the prestigious award since its inception.
- After deliberations, the chairman of the five-member judging panel, Peter Florence, said to flout the rules.
- British Indian novelist **Salman Rushdie's book 'Quichotte'** was among the six books shortlisted for the prize.
- Rushdie was shortlisted for the 5th time for the award including the 1981 win where he bagged the award for **"Midnight's Children".**

## BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL SERIES 2019

**Current context:** Bahrain International Series 2019 (**Badminton**) was held at **Isa Town, Bahrain** from 9th to 13th October.

### KEY POINTS

- **Priyanshu Rajawat** clinched the men's singles title at the Bahrain International Series Badminton.
- He has defeated **Jason Anthony Ho-Shue** from Canada in the finals from 16-21, 21-7, 21-12.
- Indian mixed double pair of **Juhi Dewangan and Venkat Gaurav Prasad** also finished with the gold.
- They defeated Thailand's **Pannawat Theerapanitnun and Kanyanat Sudchoeichom** from 21-18, 21-16 in 34 minutes.
- **Ira Sharma finished** second best in the **women's singles title** at the Bahrain International Series Badminton.
- Men's doubles pair of **Rohan Kapoor and Saurabh Sharma** were the at the runner-up position.

## 2ND PHASE OF LOTUS-HR LAUNCHED

**Current context:** The 2nd Phase of the **Local Treatment of Urban Sewage Streams for Healthy Reuse,** LOTUS-HR was launched by the Union Minister Harsh Vardhan in New Delhi on 14th October.

### ABOUT LOTUS-HR

- **LOTUS-HR** is a water laboratory that aims to produce clean water through a holistic waste-water management approach that can be reused for various purposes.
- The LOTUS-HR initiative is jointly supported by **Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research** and the **Department of Biotechnology,** the Ministry of Science and Technology.

- A 200 m2 test site has been constructed on the **Barapullah drain,** which is one of the main water transport ways in New Delhi and collects water from smaller water drains from all over the city, to dump into Yamuna.
- The 2nd phase of the India-Netherland Joint initiative LOTUS-HR was launched during the 5 day visit of the Dutch Royal Couple Netherlands King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima to India.
- The project was set up at the **Sun Dial Park in New Delhi in 2017.**

## NOBEL PRIZE FOR ECONOMICS 2019

**Current Context:** The 2019 Nobel Prize for Economics has been jointly given to **Michael Kremer of the United States, Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo.**

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee** is an **Indian-American** and **Esther Duflo** is his wife.
- The award was given by the Nobel committee for their experimental approach to **alleviating global poverty** and providing new ways to fight against it.
- Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee studied at the University of Calcutta, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Harvard University (where he received his PhD in 1988). He is currently the professor of economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Some of the major achievements of Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee are:
- Abhijit Banerjee founded the **Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) in 2003** to make research on the poverty scenario around the globe.
- He is the author of the book **"Poor Economics"** which won the Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year.
- He has served on the **U.N. Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons** on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
- He is a past president of the Bureau for the Research in the **Economic Analysis of Development.**
- A Research Associate of the **NBER**, a **CEPR** research fellow, International Research Fellow of the **Kiel Institute.**
- A fellow of the **American Academy of Arts and Sciences** and the **Econometric Society.**
- An Alfred P. Sloan Fellow and a winner of the **Infosys Prize.**

## KIRAN UNIYAL CREATED INDIVIDUAL GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

**Current context:** Kiran Uniyal, wife of an Indian Army Colonel, has created Individual Guinness World Records for:

1. The most **full contact knee strikes** of 263 strike in 3 minutes, (**one leg**) (female).
2. The most **full contact knee strikes** of 120 strikes, **alternate legs** in 1 minute(female).

### ABOUT KIRAN UNIYAL

- She surpassed the existing 226 knee strikes record of male category record in the most full contact knee strikes for 3 minutes.
- She has so far achieved **15 World Records,** including 10 Guinness World Records in Martial Arts, Social Work and Fitness.
- Kiran Uniyal created her **1st Individual Guinness World Record** for "The most full contact elbow strikes (466 strikes) (one hand) in 3 minutes.

## J.P.S. CHAWLA ASSUMES CHARGE AS NEW CGA

**Current context: J.P.S. Chawla** assumed charge as the new **Controller General of Accounts** (CGA), Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.

### KEY POINTS

- J. P. S. Chawla is a 1985-batch **Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS) Officer,** officiating as CGA with effect from **1st September 2019.**
- He has replaced **Girraj Prasad Gupta.**
- He has also served on deputation with 1. The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and served as Director (Finance) in the 2. Indraprastha Power Generation Company Limited (IPGCL) and Pragati Power Limited (PPL).
- Prior to assuming the charge of CGA, he has served as **Principal Chief Controller of Accounts,** Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC).
- He also played a key role in the integration of the **IGST refund payment network** of CBIC with the Public Financial Management System (PFMS).

## WORLD FOOD DAY

**Current context:** The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan launched a various initiative on the **World Food Day** which was observed on **16th October.**

### SIGNIFICANCE

- The initiatives include Food Safety Mitra Scheme, Eat Right Jacket and Eat Right Jhola.
- **Food Safety Mitra Scheme (FSM):** The scheme is introduced by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (**FSSAI**) with the aim to engage motivated individuals with the food safety ecosystem at ground level.
- A FSM is an individual professional (**Digital Mitra, Trainer Mitra and Hygiene Mitra**), certified by FSSAI, who will assist in compliances related to FSS Act, Rules & Regulations.
- **Eat Right Smart Jacket:** is to give an identity to FSSAI staff with a software embedded with a RFID tag, to capture entry of inspection staff into premise for monitoring.

- **'Eat Right Jhola':** is a reusable cloth bag to replace plastic bags for grocery shopping in various retail chains.
- **World Food Day** is observed to dedicate and commit people around the world to eradicate global hunger.

## CBIC LAUNCHED PROGRAMME TO ATTRACT INVESTMENTS INTO INDIA

**Current context: Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs** (CBIC) has launched a revamped programme to attract investments into India.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Under the revamped scheme, the government has streamlined the existing provisions for manufacturing goods in a custom bonded warehouse under the **bond scheme, of Customs Act, 1962.**
- Now importers can import both input material and capital goods and carry out manufacturing activity at the **Customs bonded warehouse.**
- The manufactured goods will be free from payment of any kind of duty or interest if they are exported.
- It will **improve** the liquidity of the companies, make Indian export price competitive in the international market, promote investments in India and enhance ease of doing business.
- CBIC has launched a **dedicated microsite** https://www.investindia.gov.in/bonded-manufacturing in collaboration with **Invest India** to provide information about the scheme.
- **Section 65 of the Customs Act, 1962** allows manufacturing activity in a customs bonded warehouse.

## INDIA INNOVATION INDEX 2019

**Current context:** NITI Aayog has released the **India Innovation Index (III) 2019,** with **Institute for Competitiveness** as the knowledge partner.

### KEY FINDINGS OF INDEX

- The top ten states in the **overall ranking** of the index are (mainly concentrated in southern and western India):
  1. **Karnataka (topped the Index)**
  2. Tamil Nadu
  3. Maharashtra
  4. Telangana
  5. Haryana
  6. Kerala
  7. Uttar Pradesh
  8. West Bengal
  9. Gujarat
  10. Andhra Pradesh

- The index **aims** to benchmark the performance of **29 state and 7 Union territories** with each other through a holistic tool to identify challenges in the economic growth and promote competitive federalism.
- The states are bifurcated into **three categories:**
  1. Major states
  2. North-east, and hill states
  3. Union territories/city states/small states.
- The index is calculated as the average of **2 dimensions:**
  1. **Enablers:** Human Capital, Investment, Knowledge Workers, Business Environment, and Safety and Legal Environment.
  2. **Performance:** Knowledge Output and Knowledge Diffusion
- **Karnataka** ranked at the number one position in the **overall ranking.**
- Among the category of **major states, Maharashtra** performs the best in the dimension of Enablers. **Sikkim** took the top spots among the **northeastern & hill states,** and **Delhi** among the **union territories/city states/small states.**

## JOINT EXERCISE EX-EASTERN BRIDGE-V

**Current context:** EX-EASTERN BRIDGE-V, the **joint exercise between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO),** has started from 17th October till 26th October 2019.

### ABOUT EX-EASTERN BRIDGE-V

- The joint exercise will be conducted at Air Force Base **Masirah in Oman.**
- The last exercise, EX-EASTERN BRIDGE-IV between the two countries was held **in 2017 at Jamnagar.**
- From India**, MiG-29 fighter aircraft** will participate in the exercise and this is the first time it is participating in an International Exercise outside India.
- The IAF contingent comprises of **MiG-29 and C-17 aircraft.**
- The **aim of the exercise** is to enhance inter-operability during mutual operations between the two Air Forces and learn each other's best practices.

## RIL BECAME 1ST INDIAN COMPANY TO HIT RS 9 LAKH CRORE M-CAP MARK

**Current context:** The **Reliance Industries Limited** (RIL) become the first Indian company to cross the Rs 9 lakh crore of **market capitalization.**

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The RIL shares rose nearly **2%** in Friday trading session to hit Rs1,423 whereas, India's benchmark Sensex Index rose 0.5% or 200 points to hit 39,252 points.

- According to **Bank of America Merrill Lynch** RIL can become the first Indian company to achieve a market capitalisation of **$200 billion in the next two years.**
- After RIL, **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** is India's second most valued firm in India with market capitalization of Rs 7,69,483 crore.
- RIL was also the first company to reach **Rs 8 lakh crore mark in August 2018** and hit the **$100 billion mark in market-cap in 2007.**

## IMF DOWNGRADES INDIA'S GROWTH PROJECTION TO 6.1%

**Current context:** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has slashed India's GDP growth projection for the year 2019 to **6.1%.**

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

- In the IMF's World Economic Outlook report released on 15th October 2019, IMF has **downgraded** India's growth projection by **1.2% from its April projections.**
- India suffered the sharpest cut, next only to **Saudi Arabia,** which saw a cut of 1.7 percentage points in the growth rate.
- It has said that India is expected to pick up at **7.0% in 2020.**
- India had a real growth rate of **6.8% in 2018.**
- The world economy is expected to **grow by 3%,** marginally lower than 3.2% projected in July.
- IMF has made a similar forecast for China and India, with the projected growth rate at 6.1% for both the countries. In China, the GDP grew at 6.6% in 2018.
- **Reasons** given in the report for slowdown include:
  1. sector-specific weaknesses in the **automobile sector and real estate.**
  2. lingering uncertainty about the health of **nonbank financial companies.**

## UP GOVT ORGANIZED FIRST TRAINING PROGRAMME

**Current context:** The Culture Department of **Uttar Pradesh government** has organized the first training programme of **KHON (खोन (Ramlila** in collaboration with the **Thailand government.**

### ABOUT KHON RAMLILA

- KHON Ramlila is a masked form of **Ramlila art of Thailand.**
- After the training, the artists will perform the art at Grand Deepotsav function to be held on 26th October in Ayodhya.
- KHON Ramlila of Thailand is included in the list of **UNESCO's Intangible cultural heritage.**
- It's a form of masked dance, with no dialogues and background voice narrate the Ramayana story and artists uses golden masks to depict the scenes of Ramlila.

## INTERNATIONAL JURY OF 50TH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA (IFFI)

**Current context: John Bailey,** Cinematographer will chair the International Jury of 50th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), **Golden Jubilee edition.**

### KEY POINTS

- **Ramesh Sippy,** Filmmaker is the **Indian member in the International Jury.**
- Chinese filmmaker Mr Zhang Yang, French filmmaker Mr Robin Campillo, Ms Lynne Ramsay, British cinema will be the co-jurors.
- **Malayalam film Jallikattu** directed by **Lijo Jose Pellissery and Marathi film Mai Ghat: Crime No. 103/2005** directed by **Ananth Narayan Mahadevan** are the two Indian films competing at 50th IFFI (Golden Peacock Award.).
- The 50th IFFI 2019, will be held from 20th to 28th November in Goa.

## ZOMATO TIE UP WITH BIOD

**Current context:** The **biodiesel manufacturer BioD energy** has come into a partnership with food delivery service aggregator **Zomato.**

### KEY FACTS

- The partnership is for the purpose of collecting the **used cooking oil** from restaurants around the country and convert it into **biodiesel.**
- The biodiesel generated in the process will then be sold to the oil marketing companies to be blended with regular diesel.
- This a step in the direction of **environment friendly measure** with the aim to collect **1,000 tonnes of used cooking oil per month.**
- The cooking oil is the main culprit in the cooking industry due to the problem of its disposal and there is no traceability of how the oil is disposed.
- Also, very few vendors follow the techniques of oil disposal set by the Food safety and Standard Authority of India (**FSSAI**).
- The project is initiated in **Delhi NCR region** and Zomato will expand the collection drive to 5 cities by next month.

## NO MDR ON DIGITAL PAYMENT TO LARGE FIRMS

**Current context:** The government has made changes in the **charges put on digital payment to a large firm** by customers or merchants.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The government has said that banks or system providers **will not impose Merchant Discount Rates (MDR) on customers/merchants on digital payment to large firms** having a turnover in excess of **Rs 50 crore.**
- The directive will come into effect from **1st November 2019.**
- FinMin Nirmala Sitharaman had said in her Budget speech that large business firms with annual turnover of more than 50 crore should offer low cost digital payment modes to their customers.
- Amendments have been made into the **Income Tax Act** as well as the **Payment and Settlement System Act 2007** to enact the new provisions.

## SEBI NORMS DEALING WITH AUDITOR RESIGNATION

**Current context:** The Security and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has tightened the disclosure norms dealing with **resignations of statutory auditors in listed companies.**

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- As per the new norm, if the **auditor resigns within 45days from the end of the quarter** in a Financial Year, the auditor has to issue the audit report for such a quarter before the resignation.
- Resigning after **45days of the quarter** will require the auditor to issue the audit report for such a quarter as well.
- The auditor shall have to issue the **audit report for the last quarter** before resignation if he has signed the audit report for the **first three quarters of a financial year.**
- SEBI has said that in case of non-availability of information or non-cooperation by the management in the audit process, the auditor should approach the chairman of the audit committee.
- The step is taken in the view of many instances of auditors resigning in an abrupt manner.

## G20 OKAYAMA HEALTH MINISTERS' MEETING

**Current context:** The **G20 Okayama Health Ministers' Meeting** was held under the Presidency of Japan in **Okayama City, Japan** on 19th-20th October 2019.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan attended the Minister's Meeting from India.
- He highlighted India's Vision for its projected 20% elderly population by 2050, mentioned the public health measures being taken to tackle dementia in India, Ayushman Bharat, FIT India Movement and Eat Right Campaign.

- The deliberations of the G 20 Health Ministers focused on **four major global health issues:**
  1. Achievement of Universal Health Coverage
  2. Response to population aging
  3. Management of health risks
  4. Health security management including Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR)
- The G20 Health Ministers meeting concluded by adopting the **"Okayama Declaration of the G 20 Health Ministers".** The declaration endorses the Commitment of G20 countries to address the major global health issues, towards an inclusive and sustainable world.
- G20 members have committed to continue this dialogue during the upcoming G20 presidency in Saudi Arabia.

## DNA TECHNOLOGY REGULATION BILL

**Current context:** The DNA Technology Regulation Bill has been referred to a **Parliamentary Standing Committee** for examination on 19th October 2019.

### FEATURES OF THE BILL

- The bill has been referred to the Standing Committee on **Science and Technology and Environment and Forests.**
- The bill seeks to control the use and application of the **Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA)** technology for establishing the identity of missing persons, suspects, offenders, victims and under-trials.
- The intended purpose of the bill is to expand the application of DNA-based forensic technologies to support and strengthen the **justice delivery system of the country,** like solving crimes and to identify missing persons etc.
- The proposed Bill will give a fillip to the development of a uniform code of practices in all laboratories involved in DNA testing throughout the country.
- The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019 was **passed by the Lok Sabha** on 8th July 2019.
- The **key components** of this Bill include:
  1. Establishment of a DNA Regulatory Board
  2. Accreditation of DNA laboratories undertaking DNA testing, analysing, etc.
  3. Establishment of the National and Regional DNA Data Banks, for forensic investigations

## 91ST INTERPOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**Current context:** India will host the **91st Interpol General Assembly in 2022** as part of celebrations of the **75th anniversary of Indian Independence.**

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **The International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol)** is an international police cooperation organisation, based in **Lyon, France.** It has 194 member states and 100 years of experience of international cooperation in policing.
- The general assembly of Interpol is an **annual exercise hosted by member countries** and all the major decisions of finances, working methods and resources needed for international cooperation are deliberated and discussed.
- **Rishi Kumar Shukla, the director of the CBI** is the representative of Interpol in India.
- He moved the proposal for hosting the 91st Interpol General Assembly in 2022, in the ongoing **88th general assembly in Santiago in Chile** and received the overwhelming support of member countries.
- India will host the General Assembly of Interpol **after 25 years since 1997.**

## FIRST ALL-FEMALE PAIRING TO SPACEWALK

**Current context:** Two female NASA astronauts, Christina Koch and Jessica Meir, became the first all-female pairing to carry out a spacewalk on 18th October 2019.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The first such mission was scheduled to take place in March but was cancelled.
- **Jessica Meir** is a marine biologist has now become the **15th Women and 228th person** in the world to conduct a spacewalk.
- This was **Christina Koch's** 4th spacewalk, who is an electrical engineer.
- The **1st women in space was Valentina Tereshkova,** Soviet cosmonaut in 1963.
- The **first woman spacewalker was Svetlana Savitskaya** (Russia) in 1982.
- The first female astronaut into space from US was in **1983** and has now had more women astronauts than any other country.

## KUHOO GARG-DHRUV RAWAT WON EGYPT INTERNATIONAL MIXED DOUBLES TITLE

**Current context: Kuhoo Garg and Dhruv Rawat** clinched the mixed doubles title at the **Egypt International 2019.**

### KEY POINTS

- The match was held in **Cairo, Egypt** on 20th October 2019.
- The two played against **Ahmed Salah and Hadia Hosny of Egypt,** the **second seed** in the all-Indian final.
- It was 16-21 21-19 19-21 to **third seeds Simran Singhi and Ritika Thaker.**

- And win over **fourth seeds Koceila Mammeri and Linda Mazri of Algeria** in the semi-final.
- At the **Dubai International Challenge, Rituparna Das** was defeated to Japan's World No. 208 **Mako Urushizaki.**

## PM MODI MEETS THE DELEGATION OF USISPF

**Current context:** PM Modi meet the delegation of **US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF)** on 21st October 2019 in New Delhi.

### ABOUT USISPF

- The delegation was led by **USISPF Chairman John Chambers.**
- The delegation talked about the measures to strengthen the capabilities of Indian Economy that includes:
  1. Evolving start-up ecosystem in the country,
  2. Highlighting the entrepreneurial risk taking capacity of India's youth.
  3. Ease of doing business
  4. Government steps taken to boost innovation potential
  5. Solving problems using technology
- The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (**USISPF**) was **established in 2017** with the **objective** of creating meaningful opportunities of entrepreneurship, employment-creation, and innovation for the citizens of both the countries and to strengthen their economic and commercial ties.

## DAC APPROVED INDIGENOUS MILITARY EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT

**Current context:** The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved the procurement of indigenously developed military equipment **worth Rs 3300 crore for the armed forces.**

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The approval has been given for **three projects:**
  1. The first project is third-generation **Anti-Tank Guided Missiles.**
  2. The second project is **Auxiliary Power Units** for the T-72 and T-90 tanks.
  3. The third project is the **Electronic Warfare (EW) system.**
- The third-generation Anti-Tank Guided Missiles would provide Fire and Forget and Top Attack capabilities to the troops.
- The Auxiliary Power Units would enable incorporation of various upgrades to Fire Control System and Night Fighting capabilities of the Tanks.
- Electronic Warfare systems would be designed and developed by **DRDO.**

- The step is taken towards the Make in India initiative to produce more indigenously designed and developed equipment.

## DELHI GOVERNMENT AGREED TO IMPLEMENT PM-KISAN

**Current context:** Delhi government has approved the implementation of the central scheme Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN).

### ABOUT PM-KISAN

- The PM-KISAN scheme was announced on 1st February 2019, during the interim budget presented by stand-in Finance Minister Piyush Goyal.
- The scheme **aims** to supplement the needs of the **Small and Marginal farmers** in crop production and its yield and improve their income.
- The scheme credits an amount of **Rs 6000 in 3 instalments** into farmers account through DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) i.e. **Rs 2000 in each instalment.**
- The scheme has a total budget of **Rs 75,000 crore** and covers over 1 crore small and marginal farmers.
- **West Bengal and Delhi Governments** had earlier refused to implement the scheme. But Delhi Government has now sent names of 11,000 farmers for availing the benefits.
- The scheme was first implemented by the **Telangana government as Rythu Bandhu scheme**, in which a certain amount was given to eligible farmers.

## SRI LANKA REMOVED FROM FATF'S GREY LIST

**Current context:** Srilanka has been removed from the Financial Action Task Force's grey list at the five-day plenary concluded in Paris.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- FATF has taken the decision due to new measures taken by the country on financial security against money laundering.
- Srilanka was included in the **blacklist** for the first time in **2011.**
- By 2016, the country took several measures to ensure the financial security and was declared a cooperating state in 2016.
- Following its measures, Sri Lanka was **put on a grey list from November 2017.**
- It then brought a framework to enhance the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) standard.
- In the same meeting, FATF warned Pakistan to control terror funding and avoid getting blacklisted.
- The FATF was established in **1989,** is an inter-governmental body to combat terror financing, money laundering and related financial and cybercrimes.

## ROHINGYA REFUGEES TO BE RELOCATED TO CAMP AT BHASHAN CHAR ISLAND

**Current context:** Bangladesh Refugee Commissioner Mahbub Alam Talukder, has said that the **Rohingyas** will be relocated to the **Bhashan Char Island in Bangladesh.**

### KEYS FACTS

- The Bhashan Char is an uninhabited island in **South-East Bangladesh.**
- Bhashan Char island is located on the mouth of the **river Meghna** and was formed about two decades ago.
- The relocation camp built at Bhashan Char will accommodate **about 1lakh people** and has the facilities of warehouse, embankment, etc.
- Rohingya are an **ethnic group (largely Muslims),** who moved to certain parts of India and Bangladesh from **Myanmar,** where they are classified as resident foreigners or as associate citizens.

## TRAINING OF 2ND GROUP OF NEPALESE OFFICERS AT NACIN STARTED

**Current context:** The training of 2nd group of Nepalese Govt Officers have been started at the Regional Centre of **National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN).**

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The training is given on **Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism** at NACIN Regional centre in Bengaluru.
- The course is being provided under the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** Programme of Ministry of External Affairs and is **fully supported by the Government of India.**
- The first group of 20 Nepali officers had successfully completed their training on **24th August 2019.**
- **NACIN** is the apex body of the government of India for capacity building of personals in the field of indirect taxation, service tax, customs, GST, central excise, and narcotics control administration.
- The body is administered and operated under the aegis of the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs** and provides training to the officers of the indirect taxation branch Indian Revenue Service.
- It is an accredited Regional Training Centre of **World Customs Organization for Asia/Pacific Region.**

## APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE OF CABINET (ACC)

**Current context:** The Appointments Committee of Cabinet has made new appointments and some reshufflings in multiple ministries on 22nd October 2019.

### DETAILS

- **Pankaj Kumar,** 1987 batch IAS officer is appointed as the new **CEO of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).**
- **Pramod Kumar Das** has been appointed **Minority Affairs Secretary.**
- **Rajesh Bhushan** has been appointed as **Secretary (Coordination) in the Cabinet Secretariat.**
- **Tuhin Kanta Pandey,** Odisha cadre IAS officer has been appointed as **Secretary in the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management.**
- **Braj Raj Sharma** has been appointed **Chairman of Staff Selection Commission.**
- **Sanjeev Nandan Sahai** has been appointed as the new **Power Secretary.**
- **Sanjeev Gupta** will be the **Secretary of Inter-State Council Secretariat.**
- **Sailesh** will be the **Secretary of the Department of Public Enterprises.**
- **Alok Tandon** will be **Secretary in the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.**
- **Nagendra Nath Sinha** will be the **Secretary in Department of Border Management** in the Home Ministry.

## INTERNATIONAL SNOW LEOPARD DAY

**Current context: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** has launched the **first national protocol for snow leopard** on the International Snow Leopard Day.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The International Snow Leopard Day is celebrated on **23rd October every year** with the aim to protect and conserve the snow leopards.
- The national portal is to enumerate the snow leopard population in the country.
- The protocol was launched at the **4th steering committee meeting** of the **Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP),** organized in Delhi.
- This is the **first time** that India is hosting the GSLEP. Kyrgyzstan hosted it in 2018.
- Snow leopard is listed as **endangered** under the **IUCN Red List.**
- In India, the main regions of occurrence of snow leopard are Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh and J&K.
- About 2,967 tigers reside in India, which is **77 % of the world tiger population.**

## 25 YEARS OF PULSE POLIO PROGRAMME

**Current context:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will celebrate **the Silver Jubilee of the Pulse Polio Programme on 31st October 2019.**

### PULSE POLIO PROGRAMME

- The **Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)** was launched by the **World Health Assembly (WHA) in 1988.**
- In India, the **Delhi government** had first launched the immunization programme on a **pilot basis** on **2nd October 1994** with the tagline 'Do Boond Zindagi Ki'.
- Government of India later adopted and implemented the programme as Pulse Polio Campaigns in **1995.**
- The World Health Organization gave India the **polio-free status in 2014.**

## 2024 OLYMPIC GAMES LOGO

**Current context:** The organising committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris has unveiled the logo for the 2024 Olympic Games.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Paris** will host the Olympic Games in 2024.
- The logo brings together **three iconic symbols:**
  1. The gold medal
  2. The Olympic and Paralympic flames
  3. Marianne- the personification of French Republic since the revolution in 1789
- **Pierre-Olivier Beckers-Vieujant** is the chairman of the International Olympic Committee Coordination Commission.
- **Marianne,** the female traits has been symbolised by Paris 2024 to pay tribute to a woman who is a French national symbol and embodies the revolutionary spirit that infuses the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- For the first time, the emblem will be the **same for the Olympic and Paralympic Games,** and only the Olympic rings or Paralympic agitos, which appears underneath are different.
- The logo took inspiration from **Art Deco,** the **first complete artistic movement,** which reached its height at the 1924 Games in Paris (when Paris last hosted).

## NATIONAL PANCHAYAT AWARDS 2019

**Current context:** The National Panchayat awards 2019 was conferred to Gram Panchayats by the Minstry of Panchayati Raj on 23rd October 2019 in New Delhi.

## ABOUT NATIONAL PANCHAYAT AWARDS 2019

- The awards were categorised in:
  1. **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar category-** 195 awards were conferred to Gram Panchayats
  2. **Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar category-** 20 awards were conferred to Gram Panchayats
  3. **Gram Panchayat Development Plan Award category-** 3 awards were conferred to Gram Panchayats
  4. **Child-Friendly Gram Panchayats Award-** 22 awards
  5. **e-Panchayat Puraskar category**- 6 awards
- **'Gram Manchitra' App** was also launched at the Occasion which is a **Geo-Spatial based decision support system for panchayats** and help them monitor, develop and plan developmental activities on a real time basis.
- Since **2011-12,** the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been incentivizing the best performing Panchayats.

# HINDUSTAN PETROLEUM, POWER GRID CORP GOT 'MAHARATNA' STATUS

**Current context:** The government has accorded **'Maharatna' status** to state-owned **Hindustan Petroleum and Power Grid Corporation.**

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The Department of Public Enterprises, under the **Ministry of Heavy Industry and Public Enterprises,** issued the orders to this effect on 23rd October 2019.
- With the status of 'Maharatna', the PSUs will have greater operational and financial autonomy.
- The orders will impart special powers to the PSUs Board, to take financial decisions and **the Boards of Maharatna central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) can make:**
  1. equity investments to undertake financial joint ventures and wholly owned subsidiaries.
  2. undertake mergers and acquisitions in India and abroad (limited to Rs 5,000 crore in one project, subject to a ceiling of 15% of the net worth of the CPSE).
  3. structure and implement schemes relating to personnel and human resource management and training.
  4. transfer assets, float fresh equity and divest shareholding in subsidiaries.
- **HPCL** was incorporated through the **Esso (Acquisition of Undertaking in India) Act** passed by Parliament in 1974.
- **India's largest electric power transmission utility firm,** Power Grid Corporation of India Limited was incorporated in 2007.

## GEM SIGNED MOU WITH FEDERAL BANK

**Current context:** The **Government e-Marketplace (GeM**) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **Federal Bank for Payment Services.**

### DETAILS

- The MoU has been signed to offer:
- Transfer of funds through GeM Pool Accounts (GPA)
- Advising of Performance Bank Guarantees (e-PBG) and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) to the registered users on the portal.
- The MoU will provide an efficient **procurement system** for the government with the cashless and paperless transfer.
- Government launched GeM portal in **August 2016** for seamless procurement of goods and services by the government departments in a transparent manner.
- GeM is also working with other banks, Trade Receivable Discounting System (TReDS), and SIDBI to offer bill discounting and financing of working capital.

## BSNL, MTNL TO BE MERGED

**Current context:** The government has approved the merger of loss-making PSUs **BSNL** (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited) and **MTNL** (Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited) to revive their growth.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- As per the merger, **MTNL will act as a subsidiary of BSNL** (both together holds 14% market share in mobile business in India).
- The **revival package of Rs 70,000 crore** includes raising sovereign bonds, monetising assets and voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) for employees.
- The government will also put Rs 29,937 crore to the telecom companies and will raise Rs 15,000 crore through Sovereign Bonds.
- The government will also **allocate 4G spectrum to BSNL and MTNL** and will allocated at 2016 price.
- BSNL had an **estimated loss of Rs 13,804 crore in 2018-19** and MTNL losses pegged to **Rs 3,400 crore in 2018-19.**

## WORLD BANK SIGNED LOAN AGREEMENT FOR ODISHA FARMERS

**Current context:** The Odisha state government, Government of India and the World Bank have signed a **$165 million loan agreement** on 24th October 2019.

## KEY POINTS

- The loan agreement has been signed to strengthen the production system and support **smallholder farmers of Odisha.**
- The project is named an **Odisha Integrated Irrigation Project for Climate Resilient Agriculture.**
- The project will be implemented in rural areas that are **vulnerable to droughts** and are highly dependent on **rainfed agriculture.**
- It will aid resilience against adverse climate by:
  1. Improving access to resilient seed varieties and production technologies.
  2. Diversifying towards more climate-resilient crops.
  3. Improving access to better water management and irrigation services.
- In Odisha, farming is largely dominated by farmers with landholdings of less than two hectares and the frequency of droughts in the state has increased **from 1 in 5 years to 1 in 2 years.**
- The $165 million loan from the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD),** has a maturity of 24 years and a 6-year grace period.

# INDIA RANKS 63RD IN WORLD BANK'S DOING BUSINESS REPORT

**Current context:** India has been ranked at 63rd position in the **World Bank's Doing Business Report (DBR, 2020),** released on 24th October 2020.

## DETAILS

- India has jumped **14 positions against its rank of 77 in 2019.**
- It has also improved its rank by **79 positions in last five years (2014-19).**
- The Doing Business assessment provides:
  1. objective measures of business regulations
  2. enforcement of regulations across **190 economies on ten parameters**
- The DBR ranks countries on the basis of **Distance to Frontier (DTF)** and this year India's DTF score improved to **71.0 from 67.23 in 2018.**
- India has improved its **rank in 7 out of 10 indicators** that includes Construction Permits, Registering Property, Getting Electricity, Starting a Business, Paying Taxes, Trading Across Borders and Resolving Insolvency.
- The highlights of India's performance in DBR 2020 are:
  1. India is among the **top 10 improvers** for the 3rd consecutive year.
  2. India has a record improvement in **Recovery rate under resolving insolvency** from 26.5% to 71.6 %.
  3. The **time taken for resolving insolvency** is reduced from 4.3 years to 1.6 years.
  4. From 6th position in 2014, India is now at **1st position among South Asian countries.**

## PRAVEEN KUMAR: 1ST INDIAN TO WIN WUSHU WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Current context:** Praveen Kumar became the 1st Indian man to win gold at the Wushu World Championships.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The 15th edition of the championship was held in **Minhang Gymnasium in Shanghai, China** on 23rd October 2019.
- Praveen Kumar has defeated **Russel Diaz of Philippines in the 48kg category.**
- Praveen had earlier defeated Uzbekistan's **Khasan Ikromov** 2-0 in the semi-final.
- Other Indian Winners include:
  1. **Sanathoi Devi** (women's 52kg) and **Poonam** (women's 75kg) won Silver.
  2. **Vikrant Baliyan** bagged the bronze in the men's 60kg category.
  3. India ranked **3rd overall in the Championship** with one gold, two silver and a bronze.
- **Wushu** is a Chinese martial art that includes close-range punches and kicks, full-contact kickboxing, throws, sweeps, takedowns and Kicks catch.

## NATIONAL CSR AWARDS

**Current context:** President Ram Nath Kovind has conferred the **National Corporate Social Responsibility Awards (NCSRA)** on 29th October 2019 in New Delhi.

### NATIONAL CSR AWARDS

- The NCSRA is conferred to companies for their outstanding contribution in area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to achieve inclusive growth and inclusive and sustainable development.
- The National CSR Awards has been instituted by **the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.**
- A total of 20 National CSR Awards have been in **3 categories** that are:
  1. **Corporate Awards for Excellence in CSR:** Companies have eligible CSR Spend above 100 crores, between 10 crores and 99.99 crores, between 1 crores and 9.99 crores, below 100 crores.
  2. **Corporate Awards in CSR in Challenging Circumstances.**
  3. **Corporate awards for Contribution to National Priority Schemes.**
- The Awards have been instituted in **2017.**

## INDIA RANKED 57TH IN GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY INDEX

**Current context:** India has been ranked at **57th Position in the Global Health Security Index,** among 195 countries.

## KEY FACTS

- **US has topped the list** and is followed by **UK and Netherlands at 2nd and 3rd positions** respectively.
- The GHS Index is the **first comprehensive assessment** of epidemic and pandemic threats globally.
- The report is a project of the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) and the Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security, with research by the **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).**
- The report identifies and analyses each countries' health emergency preparedness, their commitment to global norms and their Socioeconomic and environmental risk factors.
- The report published that only 13 countries in the world are prepared for any major outbreak.
- The score is normalised **between 0 (Lowest) to 100 (Highest)** and the average overall index score was just over 40.

# VIGILANCE AWARENESS WEEK

**Current context:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has announced that Vigilance Awareness Week is to be observed from 28th October to 2nd November, 2019.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The **theme** of the Vigilance Awareness Week 2019 is **"Integrity- a way of life".**
- The Central Vigilance Commission **aims** to promote integrity, transparency and accountability in public life and to achieve a corruption free society.
- The awareness week will include activities like surprise inspection, seminars, public interaction for redressal of their grievances, marathons, cycle rallies, street plays and other vigilance related awareness activities.
- **"Awareness Gram Sabhas"** are organized for dissemination of awareness in Gram Panchayats (in rural and semi-urban areas) about the ill-effects of corruption.
- This year the week is observed with the **birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (31st October).**

# DEFCOM 2019

**Current context:** DEFCOM 2019 is scheduled to be held on 26th& 27th November 2019 at **Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi.**

## ABOUT DEFCOM

- DEFCOM is jointly organised by the **Corps of Signals, Indian Army** and Confederation of Indian Industry (**CII**)/ Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (**SIDM**).

- It is a flagship event in the area of **military communication** and symposium for collaboration between the Indian armed forces, research and development organisations, Information Technology Industries.
- The event stresses on the need and measures for **seamless communication between the three services.**
- The **theme** of DEFCOM 2019 is **"Communications as a Decisive Catalyst for Jointness".**

## NEW LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS APPOINTED

**Current context:** The government has appointed the Lieutenant Governors of Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh and Governor of Mizoram on 26th October 2019.

### NEW LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS

- 1985-batch Gujarat cadre IAS officer **Girish Chandra Murmu** has been appointed as **Lt. Governor of Jammu-Kashmir** who is currently serving as the Expenditure Secretary in the Union Finance Ministry.
- 1977-batch IAS officer **R K Mathur** has been appointed as Lt. Governor of Ladakh. He has served as the Defence Secretary and is a former Chief Information Commissioner (CIC).
- **P.S. Sreedharan Pillai** has been appointed the new **Governor of Mizoram.**
- The incumbent Governor of the Jammu and Kashmir **Satya Pal Malik has been moved to Goa.**
- **Dineshwar Sharma,** former interlocutor to Jammu and Kashmir has been appointed as the the **administrator of Lakshadweep.**
- The Union territories of Ladakh and Jammu-Kashmir will come into existence on **31st October 2019.**

## EASE OF DOING BUSINESS-IMPLEMENTATION OF RFID

**Current context:** Minister of State (Independent Charge) for **Shipping and Chemicals and Fertilizers,** Mansukh Mandaviya, inaugurated the **Ease of Doing Business-Implementation of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)** based **Port Access Control System (PACS)** at Kolkata Dock System (KDS).

### ABOUT RADIO FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION

- The total cost of the RFID-based Port Access Control System (PACS) for Kolkata Dock System is around Rs **17 crore.**
- RFID based Port Access Control System (PACS) will provide **single window system** to the Port users for obtaining **permit/ pass through 100% cashless transaction.**
- The RFID project has been launched for:
  1. Eliminating manual checking of documents at port gate.
  2. Secure and systematic entry and exit of vehicles and visitors in Kolkata Dock System.

3. Ease of doing business with Port users.
4. Real time tracking of movement of vehicles, men and materials.

## INDIGEN GENOME PROJECT

**Current context:** The **Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), Ministry of Science & Technology** has conducted Whole Genome Sequencing of 1,008 Indian under the **IndiGen Genome project.**

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

- CSIR has led human genomic sciences in India for studying the **"Indian Genome Variation".**
- The outcomes of the IndiGen will be utilized towards understanding the genetic diversity on a population scale and enable genetic epidemiology of diseases.
- The Union Minister of Science & Technology Dr Harsh Vardhan, has launched the **IndiGenome card and IndiGenome mobile application** to enable participants and clinicians to access clinically actionable information in their genomes.
- The IndiGen initiative was undertaken by **CSIR in April 2019.**
- The **IndiGen Genome project** is implemented by the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), Delhi and CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad.
- The outcomes of the IndiGen will have vast area of applications including preventive medicine, efficient diagnosis of rare genetic diseases.

## RUDRASHILA: WHITE WATER RAFTING EXPEDITION

**Current context:** The white water rafting expedition- **'Rudrashila'** was flagged in on 25th October 2019 at **Jodhpur Military Station.**

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The expedition is undertaken by **Kalidhar Battalion** to commemorate its **75th Raising Day.**
- The soldiers covered a total distance of over 140km from **Rudraprayag to Rishikesh** in river Ganga along Uttarakhand mountains.
- The expedition was conducted to prepare the soldiers to overcome adversities with determination and grit.
- The expedition was flagged in by **Lieutenant General VS Sreenivas,** General Officer Commanding Konark Corps.

## 29TH BASIC MINISTERIAL MEET ON CLIMATE CHANGE

**Current context:** The 29th ministerial meeting of the **BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, China)** countries on Climate Change was held at **Beijing, China** on 25th-26th October 2019.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEET

- The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Prakash Javadekar participated from India in the meeting.
- The meeting was **chaired by H.E. Mr. LI Ganjie,** Minister of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China.
- The meeting was conducted for "Comprehensive" implementation of the **Paris climate deal** after the U.S. threat of leaving the grouping.
- The member countries urged the developed nations to deliver on their commitment to **provide $100 billion** to the developing nations as climate finance for proper implementation of the climate action plan.
- The developed countries has promised **$100 billion per year till 2020** to the developing countries to make them able to take steps for mitigating climate change.
- U.S. President Donald Trump has said that U.S. will pull-out from the agreement in next year i.e. 2020.

## INDIA WON SILVER AT FRENCH OPEN

**Current context:** Men's doubles pair of **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty** won **silver** at the **French Open.**

### KEY FACTS

- The doubles pair lost to world No.1 **Indonesian pair of Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo** in the finals of the French Open.
- The French Open was held in **Paris** on 27th October 2019.
- It was the **first time** that an Indian men's doubles pair reached a World Tour 750 final.
- **Partho Ganguli and Vikram Singh** were the last doubles pair from India to win the French Open in 1983.
- **Kidambi Srikanth** has won the men's title (Singles) in 2017 and **Saina Nehwal** won the women's title (Single) in 2012.
- The French Open (officially **Roland-Garros**) is a tennis tournament held over 2 weeks in Paris, France.

## ODISHA-MO PARIVAR LAUNCHED

**Current context:** Chief Minister and BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik have launched **'Odisha-Mo Parivar'** initiative on 26th October 2019.

### ABOUT 'ODISHA-MO PARIVAR'

- This is a social service initiative **aimed** at:
  1. Encouraging environment protection

2. Health care service: Blood donation
3. Welfare of Odias in distress

- Under the Programme, the party leaders of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) will dedicate themselves to protect the environment with trees planting and generate awareness among the public.
- BJD had earlier successfully launched the blood donation programme **'Jeevan Bindu'.**

## INDO-FRENCH JOINT EXERCISE SHAKTI-2019

**Current context:** The **Indo-French Joint Exercise Shakti-2019** will be conducted from 31st October to 13th November 2019.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Exercise SHAKTI is a biennial exercise between **India and France** and is conducted alternatively in India and France since **2011.**
- The exercise is to be conducted at Foreign Training Node at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges, **Rajasthan.**
- The Indian side is represented by the **Sikh Regiment of Sapta Shakti** Command (Indian Army) and the French army is represented by troops of **21st Marine Infantry Regiment of 6th Armoured Brigade.**
- The exercise **aims** at enhancing the cooperation and interoperability between the two Armies.
- The training exercise will **focus** on:
  1. Counter Terrorism operations in backdrop of semi-desert terrain under United Nations Mandate
  2. High degree of physical fitness
  3. Sharing of drill at tactical level

## TIGER WOODS EQUALS US LEGEND SAM SNEAD'S ALL-TIME RECORD

**Current context:** American Golfer Tiger Woods equals world **record for most career titles on PGA Tour with his 82nd** win in **Japan,** equalling **Sam Snead's** 54-year-old record.

### DETAILS

- He has made history by winning the **Zozo Championship** in Japan.
- He made this by holding off the challenge of home favourite **Hideki Matsuyama** and winning Zozo Championship by three shots.
- Woods has been awarded **"PGA Player of the Year" for a record of 11 times.**
- He has won 15 professional major golf championships and **82 PGA Tour events.**
- He is the youngest player to achieve the **career Grand Slam,** and is only the **second** golfer (after **Nicklaus**) to have achieved a career Grand Slam **three times.**

## VOTE THROUGH POSTAL BALLOTS FOR OCTAGENARIANS & PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

**Current context:** The **Ministry of Law and Justice** has allowed senior citizens and person with disabilities to vote through postal ballots on 28th October 2019.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The Ministry has amended the **Conduct of Election Rules, 1961** to allow them for postal ballots and ease the process of voting to all such categories of electors.
- As per the amended Rule, the person will make an application in a **new Form 12 D,** which will reach the Returning Officer within 5 days following the date of notification of election.
- The elector will be issued a postal ballot paper, after the receipt of such application.
- Persons over **80 years of age and person with disability** are covered under the amendment.
- Such voters will have **both the choices available** of either voting through postal ballot or going to the polling station on polling day for voting.
- At present, voting through postal ballot is available to **armed forces and those assigned poll duties.**

## PENALTY IMPOSED ON TMB

**Current context:** RBI imposed monetary penalty on **Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd (TMB)** by an order dated 24th October 2019.

### DETAILS

- RBI has imposed **Rs 35 Lakh penalty** on TMB for non-compliance of provisions issued by RBI on **"Reserve Bank of India (Frauds classification and reporting by commercial banks and select FIs) directions 2016".**
- RBI is vested with powers under the provisions of **Section 47A(1)(c)** read with **Section 46(4)(i)** of the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949** to impose such penalty.
- The statutory inspection of the bank with reference to its financial position was done on **31st March 2017.**
- Based on the inspection report, **show cause notice was issued to the bank** asking why penalty should not be imposed for non-compliance with the directions.
- RBI imposed the penalty considering the bank's reply and oral submissions made in the personal hearing.

## 14TH NATIONAL HEALTH PROFILE, 2019

**Current context:** Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan, has released the 14th National Health Profile (NHP) 2019 on 30th October 2019.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- The NHP is prepared by the **Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI)** and covers comprehensive information on **major indicators** of:
- **Demographic indicators** (population and vital statistics)
- **Socio-economic indicators** (education, employment, housing and amenities, drinking water and sanitation)
- **Health status indicators** (incidence and prevalence of common communicable and non-communicable diseases and RCH)
- Health finance indicators
- Health infrastructure and health of human resources in the country
- The NHP is published **since 2005 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.**
- The data released helps to strategize area-specific interventions, enables the policymakers to make evidence-based policies and understanding the goals.
- The **e-book of NHP** was also released by the ministry, as **digital documents** give us an opportunity for wider dissemination of information.

## MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS SIGNED MOU WITH ISB

**Current context:** Ministry of Railways has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian School of Business (ISB)** for a strategic partnership on 30th October 2019.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The comprehensive MoU for **Executive Education Programs** covers creating a future-ready leadership pool for the Indian Railways and developing research opportunities, developing case studies and pedagogical materials.
- ISB has been training the Indian Railway officers for their mid-career training requirements through its **Centre for Executive Education (CEE).**
- **Indian School of Business (ISB)** is a global business school that provides management education across its two campuses – Hyderabad and Mohali.
- The ISB is one among the select 100 global b-schools to have **AACSB and EQUIS accreditation.**

## 2ND ASSEMBLY OF INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE (ISA)

**Current context:** The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** is hosting the 2nd Assembly of International Solar Alliance (ISA) on 30th & 31st October 2019 in **New Delhi.**

### INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE (ISA)

- The Assembly is the supreme decision making body of the ISA.

- ISA is the Indian government's initiative, launched by Indian Prime Minister and the **President of France** on 30th November **2015** at **Paris, France.**
- The Alliance was formed on the **side-lines of the COP-21**, with 121 solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the **tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn** as prospective members.
- The **objective** of ISA is to collectively address key common challenges to the scaling up of solar energy in ISA member countries.
- It **aims** to undertake joint efforts to reduce the cost of finance and technology and pave the way for future technologies adapted to the needs.
- As of now, 81 out of 21 member countries have signed the Framework Agreement of the ISA and 58 countries have ratified the same.
- The 1st assembly of the ISA was held on **3rd October 2018.**

## OVERSEAS CITIZEN PERMITTED TO ENROLL IN NPS

**Current context:** Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has permitted **Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)** to enroll in **National Pension Scheme (NPS)** on 29th October 2019.

### KEY POINTS

- As per the **Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) Rules, 2019** of Dept. of Economic Affairs:
  1. An OCI may subscribe to the National Pension System, provided such person is eligible to invest as per the provisions of the PFRDA Act.
  2. The annuity/accumulated saving will be repatriable, subject to FEMA guidelines.
- **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** is a statutory Authority that functions to regulate, promote and ensure orderly growth of the National Pension System (NPS).
- Earlier, NPS was notified for **central government employees** joining service after 1st Jan **2004** and was later adopted by state governments employees.
- The NPS was extended to:
  1. **All citizens of Indian** all on voluntary basis from **May 2009**
  2. **Corporates** in **December 2011**
  3. **Non-Resident Indians** in **October 2015**

## RBI IMPOSED PENALTY ON JALGAON PEOPLES CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD

**Current context:** RBI has imposed a **monetary penalty of Rs 25 lakh** on the Jalgaon Peoples Co-operative Bank Ltd., Jalgaon, **Maharashtra.**

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The penalty has been imposed for non-compliance with directions issued by RBI on **Income Recognition and Asset Classification (IRAC) norms** and **Management of Advances.**
- RBI has imposed the penalty with the power vested in RBI under the provisions of Section 47A(1)(c) read with Section 46(4)(i) and Section 56 of the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949.**
- On 1st March 2018, the **statutory inspection of the bank** was conducted by RBI, with reference to the financial position of the Bank.
- A notice was issued to the bank to show cause the reasons for non-compliance and why penalty should not be imposed.
- RBI concluded for the imposition of monetary penalty after considering the bank's reply and oral submissions made during the personal hearing.

## RBI IMPOSED PENALTY ON JANATA SAHAKARI BANK LTD

**Current context:** RBI has imposed a monetary penalty of **Rs 1 crore on Janata Sahakari Bank Ltd.,** Pune by an order dated 16th October 2019.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The penalty has been imposed for **non-compliance with directions issued by RBI on:**
  1. Income Recognition and Asset Classification (IRAC) norms
  2. Management of Advances and Exposure Norms and Statutory/ Other Restrictions
  3. Issuance of ATM-cum Debit cards
- RBI has imposed the penalty with the power vested in RBI under the provisions of Section 47A(1)(c) read with Section 46(4)(i) and Section 56 of the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949.**

## RBI IMPOSED PENALTY ON BANDHAN BANK LIMITED

**Current context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of **Rs 1 crore** on **Bandhan Bank Limited,** by an order dated 29th October 2019.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The penalty has been imposed for the for non-compliance with the guidelines on promoter holding contained in **'Guidelines for Licensing of New Banks in Private Sector',** read with the conditions imposed by RBI in exercise of powers under **section 22 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.**
- RBI is vested with powers under the provisions of Section 47A(1)(c) read with Section 46(4)(i) of the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949** to impose the penalty.
- As per the **licencing guidelines,** the bank was required to bring down the shareholding of its **Non-Operative Financial Holding Company in the bank** in excess of 40% of the total paid-up equity capital to **40% within 3 years** from the date of commencement of business of the bank.