

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019



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Important Days

October 1	International Day of Older Persons	"The Journey to Age Equality"
October 1	International Coffee Day	'Coffee's future needs you'
October 1	World Vegetarian Day	-
October 2	International Day of Non-Violence	-
October 4	World Animal Day	-
October 5	World Teachers' Day	'Young Teachers: The Future of the Profession'
October 4-10	World Space Week	"The Moon: Gateway to the Stars."
October 2 - 8	National Wildlife Week	Life Below Water: For people and planet
October 7 (first Monday of October)	World Habitat Day	Frontier Technologies as an innovative tool to transform waste to wealth
October 7	World Cotton Day	-
October 8	Air Force Day (India)	-
October 9	World Post Day	-
October 10	World Mental Health Day	-
October 11	International Day of the Girl Child	"GirlForce: Unscripted and Unstoppable"
October 11	World Obesity Day	"It's time to End Weight Stigma!"
October 11 (second Friday in October)	World Egg Day	Eat your egg today and every day
October 12	World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD)	"Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution."
October 12	World Arthritis Day (WAD)	Time2Work.
October 14	World Standards Day	Video Standards Create a Global Stage

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October 16	World Food Day	Our Actions Are Our Future. Healthy Diets For A #ZEROHUNGER WORLD
October 17	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty	'Acting together to empower children, their families and communities to end poverty'
October 20	World Osteoporosis Day	"THAT'S OSTEOPOROSIS".
October 20	World Statistics Day	Better Data, Better Lives
October 22	International Stuttering Awareness Day	"Growth Through Speaking"
October 23	International Snow Leopard Day	-
October 24	United Nations Day	-
October 24	World Polio Day	-
October 24	World Development Information Day	-
October 25	National Ayurveda Day	-
October 27	World Day for Audiovisual Heritage	"Engage the Past Through Sound and Images"
October 28	International Animation Day	-
October 30	World Thrift Day (India)	-
October 31	National Unity Day / Rashtriya Ekta Diwas	-
October 31	World Cities Day	Changing the world: innovations and better life for future generations

Important Banking News

RBI

RBI mandates internal ombudsman by large non-bank digital wallets

- The RBI has mandated the creation of an internal ombudsman by non-bank issuers of prepaid payments wallets.
- Only issuers with more than 10 million (1 crore) prepaid payments instruments outstanding will be covered by this directive. Thus major digital wallet providers such Amazon Pay, Mobikwik or PhonePe are likely to fall under this ambit.

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- Some major issuers such as Paytm which has a payments bank license will be covered by the banking ombudsman instead.
- The RBI's objective is create swift and cost-effective mechanism for grievance redressal and create an additional tier for resolving complaints. The Central Bank is set to issue detailed instructions in this regard on 15th October 2019.
- The new internal ombudsman proposed by the RBI is likely to help providers and customers resolve complaints internal.

RBI Sets WMA Limit for Government of India At Rs 35000 For Second Half Of FY 2019-20

- The Reserve Bank of India, in consultation with the Government of India has decided that the limits for Ways and Means Advances (WMA) for the second half of the financial year 2019-20 (October 2019 to March 2020) will be Rs. 35,000 crore.
- The Reserve Bank retains the flexibility to revise the limit at any time, in consultation with the Government of India, taking into consideration the prevailing circumstances.
- The Reserve Bank may trigger fresh floatation of market loans when the Government of India utilises 75 per cent of the WMA limit. The interest rate on WMA will be Repo Rate and overdraft will be 2% above the Repo Rate.

Current account deficit narrows to 2% of GDP in Q1FY20: RBI

- India's current account deficit (CAD) narrowed to \$14.3 billion or 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during April-June quarter from 2.3% during the same period a year ago.
- However, on a sequential basis, CAD widened from \$4.6 billion or 0.7% of GDP.
- The CAD contracted on a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis, primarily on account of higher invisible receipts at \$31.9 billion as compared with \$29.9 billion a year ago.
- CAD is one of the key indicators of an economy's health and measures the difference between the value of the goods and services a country imports and the value of its exports.

4th Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Report

- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India has decided to reduce the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points to 5.15% from 5.40% with immediate effect
- The reverse repo rate under the LAF stands reduced to 4.90%,
- Marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 5.40%.
- GDP growth forecast for 2019-20 is revised downwards from 6.9% to 6.1%

RBI rejects proposed merger of Lakshmi Vilas Bank with Indiabulls Housing Finance

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- Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd the central bank has not approved its merger with Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd.
- In September, RBI had placed Lakshmi Vilas Bank under Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) due to high level of bad loans, lack of sufficient capital to manage risks and negative return on assets for two consecutive years.

RBI imposes Rs 1 crore fine on LVB, Rs 75 lakh on Syndicate Bank for violating norms

- The Reserve Bank has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs. 1 crore on Lakshmi Vilas Bank and Rs. 75 lakh on Syndicate Bank for violating asset classification and fraud detection norms.
- In the case of LVB the penalty has been imposed for non-compliance with certain provisions of directions issued by it on 'Income Recognition and Asset Classification (IRAC) norms'.
- In the case of Syndicate Bank, the penalty has been imposed for non-compliance with the RBI's directions on (i) frauds classification and reporting and (ii) innovative housing loan products – upfront disbursement of housing loans.

RBI imposes Rs 35 lakh penalty on Tamilnad Mercantile Bank

- The Reserve Bank has imposed a penalty of Rs 35 lakh on Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB) for violating norms on frauds classification and notification.
- The bank has been penalised for non-compliance with certain provisions of directions issued by RBI on frauds classification and reporting by commercial banks and select FIs directions 2016

SBI

SBI becomes first Indian bank to have office in Australia's Victoria

- The State Bank of India becoming the first Indian bank to have a branch in the Australian state of Victoria.
- The Melbourne office will assist the growing trade and investment relations between Victoria and India and is the outcome of the state's 10-year India Strategy – our shared future
- According to official figures, the two-way merchandise trade between Victoria and India was to the tune of 1.76 billion Australian dollars in 2018.

ADB

India, ADB sign 190 million dollar loan agreement for improving road connectivity in Rajasthan

- India and Asian Development Bank, ADB have signed 190 million dollar loan agreement for improving road connectivity in Rajasthan
- The agreement was signed to upgrade 754 kilometres of state highways and major district roads (MDRs) to two-lane or intermediate-lane standards that will benefit about 26 million people in 14 districts of Rajasthan.

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- The agreement was signed between Sameer Kumar Khare, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance and Mr Kenichi Yokoyama, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission.
- The Tranche 1 loan of USD 220 million under the Programme, signed in July 2017, upgraded about 1,000 km of state roads.
- The Tranche 2 roads pass through mostly rural areas of Rajasthan that lack reliable connectivity and will help improve access to health, education facilities and markets leading to increased job opportunities

World Bank

World Bank inks agreement project to support smallholder farmers in Odisha

- The Central Government, Odisha government and the World Bank signed a loan agreement worth \$165 million to support smallholder farmers in the state.
- The project "The Odisha Integrated Irrigation Project for Climate Resilient Agriculture" will be implemented in Odisha's rural areas which are vulnerable to droughts and largely dependent on rainfed agriculture.
- It will benefit about 125,000 smallholder farmer households from 15 districts of Odisha managing 128,000 hectares of agricultural land.
- The project will strengthen the resilience of smallholder farmers against adverse climate by improving access to resilient seed varieties and production technologies, diversifying towards more climate-resilient crops, and improving access to better water management and irrigation services.
- The project in Odisha is among several such initiatives supported by the government in our commitment to achieve the sustainable agriculture-related targets of the SDGs by 2030.

World Bank to Continue with \$6 Billion Annual Lending Support to India

- World Bank President David Malpass stated that the multi-lateral funding agency will continue with USD 6 billion annual lending target for India to support infrastructure development and alleviate poverty.
- As many as 97 projects are being currently executed with loan assistance from the World Bank.
- With regard to the Ease of Doing Business ranking, Malpass said India has been among top 10 countries in the last three years and it has moved from 140th place to 63rd.
- India jumped 14 places to the 63rd position on the World Bank's ease of doing business ranking riding high on the government's flagship 'Make in India' scheme and other reforms attracting foreign investment.

Other Banking News

Interest rate on Small Savings Scheme from October and December Quarter

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Instrument	Interest rate (%) from 01.10.2019	Compounding Frequency
Savings Account	4	Annually
One- Year Time Deposit	6.9	Quarterly
Two-Year Time Deposit	6.9	Quarterly
Three Year Time Deposit	6.9	Quarterly
Five Year Time Deposit	7.7	Quarterly
Five Year Recurring Deposits	7.2	Quarterly
Five Year Senior Citizen Savings Scheme	8.6	Quarterly and paid
Five Year Monthly Income Account	7.6	Monthly and paid
Five Year National Savings Certificate	7.9	Annually
Public Provident Fund	7.9	Annually
Kisan Vikas Patra	7.6 (Will mature in 113 months)	Annually
Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme	8.4	Annually

Indian Overseas Bank launches IOB Health Care Insurance Policy

- Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) in association with Universal Sompo General Insurance Co Ltd. has launched an upgraded health care plus insurance policy
- It is a co- branded insurance scheme exclusively designed for IOB customers with a sum insured starting from Rs. 50,000 and going up to Rs. 15 lakh.
- The policy issuance will be made on a real-time basis at the IOB branches to its customers. Self, spouse, dependent children, dependent parents can be covered under the policy
- The product was launched by Karnam Sekar, managing director & CEO, Indian Overseas Bank in the presence of O.N. Singh, chairman, Universal Sompo General Insurance Co. Ltd.

Vijaya Bank Museum inaugurated in Bengaluru

- The Vijaya Bank Heritage Museum was inaugurated old headquarters of Vijaya Bank, Bangalore
- Jose J. Kattor, regional director of RBI Bengaluru, inaugurated the museum
- This museum has a unique collection of photographs which demonstrate the development of the bank. This museum brings back memories of the history of the former Vijaya Bank

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- Vijaya bank was established on October 23, 1931, the erstwhile Vijaya Bank was one of the premier nationalised banks in the country. Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank merged with Bank of Baroda

IRDAI slaps Rs 1 cr fine on Cholamandalam MS General Insurance

- Insurance sector regulator IRDAI has imposed a fine of Rs. 1 crore on Cholamandalam MS GIC for violating health insurance regulations related to payment of commission.
- The authority imposes a penalty of Rs. 1 crore for violation of Clause 15 of schedule I of IRDA (Health Insurance) Regulations, 2013 which clearly specifies that no commission shall be payable to any intermediary on the acceptance of a ported policy
- The other penalty of Rs. 1 lakh pertained to motor insurance and was for “violating the outsourcing guidelines by agreeing to payment terms not in the interests of the insurer.

Bajaj Allianz Life launches video calling service ‘i-SERV’ to enhance customer service experience

- Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance has taken yet another step towards digital disruption by launching i-SERV, a first-of-its-kind video calling service within the life insurance industry.
- i-SERV is designed to enhance the customer experience and provide swift resolutions to their queries.
- A tablet-enabled service, with both voice and video facility, i-SERV offers a wide range of services and covers almost all the transactions currently offered at a branch physically. This service is available to customers across 125 Bajaj Allianz Life branches in 112 cities.

SBI launches contactless mobile payment facility for credit card holders

- The SBI Card launched 'SBI Card Pay', a payment feature based on Host Card Emulation (HCE) technology for faster, convenient and more secure card payments using mobile phones.
- SBI Card Pay is aimed at redefining the payments experience for our customers. Using cutting-edge technologies such as HCE.
- Contactless payments are playing a key role in country's digital payments drive and as the supporting infrastructure increases countrywide, adoption is bound to accelerate significantly.

Home Credit India ties up with Karur Vysya Bank for joint lending

- Home Credit India (HCIN) has tied up with Karur Vysya Bank (KVB) for a joint lending initiative in the unsecured lending space
- Under the agreement, HCIN and KVB will disburse loans in a single amount to customers
- Home Credit India Finance Pvt. Ltd. is a local arm of the international consumer finance provider with operations spanning over Europe and Asia and committed to drive financial inclusion in India.
- Home Credit India has operations spread over 179 cities across 20 States in India.

ICICI Bank introduced a new fixed deposit scheme 'FD Health'

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- ICICI Bank has launched a new Fixed Deposit (FD) scheme - FD Health. The scheme offers FD with a health benefit through a critical illness coverage.
- The FD Health scheme provides the customer a complimentary critical illness cover of Rs 1 lakh from ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company on opening an FD of Rs. 2 lakh to Rs. 3 lakh for tenure of at least two years.
- The customers, who are in the age bracket of 18-50 years, get a complimentary insurance cover for a year on 33 critical illnesses including specified severities related to cancer, lung disease, kidney failure, liver disease and benign brain tumor, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease.
- This is the latest addition to the Bank's bouquet of innovative fixed and recurring deposits under the umbrella of 'FD Xtra' which are designed to help its discerning customers to meet various needs and goals at different stages of life.

Public sector banks in India to have uniform timings across all states

- Public sector banks will now have uniform timings across all states as per a new directive issued by the Indian Department of Financial Services.
- Customer banking hours will now be from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm in all public sector banks from 1 October 2019. Lunch hours, irrespective of business timings, will be from 2:00 pm to 2:30 pm.
- The only exceptions to the new rule are the states of Mizoram, Nagaland and Madhya Pradesh. In Mizoram and Nagaland, banks will operate from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and in Madhya Pradesh, bank timings are 10:30 am to 4:30 pm.
- The final hours of operations for two critical states — Gujarat and Maharashtra — are yet to be disclosed. The timings for Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Sikkim and Andaman and Nicobar are also undecided.

Axis Bank launches Express FD

- Private sector lender Axis Bank, announced the launch of a digital fixed-deposit product. Called 'Express FD', a customer can open an Express FD account in three minutes through the digital mode without opening a savings account with the bank.
- The new Express FD account offers attractive interest rates, zero issuance fees and no penalty on premature withdrawal (up to 25% of the amount).
- With the use of net-banking, debit card or via UPI (Unified Payments Interface)- an instant real-time payment system, a customer can deposit the fund in Express FD account.

NBFC Paisalo Digital signs co-origination loan pact with Bank of Baroda

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- Non-banking finance company Paisalo Digital has signed a co-origination loan agreement with government-owned Bank of Baroda to empower farmers, MSME segment and small businesses
- The company already has similar tie-ups with State Bank of India and Bank of Maharashtra.
- The company already has similar tie-ups with State Bank of India and Bank of Maharashtra.
- Under the agreement with Bank of Baroda, both entities will jointly reach out to prospective customers and conduct due diligence for extending small-ticket size loans ranging between Rs 10,000 to 40,000 with a special focus on Uttar Pradesh.
- The co-originating arrangement will entail a joint contribution of credit by the company and the bank. It will involve sharing of risks and rewards between the two entities

SBI, Bank of Baroda squeeze micro-ATM transactions of other banks

- Public sector lenders State Bank of India (SBI and Bank of Baroda BoB) have limited the cash withdrawals of customers using micro-ATMs of other banks to just four times a month, in what could cause transactions undertaken through the Aadhaar-enabled Payment System (AePS) route to fall significantly.
- While BoB is allowing customers to do four transactions a day, SBI has limited it to just one. SBI account holders who are not part of the government's direct benefit transfer scheme are allowed to do five transactions a month.
- These limits only apply in case the customer uses the micro-ATM terminal of another bank.
- Banks provide the service through micro-ATM terminals in areas where ATMs are not viable. Through micro-ATMs, banks can connect to their core banking system and help customers undertake basic financial transactions.

IRDAI form working group to revisit the product structure of title insurance

- One of the sections under Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 made it mandatory for real estate promoters or developers to obtain a title insurance policy before launching a project. Under title insurance policy a home buyer is protected against possible loss due to defects in title of a property, disputes or frauds.
- After RERA came into existence, few general insurance companies started offering the title insurance products. However, product features—terms and conditions, scope of coverage and so on—differ based on the support received from their reinsurers.
- The WG will be chaired by T.L. Alamelu, the whole-time member of IRDAI, in-charge of non-life insurance.
- It will have representatives from general insurance companies, Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) and IRDAI.

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India gets info on Swiss bank account holders in fight against black money

- India has received first tranche of its residents' account details in Swiss banks under a latest framework enabling automatic information exchange between the two countries.
- The development marks an important breakthrough in India's efforts to track down black money stashed abroad. India is amongst 75 countries with which Switzerland's Federal Tax Administration (FTA) has swapped intelligence on the financial details of people.
- The FTA will next exchange information in September 2020.
- In total, the FTA has shared information (resident's country, name, address and financial institution with tax identification number, balance in the account and capital income) of 31 lakh financial accounts to partner countries. At the same time, Switzerland has received information about 24 lakh accounts.

Expanding and Deepening of Digital Payments Ecosystem

- RBI has been decided that all State/ UT Level Bankers Committees (SLBCs/ UTLBCs) shall identify one district in their respective States/ UTs on a pilot basis in consultation with banks and stakeholders.
- The identified district shall be allotted to a bank having significant footprint which will endeavour to make the district 100% digitally enabled within one year, in order to enable every individual in the district to make/ receive payments digitally in a safe, secure, quick, affordable and convenient manner.
- This would, inter alia, include providing the necessary infrastructure and literacy to handle such transactions.
- SLBCs/ UTLBCs shall endeavour to ensure that to the extent possible, districts identified are converged with the 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' programme of the Government of India.
- The allotment of the identified district to a bank should be done, as far as possible, through mutual consultation and voluntary acceptance by the bank.

Fintech start-up Shubh Loans gets NBFC licence from RBI

- Fintech start-up Shubh Loans has received a licence from the Reserve Bank of India to set up a non-banking financial company.
- The company said the licence has been received through the subsidiary -- Ekagrata -- of its parent company Datasigns Technologies.
- Shubh Loans has already raised series A2 funding of Rs.34 crore (\$4.8 million) from Omidyar Network India. Shubh Loans, which is fast changing the way loans are disbursed and making credit accessibility easier, is set to implement NBFC compliant frameworks and governance processes

Kerala Bank Set To Be Formed As RBI Approves Merger Of State Cooperative Banks

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- The Reserve Bank of India has approved merger of Kerala's district cooperative banks with Kerala State Co-operative Bank, paving the way for the state government to set up its own bank.
- Thirteen district cooperative banks would be merged with Kerala State Cooperative Bank for forming the so-called Kerala Bank.

Life Insurance Council launches an equivalent of 'Mutual Funds Sahi Hai'

- The Life Insurance Council launches an equivalent of '*Mutual Funds Sahi Hai*' announced a mass media campaign with the slogan '*Sabse Pehle Life Insurance*' with an aim to increase life insurance awareness and helping the masses understand the product's true purpose.
- Insurance penetration in India continues to be at 3.69%, one of the lowest across the world, according to the annual report by Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai). Between FY 2014-15 to 2016-17, life insurance penetration in the country was at a flat 2.7%.
- The complex nature of the product with a host of terms and conditions is one of the biggest reasons why the product is not bought in huge numbers. However, this campaign is a significant step towards increasing life insurance awareness.
- '*Sabse Pehle Life Insurance*' comes from this very cultural nuance and will help establish an understanding of the essentiality of life insurance in our lives and the need to treat it as top most priority while planning for life.

BoB, BNP Paribas arms to merge mutual fund biz

- Baroda Asset Management India, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bank of Baroda and BNP Paribas Asset Management India, a subsidiary of BNP Paribas Asset Management Asia (BNPP AM), will merge their mutual fund business, subject to regulatory approvals.
- Both Bank of Baroda and BNP Paribas Asset Management Asia have entered into a binding agreement to merge their business which involves no cash consideration.
- Post completion of merger, BoB will hold 50.1 per cent stake in the merged asset management company and the rest will be held by BNP Paribas Asset Management.
- BoB will own 50.7 per cent of the paid-up capital of the merged entity while BNPP AM will have 49.3 per cent.

Important Financial & Economy Affairs

ORGANISATION	GDP RATE	
	2019 – 20 (FY20)	2020 – 21 (FY21)
S&P Global Ratings	6.3%	7%

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International Monetary Fund (IMF)	6.1%	7%
Fitch Ratings	5.5%	6.2%

India Ratings lowers its FY20 GDP growth forecast to 6.1%

- India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) on Thursday revised its forecast of India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth in current financial year downward to 6.1 per cent following the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) estimating Q1 growth to be 5 per cent, much lower than Ind-Ra's estimate of 5.7 per cent.
- This is Ind-Ra's second downward revision. The agency revised its GDP growth estimate to 6.7 per cent from its earlier forecast of 7.3 per cent.

Moody's cuts India's GDP growth forecast to 5.8% for FY20

- Moody's Investors Service lowered its 2019-20 growth forecast for India to 5.8% from 6.2% earlier, saying the economy was experiencing a pronounced slowdown partly due to long-lasting factors.
- For 2020-21, the growth is expected to pick up to 6.6 percent.

Cabinet Approvals

- Approval was given for the relaxation of the mandatory requirement of Aadhaar seeded data as a pre-condition for release of funds to the beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme till 30th November, 2019.
- The scheme provides income support of Rs 6,000 per year to landholding families, subject to certain exclusions in three 4-monthly installments of Rs 2,000 each directly to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode. First installment was from December 2018-March 2019, second installment from April-July 2019 and third installment from August- November 2019.
- MoUs signed between India and Foreign Broadcasters in the field of radio and television
- It will help public broadcasters in exploring new visions; New Strategies to address the demands of new technologies and stiff competition; Media liberalization and globalization. It will lead to equity and inclusiveness among viewer/listeners of Doordarshan (DD) and All India Radio (AIR). It will also help in exchanges of technical know-how, expertise and training of manpower.
- Approval was given for the apprise of the progress under the National Health Mission (NHM) and its decisions of the Empowered Programme Committee (EPC) and Mission Steering Group (MSG) of the NHM.

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- On the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission (CPC), an approval was given to release an additional installment of Dearness Allowance (DA) to Central Government employees and Dearness Relief (DR) to pensioners with effect from 01.07.2019 representing an increase of 5% over the existing rate of 12% of the Basic pay/Pension to 17%, to compensate for price rise.
- The combined impact on the exchequer on account of both DA and DR would be Rs. 15909.35 crore per annum and Rs. 10606.20 crore in the financial year 2019-20 (for a period of 08 months from July 2019 to February 2020) which will benefit about 49.93 lakh Central Government employees and 65.26 lakh, pensioners.
- Approval was given for the inclusion of 5,300 Displaced Persons (DP) families of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K)-1947 who initially opted to move outside the state of J&K but later on returned and settled in the state of J&K, in the Rehabilitation Package approved by the Cabinet on 30.11.2016 for Displaced Families PoJK and Chhamb under the Prime Minister's (PM) Development Package 2015 for J&K.

Important Business News

Twitter to ban all political advertising

- Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey announced that the company will soon ban all political advertisements on the platform globally. That decision provides a stark contrast to Facebook and its CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who has spent recent weeks defending his decision to allow political ads of all kinds on its platform—even ones that contain falsehoods.
- While internet advertising is incredibly powerful and very effective for commercial advertisers, that power brings significant risks to politics, where it can be used to influence votes to affect the lives of millions.
- The new policy applies to political candidates as well as advertising around political issues, but will include exceptions for things like voter registration. The company plans to reveal a detailed version of the policy on November 15, and it will go into effect on November 22.

IRDAI forms panel to vet proposals for innovations

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has formed an eight-member committee, with IIT- Bangalore Director S. Sadagopan as the chairperson, to evaluate proposals it has started receiving for implementing innovations in the sector under a regulatory sandbox approach.
- It will screen applications, evaluate the test design of the proposed hypothesis, and recommend applications for taking up for experimentation.
- It would also assess the progress during the course of experimentation and evaluate outcome of the experiments undertaken.

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- The setting up of the committee is in continuation of the measures the regulator had initiated with a view to facilitating innovations through a regulatory sandbox approach.

Blockchain to help digitise tea marketing

- The Tea Board of India is keen to harness latest technologies such as blockchain to help end-consumers track the supply chain of tea of Indian origin, by digitising Indian tea marketing channels.
- The industry regulator has invited expressions of interest for designing, developing and commissioning of an end-to-end technology to ensure traceability through the integration of various online systems. Blockchain involves storing digital information (blocks) in a public database (the chain).
- It is facing challenges in terms of oversupply, quality concerns, low price realisation, tight global demand, and non-remunerative prices for small growers, who now account for bulk of the tea crop.
- India is currently the world's second largest tea producer and the fourth largest exporter.
- "Harnessing technologies like blockchain, existing systems are to be converted into a 'ring fenced' electronic environment capturing the entire details of supply chain — from procurement of raw materials to the disposal of made teas to the primary buyers through auction,
- This system will be able to enhance visibility of the quality of Indian origin tea to consumers, thereby enhancing price realisation.

RIL sets up a digital platform subsidiary with investment of ₹1.08 lakh crore

- Reliance Industries (RIL) has decided to set up a wholly owned subsidiary for digital platform initiatives and invest Rs.1,08,000 crore in the new company through optionally convertible preference shares (OCPS).
- The digital platform company will acquire RIL's equity investment of Rs. 65,000 crore in Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited (RJIL) and house all the digital assets.
- This move will make RJIL virtually net debt-free company by March 31, 2020, with the exception of spectrum-related liabilities.

TRAI says railways should get spectrum only for captive use, not commercial WiFi

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has recommended allotting spectrum to Indian Railways only for captive use.
- The regulator has advised the department of telecommunications (DoT) not to give the national transporter any frequency for it to offer commercial WiFi services.
- While the DoT adopts the auction route to give spectrum to mobile services companies for commercial use, it allots the same to government agencies like the railways, Indian Space Research Organization, and the defence services for captive use for a certain licence fee and royalty charges.

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- Currently, 35 Mhz of spectrum is available for use by all. Of this, Trai has said railways could be given 5 Mhz and the rest put to auction in the exercise expected to be conducted by March. Spectrum in 700 Mhz band is useful for 5G services.
- Further, the 1.6 MHz spectrum already assigned to railways in 900 MHz band may be taken back from on migration to LTE-based network, Trai has suggested to DoT.

Government rolls out 6th tranche of gold bonds, fixes issue price at Rs 3835/gram

- The government rolled out the sixth tranche of sovereign gold bonds.
- The government has fixed the issue price at Rs 3,835 per gram with settlement date as October 30.
- Further, the government has decided to offer a discount of Rs 50 per gram for investors applying online and making payment for the purchase of the bond through digital mode.
- For such investors, the issue price of gold bond will be Rs 3,785 per gram of gold.

PayPal to launch Venmo credit card in partnership with Synchrony

- PayPal Holdings Inc. plans to roll out a Venmo credit card next year as the online-payments giant looks for new ways to monetize the popular peer-to-peer money-transfer platform.
- Venmo cardholders will be able to deal with all aspects of their cards from within the Venmo app, providing a “native in-app experience” for users who are used to checking that app on a routine basis.

These 20 Countries Will Dominate Global Growth in 2024

- Bloomberg, based on the data of the International Monetary Fund has named 20 Countries that Will Dominate Global Growth in 2024. China is on top with 28.3% while India is on second with 15.5% share in global growth.
- United States is on third with 9.2% share in global growth. The data are based on Purchasing Power Parity.
- The share of the remaining 17 countries in the growth is 21.5%. Some are: Indonesia, Russia, Brazil, Germany, Turkey, Japan and Egypt.

No charges on digital payments made to large business establishments from 1 Nov

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced that system providers will not impose charges or Merchant Discount Rate on customers as well as merchants on digital payments made to establishments having a turnover in excess of Rs 50 crore from November 1.
- For this, amendments have been made in the income tax act as well as in the Payment and Settlement Systems Act 2007.

Reliance Nippon Life AMC Renamed As Nippon India Mutual Fund

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- Japan's Nippon Life Insurance Co. has renamed its joint venture with Reliance Capital Ltd. after buying out the latter's stake in the business.
- It now plans to recapture the market share the mutual fund house had lost in the past few years, Nippon India Mutual Fund's Chief Executive Officer is Sundeep Sikka.
- This Asset Management Company (AMC) has been acquired by Japan's largest life insurance company Nippon Life Insurance by acquiring 75 percent stake in the company, allowing Anil Ambani-promoted Reliance Capital to exit from the mutual funds business.
- In Reliance Mutual Fund, both Reliance Capital and Nippon Life held 42.88 percent stake each, while the rest was with public shareholders.

Reliance Industries becomes first Indian firm to cross Rs 9 lakh crore market capitalisation

- Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries became the first firm in India to cross the Rs 9-lakh crore market capitalisation mark
- The conglomerate was also the first to reach Rs 8 lakh crore market cap mark in August last year.
- IT giant TCS, which has seen some selling lately, was at a distant second with a market-cap of Rs 7.66 lakh crore. It was the second company to reach the Rs 8 lakh crore mark.

Google achieves 'quantum supremacy'

- Google has achieved quantum supremacy with its advanced processor that was able to surpass the world's most powerful supercomputer.
- Google says that its 54-bit Sycamore processor was able to perform a calculation in 200 seconds that would have taken the world's most powerful supercomputer 10,000 years.
- Meanwhile, IBM - the company operating the supercomputer that Google claims to have beaten is disputing the claims.
- The search giant has made the details of its research public for the scientific community to fully scrutinize its achievement.

Important State Wise National News

Andhra Pradesh

Capital – Amravati; CM – Jaganmohan Reddy; Governor - Biswabhusan Harichandan

Andhra Pradesh launches online platform SMARTPORT

- Andhra Pradesh government has launched an online portal SMARTPORT
- SMARTPORT is an online platform launched as part of implementing the Ease of Doing Business Reforms related to trade and export promotion in all ports in the state.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- SMARTPORT will be covered under the Public Service Delivery Guarantee Act and tracked through a single-desk portal to bring in transparency and accountability and establish a corruption-free environment in port-related services

Arunachal Pradesh

Capital – Itanagar; CM – Pema Khandu; Governor - BD Mishra

Arunachal Pradesh: 7th edition of Tawang Festival begins with fanfare & fervour

- In Arunachal Pradesh, the 7th edition of the Tawang Festival began with much fanfare and fervour in Tawang.
- On the occasion, the US Ambassador extended his gratitude to the people of Tawang for the exceptional hospitality offered to him and his entourage.
- With proper planning and investments, the state has the potential to become the most prosperous and happiest states in the country

Assam

Capital – Dishpur; CM – Sarbananda Sonowal; Governor - Jagdish Mukhi

Assam announced no government jobs for those with more than two kids from 2021

- Assam Cabinet has decided that no government jobs will be given to persons having more than two children after January 1, 2021.
- The cabinet also adopted a New Land Policy, which will give three bighas of agricultural land to landless indigenous people and half a bigha for constructing a house. These cannot be sold for 15 years
- The Cabinet meeting also decided to increase the bus fares in the state by 25 per cent,

Chhattisgarh

Capital – Atal Nagar; CM – Bhupesh Baghel; Governor - Anusuiya Uikey

Chhattisgarh Government to Launch 5 New Schemes on Gandhi Jayanti

- Chhattisgarh government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, launched five new schemes on October 2, to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

The schemes are

- Mukhyamantri Suposhan Abhiyaan (Chief Minister Nutrition Scheme)
- Mukhyamantri Haat Bazaar Clinic Yojana (Chief Minister Market Clinic Scheme)
- Mukhyamantri Shahariya slum Swasthya Yojana (Chief Minister Urban Slum Health Scheme)
- Universal PDS scheme and Mukhyamantri ward Karyalaya (Chief Minister Ward Offices)
- Mukhyamantri Suposhan Abhiyaan has been started as a pilot project since June 2019 in some gram panchayats in Bastar, Chhattisgarh and other forest areas of the state.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- Under the scheme, fresh and nutritious food has been provided to malnourished children and anaemic women with the help of panchayats and self-help groups.

Goa

Capital: Panaji; CM: Pramod Sawant; Governor: Satya Pal Malik

Goa replaces traditional 100 dial with new 112

- The Goa government has launched "112" as the new integrated emergency number for police, fire and medical emergencies replacing the traditional dial number "100".
- In the first phase, the dial "112" service will cover only police department.
- Fire and medical services would be brought under the new dial number in the second phase. The service has been launched with the help of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs

Gujarat

Capital: Gandhinagar; CM: Vijay Rupani; Governor: Acharya Dev Vrat

Gandhinagar becomes first kerosene-free district of Gujarat; Amit Shah allots 1000 LPG connections to women

- Gandhinagar district of Gujarat has become the first Kerosene-free district of the state.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah has allotted one thousand LPG connections to the women beneficiaries of Gandhinagar district.
- Cooking gas connections to the rural women have been allotted under the Ujjwala Yojana.
- ONGC has completed this scheme at the cost of 6.13 crore rupees covering more than 75 thousand beneficiaries.
- The Home Minister also handed over 480 middle-income group houses to the beneficiaries at Kudasan near Gandhinagar. These houses have been built by the Gandhinagar Urban Development Authority - GUDA.
- He also dedicated various drinking water schemes and gardens in Kudasan, Sargasan, Raysan and Vaval in Gandhinagar district on this occasion.
- Also inaugurated the integrated control centre and distributed beneficiary cards for the schemes of widow women, old age persons and Ayushyaman Bharat Yojana

Haryana

Capital – Chandigarh; CM - Manohar Lal Khattar; Governor - Satyadev Narayan Arya

Over 2,000 panchayats brought under natural farming in HP

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- A total of 2,209 panchayats out of the total 3,226 have been brought under the ambit of natural farming in Himachal Pradesh.
- This fact came to light at a meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Shrikant Baldi of the state-level Task Force for Promotion of Organic and Zero Budget Natural Farming under Prakritik Kheti Khushhal Kissan Yojana.
- Horticulture has an important role to play in adoption of natural farming by farmers.
- Natural farming is a technique of farming that requires no ploughing or tilting or use of chemical fertilizers.
- Approval was also given for an additional amount of Rs 2,500 per month for block technology manager and assistant technology manager recruited under Agricultural Technology Management Agency on performance basis till March 2020.

Jammu & Kashmir

Capital – Jammu (winter) Srinagar (summer); CM - Vacant; Governor - Satya Pal Malik

First-Ever Ladakh Literature Festival to Begin on Oct 29

- The first-ever Ladakh Literature Festival (LLF) is scheduled from 29th to 31st October
- The Ladakh Literature Festival, a festival of literature, culture and art, will begin in the State of Jammu & Kashmir state and culminated in the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh
- The festival will mark the official separation of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, which will become the United territories on 31st October.
- There will be screenings of Ladakhi films, discussions on Heritage and presentations on History and Archeology of Ladakh, during the festival.
- To provide an opportunity to children, youth and women to participate in the 3 Day Ladakh Literature Festival several competitions and events like Calligraphy, Culinary art are also incorporated

Kerala

Capital – Thiruvananthapuram; CM – Pinarayi Vijayan; Governor - Arif Mohammad Khan

Kerala tourism to be differently-abled friendly by 2021

- Tourist destinations in Kerala are all set to go “differently-abled friendly” by 2021.
- A host of facilities, including special parking areas and toilet facilities will be made available for the differently-empowered tourists to enjoy barrier-free holidaying in the State.
- A total of 120 tourist spots had been identified across the State in the first phase to implement the project.
- Of them, 98 destinations have already been made completely differently-abled friendly.

Madhya Pradesh

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

Capital – Bhopal; CM – Kamal Nath; Governor – Lal Ji Tandon

India's first e-waste clinic to be set up in Bhopal

- The Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) have joined hands to set up the country's first e-waste clinic, that would enable segregation, processing and disposal of waste from both household and commercial units.
- After inspecting the garbage and plastic recovery centres in Bhanpur.
- The CPCB will provide technical support at the unit and hazardous waste will be sent to Bengaluru for recycling.

10th National Cultural Festival to be held in Madhya Pradesh

- 10th National Cultural Festival begins in Madhya Pradesh
- 10th edition of the Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav - National Cultural Festival is being organized by the Union Ministry of Culture from 14th to 21st of October under the 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' campaign.
- Governor Lalji Tandon and Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel will be present at the inaugural ceremony of the Festival being held in Jabalpur
- The National Cultural festival will display diverse forms of folk, art and culture of 22 states. The concept of National Cultural Festival was conceived in the year 2015. So far, the Ministry of Culture has organized nine such Festivals.
- The festival is being organized in Madhya Pradesh for the second time. This time the festival will be held in Sagar and Rewa apart from Jabalpur.

CM Kamal Nath inaugurates 'Magnificent Madhya Pradesh'

- Chief Minister Kamal Nath inaugurated the "Magnificent Madhya Pradesh" with the aim to promote investments in the state
- Over 900 business representatives are participating in the event organised at the Brilliant Convention Centre, Indore. Chief Minister Kamal Nath also inaugurated the Global Trade Exhibition at the Brilliant Convention Centre, Indore.

Manipur

Capital – Imphal; CM – N Biren Singh; Governor – Najma Heptulla

Shirui Lily Festival inaugurated in Manipur

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Tourism and Culture Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated Shirui Lily Festival, 2019 at Shirui Vangayan Ground of Ukhrul in Manipur.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- Mr Patel along with State Chief Minister N. Biren Singh inaugurated the Strength of Unity Statue as a mark of opening the third edition of the four-day state festival
- Shirui Lily is the rare, pink-white flower is only found in this area, and is also known as Siroy Lily, or Liliun Macklinae. Named after Jean Macklin, who supposedly spotted these flowers back in 1946

Odisha

Capital – Bhubaneswar; CM – Naveen Patnaik; Governor –Prof Ganeshi Lal

Odisha's first Robot Restaurant opens in Bhubaneswar

- The Robot Restaurant opened at the Infocity DLF tower of Bhubaneswar claims to be the first restaurant in Eastern India where two indigenously developed robots, 'Champa' and 'Chameli' are engaged.
- Earlier Chennai and Bengaluru had introduced smart restaurants with robots machines imported from China.
- The robots are developed at a Jaipur-based start-up using SLAM (short for Simultaneous Localization And Mapping) technology, and It automatically navigates like humans, follows the routes and instructions. Not only this, after serving the food, the robots will also ask you for feedback in Odia that 'Are you happy',
- It has 17 kinds of sensors that sense the environment, heat, even smoke, identify persons, greet and welcome people

Odisha's biggest trade fair to begin on Nov 12

- Baliyatra, one of the biggest trade fairs of Odisha, is scheduled to begin on November 12. The trade fair will continue for eight days.
- This year's Baliyatra will be jointly organized by the Cuttack District Administration, District Cultural Council, and the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC).

Patnaik launches 'Odisha Mo Parivar' programme

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched a social service initiative aimed at encouraging environment protection, blood donation and the welfare of Odias in distress.
- Under the 'Odisha Mo Parivar' (Odisha, my family) programme, party leaders will dedicate themselves to protect the environment and undertake extensive planting of trees, and create awareness among the public. The initiative will also come to the rescue of Odias stranded in foreign countries.

Rajasthan

Capital – Jaipur; CM – Ashok Gehlot; Governor - Kalraj Mishra

Rajasthan Bans Certain Categories of Pan Masala to Curb Addiction Among Youth

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- The Rajasthan government announced a ban on pan masala containing magnesium carbonate, nicotine, tobacco, mineral oil and flavoured 'supari' in the state.
- All such products will now be banned in the state under the Food Safety Act.
- Rajasthan has become the third state after Maharashtra and Bihar to announce such a move.

Telangana

Capital – Hyderabad; CM – Chandrasekhar Rao; Governor – Tamilisai Soundararajan

Telangana becomes fully electrified state

- Telangana has become one the fully electrified states in the country after providing electricity to over 5 lakh 15 thousand households under the Soubhagya Yojana introduced by the Centre in October 2017.
- During the last two years, the entire state has been covered and the households in remote areas have been provided electricity under the Sahaj Bijili Ghar Yojana (Soubhagya).
- In Telangana state, over 5 lakh 15 thousand households especially those in the remote areas have been electrified during the past 2 years achieving 100 per cent coverage.

Uttarakhand

Capital – Dehradun; CM – Trivendra Singh Rawat; Governor – Baby Rani Maurya

Uttarakhand CM launches awareness campaign to stop power theft

- Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat launched an awareness campaign -- Urjagiri -- which aims at stopping power theft and saving.
- The Chief Minister emphasised on the need to speed up the process for wider awareness to avoid power loss in Uttarakhand.
- The government is committed to ending power theft. The officers of power departments should ensure that no power theft occurs so that honest customers do not have to bear the brunt of the power theft.

Uttar Pradesh

Capital – Lucknow; CM – Yogi Adityanath; Governor – Anandiben Patel

38th India Carpet Expo in Varanasi

- The Carpet Export Promotion Council (CEPC) is organizing the 38th India Carpet Expo (15th in Varanasi) in Sampurnanand Sanskrit University Ground
- The Export was organized with an aim to promote the cultural heritage and weaving skills of Indian hand-made carpets and other floor coverings for the visiting overseas carpet buyers.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- India carpet expo is a platform for international carpet buyers, buying houses, buying agents, architects and Indian carpet manufacturers and exporters to meet and establish business relationship.
- The Expo is organized twice a year in Varanasi and Delhi.
- The Carpet Export Promotion Council has 2700 members from all over the country
- The major carpet producing centres in India are in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, North East Region of India, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

Uttar Pradesh govt changes Emergency service number changes from 100 to 'Dial 112

- The traditional emergency service number Dial 100 is replaced by 112 in Uttar Pradesh
- Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the services of new number - 112, in a ceremonial function at Lucknow.
- The new single helpline number 112 is an integration of all immediate assistance including police, fire, women helpline and ambulance.

Yogi Adityanath launches Mukhya Mantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana on Dhanteras

- On the occasion of Dhanteras, Mukhya Mantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana was launched in Uttar Pradesh by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.
- The programme aims at empowering the girl child for which an amount of 15 thousand rupees will be provided to every family in which a girl child takes birth.
- Under the scheme, the state government will direct transfer funds in the account of the registered girls in a phased manner when a girl child will complete various achievements, like vaccination, admission in class 1, 5 and 9, graduation.
- Mr. Yogi also launched the Kanya Sumangala web portal and gave away certificates and symbolic cheques to some beneficiaries.

Other National News

OCI can now apply for National Pension System

- Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) will now be eligible to apply for the National Pension System at par with Non Resident Indians (NRIs). Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has permitted Overseas Citizen of India to enrol in NPS.
- OCI may subscribe to NPS provided such person is eligible to invest as per the provisions of the PFRDA Act and the accumulated saving will be repatriable, subject to Foreign Exchange Management Act guidelines.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- PFRDA in its endeavour to promote and develop NPS has taken several initiatives towards increasing the pension coverage in the country.
- Now, any Indian citizen, resident or non-resident and OCIs are eligible to join NPS till the age of 65 years.

Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh come into existence

- The state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) ceased to exist at midnight on October 30 and was converted into two Union Territories (UTs). This comes 86 days after Parliament abrogated its special status provided under Article 370.
- The UTs of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh will be headed by Lieutenant Governors GC Murmu and RK Mathur, respectively. They will take oath early on October 31.
- This is for the first time that a state is being converted into two UTs. The total number of states in the country is now 28, while the total UTs has gone up to nine.
- The UT of Jammu and Kashmir will have a legislature like Puducherry while Ladakh will be a UT without legislature like Chandigarh. Both UTs will be headed by separate Lieutenant Governors (LG), as per the Act.

Government sets up panel to resolve dispute between MeitY and Niti Aayog over AI mission

- The government has formed a committee to resolve differences between the Niti Aayog and the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) over who will implement its ambitious artificial intelligence mission.
- The committee will be headed by principal scientific advisor K VijayRaghavan and represented by the secretary in the department of science and technology, the CEO of Niti Aayog and secretary of MeitY.
- The committee is tasked with rooting out duplication of work between various government arms, while clearly specifying the role of different agencies to fast-track the implementation of the AI mission, the official said.
- Niti Aayog received clearance from the expenditure finance committee (EFC) for a budget of Rs 7,000 crore, while MeitY had sent a separate Rs 400 crore proposal to the EFC to set up a national AI programme.

Livestock population in India rises 4.6 per cent to nearly 536 million

- The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying released the 20th Livestock Census -2019 showed that showed that the livestock population increased by 4.6 per cent, from 512.06 million in 2012. to over 535 million in 2019
- Total Bovine population (Cattle, Buffalo, Mithun and Yak) is 302.79 Million in 2019 which shows an increase of about 1% over the previous census.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- The total number of cattle in the country in 2019 is 192.49 million showing an increase of 0.8 % over previous Census.
- The Female Cattle (Cows population) is 145.12 million, increased by 18.0% over the previous census (2012).
- The total buffaloes in the country is 109.85 million showing an increase of about 1.0% over previous Census.
- The total milch animals (in-milk and dry) in cows and buffaloes is 125.34 million, an increase of 6.0 % over the previous census.
- The total sheep in the country is 74.26 million in 2019, increased by 14.1% over previous Census.
- The Goat population in the country in 2019 is 148.88 million showing an increase of 10.1% over the previous census.
- The total Pigs in the country is 9.06 Million in the current Census, declined by 12.03% over the previous Census.
- The other livestock including mithun, yak, horses, ponies, mule, donkeys, camel together contribute around 0.23% of the total livestock and their total count is 1.24 million.
- The total poultry in the country is 851.81 million in 2019, registered an increase of 16.8% in the total poultry.
- The total birds in the backyard poultry in the country is 317.07 million. The backyard poultry has increased by around 46% as compared to previous Census.
- The total Commercial Poultry in the country is 534.74 million in 2019, increased by 4.5% over previous Census.
- As per the livestock census, the share of cattle is around 36 per cent, goat is over 27 per cent, buffaloes is over 20 per cent, sheep around 14 per cent and pigs around two per cent.
- Among the States, Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of livestock of 67.8 million (68.7 million in 2012), followed by Rajasthan 56.8 million (57.7 million), Madhya Pradesh: 40.6 million (36.3 million) and West Bengal: 37.4 million (30.3 million).
- Among the states, West Bengal reported the highest increase of over 23 per cent in livestock population, followed by Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.
- The livestock census is conducted across the country periodically since 1919. The census usually covers all domesticated animals and headcounts of these animals are taken. The 20th Livestock Census was carried out in about 6.6 lakh villages and 89 thousand urban wards across the country.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

CPCB develops mobile app to inspect industries for pollution

- Central Pollution Control Board has developed a mobile application that will enable the pollution watchdog to inspect industries through live streaming videos
- The purpose of the application is to reduce the number of follow-up inspections that take place after the initial visit of the officials.
- An E-Inspection App has been developed by the IT Division, CPCB to provide a facility for remote inspection of industries through live streaming of videos and images.
- On the day of inspection, the industry can live stream the video of places where rectification work has been done by them and the same will be viewed by CPCB officials in real-time by using the App

Commemorative stamp on centenary of NIN released

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Harsh Vardhan released a postal stamp to commemorate the centenary celebrations of the city-based ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) at a function held at Indian Council of Medical Research in New Delhi
- ICMR Director Balram Bhargava and NIN Director R. Hemalatha were present on the occasion.
- The postal stamp has been brought out under the 'Corporate My Stamp' scheme of India Posts.
- About 5,000 stamps with a face value of ₹5 each have been printed and the India Posts would print an additional 1,000 sheets for sale online at e-post office and for display and sale at national and global philately exhibitions by the Department.
- A one-time award instituted to commemorate NIN's centenary called the 'ICMR-NIN-Centenary Award' was also conferred on C. Gopalan,

CBIC launches programme to strengthen Make in India

- Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has launched a revamped and streamlined programme to attract investments into India and strengthen Make in India through manufacture and other operations under bond scheme, of Customs Act, 1962.
- The scheme has been modernized with clear and transparent procedures, simplified compliance requirements ICT-based documentation and account keeping, by issue of Manufacture and Other Operations in Warehouse Regulations 2019.
- Under the scheme, the unit can import goods -- both inputs and capital goods -- under a customs duty deferment program. The duties are fully remitted if the processed goods are exported.
- CBIC has collaborated with Invest India to launch a dedicated microsite for providing information and promoting the scheme and for facilitation of investors. The site can be accessed at <<https://www.investindia.gov.in/bonded-manufacturing>>

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

Textiles Secretary Inaugurates Indian Handicrafts and Gifts Fair

- Textiles Secretary, Ravi Capoor, inaugurated the 48th edition of the Indian Handicrafts and Gifts Fair (IHGF) at the India Expo Centre & Mart at Greater Noida
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Theme of IHGF-Delhi Fair
- The IHGF-Delhi Fair 2019 will have knowledge seminars on various topics by expert faculties, fashion shows and ramp walks by models wearing fashion jewellery, accessories and utility items sourced from exhibitors at the Fair.
- Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) is a nodal agency for promoting exports of handicrafts from the country to various destinations of the world and projecting India's image abroad as a reliable supplier of high quality handicrafts goods and services

Indian Railways to become world first 'net zero' carbon emitter by 2030

- Railways and commerce minister Piyush Goyal announced Indian Railways will become "net zero" carbon emitter by 2030.
- This is the part of India's strategy to combat climate change
- India is the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases after the US and China, and is among countries most vulnerable to climate change.
- India has a rail network of around 125,000km, making it the world's largest railway network under a single management

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal Flags off 9 'Sewa Service' Trains

- Railway Minister Piyush Goyal flagged off nine trains connecting small towns to major cities
- Nine "Sewa Service" trains were launched without any additional investment by the railways and it was an example of how to use existing resources to the maximum
- Of the nine "Sewa Service" trains, those between Delhi and Shamli, Bhubaneswar and Nayagarh town, Murkongselek and Dibrugarh and Coimbatore and Palani will run daily.
- The other trains from Vadnagar to Mehsana, Asarya to Himmatnagar, Karur to Salem, Yesvantpur to Tumkur and Coimbatore to Pollachi will run six days a week.
- The flagging off of the Kota-Jhalawar City "Sewa Service" train has been postponed.

Government launches Food Safety Mitra Scheme

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan launched Food Safety Mitra Scheme, Eat Right Jacket and Eat Right Jhola On the occasion of World Food Day

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has introduced scheme of Food Safety Mitra (FSM) through which it plans to engage motivated individuals with the food safety ecosystem at ground level.
- A FSM is an individual professional certified by FSSAI who assists in compliances related to FSS Act, Rules & Regulations with three avatars- Digital Mitra, Trainer Mitra and Hygiene Mitra depending upon their respective roles and responsibilities

India extends over 60 million dollar line of credit to Comoros for Energy and Maritime Defence

Cooperation

- India extend a Line of Credit of over 60 million US Dollars to Comoros in the field of energy and maritime defence cooperation.
- Both the countries have signed some important agreements including cooperation in defence and energy sectors.
- India will extend a Line of Credit of over 41.6 million US Dollars for setting up of 18 MW Power Plant in Moroni and another 20 million US Dollars for the procurement of High-Speed Interceptor Boats.
- The Vice President was also conferred 'The Order of the Green Crescent', the highest Civilian Honour of Comoros, by Azali Assoumani, President of Comoros in Moroni.

Railway police website, mobile app launched

- Union Minister Nityanand Rai launched a website and a mobile application that will help the railway police in addressing complaints of passengers from across India and crime detection by integrating the criminal database online.
- The Minister of State for Home Affairs launched the website — www.railways.delhipolice.gov.in — and the mobile app Sahyatri in the presence of Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik and other officials.
- The database of criminals, including their photographs, active in railways' jurisdiction all over India would be uploaded on the website.
- The entire website can only be accessed by authorized Government Railway Police (GRP) officers. The GRP heads of 24 states and one Union Territory have been assigned as super admin and they have been provided with separate user IDs and passwords.

PM Narendra Modi becomes most-followed world leader on Instagram

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has become the most-followed world leader on Instagram with over 30 million followers.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- Mr Modi is now the only world leader to reach the 30 million followers milestone on the social media platform.
- He has surged well ahead of other global leaders like US President Donald Trump and his predecessor Barack Obama on Instagram.
- Prime Minister is also among the most-followed leaders on Twitter. He has 50.7 million followers on Twitter and has over 44.4 million likes on his Facebook page

HRD Minister inaugurates Pradhan Mantri innovative learning programme 'DHRUV'

in Bengaluru

- Union Minister for Human Resources Development Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank launched ambitious DHRUV programme in the headquarter of Indian Space Research Organization in Bengaluru.
- DHRUV is a unique programme to identify talented students and mentor them in the centre of excellence for 14 days so that they can reach their full potential and work for the society.
- The students chosen under the programme will take part in workshop seminar and interact with experts on the issue of National concern like climate change agricultural production and technology.

Jaishankar inaugurates tele-education, tele-medicine projects for African countries

- External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar inaugurated tele-education and tele-medicine project for African countries in New Delhi.
- The EAM inaugurated e-VidyaBharti and e-ArogyaBharti (tele-education and tele-medicine project) for African countries on the occasion of the 55th Anniversary of India's flagship capacity building programme - Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC).
- The project(s) will enable African students to access premier Indian education through the comforts of their homes and offer Indian medical expertise to African doctors and patients alike

Dr Harsh Vardhan launches initiative 'Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan' in New Delhi

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan along with several State Health Ministers launched Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN), initiative during the 13th Conference of Central Council of Health and Family Welfare(CCHFW) in New Delhi
- The initiative aims at assuring dignified, respectful and quality health care at no cost and zero tolerance for denial of services for every woman and newborn visiting the public health facility in order to end all preventable maternal and newborn deaths.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- After inaugurating the 13th CCHFW, Dr Vardhan urged the participating Health Ministers from states to increase healthcare spending to a minimum 8 per cent of their state budget so as to meet the goals of healthcare spending of National Health Policy 2017- 2.5 per cent of GDP by 2025

Government launches Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Programme with IIM Bangalore

- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) signed a contract with the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore for introducing a two-year fellowship programme Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) programme to boost skill development at the district level
- Designed under Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) the fellowship aims to address the challenge of non-availability of personnel for implementation of various programmes at national, state and district levels.
- The MGNF programme has an in-built component of on-ground practical experience with the district administration.
- Launched on a pilot basis in 75 districts across Gujarat, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, eligible fellows for the programme have to be in 21-30 years age-group, have a graduation degree from a recognized university and be citizens of India. Proficiency in official language of state of fieldwork will be mandatory.

Health Minister Harsh Vardhan Launches Domestically Made Green Eco-Friendly Crackers Ahead Of Diwali

- Union Minister for Health, Dr Harsh Vardhan launched eco-friendly firecrackers which have been manufactured in India.
- The crackers, have been developed in the labs of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). These crackers include sound-emitting crackers, pencil and flowerpot crackers and also sparklers.
- The newly launched green crackers can be differentiated from the conventional crackers by a green logo and well as a Quick Response (QR) coding system.

Government sets up high-level panel to check money laundering activities

- The government formed a 19-member Inter-Ministerial Co-ordination Committee (IMCC) chaired by the revenue secretary Mr Ajay Bhushan Pandey to check money laundering activities.
- It is set up as per the powers conferred under Section 72A of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.
- The 19-member Inter-Ministerial Co-ordination Committee (IMCC) has five secretaries, including from ministries of finance and external affairs, and chiefs of various regulatory authorities, as well as probe

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agencies. Besides ensuring operational cooperation among the government, law enforcement agencies, the Financial Intelligence Unit-India and the regulators or supervisors, the committee would also work on development and implementing policies on anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism.

- The Financial Action Task Force Cell in Department of Revenue shall act as secretariat to the said Committee.

Government launches Prakash portal to improve coal supply to power plants

- The government launched a web portal, Prakash, with a view to improving coordination between the power, coal and railway ministries to ensure coal supplies to power plants.
- The portal was jointly launched by power minister RK Singh and coal minister Pralhad Joshi.
- The portal will also help stakeholders monitor the movement of railway rakes and coal availability at power plants. Prakash stands for 'Power Rail Koyla Availability through Supply Harmony'.

Government launches app for filing consumer complaints

- The government launched a mobile app to help consumers register complaints easily and get redressal within 60 days. The complaints which are simple in nature will be resolved within 15 days, while complicated ones will be redressed in 60 days.
- Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Ram Vilas Paswan launched the 'Consumer App'
- The 'Consumer App' is available for free in two languages including English and Hindi. It can be downloaded on Android and iOS platforms.
- This is an additional platform that the government has created for filing consumer complaints. Consumer helpline and consumer courts will continue to play their role.
- Consumers have to register on the mobile app for filing complaint on issues related to 42 sectors like airlines, banking and insurance.
- Besides, consumers through the mobile app can offer suggestion to the government. They can also benefit from other features provided in the mobile app.
- The mobile app has important links related to consumers, details of each sectors like refund rules and others.

Smriti Irani Inaugurates India's Largest 'Charkha' Made of Waste Plastic in Noida

- India's largest 'charkha' (spinning wheel) made of used plastic waste was inaugurated on the eve of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.

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- The 1,650-kg spinning wheel was inaugurated by Union Minister Smriti Irani, Gautam Buddh Nagar MP Mahesh Sharma, Noida MLA Pankaj Singh and Noida Authority CEO Ritu Maheshwari. The spinning wheel has been installed in Sector 94 near the Mahamaya flyover.
- The 'charkha', which symbolises Gandhi's dream of Swadeshi (self sufficing and self reliance), measures 14ft, 20ft and 8ft and is made of 1,250 kg of used plastic.
- The charkha has been recognised as the largest made of used plastic waste in the country by India Book of Records.
- Irani, the Women and Child Development minister, also inaugurated a 'Pink Toilet' in Sector 39 and flagged off 15 garbage collection vehicles.

PIO cards to continue as valid travel document till March 2020

- Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) cards along with valid foreign passport will be considered for exit/entry into India till 31st of March 2020.
- This means that the Bureau of Immigration (BoI) will accept all Person of Indian Origin (PIO) cards (including handwritten PIO cards), along with valid foreign passport, as valid travel document for exit from/entry into India, till March 31, 2020.
- However, the extension is subjected to the condition that if in the meantime, any deadline is notified by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) thereby making handwritten PIO cards invalid, then PIO cardholders may have to obtain appropriate visa from Indian Missions/Posts.
- OCI card is a smart card to facilitate quicker immigration clearance at Immigration Check Posts.

Amit Shah flags off Delhi-Katra Vande Bharat Express

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah flagged off the Delhi-Katra Vande Bharat Express today from the New Delhi Railway Station
- Train number 22439 New Delhi-Katra Vande Bharat Express will depart from the New Delhi Railway Station at 6 am to reach Katra at 2 pm
- On the return journey the same day, train number 22440 Katra-New Delhi 'Vande Bharat' Express will leave from the Katra Railway Station at 3 pm to reach the New Delhi Railway Station at 11 pm. Train will ply on all days of the week except for Tuesday.
- This is the second Vande Bharat Express, the first one runs between Delhi and Varanasi.

Air India Launches "Namaskar Sewa" For Passengers At Delhi Airport

- National carrier Air India has started "Namaskar Sewa" at Delhi airport to provide better services to the passengers.

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- "Namaskar Sewa" is a meet-and-greet service through which Air India staff will take care of its passengers from the airport entry gate till the passengers board the aircraft. The airline will charge passengers for this service.
- "For Namaskar sewa, we have fixed nominal charges for domestic passengers - Rs. 750 and for international passengers, it will Rs. 1,500,"

Air India becomes the first to use Taxibot on commercial Airbus flight

- Air India became the first airline in the world to use a Taxibot on a A320 aircraft with passengers onboard.
- Taxibot is a robot-used aircraft tractor for taxiing an aircraft from parking bay to runway and vice versa.
- Air India Chairman and Managing Director Ashwani Lohani flagged off flight AI665 - which was carried to runway using Taxibot at terminal 3 of the Delhi airport - to Mumbai.
- It is a pilot controlled semi-robotic towbarless aircraft tractor used as an alternate taxiing equipment.
- The use of Taxibot on the Air India aircraft at Indira Gandhi International Airport is the first such usage on any Airbus aircraft worldwide.

ISRO to celebrate 'World Space Week' with 7 academic institutions in Karnataka

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has declared World Space Week' as an annual event to be commemorated between October 4 to October 10 every year
- As a part of World Space Week program, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has joined hands with seven academic institutions across Karnataka to spread information and knowledge about the benefits of space science and technologies to the student community.
- The programme will start on October 4 and will continue till October 10
- The one day program consists of various competitions for students, an exhibition of satellite models, posters, videos and talks depicting the past, present, and future of Indian space program.
- The space agency has invited students to participate in these events and enrich themselves about space activities in general and activities of ISRO-U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC).
- URSC is the lead centre of ISRO, which is responsible for design, development and realisation of satellites for the Indian space program aimed at benefitting the common man.

Ministry of Tourism launches Audio Guide facility App "Audio Odigos" for 12 sites of India (including Iconic Sites)

- Ministry of Tourism has launched Audio Guide facility App "Audio Odigos" for 12 sites of India (including Iconic Sites).
- Audio Guide facility Audio Odigos can be used in 12 sites that includes Amer Fort, Rajasthan, Chandni Chowk, Red Fort, Purana Quila, Humayun's tomb, Delhi, Fatehpur Sikri, Taj Mahal, Uttar Pradesh,

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Somnath and Dholavira, Gujarat, Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh, Mahabalipuram, Tamilnadu and Mahabodhi Temple, Bihar.

- Audio guide odigo offers Government of India verified content, with visuals & voice over support. With Audio Odigos, tourists will now enjoy a more enriching experience and take back historical insights of the Indian culture and heritage. The Audio Odigos app contains an inbuilt map of the site for a smooth navigation during the tour.
- Listeners will be offered various versions of history like Synopsis, Detailed History and Podcasts. The audio can be chosen in their preferred language & version of the history. Audio Odigos is now available for download on all Android and iOS supported mobile phones.

Textiles Minister to represent India at World Cotton Day celebrations in Geneva

- Union Minister of Textiles, Smriti Irani will participate in the plenary session of World Cotton Day being observed from October 7 -11, 2019 in Geneva, which will also serve to shed light on the challenges faced by cotton economies around the world.
- The World Trade Organization (WTO) is organizing World Cotton Day event in collaboration with the Secretariats of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC).
- WTO is hosting the event at the request of the Cotton – 4 countries, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali to celebrate their official application for the recognition of 7th October as World Cotton Day by the United Nations.
- World Cotton Day will celebrate the many advantages of cotton, from its qualities as a natural fibre, to the benefits people obtain from its production, transformation, trade and consumption. World Cotton Day will also serve to shed light on the challenges faced by cotton economies around the world because cotton is important to least developed, developing and developed economies worldwide.

Government launches Ganga Aamantran Abhiyan, a month long exploratory open water rafting expedition

- Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched a unique initiative called 'Ganga Aamantran' to connect with the stakeholders of the river. It is a pioneering exploratory open- water rafting and kayaking expedition on the Ganga river to be held between 10th October 2019 to 11 November 2019.
- The expedition will start at Devaprayag and culminate at Ganga Sagar covering the entire stretch of over 25,000 kilometres of the River.

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- This is the first ever effort by National Mission for Clean Ganga to raft across the entire stretch of the river and also the longest ever social campaign undertaken through an adventure sporting activity to spread the message of River Rejuvenation and Water Conservation on a massive scale.

Dr Harsh Vardhan launches digital platform 'eDantseva' for oral health information

- Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launched a website and mobile application of 'eDantseva', the first-ever national digital platform on oral health information and knowledge dissemination.
- E -DantSeva is the first-ever national digital platform that provides oral health information both in the form of a website and mobile application.
- The initiative of the Union Health Ministry with the AIIMS and other stakeholders aims to sensitize the public about the significance of maintaining optimum oral health and equips them with the tools and knowledge to do so, including awareness on the nearest oral health service facility.
- e-DantSeva contains information about the National Oral Health Program (NOHP), detailed list of all the dental facility and colleges, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material and a unique feature called the 'Symptom Checker', which provides information on symptoms of dental/oral health problems, ways to prevent these, the treatment modes, and also directs the user to find their nearest available dental facility (public and private sectors both).
- The Union Health Minister also released the Braille booklet and voice over on oral health education for the visually impaired individuals along with the oral health posters for pregnant women and children.

Government Constitutes Working Group To Prepare Contours Of New Industrial Policy

- The government constituted a working group headed by Guruprasad Mohapatra, secretary of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) to prepare contours of new industrial policy to make India a manufacturing hub.
- It will be the third industrial policy after the first in 1956 and the second in 1991. It will replace the Industrial Policy of 1991 which was prepared in the backdrop of the balance of payment crisis.
- The DPIIT had initiated the process of formulation of a new industrial policy in May 2017. The new policy will subsume the National Manufacturing Policy (NMP). A draft has been prepared by the DPIIT and has been sent for Cabinet approval.
- The committee has representatives from eight states such as Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

NITI Aayog, UNDP, AIM launch youth lab prog for entrepreneurs to accelerate innovation

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- In a latest initiative to recognize young people as critical drivers of sustainable development, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India launched Youth Co:Lab, a youth lab programme which aims at accelerating social entrepreneurship and innovation in young India.
- To mark the launch, a Letter of Intent (LOI) was signed between AIM, NITI Aayog and UNDP India.
- Through Youth Co:Lab, young entrepreneurs and innovators will get a chance to connect with governments, mentors, incubators and investors, who will help equip them with entrepreneurial skills.
- The initiative will also convene a series of youth dialogues across several cities such as New Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Mumbai to promote entrepreneurship across India.
- AIM and UNDP, as part of UNSDF signed between NITI Aayog and UN India, are collaborating to spread awareness about different issues pertaining to youth, the future of work and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through Youth Co:Lab.

Ministry of Tourism organises first of its kind Adventure Trekking Training course in Ladakh

- Indian Institute of Skiing & Mountaineering (IISM) Gulmarg, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India in association with Indian Institute of Travel & Tourism Management has organized an Adventure Tourism Training Courses in Trekking.
- The first of its kind in the region, this 10 days training course trains local youth in various aspects of mountain trekking and also gives them hands-on experience.
- This training program is aimed at developing the basic skills of Trekking in the youth who can later use these skills for becoming guides or entrepreneurs in the future.

DPIIT launches website, mobile app for IPR

- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Guruprasad Mohapatra launched the website and mobile application L2Pro India [Learn to Protect, Secure and Maximize Your Innovation] on Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).
- The website and app has been developed by Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM)-DPIIT in collaboration with Qualcomm and National Law University (NLU), Delhi.
- The L2Pro has been successfully implemented in Germany, United Kingdom, Italy and France, benefiting immensely from close collaboration with respective IP organizations and public research institutions.
- The learning app has been customized for India in order to ensure that innovation which is fundamental to startups are protected, managed and commercialised.

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- Learners will access the L2Pro IP e-learning platform through their desktop, laptop, mobile browser and mobile application (available on Android & iOS), and will be provided e-certificates by CIPAM-DPIIT and NLU Delhi and Qualcomm on successful completion of the e-learning modules.

India and Netherlands launched the second phase of the LOTUS-HR

- King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima of the Kingdom of Netherlands and the Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan jointly launch the second phase of the LOTUS-HR (Local Treatment of Urban Sewage streams for Healthy Reuseplant) as a part of joint collaboration, at the Barapullah drain, in New Delhi
- The project was initiated in July 2017 and aims to demonstrate a novel holistic (waste) water management approach that will produce clean water which can be reused for various purposes.
- The innovative pilot scale modular plant upon commissioning will treat 10,000 L sewage water per day and will showcase a self-sustaining model for the end user.

Union Health Ministry to launch "Indradhanush 2" for covering low immunisation pockets

- Union Health Ministry will carry out massive immunisation program in 271 districts across the nation and 652 blocks located in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar from December 2 under the "Mission Indradhanush 2.0".
- The "Mission Indradhanush 2.0" is slated to be launched by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on October 31 falling on the silver jubilee of the Polio eradication campaign, but will come into implementation from December 2.
- The extensive immunisation program will cover children up to 2 years of age and all pregnant women.
- The two vaccines which are put under sub-vaccination level are for diseases like Japanese Encephalitis and Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine which occurs in high-end endemic areas.

India Launches TechSagar Knowledge Repository For Businesses, Startups And Researchers

- To facilitate knowledge-sharing and holistic growth in the Indian tech industry for big corporations and startups, the National Cyber Security Coordinator's office in partnership with Data Security Council of India (DSCI), launched a digital portal TechSagar.
- TechSagar is meant to act as a repository of over 4K businesses and research entities focusing on technology— IT industry, startups, academia and individual researchers.
- TechSagar is a consolidated and comprehensive source of India's cyber tech capabilities which will provide insights across 25 technology areas such as internet of things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), blockchain, cloud, virtualisation, robotics, automation, AR or VR, wireless and networking, among others.

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'Hunar Haat' to be held in Prayagraj from Nov 1-10

- The next 'Hunar Haat', an initiative of the Minority Affairs Ministry, will be organised from November 1-10 in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.
- The Modi government will provide employment opportunities to lakhs of artisans, craftsmen and traditional culinary experts through the 'Hunar Haat' initiative in the next five years.
- All the 'Hunar Haats' to be organised in 2019 and 2020 will be based on the theme of "Ek Bharat Shresth Bharat".
- 'Hunar Haat' has proved to be an effective programme to provide employment and employment opportunities to master artisans.
- More than 2,50,000 master artisans, craftsmen and culinary experts, including a large number of women, have been provided employment and employment opportunities in the last three years.
- Traditional cultural programmes, Qawalli, Sufi music and poetry will also be performed by renowned artists at these 'Haats'.

Indian Railway launches One Touch ATVM for fast ticketing

- Indian Railways has launched 'one touch ATVM' at 42 suburban stations of Central Railway to render fast ticketing to millions of commuters over Mumbai Suburban Network.
- This new machine will reduce the waiting time of the passengers and allow passenger to avoid standing in long queues. A total of 92 ATVMs has been installed at 42 suburban stations.
- The new machine is loaded with the user friendly which will greatly ease the load on ticketing system of Mumbai Suburban Network

Postal ballot for disabled & voters aged above 80

- Differently abled people and those over 80 years of age can now cast their vote through postal ballots, in a move aimed at increasing voter participation.
- At present, voting through postal ballots is available to the armed forces and those on poll duty.
- Following a recommendation from the Election Commission, the ministry of law and justice amended the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, allowing senior citizens and those with disabilities on the absentee voter list. Absentee ballot refers to a vote cast by someone unable to go to the polling station.

Union Cabinet decisions

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved a number of measures including the hiking of MSP for wheat and the opening up of fuel retailing to non-oil companies.

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Hikes MSP for wheat by ₹85, pulses by ₹325 per quintal

- In a move to increase farmers' incomes, the Union Cabinet has decided to hike the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Rabi crops for the marketing season 2020-21.
- The increase in MSP for Rabi Crops for 2020-21 is in line with the principle of fixing the MSPs at a level of at least 1.5 times of the all India weighted average cost of production [CoP], which was announced in the Union Budget 2018-19.
- The highest increase has been recommended for lentils (increase of ₹325 to ₹4,800 a quintal) followed by safflower (increase of ₹270 to ₹5215 a quintal) and gram (an increase of ₹255 to ₹4875).
- The MSP of rapeseed & mustard has been increased by ₹225 to ₹4,425. For both wheat and barley, it has been increased by ₹85 to ₹1925 and ₹1525 per quintal, respectively.

Opens up fuel retailing to non-oil companies

- The government opened up fuel retailing norms, allowing non-oil companies to set up petrol pumps to increase competition.
- At present, to obtain a fuel retailing licence in India, a company needs to invest ₹2,000 crore in either hydrocarbon exploration and production, refining, pipelines or liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals.
- State-owned oil marketing companies — Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd. (HPCL) — currently own most of 65,000 petrol pumps in the country.
- Reliance Industries, Nayara Energy (formerly Essar Oil) and Royal Dutch Shell are the private players in the market but with limited presence. Reliance, which operates the world's largest oil refining complex, has less than 1,400 outlets.

Approves proposal to grant ownership rights to people in unauthorised colonies in Delhi

- Union Cabinet approved a proposal to grant ownership rights to people living in unauthorised colonies in Delhi.
- Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said the Centre would also bring a Bill in the Winter Session of Parliament to give relief to residents of unauthorised colonies in the national capital. The decision "is applicable to 1,797 identified unauthorised colonies" spread over 175 sq. km and inhabited by people from lower income groups.

Approves agreements with other countries in various fields

- The Cabinet gave approval to agreements signed with other countries in various fields including traditional medicine, and science and technology.
- These include administrative arrangements for cooperation in the field of railways between the Ministry of Railways and the Directorate General for Mobility and Transport of the European Commission.

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- A proposal for cooperation in science and technology between India and the U.S. was also approved.
- The agreement would provide an opportunity to promote “high quality” and “high impact” research and innovation partnerships, as well as broaden relationships between the extensive scientific and technological communities.
- The Cabinet also approved a Memorandum of Understanding to provide a framework of cooperation between India and St. Vincent and the Grenadines for the promotion of traditional systems of medicine.
- This will mutually benefit the two countries in the said field
- It will lead to promotion and propagation of traditional systems of medicine in St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Activities mentioned in the MoU will boost the importance of AYUSH in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Important International News

PM Modi to launch RuPay card in Saudi Arabia

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced that India will launch RuPay card in Saudi Arabia during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the country to help the Indian pilgrims visiting Mecca Madina.
- With this, Saudi Arabia would become the third country in the Gulf region to get the RuPay card facility after the UAE and Bahrain.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is slated to visit Saudi Arabia, where he will hold a bilateral meeting with Saudi Arabia King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in Riyadh.
- RuPay has been launched in India, Singapore, Bhutan, Maldives, Bahrain, UAE and will be launched in Saudi Arabia which will help the Indian pilgrims visiting Mecca and Madina.
- RuPay has also tied-up with international players like Discover, Japan Credit Bureau and China Union Pay to enhance its international acceptance and recently achieved a milestone of issuing 25 million RuPay-Discover global cards.

California declares state of emergency over wildfires, winds

- California's governor declared a state-wide emergency as a huge wind-fuelled blaze forced evacuations and massive power blackouts, threatening tourist towns in the State's famed Sonoma wine region.
- The so-called Kincade Fire, north of San Francisco, spread to 30,000 acres overnight, with only 10% containment.
- The Kincade Fire — the most devastating in California this year — ignited and spread quickly due to powerful wind gusts up to 145 kilometers per hour.

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- Governor Gavin Newsom declared a statewide emergency on Sunday due to the “unprecedented” high winds that have led to the fires.

United Nations WFP launches 'Feed Our Future' cinema ad campaign

- The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) have launched a cinema advertisement campaign 'Feed Our Future' to raise awareness and take steps against hunger and malnutrition in India.
- The campaign launch event included a panel discussion hosted by TV host Mini Mathur, which had actor-director Nandita Das and filmmakers Neeraj Ghaywan and Anubhav Sinha sharing their perspectives over cinema and social change.

UNICEF Launches Cryptocurrency Fund, Will Accept Donations Through Bitcoin and Ether

- The Children's agency of the United Nations, known as UNICEF, has now become the first UN organization to hold and make transactions in cryptocurrency.
- The UN Children's agency has established UNICEF Cryptocurrency Fund, making UNICEF able to receive, hold and disburse donations via cryptocurrencies.
- UNICEF joins a number of aid agencies that accept donations in cryptocurrencies, including the American Red Cross and the UN World Food Programme.
- The Ethereum Foundation will make its initial donation through the French National Committee for UNICEF.

Sri Lanka removed from FATF's Grey List

- Sri Lanka has been removed from the "Grey List" of the international terror financing watchdog FATF.
- The island nation will no longer be subject to the Financial Action Task Force's monitoring under its on-going global anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) compliance process.

Italy to introduce web tax on digital giants from 2020

- Italy approved a new tax on digital companies, including U.S. tech giants, as part of its 2020 draft budget
- The levy, due to be introduced from next year, will oblige companies such as Facebook (FB.O), Google (GOOGL.O) and Amazon (AMZN.O), to pay a 3% levy on internet transactions
- The Italian scheme is expected to yield about 600 million euros (\$662 million) a year,
- Italy's plan is broadly in line with proposals from the OECD, which last week urged governments to redraw rules for taxing global giants.

UAE announces establishment of 1st graduate-level, research-based AI university in world

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- UAE announced the establishment of the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), the first graduate-level, research-based AI university in the world.
- MBZUAI will enable graduate students, businesses and governments to advance the artificial intelligence field.

The University is named after Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces

- MBZUAI will introduce a new model of academia and research to the field of AI, providing students and faculty access to some of the world's most advanced AI systems to unleash its potential for economic and societal development.

Bangladesh become 2nd fastest growing economy in South Asia

- According to World Bank report 'South Asia Economic Focus, Making (De) Centralization Work' Bangladesh has become the second-fastest growing economy in South Asia after Bhutan.
- World bank projected GDP growth rate from moderate to 7.2 per cent this fiscal year and 7.3 per cent in 2020 in Bangladesh.
- World Bank stated that India's growth rate is projected to fall to 6 per cent this fiscal. However the country was expected to gradually recover to 6.9 per cent in 2021 and 7.2 per cent in 2022.
- Growth in South Asia is projected to fall to 5.9 per cent in 2019, down 1.1 percentage points from April 2019 estimates

Madagascar to issue postal stamp on Mahatma Gandhi

- Madagascar is set to issue a postal stamp bearing the image of Mahatma Gandhi to celebrate his 150th birth anniversary
- The island nation had issued a postal stamp on Mahatma Gandhi back in 1998.
- India's Ambassador to Madagascar Abhay Kumar had recently unveiled a plaque of a road named after Mahatma Gandhi

PM Modi Inaugurates Metro Service, ENT Hospital in Mauritius Via Video Conference

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi jointly inaugurated a metro express service and a hospital in Mauritius with Mauritian premier Pravind Jugnauth via video conference and described the projects as a symbol of New Delhi's strong commitment towards the development of the island nation.
- Both the projects will serve the people of Mauritius.
- The metro will provide a clean, efficient and time-saving transport service. It will contribute to economic activities as also tourism.

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- The Government of India has granted \$275 million for the Metro Express project and \$14 million for the new Hospital Project.
- The state-of-the-art energy efficient ENT Hospital is first paperless E-Hospital in Mauritius.

Dubai Customs launches World Logistics Passport

- Dubai Customs launched the World Logistics Passport as part of the implementation of the first phase of the Dubai Silk Road strategy.
- The passport will help boost the role of the Dubai Silk Road and enhance demand for Dubai's products, services and integrated transportation systems.
- The unique initiative also further raises the growing role played by Dubai Customs in regional and international trade.

Important Appointments

National Appointments

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Jai Bhagwan Bhorla	New administrator for Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank
2.	Surjit S Bhalla	Executive Director for India at the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
3.	KS Dhatwalia	Director General of the Press Information Bureau (PIB)
4.	Mallikarjuna Rao	MD and CEO of Punjab National Bank
5.	Abhishek Singh	chief executive officer of MyGov India
6.	P K Gupta	Chairman and MD of NBCC (National Buildings Construction Corporation)
7.	Sushil Chandra Mishra	Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Oil India Limited
8.	Amur S Lakshminarayanan	Managing Director and Group Chief Executive Officer of Tata Communications
9.	K Satish Reddy	President of the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA) for 2019-2021
10.	Anoop Kumar Mendiratta	Union Law Secretary (Secretary, Legal Affairs)
11.	J.P.S. Chawla	Controller General of Accounts (CGA), Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure
12.	Anup Kumar Singh	Director-General of the National Security Guard (NSG)

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13.	Sudhaker Shukla	Whole-Time Member, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)
14.	Rajnish Kumar (SBI's head)	Chairman of Indian Banks Association for fiscal 2019-20
15.	Sourav Ganguly	President of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)
16.	Pankaj Kumar	CEO of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)
17.	Sanjeev Nandan Sahai	New Power secretary
18.	Braj Raj Sharma	Chairman of the Staff Selection Commission (SSC)
19.	Nagendra Nath Sinha	Secretary of the department of border management
20.	Pramod Kumar Das	Minority affairs secretary
21.	Alok Tandon	Secretary in the department of administrative reforms and public grievances
22.	Tuhin Kanta Pandey	Secretary of Department of investment and public asset management (DIPAM)
23.	Deepika Padukone and shuttler PV Sindhu	Ambassadors for 'Bharat Ki Laxmi', an initiative by Prime Minister Narendra Modi
24.	Arvind Singh	Chairman of Airports Authority of India
25.	Sukhbir Singh Sandhu	Chairman National Highways Authority of India
26.	B Srinivas	MD National Horticulture Board
27.	Ganji Kamala V Rao	Chairman & MD of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) Ltd.
28.	Vijayendra	Chairman & MD of National Small Industries Corporation Ltd
29.	Pramod Kumar Tiwari	Director General of the Bureau of Indian Standards
30.	Amit Yadav	DG, Directorate General of Foreign Trade
31.	Manohar Lal Khattar	Chief Minister of Haryana (second consecutive term)
32.	Dushyant Chautala	Deputy Chief Minister of Haryana
33.	Sharad Arvind Bobde	Next Chief Justice of India (47 th CJI)
34.	P S Sreedharan Pillai	New Mizoram Governor
35.	Satya Pal Malik	New Goa Governor
36.	Girish Chandra Murmu	Lieutenant Governors of Jammu and Kashmir

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37.	Radha Krishna Mathur	Lieutenant Governors of Ladakh
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UNICEF ropes in Ayushmann Khurrana to raise voice against child sexual abuse

- Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurrana has joined hands with UNICEF and Ministry of Women and Child Development to raise awareness and speak up against sexual abuse of children.
- Ayushmann has boarded the ministry's key initiative, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), with an aim to make people aware of the protection and legal support that the Act offers against child sexual abuse.
- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) is a hugely important step taken by the ministry to make people aware of the protection and legal support that the act offers against child sexual abuse.

International Appointments

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Antonio Costa	Prime Minister of Portugal
2.	Kishan Dan Dewal	Next Ambassador of India to Georgia
3.	Kais Saied	Tunisia's next president
4.	Joko Widodo	Indonesia's President
5.	Upender Singh Rawat	Next ambassador of India to the Republic of Nicaragua
6.	Phil Simmons	Head coach of West Indies men's cricket team
7.	Godavarthi Venkata Srinivas	Next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Cabo Verde
8.	Alberto Fernandez	President of Argentina
9.	Mokgweetsi Masisi	President of Botswana
10.	Evo Morales	President of Bolivia
11.	Sophie Wilmes	Prime minister of Belgium
12.	Birender Singh Yadav	India's next Ambassador to Iraq
13.	Muktesh Kumar Pardeshi	India's next High Commissioner to Samoa
14.	Rafael Grossi	Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Resignation

Sl.No	Person	Designation
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1.	Kapil Dev	Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Cricket Advisory Committee
2.	Saad Hariri	Lebanon Prime Minister

Important Awards and Honors

Sl.No	Winners	Awards
1.	Thanu Padmanabhan (physicist)	M P Birla Memorial Award 2019 for his contributions to the world of cosmology (trophy and a cheque for Rs. 2,51,000)
2.	Caroline Criado Perez (British feminist, activist and journalist)	Royal Society Insight Investment Science Book Prize 2019 for her 2nd book 'Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men' (Prize money - £25,000)
3.	Azizbek Ashurov	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Nansen Refugee Award 2019
4.	Ben Stokes (England cricketer)	Professional Cricketers' Association (PCA) Players' Player of the Year title
5.	Yalitza Aparicio (Mexican actress)	UNESCO's goodwill ambassador for indigenous peoples
6.	William G Kaelin Jr, Peter J Ratcliffe, Gregg L Semenza	2019 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine (for their discoveries of "how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability)
7.	Ramesh Pandey	Asia Environmental Enforcement Award by the United Nations Environment Programme
8.	Thanu Padmanabhan (physicist)	M P Birla Memorial Award 2019 for his contributions to the world of cosmology (trophy and a cheque for Rs. 2,51,000)
9.	1. James Peebles (half of the 9mn Swedishkronor prize for his theoretical discoveries about the evolution of the universe) 2. Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz (share the other	2019 Nobel Prize for physics

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	half of the prize for their discovery of the first planet beyond our solar system)	
10.	John B Goodenough M Stanley Whittingham Akira Yoshino	2019 Nobel Prize for Chemistry (for the development of lithium-ion batteries)
11.	Asha Bhosle	Honorary doctorate by the University of Salford in Greater Manchester, England
12.	Olga Tokarczuk (Polish writer)	2018 Nobel Prizes for literature (for a narrative imagination that with encyclopedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life)
13.	Peter Handke (Austria)	2019 Nobel Prizes for literature (“for an influential work that with linguistic ingenuity has explored the periphery and the specificity of human experience)
14.	Chandi Prasad Bhatt	Indira Gandhi award for national integration for the years 2017 and 2018
15.	Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer	2019 Nobel Economics Prize for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty
16.	Priyadarshan (director and producer)	Madhya Pradesh government's National Kishore Kumar Samman for 2018-19
17.	Margaret Atwood (for her book 'The Testaments') Bernardine Evaristo (for 'Girl, Woman, Other')	2019 Booker Prize (prize money £50,000)
18.	K Parasaran (former Attorney General)	‘Most Eminent Senior Citizen Award’ by Vice President presents
19.	Shri. Thakur Anup Singh	Udyog Rattan Award– 2019 by the 'Institute of Economic Studies' for

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	(Marg ERP Ltd's Chairman & MD)	his exceptional work in transforming the Indian industry landscape how MSMEs can accelerate their business using technology
20.	Ilham Tohti (Economist)	'Sakharov Prize' (European Union's highest human rights prize) for his work defending China's Uighur minority
21.	Jaspri Bumrah Smriti Mandhana Fakhar Zaman (Pakistan) Dimuth Karunaratne (Sri Lanka) Rashid Khan (Afghanistan)	Wisden Almanack Cricketer of the Year award
22.	Gundappa Viswanath & Lala Amarnath	Inducted into the Wisden India Hall of Fame
23.	Cricket Country: The Untold History of the First All India Team by Prashant Kidambi	Wisden India Book of the Year
24.	BharatPe	DigiDhan Mission Fin-tech Award 2018-2019 for 'Innovation in Digital Payments through Emerging Technology'
25.	Leeladhar Jagoori (Hindi writer)	28th Vyas Samman for the year 2018 for his poetry collection- Jitne Log Utne Prem (Award money of Rs. 4 lakh along with a citation)

Fourteen start-ups selected for 2019 SEED Awards

- The awards, an annual affair, are granted to organisations working on sustainable development. For 2019, out of 906 applications across nine countries, 14 winners and 52 finalists have been selected for innovative and locally-led start-up eco-inclusive enterprises.
- The award highlights the contribution of green and social enterprises to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Every year, awards are decided under various categories.
- This year's categories includes SEED Low Carbon, SEED Africa Awards, SEED South Africa Climate Adaptation Awards and SEED Gender equality award.
- SEED was founded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

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- It is a global partnership for action on sustainable development and the green economy. This initiative works in Asian and African countries including Ghana, India, Indonesia, South Africa, Thailand and Uganda and supports small and growing enterprises with business and capacity-building support.
- Under the SEED Low Carbon category, an organisation called Aikya Organics, located in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh has won the award from India.
- Similarly, Fang Thai, an organisation from Thailand, has also been awarded. It manufactures paper and packaging material from rice straw.
- Another awardee, Mycotech, a company based in Indonesia, makes leather-like materials from a fungi, which are further converted to bags, wallets etc.

New history created in Ayodhya as over six lakh diya light up Sarayu's banks

- A new history was created at Ayodhya as a record 6 lakh earthen lamps lit up the Sarayu river bank on the eve of Diwali, days ahead of the Supreme Court verdict on the title suit over the disputed Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid land.
- The banks of Sarayu in the temple town Ayodhya were lit up with the sparkling light of lakhs of earthen lamps as people from different walks of life took part in the grand programme and lighted 'diyas' to cherish the moment.
- Last year's record was of three lakh one thousand one hundred eighty six 'diyaas' at the ghat. This time, it was 4 lakh 10 thousand 'diyaas' lit at the ghat.

President Kovind confers first National Corporate Social Responsibility Awards

- President Ram Nath Kovind conferred the first National Corporate Social Responsibility Awards to the companies for their outstanding contribution in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- It is important to internalize social welfare in the corporate culture and the companies have shown that it is possible to be profitable while being socially and environmentally responsible.
- Commending the efforts of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs for initiating the National CSR Awards in the year of Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary, these awards will be conferred every year on 2nd October.

Nepali mountaineer Nirmal Purja claims new speed record for world's 14 highest peaks

- A Nepali mountaineer on Tuesday smashed the record for summiting the world's 14 highest peaks, racing up all "8000 meters" in just seven months.
- Nirmal Purja completed the climb of the 14 mountains, all over 8,000 metres (26,250 feet) in seven months.

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- The 36-year-old Purja, a former member of the Gurkhas — a unit of Nepalis recruited into the British army — as well as the elite Special Boat Service, kicked off his ambitious “Project Possible” in April.
- In the first part of his record attempt, Purja climbed Annapurna, Dhaulagiri, Kanchenjunga, Everest, Lhotse and Makalu — among the highest of the “8000ers” — in just one month.

Lucknow school bags Guinness World Record title for having 55,547 students

- A Lucknow-based school has won the Guinness World Record for becoming the 'world's largest school' in terms of strength of students.
- City Montessori School (CMS) has won the global award for having 55,547 students in 2019-20, as stated by CMS founder, Jagdish Gandhi.
- Currently, the CMS has 18 branches and approximately 56,000 students all over the city.

Wipro selected as DJSI member for 10th consecutive year

- Wipro, an IT consulting and BPO company has been selected as a member of the global Dow Jones Sustainability World Index (DJSI) - 2019 for the tenth year in succession.
- Launched in 2009, the S&P DJSI (World) is the gold standard for corporate sustainability. Inclusion in DJSI (World) index is based on a rigorous analysis of a company's performance on more than 20 primary indicators and 120 secondary indicators across a spectrum of economic, environmental, social and governance parameters.

Gully Boy, Delhi Crime Win Big at Asian Academy Creative Awards

- Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt starrer 'Gully Boy', India's official entry to the 92nd Oscar Awards, walked home with the best film from India award in the regional finals at the Asian Academy Creative Awards ceremony. Netflix's 'Delhi Crime,' also bagged several awards in various categories.
- Actor Shefali Shah won Best Actor in a leading role award followed by Richie Mehta for Best Direction and Best Original Screenplay, Beverley Mills for Best Editing and Best Original Programme by a streaming service.

President Kovind to confer Vayoshreshtha Samman-2019

- President Ram Nath Kovind will confer the Vayoshreshtha Samman-2019 on the eminent senior citizens and institutions in recognition of their services towards the cause of the elderly persons. The award will be given a function in New Delhi.
- These awards are presented to institutions/organisations/individuals as part of the celebration of the International Day of Older Persons (IDOP) which is celebrated every year on 1st October.

India wins four UNESCO heritage awards

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation awards were announced at a ceremony held in Penang, Malaysia, marking 20 years since its institution
- The four winners from India, include one from Ahmedabad -- Award of Distinction for Vikram Sarabhai Library, Indian Institute of Management (IIM)
- Three from Mumbai -- Award of Merit for Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue and Our Lady of Glory Church
- While Honourable Mention for Flora Fountain.
- The renewal of the historic Tai Kwun - Centre for Heritage and Arts in Hong Kong received the Award of Excellence, the highest award among all categories.

Complete list of winners

Award of Distinction

- Keyuan Garden, Suzhou, China
- Vikram Sarabhai Library, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India
- Nelson School of Music, Nelson, New Zealand

Award of Merit

- Tseto Goenpa, Paro, Bhutan
- Guyue Bridge, Chi'an Town, Zhejiang, China
- Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue, Mumbai, India
- Our Lady of Glory Church, Mumbai, India
- Lyttelton Timeball Station, Christchurch, New Zealand

Honourable Mention

- The 5s Classroom, Preshil The Margaret Lyttle Memorial School, Kew, Australia
- Westpac Long Gallery, Australian Museum, Sydney, Australia
- Liddell Bros. Packing Plant, Wuhan, China
- Flora Fountain, Mumbai, India

New Design in Heritage Contexts

- Joan Sutherland Theatre Passageway and Lift, Sydney Opera House, Sydney, Australia
- Dry Pit Latrine in Jiaxian Ancient Jujube Garden, Nihegou Village, Shaanxi, China
- The Mills, Hong Kong SAR, China

Important MOU's

India and Saudi Arabia to sign dozen agreements during PM Modi's two day visit

- India and Saudi Arabia are likely to sign a dozen agreements on energy, defence procurement and civil aviation during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to the West Asian nation.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- There are 12 agreements being signed. The important ones pertain to the defence procurement industry, renewable energy and then there is one in civil aviation.
- He addressed the Future Investment Initiative Forum organised by the Saudi Arabia's Sovereign Wealth Fund – the Public Investment Fund.
- The forum is popularly known as the 'Davos in the Desert' and has been hosted by Riyadh since 2017 to project the kingdom as the future investment hub in the region.

The list of MoUs / Agreements are given below.

- Strategic Partnership Council Agreement
- MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Renewable Energy between Saudi Ministry of Energy and Ministry of New & Renewable Energy of India
- Agreement on Security Cooperation
- MoU for Cooperation in the field of combating illicit trafficking and smuggling of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and chemical precursors.
- MoU between Saudi General Authority of Military Industries (GAMI) and Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence concerning collaboration in military acquisition, industries, research, development and technology
- MoU for Cooperation in the field of Civil Aviation
- MoU between Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Saudi Food & Drug Authority (SFDA) for Cooperation in the field of medical products regulations
- Letter of Intent between Small and Medium Enterprises General Authority (Monshaat) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, of the Republic of India
- Cooperation Programme between Foreign Service Institute, MEA and Prince Saud Al Faisal Institute of Diplomatic Studies (IDS) of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia
- MoU between Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL) and Saudi Aramco.
- MoU for Cooperation between National Stock Exchange (NSE) and Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul)
- MoU between National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and Saudi Payments.

Odisha government inks LoU for 'drink from tap mission' with UNICEF

- Odisha has inked a Letter of Understanding (LoU) on "drink from tap mission" with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to provide quality drinking water to every urban household in the state
- UNICEF will provide technical cooperation to the government of Odisha for implementation of the "drink from tap" program which aims at providing piped quality drinking water supply to each household on a 24-hour basis, in first phase 1.20 lakh people are going to benefit.

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- The pilot project of the mission will be undertaken in five areas of Bhubaneswar and two areas of Puri and will be completed by March 2020.

Govt approves BSNL-MTNL merger, clears Rs 70,000-crore relief package

- The government finally approved a nearly Rs 70,000-crore revival package for the ailing telecom PSUs, Bharat Sanchar Nigam (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam (MTNL), which will include the two raising long-term sovereign bonds, allocation of 4G spectrum by the government, a voluntary retirement scheme, and the merger of the two firms.
- The revival package is a little less than the Rs 74,000 crore which the department of telecommunications had initially pitched for but fails to assure that the two loss-making PSUs will be able to compete in a hyper-competitive telecom market where incumbent private sector players are also finding it difficult to survive.
- Administrative allotment of spectrum for 4G services to BSNL and MTNL. The said Spectrum will be funded by the Government of India by capital infusion in these PSUs at a value of Rs 20,140 Cr in addition; the GST amount of Rs 3,674 Cr to this spectrum value will also be borne by the Government of India
- BSNL and MTNL will also raise long-term bonds of Rs 15,000 Cr for which sovereign guarantee will be provided by the Government of India (GoI)
- BSNL and MTNL will also offer Voluntary Retirement to their employees, aged 50 years and above through attractive Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS)

GeM Signs MoU With Federal Bank For Payment Services

- The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Federal Bank to offer a number of services
- The services including 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 facilitate a cashless, paperless and transparent payment system on the portal and would create an efficient procurement system for government entities.
- GeM is also working with Banks, TReDs, and SIDBI to provide bill discounting and financing of working capital where the cost of capital is linked to the performance & rating of a seller on GeM.

Mastercard joins hands with MS Dhoni to build 'Team Cashless India'

- Mastercard along with legendary cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni launched a nationwide initiative to accelerate the acceptance and adoption of digital payments.

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- The initiative named 'Team Cashless India', the initiative brings consumers and merchants to the forefront of the digital payments dialogue.
- Mastercard will work together with the Confederation of All India Traders, acquirer banks and fin-tech companies to support nominated merchants to deploy digital payments acceptance infrastructure.
- To take part in 'Team Cashless India', anyone can either nominate merchants online or give a missed call at 9016861000.

IIT Madras to collaborate with ExxonMobil for research in Energy and Biofuels

- IIT Madras will collaborate with ExxonMobil on Research in Energy and Biofuels.
- The five-year joint-research agreement focuses on biofuels, data analytics, gas conversion and transport, and is intended towards finding low-emission solutions
- ExxonMobil has spent more than \$9 billion since 2000, developing and deploying lower-emissions energy solutions.
- India is the 3rd highest producer of agro-residues globally with the surplus potential of over 230 million tonnes per year after China and Brazil
- The 'new biofuel policy' of Government of India targets to convert the country's biofuel industry into a \$15.6 billion economy

IHMCL, GSTN to sign MoU to link FASTag with GST e-way bill system

- The Indian Highways Management Company Ltd (IHMCL) and Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) will sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for integration of FASTag with GST e-way bill system.
- The MoU will be inked at the 'One Nation, One FASTag' conference, which will be inaugurated by Road Transport and Highway Minister Nitin Gadkari.
- FASTag is a simple to use, reloadable tag which enables automatic deduction of toll charges and lets vehicle pass through toll plaza without stopping for cash transaction.
- An MoU will be signed between IHMCL and GSTN for integration of FASTag with GST e-way bill system.
- The integration of e-way bill system with FASTag will help revenue authorities track the movement of vehicles and ensure that they are travelling to the same destination that the transporter or the trader had specified while generating the e-way bill.

India and Sierra Leone sign six agreements

- India and Sierra Leone signed six agreements including extending a credit line of 30 million US Dollars for rice cultivation.
- Vice President Venkaiah Naidu and Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio committed to further strengthening bilateral relations.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- Naidu on the second leg of his ongoing five-day visit to the West African countries
- New Delhi has extended concessional lines of credit to Sierra Leone worth USD 123 million in sectors such as agriculture, water, and transmission line.
- In addition, Sierra Leone has also availed lines of credit worth USD 49.45 million from ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) for projects in solar and telecom sector out of Lines of Credit extended by India to EBID

EESL, NIIF form joint venture to deploy smart meters across India

- Energy Efficiency Services (EESL) and National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) have entered into a joint venture for the deployment of smart meters across India.
- The new joint venture, named IntelliSmart Infrastructure will implement, finance and operate the smart meter roll-out programme of power distribution companies.
- This venture will support the ambitions of ongoing government programmes, such as UDAY and National Smart Grid Mission.
- The Central government plans to install 250 million smart meters in the next few years.
- EESL has been spearheading the smart meter deployment in India with the installation of over 625,000 smart meters. This partnership of NIIF and EESL will give a fillip to the smart meter ambition of the Government of India.
- IntelliSmart will support the efforts of the Indian power sector as it strives towards delivering dependable 24/7 service to end-consumers.

Aegon Life to sell insurance through Paytm to strengthen digital presence

- Aegon Life Insurance announced its tie-up with Paytm, India's largest digital payments platform, to offer comprehensive insurance products.
- Aegon is one of the pioneers in adopting tech and digitisation in the insurance space and the company will now offer its products through Paytm as well.
- As per this agreement, Paytm will distribute Aegon Life products to its customers. The product portfolio comprises existing and co-created tailor-made propositions.

Through this partnership, Aegon Life will deepen the penetration of its product offers and enable more policy holders to access their risk solutions.

National e Governance Division (NeGD) signed an MoU with The National Law Institute University (NLIU), Bhopal

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- National eGovernance Division (NeGD), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) & The National Law Institute University (NLIU), Bhopal have signed an MoU to implement an 'Online Capacity Building Programme on Cyber Law, Crime Investigation and Digital Forensics through NeGD Learning Management System (LMS)'.
- The goal of this programme is to enable Police Officers, State Cyber Cells, Law Enforcement Agencies, Prosecutors and Judicial Officers to acquire the requisite skills to deal with Cyber Forensics cases efficiently
- NeGD, under the Digital India Programme in collaboration with NLIU Bhopal has taken this initiative to offer 9 months Online PG Diploma Course in Cyber Law, Crime Investigation & Digital Forensics to 1000 officials through its Learning Management System (LMS).

Bank of Baroda signs MoU with Indian Army for customised services

- Bank of Baroda (BoB) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Army under which the bank would offer customised services along with a host of facilities to account holders
- The MoU includes handsome free personal accident insurance cover, free air accident insurance cover of Rs 15 lakh to Rs 50 lakh and an overdraft facility up to three times of monthly net salary.
- The features are also applicable for pensioners of Indian Army up to the age of 70 years

India, Bangladesh sign MoU for setting up a coastal surveillance system radar in Bangladesh

- India and Bangladesh inked a important MoU that will enable Delhi to set up a coastal surveillance system radar in Bangladesh besides deciding to further expand connectivity network corridors boosting Delhi's Indo-Pacific strategy with Dhaka emerging as a key pillar in that vision.
- PMs Narendra Modi and Sheikh Hasina here the two sides signed seven pacts -- MoU for providing a Coastal Surveillance System; Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on the use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports for Movement of goods to and from India
- MoU on withdrawal of 1.82 cusec of water from Feni River by India for drinking water supply scheme for Sabroom town, Tripura; Agreement concerning Implementation of the Lines of Credit (LoCs) committed by India to Bangladesh.
- MoU between University of Hyderabad and University of Dhaka; Renewal of Cultural Exchange Programme MoU on Co-operation in Youth Affairs.
- The two leaders also inaugurated through video-link three bilateral development partnership projects a) Import of Bulk LPG from Bangladesh b) Inauguration of Vivekananda Bhaban (students hostel) at Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka c) Inauguration of Bangladesh-India Professional Skill Development Institute (BIPSDI) at the Institution of Diploma Engineers Bangladesh (IDEB), Khulna

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- An MoU on Establishment of Coastal Surveillance Radar System in Bangladesh and encouraged both sides for early signing of the MoU. India has provided such systems to Mauritius, Seychelles, Maldives and planning one in Myanmar. The coastal surveillance system will pave way for Indo-Bangladesh White Shipping Agreement in future. This will be useful amid growing terror threats via seas and growing presence of China in the Bay of Bengal region.

National Health Authority and Google Tie up for Ayushman Bharat Implementation

- The National Health Authority (NHA) has joined hands with Google to collaborate and strengthen the implementation of the government's flagship health scheme, Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY).
- The two organizations will be working closely to explore various user cases for increasing process efficiencies in day-to-day applications. Google will also support NHA in improving PM-JAY's digital presence and showcasing relevant content to the 50 crore entitled beneficiaries.
- Google will also help provide training and support to NHA personnel to build on digital skills. The collaboration will seek to bolster PM-JAY's objective of reaching the poor and vulnerable, reducing their high out-of-pocket health expenditure, and improving access to quality healthcare.
- The mission of NHA is to create the world's best health assurance programme on an efficient and technologically robust eco-system.

BSE joins hands with Ficci to enhance MSME and start-up environment

- To enhance MSME and startup environment, leading stock exchange BSE in association with Ficci organised a brainstorming session to identify gaps in the existing policies and make suggestions for robust policies.
- Besides, the session was organised to promote Udyam Saathi and Udyam Sakhi initiatives to foster the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector.
- The MSMEs were invited to present their summary of ideas and suggestions as well as discuss their main issues of concern to the ministry. Around 40 stakeholders, including 20 MSMEs, participated at the event

Important Summit & Conference

French minister visiting India to co-host 2nd ISA assembly

- French Deputy Minister for Ecological and Inclusive Transition Brune Poirson is visiting India to co-preside over the second Assembly of the International Solar Alliance.
- Poirson, who is on a three-day India visit, will co-president the ISA event along with Raj Kumar Singh, Minister of State (IC) of Power, and New and Renewable Energy.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- The International Solar Alliance brings together 80 States and offers concrete solutions that help reduce the cost of solar installations, particularly in developing countries.
- This meeting is also aimed to prepare the COP25 Climate Change and the COP15 Biodiversity conferences.

28th BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change

- Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar held talks with some of his fellow ministers from the five-member BASIC group of countries ahead of their ministerial meeting on Climate Change due to be held in Beijing, China.
- The 29th ministerial meeting of the BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, China) countries on Climate Change is taking place ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference to be held in Chile from December 2 to 13 this year.
- At the 28th meeting held at Sao Paulo, Brazil in August the BASIC ministers expressed their concern for climate change and its adverse effects and reaffirmed their commitment to the successful implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, its Kyoto Protocol and its Paris Agreement, according to the joint statement issued at the end of the meeting.

Indian Ocean Rim to Get Boost with UAE, Bangladesh at Helm

- The upcoming Indian Ocean Rim Association ministerial meeting in Abu Dhabi will be keenly watched as India continues to promote its official policy of “coordination, cooperation and partnership” in the regional maritime domain.
- The meeting is important as two of India’s important partners, the United Arab Emirates and Bangladesh, will take charge as the new chair and vice-chair of one of the largest regional maritime organisations for the duration of 2019-21.
- It is expected that the rise of more partner countries in managing the crucial maritime region that connects India with the energy suppliers in the Gulf will help in greater coordination in the Indian Ocean region.
- The 19th IORA Council of Ministers (COM) meeting will be held on November 7 in Abu Dhabi with the theme of “Promoting a Shared Destiny and Path to Prosperity in the Indian Ocean”.

New Delhi to Host First “Global Bio-India 2019” Summit from 21st – 23rd November

- The Global Bio-India 2019, one of the largest biotechnology stakeholder’s conglomerate will be held for the first time in India at New Delhi from 21st to 23rd November, 2019. Announcing this at a Curtain Raiser in Delhi.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- India for the first time is hosting a mega event for the biotech community to attract investments, showcase our indigenous strengths and more importantly fuel the hopes and aspirations of the indigenous talent pool.
- The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India along with its Public Sector Undertaking, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) is organizing this event.

India to host 91st Interpol General Assembly in 2022

- India will host the 91st Interpol General Assembly in 2022 as part of celebrations of the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence.
- The general assembly of Interpol is an annual exercise hosted by member countries. All major decisions affecting general policy, the resources needed for international cooperation, working methods and finances are deliberated and discussed by representatives
- The International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) had hosted the general assembly, where representatives of all member countries converge, in India in 1997.
- Interpol is an international organization with 194 member states and 100 years of experience of international cooperation in policing

Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurates 11th Nuclear Energy Conclave

- The Union Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (I/C), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated the 11th Nuclear Energy Conclave in New Delhi
- Theme of the Conclave: “Economics of Nuclear Power- Innovation towards Safer & Cost Effective Technologies
- The Government has taken various steps to promote the scientific temper in the country, specially in the Department of Atomic Energy and Space.
- Atomic power plants were restricted in Southern India, now the Government is setting up the nuclear plants in other parts of the country. A nuclear plant is coming up in the Gorakhpur of Haryana,
- To educate the students and general public about the applications of nuclear energy, a “Hall of Nuclear Energy” was opened in Pragati Maidan in Delhi

First National Hindi Science writers conference inaugurated in Lucknow

- The first National Hindi Science writers conference started in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh with an aim to promote use of Hindi and other Vernacular languages in science writing.

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- The conference being organised at Dr. Shakuntala Mishra National rehabilitation university was inaugurated by speaker of the state assembly Hriday Narayain dixit.
- More than one thousand science writers from across the country are expected to take part in this conference which is aimed to bring all Hindi and vernacular language science writers at one platform and to promote Hindi in the field of science writing. A dedicated website WWW.VIGYANLEKHAN.COM has been prepared for this event

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates 41st DRDO Directors Conference in New Delhi

- Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the 41st DRDO Directors Conference in New Delhi.
- Chiefs of the three forces & DRDO Chairman G Satheesh Reddy were also present on the occasion.
- Rajnath Singh stated that DRDO has played significant role in ensuring technological advancement of our forces and safeguarding our country.

2nd India-China Informal Summit in Mahabalipuram, TamilNadu

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping are all set to take part in an "informal summit" in the coastal town of Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu.
- The two leaders will engage in informal talks to cement ties strained by tough talk on the Kashmir issue by both the countries.
- This would be the second informal meeting between PM Modi and the Chinese premier after their first one in Wuhan, China, in 2018. The Wuhan meet came months after a 73-day-long standoff between both the countries' armies in Doklam tri-junction in Sikkim.
- During the summit, The Indian embassy in Beijing, China has announced relaxations in its e-visa policy for Chinese nationals, announced to set up a High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue mechanism for trade and investment related issues and also decided to designate 2020 as Year of India-China Cultural and People to People Exchanges. The year 2020 also marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of India-China relations.
- India relaxes e-visa rules for Chinese nationals
- India, China to set up a new mechanism for trade and investment related issues
- 2020: Year of India-China Cultural and People to People Exchanges

Piyush Goyal to attend 9th RCEP Intersessional Ministerial Meeting in Thailand

- Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal will attend the 9th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, RCEP Intersessional Ministerial meeting beginning at Bangkok in Thailand.
- This will be the last Ministerial before the 3rd Leaders Summit to be held on 4th of next month in Bangkok.

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- Out of 25 chapters, 21 chapters have been concluded. Crucial chapters of Investment, Electronic Commerce, Rules of Origin and Trade Remedies are yet to be settled.
- The 28th round of negotiations for RCEP at the expert level was concluded at Da Nang in Vietnam.

Drone Innovators Network Summit 2019

- Drone Innovators Network Summit-2019 focusing on the governance of drones was held in New Delhi. The summit was organised by the World Economic Forum (WEF) under the aegis of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- Minister of State (MoS-Independent charge) for Civil Aviation, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri addressed the event.
- Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) for drones were issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation in December 2018. These regulations were needed to comply with the No Permission, No Take-off (NPNT) software programme to comply with the requirements on the Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) in order to get DigiSky platform's permission to operate drones in India.

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, 2019, Uganda

- One of the largest annual gatherings of Commonwealth Parliamentarians will take place from 22 to 29 September 2019 at the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) hosted by the CPA Uganda Branch and the Parliament of Uganda.
- The conference will be hosted by the CPA President Designate (2018-2019), Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda.
- The main conference theme is: 'Adaption, engagement, and evolution of parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth'.
- During the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, there will also be a number of additional conferences and meetings including: 37th CPA Small Branches Conference; 6th triennial Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference; 64th CPA General Assembly; meetings of the CPA Executive Committee; and the Society of Clerks at the Table (SOCATT) meetings.
- This year, the conference will hold elections for the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), the CPA Treasurer and the CPA Small Branches Chairperson for new three-year terms.

Gandhi Film Festival to be organised in Mumbai

- Film Division in association with India Tourism will organise a Gandhi Film Festival at JB Hall in Mumbai from 2nd to 6th October.

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- The festival as part of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary will showcase select films focussing on Swachh Bharat and non-violence.
- The festival will be inaugurated by noted actor Darshan Jariwala on 2nd October.
- Movies to be screened include 'Gandhi' by Richard Attenborough, 'The Making of Mahatma' by Shyam Benegal and 'Maine Gandhi to Nahi Maara' by Jahnu Barua.

Prime Minister to attend Arogya Manthan function at New Delhi

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will preside over the valedictory function of Arogya Manthan at Vigyan Bhawan.
- Arogya Manthan is a two-day event organized by the National Health Authority, to mark the completion of one year of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY.
- A new mobile application of Ayushman Bharat will be launched by the Prime Minister at the venue.
- He will also launch the 'Ayushman Bharat Start-Up Grand Challenge' and will release a commemorative stamp on the occasion.
- The purpose of the Arogya Manthan is to provide a platform to meet for all the important stakeholders of PM-JAY to meet and discuss the challenges faced in the implementation of the scheme in the past year and to forge new understanding and pathways towards improving implementation.

International Conference on drug situation in NE begins

- Governor Dr Najma Heptulla inaugurated the International Conference cum workshop on comprehensive approach to combat illicit trafficking of Afghan opiates and drug situation in North East held in Imphal, Manipur.
- The conference organized by the State Government and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Regional Office, South Asia (UNODC-ROSA).

World Congress of Poets at KIIT

- The 39th World Congress of Poets (WCP) will commence in KIIT Deemed to be university, coinciding with the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- More than 1,000 poets, writers from 82 countries and 500 poets from Odisha will attend the meet, which has 'Compassion through Poetry' as its theme.
- This is the third time WCP is being hosted in India. On previous two occasions it was held in Chennai in 1986 and 2007. It is a matter of pride for Odisha and India to be hosting such a coveted Congress.
- The WCP 'Golden Gabel' will be conferred on Dr Samanta. Besides that, honorary DLitt will be conferred on six eminent litterateurs and honorary diploma on five eminent persons. The Gandhi Prize for Literature will be awarded to noted Gandhian Acharya Bhabananda.

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- The theme of the 5 days poetry festival was “Compassion through Poetry”.

First-ever India International Cooperative trade fair to be held in Delhi

- The first-ever India International Cooperatives Trade Fair (IICTF) will be held at Pragati Maidan from October 11.
- The ministries of Agriculture and Commerce and Industry have organised a three-day India International Cooperative trade fair from October 11 to 13.
- The fair has been jointly organised by National Cooperative Development Corporation in association with the Bangkok-based international organisation NEDAC and leading organisations in India like NAFED, APEDA and ITPO.
- In addition, six state governments and Union Territories are partners of IICTF. Bangladesh is also a partner country in the event.

Important Defence News

DRDO's AIP system gets boost with the operation of land-based prototype

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) programme to build a fuel cell-based Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system for Indian Naval Submarines has crossed several milestones in technology maturity.
- Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) has a force multiplier effect on the lethality of a diesel-electric submarine as it enhances the submerged endurance of the boat, several folds. Fuel cell-based AIP has merits in performance compared to other technologies.
- Operation of the land-based prototype engineered to the form-and-fit of a submarine was witnessed by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh in the presence of Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Dr G. Satheesh Reddy at the Naval Materials Research Laboratory in Ambarnath, Maharashtra

Philippine Army Plans To Buy India's BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile To Strengthen Its Coastal Security

- BrahMos missile is regarded as one of the world's fastest supersonic missiles and the Philippine Army is interested in acquiring the Indian-manufactured weapons system, in order to strengthen its coastal defences.
- Philippines is very much interested in the possible acquisition of the BrahMos missile, which can be launched from all four platforms (ship, a plane, submarine, or on land).
- Philippine Army wants BrahMos missile as its First Land-Based Missile System Battery (1LBMS).

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India ramping up mobile connectivity along LAC, amid Chinese spill over

- India is planning to enhance its mobile network in the eastern-most regions of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Indian Army has recently held a discussion with the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) on how to bring secure network in the region through mobile and microwave towers. Currently, the Indian side along the border automatically picks up Chinese network in the area.
- Scientists from NTRO recently visited Kibithu, the eastern most sector of the LAC, ET has learnt. The army informed them about the need for mobile network. While the scientists agreed to raise the matter at the government's highest level, only mobile towers or microwave towers that need only small power supplies and project network can be setup along the border.
- It will also provide soldiers an opportunity to connect with their families; they often stay out of touch for months, resorting to hand-written letters.

Indo-French joint military drill under 'Exercise Shakti-2019' in Rajasthan from October 31

- Indian and French armies will conduct joint counter-terrorism drills under 'Exercise Shakti-2019' in the Mahajan field firing range in Rajasthan from October 31 to November 13.
- The joint exercise will focus on counter-terrorism operations in the backdrop of semi-desert terrain under the United Nations mandate. The biennial exercise between the armies of the two countries had stated in 2011.
- The training will focus primarily on high degree of physical fitness, sharing of drill at tactical level and the learning of best practices from each other.

Indian Army to conduct "Sindhu Sudarshan" exercise 2019

- The Indian Army is to conduct exercise codenamed "Sindhu Sudarshan" for the year 2019 in the deserts of Rajasthan from November 29 to December 4, 2019.
- The aim of this exercise is to evaluate the capability of the defence services in an integrated air-land battle.
- In the Sindhu Sudarshan exercise, operational efficiency of the Strike Corps fighting in the desert terrain will be assessed and the Indian Air Force (IAF) will provide support in terms of destruction of targets and airlifting troops.

Rajnath Singh inaugurates strategic bridge in eastern Ladakh

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated 'Col Chewang Rinchen Setu', a strategically important bridge, over Shyok river in Ladakh region.

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- The 430-meter-long bridge has been built by Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and connects Durbuk and Daulat Beg Oldie in Eastern Ladakh.
- This bridge has been completed in record time. It will not only provide all-weather connectivity in the region but also be a strategic asset in the border areas.
- Sandwiched between strategic Karakoram and Chang Chenmo ranges, the bridge is 430-metre long at an altitude of about 15,000 feet and has been constructed using micro piling technology. The construction has been completed in record 15 months.

DAC approves procurement of indigenous equipment worth over Rs 3,300 crore for armed forces

- The Defence Ministry accorded approval for procurement of indigenously designed and developed military equipment including anti-tank guided missiles worth over Rs 3300 crores for the armed forces
- The decision was taken at a meeting of the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh
- The first two projects include procurement of third generation anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) and the auxiliary power units (APUs) for the T-72 and the T-90 battle tanks.
- The third indigenous project pertains to discrete Electronic Warfare (EW) systems for mountain and High Altitude terrain, which would be designed and developed by DRDO and manufactured by design cum production partner from the Indian industry.

India-Myanmar Naval Exercise commence onboard INS Ranvijay

- The opening ceremony of the second edition of 'India Myanmar Naval Exercise' IMNEX-2019 was conducted onboard INS Ranvijay.
- The harbour phase of IMNEX-19 scheduled till October 20 includes visits to Indian Naval units, training and maintenance facility at Visakhapatnam.
- During Sea Phase scheduled from October 20 to 22, INS Ranvijay, a guided-missile destroyer and INS Kuthar, a missile corvette will be carrying out a joint exercise with Myanmar ships UMS Sin Phyu Shin, a frigate and UMS Tabinshweti, a corvette in the Bay of Bengal.
- The joint exercise will encompass a variety of operations including anti-air and surface firing exercises, flying exercises using integral helicopter and seamanship evolutions at sea.

India, Oman Begin Joint Training Exercise 'EX EASTERN BRIDGE-V'

- Indian Air Force (IAF) kickstarted its bilateral joint exercise with Royal Air Force Oman (RAFO), named 'EX EASTERN BRIDGE-V' at Air Force Base Masirah.

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- The IAF contingent comprises of Mig 29 UPG (upgrade) combat aircraft along with C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft.
- The Royal Air Force of Oman will be fielding Eurofighter Typhoon, F-16 and Hawk 200 combat aircraft in the exercise.
- For the first time, MiG-29 fighter aircraft will be participating in an international exercise outside India
- The last exercise, EX-EASTERN BRIDGE-IV was held in 2017 at Jamnagar, Gujarat

Defence of Andaman and Nicobar Islands exercise 2019 (Danx-19)

- Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) has conducted the second edition of Defence of Andaman & Nicobar Islands 2019 (DANX-19), a large scale joint services exercise from 14 Oct to 18 Oct 19.
- Components of the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard carried out mobilisation and field manoeuvres to validate defensive plans of Headquarters ANC towards pursuance of the Command's responsibility, namely ensuring territorial integrity of the A&N Islands.
- In addition to internal forces from ANC, accretional forces from Mainland comprising ships and aircraft, Special Forces from the newly formed Armed Forces Special Operations Division (AFSOD), also participated in this edition.

Indian Army Launches Software OASIS to digitise records of the Army officers

- Army has launched a new software "Officers Automated Structured Information System" (Oasis) which has started digitising the records of the Army officers. The new software is hosted on Army's intranet and can be accessed by the Army officers to check their details
- Before the roll out of the Oasis the records were manually preserved by Manpower Planning Directorate and the whole process of collecting the records, checking the records and keeping a track was very cumbersome.
- On the retirement of the officer, the whole data will migrate from Oasis to Retired Officers Digital Records Archive (RODRA) which holds the pension details of the retired Army officers.
- Oasis will also integrate with other department of the Army and will allow officers to access their salary slips and other details.
- Manpower Planning (MP) Directorate, is responsible for custody and maintenance of approximately 1.2 lakh service records of serving and retired officers of the Indian Army.

India, Japan joint Air Force exercise 'Shinyuu Maitri' begins in West Bengal

- The Indian Air Force will be carrying out a joint military exercise 'Shinyuu Maitri' with Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) from October 17 to 23.
- The exercise will be held at Air Force Station, Arjan Singh in Panagarh town in West Bengal.

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- C-130 J aircraft of the Special Operations Squadron of IAF and C-130 H of Tactical Airlift Squadron of JASDF will participate in the exercise
- The focus of the exercise will be to undertake Joint Mobility and Tactical interoperability among the two forces.

India hands over second pair of Mi-24V helicopters to Afghan forces

- India handed over the second pair of Mi-24V helicopters to war-torn Afghanistan, boosting the capability of the Afghan forces.
- The helicopters were officially handed over by Indian Ambassador Vinay Kumar to Afghanistan's acting Defence Minister Asadullah Khalid at a ceremony held at the military airport in Kabul.
- These helicopters are a replacement for the four attack helicopters previously gifted by India to Afghanistan in 2015 and 2016.

India, Japan to hold joint military exercise from October 19

- Dharma Guardian, the joint military exercise between India and Japan, will be held at the Counter-Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School Vairengte in Mizoram from October 19 to November 2.
- A Defence Ministry said that Indian Army and Japanese Ground Self Defence Forces (JGSDF) contingents comprising 25 soldiers each will participate in the exercise with an aim to share experience gained during various counter-terrorism operations.
- The exercise is an annual training event, which is being held in India since 2018.
- The scope of the exercise covers platoon-level joint training on counter-terrorism operations in the jungle and urban scenario.

India – Bangladesh Navies Undertake Coordinated Patrol in North Bay of Bengal

- The second edition of Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) of the navies of India and Bangladesh commenced in Northern Bay of Bengal.
- The two-day patrol will be followed by the maiden edition of Bilateral Exercise of the navies of two countries at Visakhapatnam between October 12-16.
- The India Bangladesh CORPAT commenced in 2018. The exercise aims at development of mutual communication and sharing of best practices between the two navies.
- India and Bangladesh have a common territorial boundary of over 4000 km and a maritime boundary. This exercise will add a new dimension to the India- Bangladesh maritime relations.

Indo-Mongolian Joint Exercise Nomadic Elephant 2019

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- 14th edition of Indo – Mongolian joint military training, Exercise Nomadic Elephant-XIV, being conducted over a period of 14 days, will commence from 05 Oct 2019.
- The exercise will be conducted from 05 Oct 19 to 18 Oct 19 at Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh. The Mongolian Army is being represented by officers and troops of the elite 084 Air Borne Special Task Battalion while Indian Army is being represented by a contingent of a battalion of RAJPUTANA RIFLES.
- Nomadic Elephant-XIV is aimed at training troops in counter insurgency & counter terrorism operations under United Nations mandate.
- The Joint Exercise will enhance defence co-operation and military relations between the two nations. It is an ideal platform for the armies of both the nations to share their experiences & best practices and gain mutually during the joint training.

Indo Maldives joint Ex Ekuverin – 19 at Aundh Mil Stn, Pune from 07 to 20 Oct 19

- Tenth edition of the Joint Military Exercise Ekuverin between the Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Force will be organised from 07 to 20 October 2019 at Aundh Military Station in Pune, Maharashtra.
- The Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Forces have been conducting Exercise Ekuverin meaning 'Friends' in the Dhivehi language since 2009.
- The 14 days Joint Exercise held alternatively in India and Maldives focuses on enhancing interoperability between the two forces for carrying out counter insurgency and counter-terrorism operations in a semi-urban environment under the United Nations mandate.
- The focus of the exercise will be on sharing of best practices and acquainting each other with the operating procedures being followed while undertaking counter insurgency and counter-terrorism operations. The last exercise was held in 2018 at Northern Area Headquarters, Lh. Maafilaafushi of Maldives.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh approves 4-fold increase to families of battle casualties

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a four-fold hike in assistance to the next of kin for all categories of battle casualties from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 8 lakh.
- The amount will be granted under the Army Battle Casualties Welfare Fund (ABCWF).
- Earlier, there was a provision of financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh to the battle casualties which are fatal, 60 per cent and above disability, battle casualties invalided out due to disability and Rs 1 lakh to disability less than 60 per cent. It was in addition to liberalised family pension, financial assistance from Army Group Insurance, Army Welfare Fund and ex-gratia amount.

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- This fund was set up in addition to the various existing schemes for the welfare of next of kin of battle casualties and their children.
- In addition to the assistance under the ABCWF, the already existing monetary grant includes ex-gratia for various ranks ranging from Rs 25 lakh to Rs 45 lakh and Army Group Insurance ranging from Rs 40 lakh to Rs 75 lakh.
- Rajnath Singh, as home minister in the previous government, had launched 'Bharat ke Veer fund' to assist families of paramilitary personnel killed or injured in action.

India formally gets the first Rafale fighter jet

- The first India specific Rafale multi-role combat aircraft was symbolically handed over to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at a ceremony in Bordeaux, France.
- 36 such combat jets have been acquired by the Indian Air Force which will be delivered by April-May 2022.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also called on French President Emmanuel Macron and held strategic delegation level discussions with France's Armed Forces minister Florence Parly.
- Rafale is a twin-jet fighter aircraft that operates from both an aircraft carrier and airbase. Dassault describes it as a fully versatile aircraft for all combat aviation missions. It delivers air superiority and air defence, close air support, in-depth strikes, reconnaissance, anti-ship strikes and nuclear deterrence.
- India had ordered 36 Rafale fighter jets from France in a deal worth Rs 59,000 crore in September 2016. The first batch of four Rafale jets will fly to their home base in India by May 2020. All 36 jets are expected to arrive in India by September 2022. The IAF has been readying infrastructure and training pilots.

Important Science and Technology

MIT researchers developed a new technology to remove carbon dioxide from air

- Researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US have developed a new technology to capture carbon dioxide from a stream of air, virtually at any concentration level
- Most methods of removing carbon dioxide from a stream of gas required higher concentrations. the new method could suck out the gas even when it was present in very low concentrations.
- The new method required significantly energy, and could even suck out the greenhouse gas at the roughly 400 parts per million currently found in the atmosphere.
- In a study, published in the journal Energy and Environmental Science, the researchers described the device as a large, specialized battery with a stack of electrodes that absorbs carbon dioxide from the air passing over its surface as it was being charged up, and then released the gas as it was being discharged.

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Saturn overtakes Jupiter as planet with most moons

- Saturn has overtaken Jupiter as the planet with the most moons, according to US researchers.
- A team discovered a haul of 20 new moons orbiting the ringed planet, bringing its total to 82; Jupiter, by contrast, has 79 natural satellites.
- The moons were discovered using the Subaru telescope on Maunakea, Hawaii.
- Each of the newly discovered objects in orbit around Saturn is about 5km (three miles) in diameter; 17 of them orbit the planet "backwards".
- This is known as a retrograde direction. The other three moons orbit in a prograde direction - the same direction as Saturn rotates.
- Two of the prograde moons take about two years to travel once around the ringed planet.
- The more-distant retrograde moons and one of the prograde moons each take more than three years to complete an orbit.

Nasa astronauts complete first ever all-female spacewalk

- Two Nasa astronauts have embarked on the first all-female space walk in a historic first.
- Christina Koch and Jessica Meir floated feet-first out of the International Space Station's (ISS), tasked with replacing a failed power control unit.
- The spacewalk, known as an extra-vehicular activity (EVA) in astronaut jargon, took place seven months after the original planned date for an all-female outing, which had to be scrapped because the ISS had only one medium-sized spacesuit on board. The agency sent up a second medium spacesuit in October

Important Ranking and Indexes

Index	India's Rank	Top	Least	Other info
Global Firepower (GFP) 2019 Military Strength Ranking	4th	United States	Bhutan	137 Nations
Global Competitiveness Index	68 th / 141	1. Singapore 2. US	-	103 indicators
Global Hunger Index	102 / 117	Seventeen countries shared the top rank with	Central African Republic	Four indicators 1. undernourishment 2. child stunting 3. child wasting (weight for

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		GHI scores less than five		age) 4. child mortality
World Giving Index	82 / 128	USA	China	Conducted by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF
Women Peace and Security Index	133 rd / 167	Norway	Yemen	11 indicators (Released by Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security in partnership with National Geographic)
Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index 2019 (MMGPI)	32 nd / 37	Netherlands	Thailand	-
World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2020	63 rd / 190	New Zealand	Somalia	Performance of countries across 10 different dimensions in the 12-month period ending May 1, 2019.
Global Health Security Index	57 th / 195	US (83.5)	Equatorial Guinea	It 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)

Bill Gates overtakes Jeff Bezos as world's richest man

- Microsoft founder Bill Gates overtakes Amazon entrepreneur Jeff Bezos as the world's richest person
- Amazon shares fell 7 per cent in after-hours trading on Thursday, leaving Mr. Bezos down to \$103.9 billion.
- Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates is currently worth \$105.7 billion. Mr. Gates debuted on Forbes' first ever billionaire list in 1987 with a net worth of \$1.25 billion

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- Mr. Bezos ended Gates' 24-year run as the richest man in 2018 and became the first man on earth with a net worth of \$160 billion.

Three Indian-origin CEOs in Harvard Business Review's top 10 best-performing CEOs

- Three Indian-origin CEOs, Shantanu Narayen, Ajay Banga and Satya Nadella are among the world's top 10 best-performing chief executives, featured in a list compiled by the Harvard Business Review (HBR).
- 'The Best-Performing CEOs in the World, 2019' list by the HBR features 100 CEOs and has been topped by American technology company NVIDIA's CEO Jensen Huang.
- On the 6th spot is Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen, followed by MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga, ranked 7th and Microsoft chief Satya Nadella on the 9th spot.
- The list also features India-born CEO of DBS Bank Piyush Gupta on the 89th spot. Apple CEO Tim Cook is ranked 62nd.
- The HBR took into account three metrics for each CEO's tenure - the total shareholder return (including dividends reinvested) adjusted by country and by industry and change in market capitalisation (adjusted for dividends, share issues, and share repurchases), measured in inflation-adjusted USD.

NITI Aayog launched India Innovation Index 2019

- NITI Aayog with Institute for Competitiveness as the knowledge partner released the India Innovation Index (III) 2019
- The India Innovation Index 2019, developed on the lines of Global Innovation Index (GII), looks into the innovation ecosystem of Indian states and union territories to help policymakers design policies to drive innovation across regions.
- Karnataka (1st), Tamil Nadu (2nd), Maharashtra (3rd), Telangana (4th) and Haryana (5th) have been ranked as top five states in innovation in NITI Aayog's first Innovation Index
- Chhattisgarh (15th), Bihar (16th) and Jharkhand (17th) are at the bottom of the index among states.
- Among north-eastern & Hill states, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have top the index
- While Delhi, Chandigarh and Goa have topped the list among union territories in the countries.
- Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh are the most efficient states in translating inputs into output.
- The index is based on seven pillars which include five enablers and two performance indicators
- The Enablers are the factors that underpin innovative capacities, grouped in five pillars: (1) Human Capital, (2) Investment, (3) Knowledge Workers, (4) Business Environment, and (5) Safety and Legal Environment.

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- The Performance dimension captures benefits that a nation derives from the inputs, divided in two pillars: (6) Knowledge Output and (7) Knowledge Diffusion.

Singapore tops new 'citizen-centric' global smart city index

- Singapore is officially ranked the smartest city in 2019 by the very-first edition of the IMD Smart City Index 2019 (SCI).
- The SCI is presented by the IMD World Competitiveness Center's Smart City Observatory, in partnership with Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD).
- This index finds that the 10 smartest cities in 2019 are: Singapore (1st), Zurich (2nd), Oslo (3rd), Geneva (4th), Copenhagen (5th), Auckland (6th), Taipei City (7th), Helsinki (8th), Bilbao (9th) and Dusseldorf (10th).
- Hyderabad topped among the Indian cities with the rank of 67

Country's top three cleanest railway stations are from Rajasthan

- Railway Minister Piyush Goyal released the 'Stations' Cleanliness Survey Report' (Cleanliness assessment of Non-suburban and Suburban Stations 2019).
- The highlight of the report was that the top three cleanest railways stations are from the western state of Rajasthan.
- While Jaipur was on the first position, Jodhpur on second followed by Durgapura in third position.
- North Western Railway followed by South East Central Railway and East Central Railway are the top three railway zones.
- Railways have been conducting third party audit and cleanliness ranking of 407 major stations annually since 2016. This year the survey was expanded to include 720 stations and suburban stations were also included for the first time.

HCL's Shiv Nadar tops EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2019

- HCL founder and chairman Shiv Nadar has topped the EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2019 with the highest contribution of Rs. 826 crore between April 2018 and March 2019.
- The amount in philanthropy contributed by Indians in the list stands at Rs 4,391 crore with an average contribution of Rs 44 crore.
- The number of individuals who have contributed more than Rs 10 crore increased by around 90 percent, from last year's 38 to 72 this year.
- Wipro founder Azim Premji was second with Rs 453 crore. Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani was third with Rs 402 crore

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IIT Bombay tops again in QS India University Rankings 2020

- Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB) has topped the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) India University Rankings 2020 for the second consecutive year
- This is the second time QS has published separate ranking for top institutions in India. The first edition was released in 2019
- Six other IITs have found a place among the top ten institutions in the QS list of top Indian institutions.
- Indian Institute of Science Bangalore (at number 2), Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD) at number 3, Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM) at number 4, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IIT-KGP) at number 5,
- The British higher education analysts QS has ranked the higher education institutions in India on the basis eight parameters which have different weightage.
- The eight parameters with their weightage are academic reputation (30%), employer reputation (20%), faculty student ratio (20%), staff with PhD (10%), Papers per faculty (10%), citation per paper (5%), international faculty (2.5%) and international students (2.5%).
- Calcutta University (CU) has secured the 11th spot in QS India Rankings 2020, topping among the state-run universities, followed by Jadavpur University (JU) at 12.

National Crime Records Bureau releases data for 2017

- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released its 2017 data for crime in India.
- The data that was supposed to be published under the new sub-heads of mob lynching, murder by influential people, killing ordered by khap panchayats and murder committed for religious reasons.
- The data suggests that in 2017 itself, India registered over 50 lakh cases of cognisable offences, which, according to reports, is a 3.6 percent increase in the registration of cases as compared to 2016.
- Uttar Pradesh has been listed as the most unsafe for women, with the state registering the maximum number of cases – over 56,000 – of crimes against women in 2017. This comes at a time when a debate rages regarding the law and order situation in the state.
- NCRB has classified 'crimes against women' as 'murder, rape, dowry death, suicide abatement, acid attack, cruelty against women and kidnapping'.
- The NCRB report states that as compared to 2016, there has been a 30 percent rise in incidents of offences against the state. Sedition, waging war against country and damage to public property are among the offences included under this category.

Chennai has fastest wireline broadband, Mumbai tops in mobile internet Speeds

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2019

- In a report by Ookla, Mean fixed broadband download speeds in India rose by 16.5 per cent during last two quarters
- Chennai and Mumbai have the fastest mean fixed broadband and mobile download speeds respectively, according to a new report by Ookla, the company which owns Speedtest.
- On comparing the fixed and mobile download speeds in the 15 largest cities in India, the reports shows Chennai had by far the fastest mean download speed over fixed broadband (51.07 Mbps), followed by Bengaluru (42.50 Mbps) and Hyderabad (41.68 Mbps). The slowest download speeds were measured in Nagpur (20.10 Mbps), followed by Pune (22.78 Mbps) and Kanpur (23.20 Mbps).
- Overall, mobile download speeds were relatively flat in India, fluctuating between 10.63 Mbps and 11.18 Mbps during April-September 2019.

Important Books and Authors

Authors	Books
Sandeep Shastri	“Lal Bahadur Shastri: Politics and Beyond”
Jaspreet Bindra	“The Tech Whisperer”
Michelle Obama	“Becoming: A Guided Journal for Discovering Your Voice”
Siddhartha Sarma	‘Carpenters and Kings: Western Christianity and the Idea of India’
Abhijit Banerjee & Esther Duflo	'Good Economics for Hard Times – Better Answers to our Biggest Problems'
N Chandrasekaran and Roopa Purushothaman	“Bridgital Nation: Solving Technology’s People Problem” (unveiled by PM Modi)
Govind Narayan Singh (former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh)	“Srimad Bhagavad Gita Mein Bhudhiyog”
Viswanathan Anand	“Mind Master: Winning Lessons from a Champion’s Life”.
Romesh Gunasekera (Sri Lankan author)	Suncatcher

Important Sports News

Cricket

BCCI orders 6 dozen pink balls for day-night test match at Eden

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- The BCCI has asked manufacturer SG to deliver 72 pink balls by next week for India's first-ever day night Test, to be held at the Eden Gardens, Kolkata.
- Producing a ball fit for a Test match under lights is a big challenge for SG as its pink ball is yet to be tested in a competitive game. The Duleep Trophy was played with Kookaburra pink balls for three seasons.

ICC bans Bangladeshi cricketer Shakib Al Hasan from all cricket for two years

- Bangladesh Test and T20 Captain Shakib Al Hasan has been banned by the International Cricket Council (ICC) from all cricket for two years. One year of the punishment has been suspended after he accepted three charges of breaching the ICC Anti-Corruption Code.
- Shakib will be free to resume international cricket from 29th of October next year subject to him satisfying the conditions in respect of the suspended part of the sanction.

Karnataka won Vijay Hazare Trophy 2019-20 champions

- Karnataka was crowned the 2019-20 Vijay Hazare Champions as they beat Tamil Nadu by nine wickets in the Vijay Hazare Trophy at Bengaluru. Karnataka win the Vijay Hazare Trophy for the 4th time
- Batting first, Tamil Nadu were bowled out for 252 in 49.5 overs with Mithun claiming 5 for 34, including a last-over hat-trick.
- Karnataka were cruising towards a 253-run target before rain interrupted play. The final was eventually called off when Karnataka were 146/1 in 23 overs. With Rahul batting on 52 and Agarwal unbeaten on 69, Karnataka were declared winners by VJD method. Karnataka were well ahead of the VJD par-score, which was 87

Jasprit Bumrah, Smriti Mandhana win Wisden India Almanack 'Cricketer of the Year' award

- Fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah and batswoman Smriti Mandhana won the Wisden India Almanack Cricketer of the Year award. They were the two winners from India among five who won the award.
- The other winners from Asia were Pakistan's Fakhar Zaman, Sri Lanka's Dimuth Karunaratne, and Afghanistan's Rashid Khan.
- Mandhana became the third woman to win the award, after Mithali Raj and Deepti Sharma.
- Legends Gundappa Viswanath and Lala Amarnath were inducted into the Wisden India Hall of Fame.
- Cricket Country: The Untold History of the First All India Team by Prashant Kidambi was adjudged the Wisden India Book of the Year
- The seventh edition of the annual cricket publication for 2019 and 2020 also features Mayank Agarwal for his stellar domestic run leading to a successful Test call-up.

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Harmanpreet beats Dhoni, Rohit to become 1st Indian to play 100 T20Is

- India Women T20I captain Harmanpreet Kaur became the first Indian (male or female) to play 100 T20I matches, achieving the feat after taking the field in the sixth T20I against South Africa Women.
- Harmanpreet is followed by former Indian men's team captain MS Dhoni and opener Rohit Sharma, who have played 98 matches each

Zimbabwe and Nepal readmitted as ICC members

- Zimbabwe has been reinstated as a member of the ICC, three months after being suspended for government interference in its board.
- The sanction on Zimbabwe was lifted at the ICC's October board meeting held in Dubai
- Nepal has also been reinstated as ICC members, although on a conditional basis. They were suspended in 2016 for breach of ICC regulations that prohibit government interference while also requiring 'free and fair elections'.

England all-rounder Jenny Gunn announces retirement from international cricket

- England all-rounder Jenny Gunn has announced her retirement from international cricket.
- Gunn, who is England's most capped player in T20Is, made 259 appearances for her country, winning three World Cups and five Ashes series.
- Gunn was a member of the England side that won the inaugural Women's World T20 in 2009, and also featured in her country's Women's World Cup-winning campaign that same year.

Abhishek Nayar retires from all forms of cricket

- Veteran Mumbai all-rounder Abhishek Nayar has retired from all forms of cricket.
- Nayar represented India in only three ODIs under M.S. Dhoni in 2009.
- He played 103 first-class games and scored 5749 runs while taking 173 wickets

Football

China to host expanded Club World Cup in 2021

- FIFA has awarded the inaugural edition of its expanded 24-team Club World Cup to China, the association's president Gianni Infantino announced in Shanghai.
- Currently the FIFA Club World Cup features 7 teams including the holders of the UEFA Champions League. Qatar is the host nation for the competition to be held 2019 and 2020.

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India slip to 106 in latest FIFA rankings, Belgium retain top spot

- The Indian football team slipped two places to 106 in the latest FIFA rankings after their 1-1 draw with much lower-ranked Bangladesh in the World Cup qualifier earlier this month.
- Bangladesh, meanwhile, jumped three spots to 184 riding the result which their head coach Jamie Day had described as being similar to India's famous tie against Qatar.
- Meanwhile, Belgium has remained at the top spot in the rankings with France and Brazil also holding on to their positions.
- Top-ten rivals Uruguay (5th, up 1), Croatia (7th, up 1), Argentina (9th, up 1) have edged closer to the summit.
- But the most significant rises are to be found further down the Ranking, where the in-form quartet of Ukraine (22nd, up 3), Japan (28th, up 3), Turkey (32nd, up 4) and Russia (37th, up 5) are among the more notable climbers.

FIFA bans Ex-CONMEBOL president for life for bribery

- FIFA has banned former CONMEBOL president Eugenio Figueredo from all football activities for life after finding him guilty of bribery.
- The 87-year-old Uruguayan headed his nation's football association for nine years from 1997, doubling up as a CONMEBOL vice-president for part of that spell, a post he held for two decades until 2013.

Germany's Bastian Schweinsteiger announces retirement from football

- Germany's World Cup winner Bastian Schweinsteiger has announced his retirement from football.
- Schweinsteiger spent most of his career at Bayern Munich and was able to win eight Bundesliga titles, seven German Cups and Champions league in 2013
- The 35-year-old played over 300 matches for Bayern, managing to score 45 goals from 2002-2015.
- While playing for Germany, he played over 121 matches and registered 24 goals. He was also a part of the team's World Cup-winning squad.

Indian women's football team clinches SAFF U-15 title

- India beat Bangladesh 5-3 on penalty shoot-out to win the SAFF U-15 Women's Championship title
- Final of the SAFF U-15 Women's Championship held at the Chalimithang Stadium in Thimphu, Bhutan

Lionel Messi wins sixth Golden Shoe award

- Barcelona captain Leo Messi received his sixth Golden Shoe as the top scorer in the European leagues
- Messi won the trophy for a third straight year after scoring 36 goals, three more than his closest challenger, Kylian Mbappe of Paris Saint-Germain

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- Messi now has two more Golden Shoes than his great rival Cristiano Ronaldo. Luis Suarez is one of nine players on two. The award was created in 1967

Other Sports News

Lewis Hamilton claims brilliant Mexican Grand Prix victory

- Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes – Britain) has won the Formula One, Mexican Grand Prix 2019.
- Sebastian Vettel remained on second position, Valtteri Bottas was on third followed by Charles Leclerc on fourth spot.

Tiger Woods claims historic 82nd title with Zozo Championship victory

- Tiger Woods secured a record-equalling 82nd PGA Tour crown after he won the Zozo Championship in Japan
- Woods sealed a historic three-stroke win to draw level with Sam Snead for the most victories on Tour.
- Woods carded a three-under-par 67 to finish 19 under overall, ahead of Hideki Matsuyama (67) at Accordia Golf Narashino Country Club.

Praveen Kumar becomes first Indian man to win gold at Wushu World Championships

- Praveen Kumar became the first Indian man to win a Wushu World Championships gold, beating Russel Diaz of Philippines in the 48kg category in Shanghai.
- The Indian saw off his Filipino opponent in the men's Sanda event of the 15th World Wushu Championships.
- Among other Indians in the fray, Poonam (women's 75kg) and Sanathoi Devi (women's 52kg) secured silver medals while Vikrant Baliyan bagged the bronze in the men's 60kg category.
- India finished third overall in the championship in event with a gold, two silvers and a bronze.
- Wushu is a Chinese martial art which combines full-contact kickboxing, including close-range punches and kicks, with wrestling, takedowns, throws, sweeps and kicks catch.

2024 Olympic Games logo unveiled in Paris

- Paris has unveiled a gold-medal-shaped emblem for the 2024 Olympics and Paralympic Games that incorporates the Olympic flame and the lips of Marianne
- The logo has been created as a combination of three symbols connected to the Olympics and France. It takes its shape and colour from a gold medal – awarded to the winners of each event during the Games.
- Cut out of this gold circle is a white flame-shape to represent the Olympic flame, which burns throughout the event, while a pair of golden lips represent Marianne – a representation of the Goddess of Liberty that is often used as a symbol of the French Republic.

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Graeme Smith and Tim May named honorary life members of MCC

- Former South Africa skipper Graeme Smith has been elected an Honorary Life Member of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), custodians of the game's law.
- The former batsman became South Africa's youngest ever captain at 22
- Former Australian off-spinner Tim May was also awarded Honorary Life Membership in recognition of his outstanding achievements in cricket
- The pair follow Paul Collingwood, AB de Villiers, Mitchell Johnson and Adrian Morgan in being awarded Honorary Life Membership of MCC this year.

Sultan of Johor Cup: Indian junior hockey team loses to Great Britain

- Indian junior hockey men's team lost a second consecutive final to Great Britain in the Sultan of Johor Cup as it succumbed to a 1-2 loss at Johor Bahru, Malaysia.
- Rushmere scored another goal as Britain bagged its second title in as many years.

Kuhoo Garg-Dhruv Rawat Pair Wins Egypt International Mixed Doubles Title

- Kuhoo Garg and Dhruv Rawat put up a brilliant effort to win the mixed doubles title at the Egypt International 2019 in Cairo.
- Kuhoo Garg, however, failed to win the women's double finals with her partner Sanyogita Ghorpade and they lost in the finals.

Bishworjit Singh Saikhom of Indian Army wins IRONMAN 70.3

- Indian Army's Bishworjit Singh Saikhom scripted history after finishing on the first spot in the country's first-ever IRONMAN 70.3 triathlon.
- Saikhom, a Pune based Havildar working with the Bombay Sappers, completed the IRONMAN 70.3 in 4 hours 42 minutes 44 seconds.
- The second position was secured by Nihal Baig, alumni of IIT Bombay, who clocked 4 hours 47 minutes 47 seconds. Mahesh Lourembam completed the triathlon in 4 hours 52 minutes, finishing third.

Canada's Denis Shapovalov wins first career ATP title at Stockholm Open

- Canada's Denis Shapovalov won the Stockholm Open
- He defeat Serbian Filip Krajinovic with a 6-4, 6-4 in the final
- Not only was it Shapovalov's first ATP title but he becomes the first Canadian Tour winner since Milos Raonic of Thornhill, Ont., in Brisbane in January 2016

Bengal Warriors beats Dabang Delhi, lifts maiden Pro Kabaddi title

- Bengal Warriors has won the Pro Kabaddi League title 2019 by defeating Dabang Delhi 39-34.
- The finals was held in EKA Arena by TransStadia in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

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- Pardeep Narwal became the first ever player to reach 1000 points in the Pro Kabaddi League.

Prithvi Sekhar wins gold in World Deaf Tennis Championship

- Prithvi Sekhar beat third seed Jaroslav Smedek of the Czech Republic 6-4, 6-3 in the men's final of the World Deaf tennis championship in Antalya, Turkey.
- It was a dominant performance from the 26-year-old Prithvi, who is trained in Chennai by coach Sureshkumar Sonachalam.
- Prithvi had also won the doubles bronze medal with Prashanth Dasharath Harsambhavi.
- It has been a memorable season for Prithvi as he was part of the Indian Railways team which won the gold in the World Railways tennis championship in Albena, Bulgaria.

7th International Military World Games underway in Wuhan

- 7th International Military Sports Council Military World Games is underway in China's Wuhan. 54 players from Indian armed forces contingent went to Wuhan to participate.
- More than 9000 soldiers are participating from over 100 countries.

Priyanshu Rajawat wins men's singles title at Bahrain International Series

- Indian shuttler Priyanshu Rajawat claimed the men's singles title at the Bahrain International Series Badminton at Isa Town.
- Seventeen year old Rajawat beat top-seed Jason Anthony Ho-Shue from Canada in the finals 16-21, 21-7, 21-12 in the summit clash.
- Top-seeded Indian mixed double pair of Juhi Dewangan and Venkat Gaurav Prasad also finished at the top. They defeated Thailand's Pannawat Theerapanitnun and Kanyanat Sudchoeichom 21-18, 21-16 in 34 minutes to bag the gold medal.

Sports Ministry makes sporting infrastructure 'free & accessible'

- A major decision has been taken that all Sports Authority of India Stadiums and facilities will be made free for federations to hold competitions and leagues.
- Also, non-SAI coaches can train their athletes in SAI facilities free of cost by booking training slots online.
- This decision was made to promote Fit India Movement and to make play fields and sporting infrastructure accessible to all sports persons across the country.
- From 1st November 2019, the Ministry of Sports has decided to allow national and state sports federations, leagues and clubs to organize sports events in all sporting facilities owned by the government, free of cost.

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- In the first phase, stadiums in Delhi including Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Indira Gandhi Stadium, Major Dhyanchand Stadium and Karni Singh Shooting Range will be opened up for state and national federations to host competitions, tournaments and leagues of all sporting disciplines.

ICC changes super over rule for all its major events

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has changed the super over rule for all its major events following the uproar over the outcome of the men's World Cup final this year when England were declared winners against New Zealand on boundary count.
- As per new rule, in case of a super over tie there will be a repeated super over until one team has more runs than the other.

Mercedes's Valtteri Bottas wins Japanese Grand Prix 2019

- Valtteri Bottas won the 2019 Japanese Grand Prix to help Mercedes clinch a record-tying sixth straight constructors' championship,
- Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel finished 2nd while Lewis Hamilton came 3rd

MC Mary Kom settles for bronze in World Women's Boxing Championships

- Six-time champion M C Mary Kom settled for a bronze medal in the World Women's Boxing Championships after losing to Turkey's Busenaz Cakiroglu in an intense semifinal bout at Ulan Ude in Russia.
- Third-seeded Mary Kom lost to second seed Cakiroglu, who is the reigning European Championships and European Games gold-medalist.

Lakshya Sen wins Dutch Open to clinch maiden BWF World Tour Title

- Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen clinched his maiden BWF World Tour title by winning the Dutch Open men's singles title after beating Yusukey Onodera of Japan in the summit clash in Almere, Netherlands
- The 18-year-old Indian rallied from a game deficit to defeat his world no. 160 opponent 15-21 21-14 21-15 in a final that lasted 63 minutes.

Sprinter Nirmala Sheoran banned for 4 years, stripped of Asian titles

- Indian sprinter Nirmala Sheoran has been stripped off her two Asian Championships gold medals and banned for four years by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU), which manages track and field doping cases.
- The AIU came out with the order to ban Nirmala for testing positive for the steroids drostanolone and metenolone at a competition back home in June 2018.
- The period of her ban will start from June 28, 2018. Her results from August 2016 to November 2018 were also disqualified.
- Nirmala had won gold medals in the 400m and 4x400m relay at the 2017 Asian Championships in India.

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- She also ran in both the events at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Simone Biles wins 15th world championship title

- US gymnastics star Simone Biles clinched a record-extending 15th world championship gold medal as the Americans won the women's team title in Stuttgart, Germany
- Biles secured her 21st world medal, overtaking Russia's Svetlana Khorkina for the women's record.
- The US women claimed gold with a tally of 172.330, well ahead of the Russians who took silver with 166.529, while bronze went to Italy on 164.796.

Novak Djokovic Demolishes John Millman to Win Japan Open

- Novak Djokovic from Serbia defeated John Millman of Australia to win the title. Japan Open is a men's tennis tournament.
- Djokovic, who played his first Japanese competition ever, dominated throughout the week, never losing a single set to claim the trophy.

Naomi Osaka, Dominic Thiem win China Open finals

- Naomi Osaka won her second consecutive title in Asia at the China Open.
- In the men's final, top-seeded Austrian Dominic Thiem beat Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas.
- Men's Double by Ivan Dodig (Croatia) and Filip Polášek (Slovakia)
- Women's Double by Sofia Kenin (United States) and Bethanie Mattek-Sands (United States).

Indian Senior Team Win Bronze Medal at World Bridge Championships

- India's senior bridge team led by Dipak Poddar has won a bronze medal for the first time ever in the 44 years of the World Bridge Championships.
- This was announced by the Bridge Federation of India.
- The 44th World Bridge Championships was recently held in China.
- The senior Indian bridge team comprising captain Dipak Poddar, Jitendra Solani, Subhash Dhakras, Ramamurthy Sridharan, Subrata Saha and Sukamal Das, won the bronze medal.

Austria's Christine Wolf wins the Hero Women's Indian Open

- Austria's Christine Wolf won the Hero Women's Indian Open at the DLF Golf and Country Club course in Gurugram
- It was Christine's first title after six years on the Ladies European Tour.
- Among the Indians Anika Varma finished fifth and Tvesa Malik finished sixth

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Surender Singh creates three world records at World Powerlifting C' ship

- Surender Singh of India created three world records at the ongoing World Powerlifting Championship in Berlin, Germany. Surender bagged gold medal in 110 kg category, Classic Raw and the Best Lifter Award in Classic Raw and Single Ply.
- Three-time World Champion Mukesh Singh went on to add another feather to his cap by winning yet another gold only to be known as 4-time World Champion.
- Nirpal Singh also won silver in 110 kg Classic Raw event and Manpreet clinched gold in 100 kg. Classic Raw

Kaushal Dharmamer clinches men's singles title at Maldives International Challenge

- In Badminton, Indian shuttler Kaushal Dharmamer clinched the men's singles title at the Maldives International Challenge with a straight-games win over Siril Verma in Male.
- In the women's doubles event, the duo of Ashwini Ponnappa and Sikki Reddy.
- Saipratheek Krishnaprasad and Ashwini Bhat went down to Thailand's Chaloempon Charoenkitamorn and Chasinee Korepap in the mixed doubles final.
- Men's doubles pair of Arun George and Sanyam Shukla lost to top seeds Keiichiro Matsui and Yoshinori Takeuchi from Japan.

Sumit Nagal wins men's singles title ATP Challenger Tournament

- In Tennis, Sumit Nagal has won the men's singles title of ATP Challenger Tournament at Buenos Aires in Argentina.
- He defeated local favourite Facundo Bognis in straight to claim the 54,160 US dollars prize money.
- The 22-year-old from Haryana, seeded seventh, outclassed 8th seed Bognis of Argentina to become first Indian to win on South American clay court.

China tops medal table at 2019 weightlifting worlds

- China topped the medal table with 29 gold, 14 silver and 10 bronze medals at the 2019 International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) World Championships PATTAYA, Thailand.
- DPR Korea finished second with 7 gold, 12 silver and 5 bronze medals.
- In the men's over 109kg category, Georgia's Lasha Talakhadze broke all three world records in snatch, clean and jerk and total and secured all three gold medals for his country.
- The 10-day championships also served as qualifying event for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

Bhavani Devi clinches silver in Belgium meet

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- Indian fencer C. A. Bhavani Devi clinched the silver medal in the women's sabre individual category in the Tournoi satellite competition (World level) at Ghent, Belgium.
- Bhavani continued that she has another eight competitions - World Cup, Grand Prix and satellite events - lined up until the end of March that will be considered for Olympic qualification.
- The top two players from the Asian zone in the World rankings will qualify for the 2020 Olympics to be held in Tokyo, Japan.

Asian Age Group C'ships: India finishes with 64 medals

- India ended its campaign at the 10th Asian Age Group Championships on a high as divers Palak Sharma and Siddharth Pradeshi earned the nation's 19th and 20th gold medals.
- India finished with a total medal tally of 64 medals (20 gold, 24 silver and 20 bronze).
- Held from September 24 to October 2, 2019 in Bengaluru

Maj AQ Khan Won Silver Medal in 53rd Asian Body Building and Physique Sports Championship 2019, Indonesia on 02 Oct 2019

- Maj Abdul Quadir Khan of the Corps of Signals brought laurels to India by winning a Silver Medal at the prestigious 53rd Asian Body Building and Physique Sports Championship held at Batam, Indonesia on 02 Oct 19.
- He participated in the Indian Body Building Federation (IBBF) selection trials held at Khammam, Telangana in July 2019 and got selected to represent India.

Important Obituaries

Person	Field
K P S Menon	Former Foreign Secretary
V Ganesan	Indian National Army (INA) veteran
Hargovind Laxmishanker Trivedi	Noted nephrologist and Padma Shri awardee
M Gopal Gowda	Renowned Kudmi Konkani folk artist
Alexei Leonov	Cosmonaut (The first person to perform a spacewalk)
Kalidas Karmakar	Renowned Bangladesh painter
Alicia Alonso	Cuba's Legendary ballet dancer
KB Siddaiah	Sociopolitical philosopher and writer

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Mark Hurd	Former Oracle co-CEO
Dadu Chougule	Wrestler
Subha Dutta	Editor of Bengali daily 'Bartamaan
Dilip Parikh	Former Gujarat chief minister
V. Nanammal	Yoga exponent