

APPOLLO

STUDY CENTRE

CONSOLIDATED CURRENT AFFAIRS MONTH OF DECEMBER (1-10), 2020

IMPORTANT DAYS

DATE	DAY	THEME
December 1	World AIDS Day	"Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Resilience and Impact"
December 1	56 th Raising Day of Border Security Force	-
December 2	National Pollution Control Day	-
December 2	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery	-
December 2	World Computer Literacy Day	-
December 3	International Day of persons with Disabilities	"Building Back Better: Towards a disability-inclusive accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 World".
December 4	Indian Navy Day	-
December 5	World Soil Day	Keep Soil Alive, Protect Soil Biodiversity
December 5	International Volunteer Day	-
December 6	Mahaparinirvana Divas	-
December 7	Armed Forces Flag Day	-
December 8	36 th SAARC Charter Day	-
December 8	53rd Submarine Day	-
December 8	260th Army Service Corps Day	-
December 9	International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime.	-
December 9	International Anti-Corruption Day	'United Against Corruption.'
December 10	International Human Rights Day	Recover Better-Stand Up for Human Rights.

TAMIL NADU

Cut flowers centre at Kothanur

- Israeli delegates - visited cut flowers centre at Kothanur near Thally in Krishnagiri.
- Consul general of Israel to South India, Jonathan Zadka and his deputy Ariel Seidman visited the Indo-Israel joint agriculture project (IIAP) at Kothanur.
- Israel had helped to set up 29 centers of excellence throughout India as part of its bilateral cooperation in agriculture.

The cyclonic storm Burevi over Bay of Bengal

- It is likely to cross the Indian coast on the early morning of December 4 between Kanyakumari and Pamban.
- The storm will make the initial landfall near Trincomalee in Sri Lanka.
- The name "Burevi" has been given by Maldives, which means black Mangroves.
- According to IMD's forecast track of the cyclone, the storm is likely to emerge again over the sea near south Kerala coast after crossing the south Tamil Nadu coast.

Copper plate of the 18th century Nayak period

- A copper plate of the 18th century Nayak period - has been found from a villager in Karisalpatti in Karumathur, 25km from Madurai.
- The plate mentions about the 'watch-and-ward' social order system that was prevalent in the village during the Nayak period.
- There are 40 lines of Tamil script written on the plate, which highlights the social life of the people in this region.

Eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of Kanyakumari Wildlife Sanctuary

- The Madras high court - granted interim stay on the Union government's gazette notification declaring eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of Kanyakumari Wildlife Sanctuary.

An all - Woman police at suramangalam

- An all - woman police station at Suramangalam in salem city has been rated as the second best performing police station in the country for the year 2020.
- Nongpok Sekmai Police Station in Thoubal district of Manipur was ranked as the country's best police station on the annual ranking list released by the Union Home Ministry.

The renovated National Art Gallery at the Government Museum in Egmore

- The renovated National Art Gallery at the Government Museum in Egmore is set to reopen in January 2021.
- The heritage sandstone building constructed by the British in 1909 was

being restored since 2015.

- The Gallery will have some 'Unique' relics that were used by the royals in Tamil Nadu and Portraits of Mughal emperors.
- The renovated museum will feature artefacts used by the royal dynasties in the state such as Marathas of Thanjavur and the Nayaks in south Tamil Nadu

'Bat Woman: Night Warriors 2'

- S Balamurugan, a production assistant at the educational multimedia research centre (EMRC) of Pondicherry University has bagged a national award for his film, 'Bat Woman: Night warriors'
- The film won the Silver Beaver award under the 'Interface' category.

Mullaperiyar drinking water project

- Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - laid the foundation stone for the ₹ 1,295.76 crore Mullaperiyar drinking water project
- The Mullaperiyar drinking water project envisages laying of pipelines from Lower Camp near Gudalur to Madurai city
- It would provide round-the-clock safe drinking water to all the residents in 100 wards of Madurai
- The project will provide additional 1.1 lakh water connections to the residents of Madurai.

Relief fund

- Tamil Nadu government - has sought ₹3,759 crore Central assistance to carry out relief and restoration of Cyclone Nivar-affected districts
- Out of the total amount, the state has sought temporary relief of Rs 650 crore
- An inter-ministerial Central team led by Union home ministry joint secretary Ashutosh Agnihotri is on a four-day visit to the state to assess the damage caused by the cyclones, Nivar and Burevi.

The National Institute of Siddha (NIS) - entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE)

- The two institutes have agreed to collaborate in the following areas - conduct joint research and development projects in the areas of clinical and health system research; epidemiological studies, basic medical and allied sciences research to be funded by specific funding sources; to organise seminars, workshops, webinars; and continuing education programmes develop academic programmes in areas of mutual interest.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

- France - will sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Tamil Nadu's Industrial Guidance and Export Promotion Bureau
- The Indo-French Chamber of Commerce and Industry to facilitate mutual investments and to promote ease of doing business..
- The MoU will be signed when ambassador of France to India, Emmanuel

Lenain, visits Chennai from December 7-8.

- Lenain will call on chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami and industries minister M C Sampath and hold talks with them.

Kulasekaran Committee

- To survey and collect caste-wise data of the people of the state.

Tamil Nadu Appointment on Preferential Basis

- Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit - gave his nod to the Bill to amend the Tamil Nadu Appointment on Preferential Basis in the Services under the State of Persons Studied in Tamil Medium Act, 2010.
- The Act aims to provide 20% reservation to Tamil medium candidates in direct recruitment to government services

Victoria Public Hall in Chennai

- The Greater Chennai Corporation - is planning to renovate the historic Victoria Public Hall in Chennai
- It is located next to the Ripon Building, the building is likely to be converted into a museum
- Built in 1887 by Namberumal chetty. Each hall in the ground and first floors of the redbrick structure can accommodate 600 people
- It was historically called Jubilee Hall

Bonded Labour System Abolition Day'

- The Tamil Nadu government - has announced to observe February 9 as 'Bonded Labour System Abolition Day' in the state.
- Tamil Nadu is the first state in the country to make such an announcement.
- The Centre had enacted the Bonded labour system (Abolition) Act on the same day in the year 1976.

Chola period Inscription on canals found near Sankarapuram

- ARCHEOLOGISTS have stumbled on a Chola period stone inscription at a lake bund in Mookanur village near Sankarapuram in Kallakurichi district.
- According to experts, King Vanenja Perumalana Vanakovarayan created the inscription about a canal and connecting lakes during Rajendra Cholan III regime in the Sagarai year 1182 (1260 AD).

13 Women judges in madras HC highest in India

- The Chief Justice of the Madras High Court AP Sahi administered oath to 10 new additional judges including four women judges. With this, its total strength has increased from 53 to 63, of which 13 are women judges, which is the highest among all High Courts in the country

Bio- mining at Pallikaranai yard

- More than 14 acres in Pallikaranai will be cleared of legacy waste by the end of January, with the Greater Chennai Corporation having completed 80 per cent of bio-mining at the former dumping yard near the marshland.
- “Bio-mining process involves segregation of waste into reusable and non-reusable products. We have bio-mined a large portion of the waste, and kept the segregated reusable waste separately inside the yard. Once the COVID-19 lockdown is further relaxed, it will be sent to industries as raw materials. The work will be completed before January,” said a Corporation official.

Vayalur thermal plant

- Work on the 2x660 MW Ennore SEZ thermal power project at village.
- The project which was initially configured as 2x800 MW, was changed to 2x660 MW in 2018.
- Tangedco informed the EAC that the time schedule now to complete the project is 2022-23 and that 45% physical progress and 55% of financial progress had been achieved.

- **Vagaikulam, Arittapatty to be bio- heritage sites.**

STATE

“Raimona National Park”

- Assam Proposed to set up its 6th National Park - “Raimona National Park” in the Ripu Reserved Forest
- The Assam government has proposed to its establish its 6th National Park, the “Raimona National Park” in the Ripu Reserved forest of the state which was severely damaged due to militancy.

Leopard Conservation Project

- In a first of its kind initiative, Gujarat forest department has implemented a leopard conservation project under PPP mode
- The project is implemented under public private partnership between the Reliance Industries Limited and the state government

The blue tide phenomenon

- It was recently observed in several stretches of Maharashtra coast, including in the Juhu Beach
- The phenomenon is due to a phenomenon called ‘bioluminescence’, which is the emission of light by microscopic marine plants called phytoplanktons. Eg: dinoflagellates.
- The blue light results due to the chemical reactions of proteins inside the organism

Kolkata’s Majerhat Bridge named “Jai Hind” to Mark Netaji’s

- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee named the newly-built Majerhat bridge in Kolkata as ‘Jai Hind’ bridge to commemorate the 125th Birth Anniversary of Subash Chandra Bose.

“Child-friendly” police station

- It was recently established in Pune as per the guidelines provided by the National Commissioner for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

First ever migratory bird festival this year

- Bihar government is planning its first ever migratory bird festival this year.
- This is a three-day festival to be conducted in Bhagalpur District in Bihar
- The festival is to be jointly organised by Bhagalpur forest division, Bombay Natural History Society and the local Mandar Nature Club.

Suryadhar lake at Doiwala

- Trivendra Singh Rawat, Chief Minister of Uttarakhand inaugurated the Suryadhar lake on Jakhan river at Doiwala, Dehradun district, Uttarakhand. The man made lake is built at a cost of around Rs 50.24 crore. The lake has been named after social worker Gajendra Dutt Naithani.

“Organ donor Memorial”

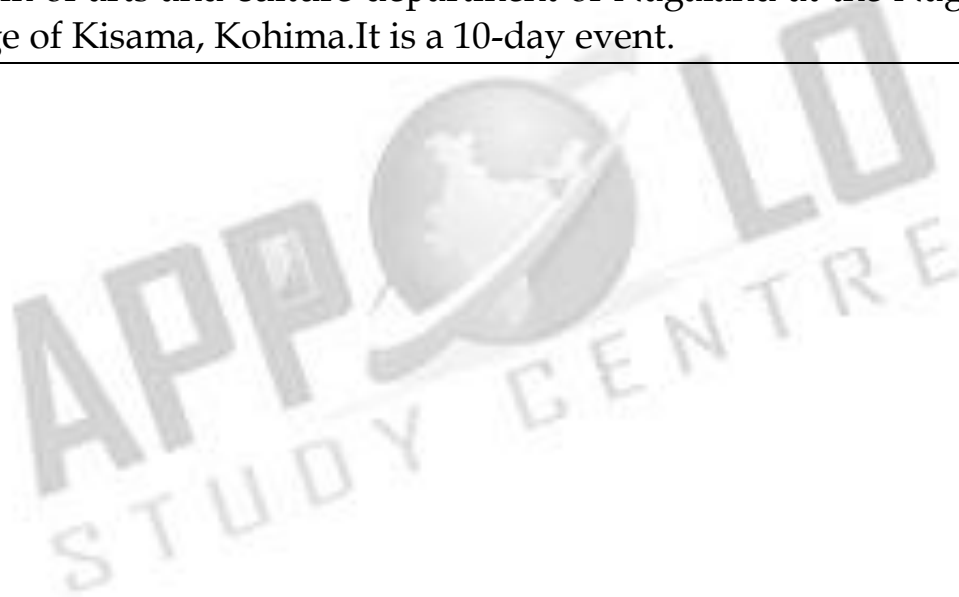
- In the occasion of 11th National Organ Donation Day celebration at Jaipur, Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot inaugurated virtually the first of its kind “Organ Donor Memorial” in the country.

Recognized online portal in India

- National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO)
- Regional Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (ROTO)
- Organ Retrieval Banking Organisation (ORBO).

Hornbill festival 2020

- Nagaland started celebrating the 21st edition of Hornbill festival 2020 from 1st-5th of December organised virtually for the first time due to the pandemic.
- Hornbill festival known as “Festival of Festivals” is organised by the state tourism of arts and culture department of Nagaland at the Naga Heritage Village of Kisama, Kohima. It is a 10-day event.



NATIONAL

Global climate deal

- India - has proposed to set up an apex committee, comprising members from its 13 key ministries - to coordinate actions for achieving its goals under the global climate deal.
- The Paris Agreement on Climate Change will officially come into force from January 1, 2021.
- The apex body will also function as a national authority to regulate carbon markets in India under the Paris Agreement in post-2020 period.

Mission COVID Suraksha

- Government of India has allocated Rs.900 crore to Department of Biotechnology(DBT) for research and development of COVID-19 vaccines under Mission COVID Suraksha. This is the third stimulus package, already a stimulus of Rs.900 crore for a period of 12 months has been allocated for phase 1 trials.
- Objective of the fund :- to quicken the process of pre-clinical& clinical development; licensure of COVID-19 vaccine, and strengthening the existing immunoassay laboratories, central laboratories and suitable facilities for animal studies, production facilities, and other testing facilities to support COVID-19 vaccine development.

The Election Commission

- It has sent a proposal to law ministry for allowing the Non-resident Indians (NRIs) to vote remotely from their country of residence.
- At present, the NRIs must cast their vote in person in India.
- As per the EC's suggestion, the NRIs are to be allowed to vote through electronically-transmitted postal ballot system (ETPBS).
- This facility is already available to service voters that include members of the armed forces, paramilitary and government employees serving abroad.

Army chief on crucial visit to UAE & Saudi

- Army Chief General MM Naravane left on a six-day tour of the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, in a rare visit reflecting India's growing strategic ties with the two influential Gulf nations.
- The visit comes in the midst of fast-paced developments in the Gulf region including normalisation of Israel's relations with several Arab countries as well as situation arising out of the assassination of Iran's top nuclear weapons scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.
- It is for the first time that an Indian Army chief is visiting the two Gulf nations, officials said.

Cattle, Buffalo meat residue found Indus Valley vessels

- A new study has found the presence of animal products, including cattle and buffalo meat, in ceramic vessels dating back about 4,600 years at seven Indus Valley Civilisation sites in present day Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Cybersecurity Capabilities

- A cyber security firm, Kaspersky and the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) announced a strategic partnership for improving mutual cybersecurity capabilities by working together in order to create a safe and secure cyberspace in India.

Odisha hosts 9th International Sand Art festival and 31st Konark Dance festival

- Odisha government's tourism department has organised the 9th edition of International Sand Art festival at Chandrabhaga Beach in Odisha's Puri district and parallelly the 31st edition of Konark dance festival following the COVID-19 protocols.

DoS Signed 1st of its kind NDA with Agnikul Cosmos

- The Department of Space (DoS) has signed first one of its kind Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with Agnikul Cosmos Pvt. Ltd under which the latter can access the facilities and technical expertise of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for its launch vehicle development programme.

The New Parliament building

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi - laid the foundation stone of the New Parliament building on December 10 with a 'Bhoomi Pujan' for the project.
- The Parliament project is scheduled to be completed by 2022, coinciding with 75 years of India's independence.
- The new Parliament building will remain as a symbol of "atmanirbhar Bharat" and a "temple of democracy" for Independent India, according to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

The serum Institute of India

- It became the first Indian company to apply to the Drugs Controller General of India seeking emergency use authorisation for the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine, Covishield.

The Defence Ministry

- It has approved the creation of a new post in the Army- Deputy Chief for Military Operations and Strategic Planning.
- The Deputy Chief will deal with strategic planning, military operations, intelligence and operational logistics.

Policy on school Bag 2020

- Union Ministry of Education – has unveiled the new ‘Policy on School Bag 2020’
- The recommendations are based on various surveys and studies conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- According to the new policy, school bags should not be more than 10% of the body weight across Classes I to X and there should be no homework till Class II.
- It also recommends that the weight of the bag needs to be monitored on a regular basis in schools

Laying of undersea optical fibre cable to connect 11 islands of Lakshadweep with Kochi

- The Union Cabinet - approved laying of undersea optical fibre cable to connect 11 islands of Lakshadweep with Kochi by May 2023, to help improve broadband connectivity in the Union Territory.
- The project is estimated to cost about ₹1,072 crore, including operational expenses for five years.

Public Wi-Fi hotspots

- The government - gave permission to setting up of lakhs of public Wi-Fi hotspots.
- The Union Cabinet approved the Public Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (WANI), which aims to provide access to easy and seamless Wi-Fi connectivity at minimal cost across the entire country.

WCF, NITI Aayog Partner to provide training to Country’s Children and Youth on Cybersafety

- WCF (WNS Cares Foundation), the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) wing of Private firm WNS Global Services has partnered with Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL), an initiative under Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog for providing training to India’s children and youth on cybersafety. WCF will provide digital education through its platform CyberSmart.

INTERNATIONAL

“Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development” (OECD)

- India tops the list of sending Most Number of Educated Migrants to OECD Countries.
- Most Common birth countries of Highly Educated Migrants residing in OECD Nations, India came at the top with around 3.12 Million Highly Educated Migrants living in the OECD Nations as of 2015-16 data.

7th India-Suriname Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) was held virtually

- The meeting was Co-Chaired by the Minister of State for External Affairs, V. Muraleedharan & Albert R. Ramdin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation of the Republic of Suriname.

“Artificial Sun” nuclear fusion reactor

- China - successfully powered up its “artificial sun” nuclear fusion reactor for the first time, providing a milestone in the country’s nuclear power research capabilities.

The Five Eyes Countries

- The Five Eyes countries - recently expressed their concern about increasing Chinese curbs on the autonomy of Hong Kong and its freedom and rights.
- The Five Eyes (FVEY) is an intelligence alliance consisting of Australia, Canada, the UK, New Zealand and the US.

5th Presidium Meeting of the BRICS

- Executive chairman of the BRICS Media Forum He Ping, also president and editor-in-chief of Xinhua News Agency, presides over the “5th Presidium Meeting of the BRICS Media Forum” was held virtually. The countries exchanged information from the economic issues to public health issues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Three Warmest Year Ever Recorded:

- “State of the Global Climate 2020” Interim report released by the United Nations World Meteorological Organization (UN-WMO) based on the temperature data from January-October (of 2020), the year 2020 is set to be among one of the Three Warmest Years Ever recorded. 2020 becomes the 2nd warmest year followed by 2016.

Oman - recently announced to establish ‘friendship’ association with India

- This was the first of such initiative from West Asia.
- The bilateral discussion was held virtually on the backdrop of recent trip by the External Affairs Minister of India S Jaishankar to Bahrain and UAE.

UN CBD removes Cannabis from “Most Dangerous Drug” Category

- In the Ongoing 63rd session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (UN-CND), Cannabis has been removed from the “Most Dangerous Drug” category. It is removed after UN-CND voted to remove cannabis and cannabis resin from Schedule IV of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, decades after they were first placed on the list.

World’s tallest mountain as 8,848.86m (29,031.7ft)

- China and Nepal - have jointly determined the height of the world’s tallest mountain as 8,848.86m (29,031.7ft).
- According to these countries which share a mountainous border, Mount Everest has risen almost 3 feet

Pfizer’s vaccine debuts in UK as world’s 1st fully tested shot

- United Kingdom - became the first country in the world to offer a clinically authorised, fully tested vaccine to its people.
- Bahrain has become the second nation in the world to grant an emergency-use authorisation for the coronavirus vaccine made by Pfizer and its German partner Bio-NTech
- Britain’s National Health Service delivered its first shots of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine on December 8
- 90-year old Margaret Keenan, a former Jewellery shop assistant living in Coventry in central England, received the first shot of the Covid-19 vaccine

Iranian scientist’s killed

- The assassination of Mohsen Fakhirzadeh a top Iranian nuclear physicist on November 27 on the outskirts of Tehran has turned the spotlight back on Iran’s nuclear programme.

India, Mongolia hold 7th Meeting of Joint Committee on Cooperation 2020

- On December 3, 2020 The 7th meeting of the India-Mongolia Joint Committee on Cooperation 2020 was held virtually. It was chaired jointly by Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister, India & Mr. L. Oyun-Erdene, Minister and Chief Cabinet Secretary, Government of Mongolia.

INDIA & OTHER COUNTRIES

India - has voted in favour of a move by the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)

- To remove cannabis from Schedule IV of the 1961 convention
- The decision to reclassify cannabis and drop it from the most strict drug control list of Schedule I followed a recommendation by WHO for a change in the scope of control of cannabis and cannabis-related substances.
- The decision was related to possible medical uses of cannabis and recommendations by WHO.
- Around 50 countries in the world have legalized the medicinal usage of cannabis
- The usage of Cannabis in India is governed by the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985.

India, US signs MoU on Intellectual Property Cooperation

- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to increase cooperation between India and the US on Intellectual Property (IP).

India-Japan Cyber Security Pact

- In October, 2020 During the External Affairs Minister Jaishankar's visit to Japan, both countries finalized the text of Cybersecurity pact which is expected to promote the Cooperation in sectors such as 5G, Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI).

APPOINMENTS

Ramesh Pokhriyal constitutes Task Force to impart Technical Education in Mother Tongue

- Union Minister of Education, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' constituted a Task Force for preparing a blueprint on imparting Technical Education in Mother Tongue. The Task Force will be headed by Secretary of Higher Education (Amit Khare).

First Dronacharya Awardee

- Srinagar born Wushu coach and the first Dronacharya Awardee from the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Kuldeep Handoo is appointed as the Ambassador of Fit India movement.

SCHEMES

'Karpom Ezhthuvom Iyakkam'

- The Directorate of non-formal and adult education - had recently launched a new scheme 'Karpom Ezhthuvom Iyakkam'.
- The initiative aims to provide literacy to illiterate 'aged' people.
- At present, 712 - odd people in Adavathur Panchayat in Trichy district were encouraged by government school teacher to get back to learning.
- Under Puthiya Vayathu vanthor kalvi thittam - an adult literacy programme, illiterates above the age of 15 are identified in every village and trained to put their signature besides being taught to read and write.

"Orunodoi" Scheme

- Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal launches "Orunodoi" Scheme.
- The scheme is allocated with an annual budget of Rs. 2400 crore to provide financial assistance to socio- economically weaker sections for a period of 5 years.

Swasthya Sathi Scheme

- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee extended the state's Health Insurance scheme "Swasthya Sathi Scheme" to cover the entire population of the state.

'Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana'

- Under the scheme, the government will contribute to the EPFO on behalf of both employee and employer for two years, for recruitments made between October 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.
- The scheme will benefit nearly 58.5 lakh employees.

COMMITTEES

Apex Committee for Implementation of 2015 Paris Agreement

- The Government of India (GoI) has constituted a 17 members committee namely "Apex Committee for Implementation of Paris Agreement (AIPA)" under the chairperson of secretary, Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)(Presently - Mr.Rameshwar Prasad Gupta).

COURT VERDICT

Chennai – Salem 277- km eight greenfield corridor project

- The Supreme Court - upheld the notification to acquire farmlands, and allowed Centre to proceed with the Chennai-Salem 277-km eight-lane greenfield corridor project
- The eight-lane highway (NH179A and NH179B) is a part of the first phase of the 'Bharatmala Pariyojna' project
- It stretches across 24,800 km and has an estimated outlay of ₹5.35 lakh crore
- The highway intends to cut travel time for freight and passenger movement between Chennai and Salem by half

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

10th National Science Film Festival 2020

- The 10th National Science Film Festival 2020 was jointly organised by VigyanPrasar, an autonomous agency under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India and the Tripura State Council of Science and Technology, Government of Tripura.

World's Oldest Nanostructures Found In 6th-Century BC Pottery from Keeladi, Tamil Nadu

- Scientists have discovered the oldest known human-made nano-materials in the "unique black coatings" of ancient pottery shards dated to **600 BC** that were unearthed from an archeological site in Keeladi, Tamil Nadu.
- The research was published in the journal Scientific Reports and the findings have been documented in a paper published in "Nature".

IAF carries out firing of surface - to - Air Missiles

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) carried out the Firing of Indigenously developed Akash Missile System (Surface - to - Air Missile) & Russian - Origin short - Range Iгла Missile (Surface - to - Air Missile) as part of a drill which took place at Air Force station in Suryalanka, Andhra Pradesh.

China - second country to plant national flag on the moon

- China's National flag was unfurled from the Chang'e-5 spacecraft on the Moon, as per a photo released by China National Space Administration (CNSA) on December 4
- The US Planted the first flag on the moon during the manned Apollo 11 mission in 1969.

Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP)

- It is a new type of radio telescope developed by Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).
- It creates high-resolution images by combining the signals of 36 smaller dish antennas, each of 12 metre in diameter.

China launches Gaofen-14 - Earth Observation Satellite from XSLC

- China National Space Administration (CNSA) successfully launched Gaofen-14, a New Earth Observation Satellite from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre (XSLC) in Southwest China's Sichuan province. The Satellite was sent into orbit by Long March-3B/G5 Carrier Rocket. This was the first use of the G5 version of the Long March-3B launch vehicle which features a longer fairing.

SpaceX Launched New Next-Generation Dragon Cargo Ship To ISS

- On 6th December 2020, SpaceX launched its 21st Commercial Resupply Services mission (CRS-21) to International space station (ISS) from the Launch Complex 39A (LC-39A) at Kennedy Space Center, Florida.

Digital Saksham

- Mastercard, National Institute for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (nimsme) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) entered into partnership to launch Digital Saksham, a capacity building initiative to drive awareness about digitization for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in India. Under this 3 year project, more than 3 lakh MSMEs will be trained to adopt digitization

Central Zoo Authority grants recognition to 2 New Zoos

- One each in Bihar & Uttar Pradesh
- The 37th General Body meeting of Central Zoo Authority (CZA) chaired by Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Prakash Javadekar granted recognition to 2 New Zoos - Rajgir Zoo Safari in Nalanda, Bihar & Shaheed Ashfaque Ullah Khan Prani Udyaan in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.

Nepal, China announced revised height of the World's Highest Peak Mt. Everest

- Nepal and China jointly announced that "8848.86 metres" is the revised height of World's Highest Peak, Mount Everest
- The revised height of Mt. Everest is 86 centimetres more than the previous measure done in 1954 by Survey of India (8, 848 metres).
- "Sagarmatha" is the Nepali name for Mount Everest, whereas it is called "Chomolungma" or "Qomolangma" in Tibetan and "Qomolangma Feng" in Chinese

Cancer rate in Asia

- Pakistan has highest cancer rate in Asia experts

- Pakistan has the highest rate of breast cancer in Asia as approximately 90,000 women are diagnosed with the disease every year out of whom 40,000 pass away, according to a media report.

Japan awaits capsule's return with Ryugu soil

- Japan's Hayabusa2 spacecraft successfully released a small capsule and send it toward Earth to deliver samples from a distance asteroid that could provide clues to the origin of the solar system and life planet, the country's space agency said.

ENVIRONMENT

Greenland's ice sheet may never regrow

- The massive Greenland ice sheet could be facing a point of no return, beyond which it may no longer fully regrow, permanently changing sea levels around the world, warns a new study.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

3rd Global RE-INVEST Renewable Energy Investors Meet & Expo takes place virtually

- The 3rd Global RE-INVEST Renewable Energy Investors Meet & Expo 2020 organised by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) took place virtually from November 26-28, 2020. The event was virtually inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The **Theme** of RE-INVEST 2020 is 'Innovations for Sustainable Energy Transition'.
- Partner Countries - Australia, Denmark, France, Germany, Maldives, the United Kingdom, European Union and United States agencies.
- Partner States - Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

Maritime Security

- NSA Ajit Doval Visits Colombo for 2 Day to Participate in 4th NSA Level Meeting on Trilateral Maritime Security Cooperation.
- The meeting was hosted by Sri Lanka.

2020 Industry Transition Leadership Virtual Summit organized by LeadIT

- Union Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Forest Minister (MoEFCC), Prakash Javadekar represented India at the 2020 Industry Transition Leadership Summit organized by Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT). The Summit was held in Virtual Mode due to Covid-19 Pandemic.

7th edition of WASH Conclave 2020

- A 3-Day virtual 7th edition of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Conclave 2020 kicked off in Hyderabad from December 2-4, 2020. It was organized by UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund), National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD & PR) in collaboration with 3 state governments - Telangana, Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka
- **Theme** - “Hygiene Matters”
- **Target** - The year 2024 is set as target for providing access, and use of safe and adequate drinking water to all households.

DEFENCE

BrahMos supersonic cruise missile

- The naval version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile - was successfully tested from a warship in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands territory of Bay of Bengal on December 1.

‘Passage’ exercise with Russia

- India - kicked off a two-day naval ‘Passage’ exercise with Russia in the eastern Indian Ocean Region (IOR) on December 4
- The country had undertaken the high-voltage Malabar war games with the other three “Quad” countries, the US, Japan and Australia, last month.

Defence Geo Informatics Research Establishment

- The Defence Research Development Organization (DRDO) - recently launched a new laboratory Defence Geo Informatics Research Establishment.
- The new lab will focus on research on the areas of terrain and avalanches along the borders with China and Pakistan.

Indian Navy finalises procurement of Israeli ‘SMASH 2000’ Anti-Drone Systems

- Indian Navy has finalised the contract for procurement of a batch of Israeli ‘SMASH 2000 Plus fire Control Systems’ Anti-Drone Systems which is capable of destroying high-speed enemy drones. It is manufactured by Israel Firm ‘Smart Shooter’.

25 Years of SOHO mission

- The Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO), a joint mission between the European Space Agency (ESA) and NASA, has become the longest-running Sun-surveying spacecraft as it marks its 25th launch anniversary.

ECONOMY

‘Quarterly filing of Return with Monthly Payment’ (QRMP)

- The government - has announced a new system of return filing under the Goods and Services Tax regime.
- Coming into effect from January 2021, it will cover 92% of taxpayers with an annual turnover of up to ₹5 crore.

‘One Nation One Ration Card’

- The Centre - has allowed nine states to raise over ₹23,500 crore via market borrowings after they completed the mandated reform on ‘One Nation One Ration Card’ to be eligible for additional fund-raising.
- The states eligible for additional borrowing permission for 0.25% of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) after completing Public Distribution System (PDS) reforms include Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.

PERSONALITY

Utpal Kumar Singh

- Om Birla appoints Utpal Kumar Singh as secretary- General of Lok Sabha

Man who recounted history of new verse in Tamil poetry

- R S Krishnasamy, better known by his pseudonym Vallikannan, whose centenary is this year, stood for freedom in contemporary Tamil literature.
- Vallikannan created a collection of essays, serialised in the magazine ‘Deepam’, capturing the birth and growth of new Tamil poetry in ‘Pudukavithaiyin Thottramum Valarchiyum’.

Ramachandran

- In world Triathlon Audit committee
- Former Indian Olympic association (IOA) president N Ramachandran has been elected as a member of the world Triathlon Audit committee.

Chief Guest of Republic Day

2021	Prime Minister Boris Johnson	United Kingdom
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Lloyd Austin:

- US President-elect Joe Biden has chosen retired General Lloyd Austin as his defence secretary.

Dr Vivek Murthy

- His picks for the health team
- He will be one of Biden’s closest advisers on containing the virus, besides handling the government’s public outreach.

Xavier Becerra

- As Secretary of Health and Human Services.

AWARDS

Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL)

- It has been conferred the International Award 2020 by the World Safety Organisation (WSO), United States.

Aditya Vikram Birla Kala Shikhar Puraskar 2020

- Veteran Bollywood Actor Naseeruddin Shah was honoured with the Aditya Vikram Birla Kala Shikhar Puraskar 2020 at the Sangit Kala Kendra Awards virtual function. He was awarded in the category theatre.

Global Teacher Prize 2020

- Ranjitsinh Disale, a teacher from Zilla Parishad Primary School, Paritewadi, Solapur district in Maharashtra, India won US \$1 million annual Global Teacher Prize 2020.
- The Prize was founded by Varkey Foundation and organised in partnership with UNESCO.

PEN Hessell - Tiltman Prize 2020 - Anita Anand

- Book Titled, 'The Patient Assassin: A True Tale of Massacre, Revenge and the Raj'. (It is about Jallianwala Bagh massacre)

World Athletics Awards 2020

- Mondo Duplantis and Yulimar Rojas Named '2020 World Athletes of the Year'.

UNESCO World Heritage cities list

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has inscribed the fort cities of Gwalior and Orchha in Madhya Pradesh (MP) in its world heritage cities under urban landscape city programme
- This was informed by the state government of MP. With this Inclusion the total number of UNESCO World Heritage Cities of India will increase to 40

UNCTAD Investment Promotion Award for 2020

- "Invest India" won the 2020 UNCTAD Investment Promotion Award by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The award was presented at the award ceremony organised at the headquarters of UNCTAD, Geneva, Switzerland

2020 Goldman Environmental Prize Ceremony held virtually; Paul Sein Twa of Myanmar won in Asia Continent

- The 2020 Goldman Environmental Prize ceremony was held virtually on November 30, 2020 which recognizes six grassroots environmental activists annually from each of the world's six continents viz. Africa, Asia,

Europe, Islands & Island Nations, North America, and South & Central America. The prize is also known as the “Green Nobel Prize”. Paul Sein Twa of Myanmar won the award in Asian Continent.

Shankar Das Swamigal Award

- Another Tamil film, actor-director Parthiban's Oththa Seruppu Size 7, has won three awards at the film festival: Jury Award for Best Feature Film, Jury Award Best Feature Film Director and Best Solo Act Award.
- Oththa Seruppu is a thriller featuring only one character (played by Parthiban)

UN Population Award

- Bhutan's Queen Mother Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck was given the 2020 United Nations Population Award
- NGO HelpAge India received the “2020 UN Population Award” in the institutional category on Thursday for its contribution towards serving disadvantaged elderly people and raising awareness on their cause.

Shameless Short Film

- Shameless, a short film written and directed by Keith Gomes, will compete in the Live-Action Short Film category at the 93rd Academy Awards.
- Sayani Gupta (Article 15, Four More Shots Please!) and Hussain Dalal (Margarita with a Straw, Judgmentall Hai Kya) star in this 15-minute long short that beat Vidya Balan's Natkhat to the race.
- **Serum Institute CEO Adar Poonawalla among 6 'Asians of the Year' named by The Straits Times.**

APPOINTMENTS

Anil Soni

- Indian-origin global health expert, Anil Soni - has been appointed as the first CEO of the newly launched the WHO Foundation
- The Foundation will work alongside the World Health Organization to address most pressing health challenges globally

Justice Rajesh Bindal

- Ram Nath Kovind, President of India appointed Justice Rajesh Bindal as the Chief Justice of the Common High Court (HC) for the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Union Territory of Ladakh. He will take charge on December 9, 2020. He succeeds Justice Gita Mittal, the 1st female Chief Justice of this court.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

BOOKS	AUTHORS
"Indian Icon: A Cult Called Royal Enfield"	Journalist Amrit Raj
"Vahana Masterclass"	Alfredo Covelli
"40 Years with Abdul Kalam- Untold Stories"	Sivathanu Pillai
Romancing Targets: Get closer to selling in 7 steps	Nidhi Vadhera
"Dharma: Decoding the Epics for a Meaningful Life"	Amish Tripathi

OBITUARY

"King of Spice", Dharampala Gulati

- Mahashay Dharampal Gulati, the founder and CEO of MDH Masala India's famous spices company, dies at the age of 97 due to cardiac arrest in New Delhi. The pioneer of the ready to use ground spices, also called as "King of Spice" was awarded India's third highest civilian award "Padma Bhushan" in 2019.

APPS AND PORTALS

'Co-WIN'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) has developed 'Co-WIN' - A Digital Platform & Mobile Application for real-time monitoring of COVID-19 vaccine delivery and recording data. The platform can be used by the people to register themselves for vaccination.
'Abhayam'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For safety of women passengers launched in Andhra Pradesh.

INDEX, RANKING & REPORT

India's top three deadliest accident blackspots - are located in Chennai

- The 500-metre stretch of Chennai-Thiruvallur High (CTH) Road near Ambattur Telephone Exchange tops the list with the reporting of 166 deaths occurring in 755 accidents in the past three years.
- National highway Authority of India (NHAI) has completed permanent rectification work at only 23 accident blackspots in the state. According to official data, in the past eight years, NHAI has identified 563 accident blackspots stretches which reported at least five fatal accidents in a year for permanent rectification

FAO's Report SOFA 2020

- FAO's Report SOFA 2020 with theme 'Overcoming Water Challenges in Agriculture' states 1 out of 6 People in the World Faces Severe Water Scarcity.
- **Theme** "Overcoming Water Challenges in Agriculture".

"World Malaria Report 2020"

- India Recorded Largest Reductions in Malaria cases in South-East Asia between 2000 -2019.
- Despite India's progress, it still contributes significantly to the global malaria burden and is among the 11 highest malaria burden countries in the world, as per the World Health Organisation's malaria report 2020.

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)

- It has released its annual 'State of the Global Climate' report.
- The report is based on data from January-October, 2020.
- Accordingly, the year 2020 is on track to be one of three warmest years on record

Amul becomes World's 8th Largest Milk Processor

- According to The International Farm Comparison Network (IFCN) Dairy Processors Report 2020 (Biennial), Amul (Anand Milk Union Limited) a brand of dairy cooperative major Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) emerged as the 8th Largest Milk Processor globally in the list of Top 20.

'Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2020

- According to the 8th Edition of 'Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2020: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism' released by Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), India with a score of 7.353 is the 8th Most Affected Country in the World due to Terrorism in 2019. Afghanistan (9.592), Iraq (8.682) & Nigeria (8.314) are top 3 countries which are the most affected by Terrorism.

ICAR Ranking

- It has re-entered into the top 10 in ICAR ranking for 2019.
- The recently released ranking place TNAU **8th** among 67 agricultural Institutes 4th among state agricultural universities and the first among Southern Agricultural Universities

Global Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)

- India - remains in the top 10 for the second year in a row in the latest global Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) released in Germany on December 7.
- The biggest current emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG) China figures at 33rd rank while the largest historical polluter, the USA, appears at the bottom of the list.
- India had shown a steady progress in its journey towards climate protection
- The country was ranked 31st in 2014 and improved significantly to 9th in 2019.

IUCN Report named India's Western Ghats under Significant Concern

- In accordance with the new report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) namely "IUCN World Heritage Outlook 3", India's Western Ghats, inscribed by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 2012 as a natural world heritage site, is threatened by population pressure, urbanization and climate change. The site is regarded as of significant concern.

16th Climate change Performance Index 2021

- Sweden Ranked at 4th while India ranked at 10th Position
- A non-profit, non-governmental organization, Germanwatch has released the 16th edition of Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) i.e. CCPI 2021 for 57 countries and European Union (EU) in which India was ranked at 10th spot with a score of 63.98 out of 100. This was the second consecutive time that India remained in top 10 as it was at 9th position in 2019 with an overall score of 66.02

'Emission Gap Report'

- The United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) 'Emission Gap Report' - was released.
- As per the report, the world is heading for a temperature rise in excess of 3°C this century.
- Further, the report predicted a fall of 7% in Carbon dioxide emission globally this year following the Covid-19 induced lockdown and reduced travel and industrial activities.

India Tops Asia in Bribery

- In accordance with the 10th edition of the report titled “Global Corruption Barometer (GCB)-Asia 2020” by corruption watchdog Transparency International, India has the highest bribery rate of 39% in Asia and the highest rate of people (46%) who use personal connections to access public services.

SPORTS

Virat Kohli - Quickest Batsman to score 12, 000 runs:

- Virat Kohli became the quickest batsman to reach 12,000 runs in ODIs.
- He has taken 242 innings to achieve this record. He surpassed Sachin Tendulkar’s record of reaching 12, 000 runs in 300 innings.

Napoli's stadium - has been renamed after Diego Maradona

- Napoli's stadium - has been renamed after Diego Maradona in memory of the late Argentinean soccer great, who led the club to two Italian league titles.

Breakdancing

- Breakdancing - was announced as an official Olympic sport for the 2024 Paris Games by the International Olympic Committee

Other sports that are confirmed for the Paris extravaganza by the IOC executive board includes skateboarding, sport climbing, and surfing.

Three other sports included too

- Skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing will also feature in Paris, which will see the number of athletes capped at 10,500.
- 329 medal events in Paris are 10 fewer than in Tokyo next year including four lost from weightlifting. There will be a mixed gender event in place of men’s 50M walk.