Weekly Current Affairs PDF December 13 to December 19, 2020

Current Affairs PDF- December 19, 2020

INTERNATIONAL

Boris Johnson invites PM Modi to UK-Led G-7 Summit
- United Kingdom Prime Minister, Boris Johnson has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to join the UK-hosted G-7 summit 2021. UK Prime Minister Johnson has also accepted the very generous invitation to attend India’s Republic Day celebrations in January.
- PM Johnson will attend India’s annual Republic Day parade in New Delhi.

35th Edition Of India-Indonesia CORPATs
- The 35th edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Indonesian Navy is being conducted from 17 to 18 December 2020. The 35th IND – INDO CORPAT will contribute towards the Indian Navy’s efforts to consolidate inter-operability and forge strong bonds of friendship across the Indo Pacific.
- Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kulish, an indigenously built missile corvette along with P8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) will undertake coordinated patrol with Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Cut Nyak Dien, a Kapitan Pattimura (Parchim I) class corvette and an MPA of the Indonesian Navy.
- To reinforce maritime links, the two navies have been carrying out CORPAT along their International Maritime Boundary Line since 2002, with the aim of ensuring safety and security of shipping and international trade in the region. CORPATs build up understanding and interoperability between navies and facilitate the institution of measures to prevent and suppress Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking, maritime terrorism, armed robbery and piracy.

NATIONAL

Nehru Zoological Park Hyderabad gets ISO certifications
- Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, with its standard working procedures, has acquired ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Standards Certification from ASCB, UK. The Hyderabad Zoo has become the first zoo in the country to receive ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Standards Certificate. This was presented to Telangana Forests Minister A. Indra Karan Reddy.
- HYM International Certifications, Accredited by ASCB(UK) recently conducted an assessment of the Zoo for ISO 9001:2015 Certifications and expressed satisfaction and happiness in the standards being followed in Nehru Zoological Park in the area of sanitation, food processing, animal breeding, Zoo Hospital, animal care, hygiene maintenance and establishment.

Uttar Pradesh govt to launch ‘Kisan Kalyan Mission’
- Uttar Pradesh government will launch a special program to double the income of farmers. The program named as “Kisan Kalyan Mission” will cover all assembly constituencies of the state. Under the Kisan Kalyan mission, various programs will be organised across the state.
Exhibitions of agriculture and Associate sectors will be organised which will include the products of MSME sector units and livelihood missions.

Farmer meetings will also be organised in which progressive farmers, scientist and workers associated with Agriculture Department will explain the scientific farming and provide information about the schemes of the government.

Farmers will be given benefit under the various schemes of the agriculture department during these events.

Under the Kisan Kalyan mission, many departments of state government like agriculture marketing Mandi Parishad, Horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries, sugarcane food and supply and Panchayati Raj will work together.

**Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launched ‘Pareshram’ Portal**

- Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik through a video conference, launched ‘Pareshram’ Portal along with 22 online services of Labour and Employees State Insurance Department. The Portal and the Online Services shall be helpful in “Ease of Doing Business” and contribute significantly to the industrial development of the State.

- The Portal will provide 52 types of services in the coming days. This technology is the foundation of 5-T initiative and this will help in transformation, hoped that information regarding different Labour Laws will be available and industries, commercial organisations, small entrepreneurs and public will be benefited through this Portal.

**SPORTS**

Robert Lewandowski and Lucy Bronze win best of 2020 FIFA awards

- The Bayern Munich striker, Robert Lewandowski has been named The Best FIFA Men’s Player 2020, beating off competition from last year’s winner Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo. The 32-year-old Lewandowski, top scorer in Europe and winner of the Champions League with Bayern.

- Manchester City full-back, Lucy Bronze won the women’s best player award, becoming the first female English player to take the prize. It is the first occasion for both Lewandowski and Bronze to win the award, with the Pole only the second player after Luka Modric in 2018 to break a 13-year Messi-Ronaldo hegemony.

**APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS**

NHAI chairman Sukhbir Singh Sandhu gets six months extension

- Sukhbir Singh Sandhu has been given six months extension as the chairman of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the extension in central deputation tenure of Sandhu, chairman, NHAI, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, for a period of six months beyond January 21, 2021, i.e. up to July 21, 2021. Sandhu is a 1988-batch IAS officer of Uttarakhand cadre.
### SUMMITS AND MOU’S

**ADB and India sign $300 million loan to upgrade power projects in UP**
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a $300 million loan agreement with the Government of India to upgrade rural power distribution networks in Uttar Pradesh. This upgradation helps to provide reliable electricity supply to consumers in the state. This is the first tranche of the loan for the Uttar Pradesh Power Distribution Network Rehabilitation Project.
- Overall, the $430 million multi-tranche financing facility (MFF) has been approved for the project constituting two tranches.
- The project envisages conversion of 65,000 kilometres (km) of rural low-voltage distribution lines from bare conductors to aerial bundled conductors (ABC) to create a robust distribution network that will benefit an estimated 70 million people in 46,000 villages.

**GoI and ADB sign 4.21 million dollar PRF facility for Tripura**
- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a US $4.21 million project readiness financing (PRF) facility for the preparation of infrastructure development projects to improve urban amenities and develop tourism infrastructure in Tripura. This is ADB’s first PRF facility for a state in the northeastern region of India.
- The facility will support the Tripura Government’s priorities of improving urban services and tourism infrastructure that will help boost economic development.
- The facility aims to ensure high readiness of ensuing infrastructure projects through feasibility studies, preparing detailed engineering designs, and capacity building of state-level agencies while ensuring climate and disaster resilience and sustainability of sub-projects.

### AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

**India’s Vidyut Mohan named among ‘Young Champions of the Earth’ by UNEP**
- Vidyut Mohan was one of the “Young Champions of the Earth” winners by United Nations Environment Programme. A 29-year-old Indian entrepreneur is among the seven winners of the prestigious “Young Champions of the Earth” 2020 prize given by the UN environment agency to global change-makers using innovative ideas and ambitious action to help solve some of the world’s most pressing environmental challenges. The prize is annually awarded to 7 entrepreneurs under age 30.
- Vidyut Mohan, an engineer, is the co-founder of “Takachar”, a social enterprise enabling farmers to prevent open burning of their waste farm residues and earn extra income by converting them into value-added chemicals like activated carbon on-site.

### RANKING

**India ranks 111 in Human Freedom Index 2020**
- A worldwide ranking of civil, economic and personal freedom, the Human Freedom Index 2020 was released. India was placed at the 111th spot out of 162 countries. In 2019, India ranked 94 on the index.
- The first three spots have been bagged by New Zealand, Switzerland and Hong Kong. The United States and the United Kingdom are tied at the 17th spot on the index. War-torn Syria ranked the...
India’s scored 6.30 out of 10 in personal freedom and 6.56 in economic freedom. The country’s overall human freedom score was 6.43.

However, India has been ranked ahead of China and Bangladesh, which ranked 129 and 139 on the 2020 index respectively.

Human Freedom Index was published by American think tank Cato Institute and Fraser Institute in Canada. The index takes into account 76 indicators of personal, civil, and economic freedoms to rank 162 countries from 2008 to 2018. The institutes noted that the world has seen a notable decline in personal freedom since 2008.

Current Affairs PDF- December 18, 2020

INTERNATIONAL

NASA selects Raja Chari as commander of SpaceX Crew-3 mission
- NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) have selected Indian-American Raja Chari to be the Commander of the SpaceX Crew-3 mission to the International Space Station. Presently Raja Chari, is a colonel in the US Air Force. He will be the commander of SpaceX Crew-3 mission, while Nasa’s Tom Marshburn will be pilot and ESA’s Matthias Maurer will serve as a mission specialist. This mission is expected to be launched next year.
- When Chari, Marshburn, and Maurer arrive at the orbiting laboratory, they will become expedition crew members for the duration of their six-month stay. The crew will have a slight overlap with the Crew-2 astronauts, who are expected to launch in the spring of 2021.
- Chari was born in Milwaukee, but considers Cedar Falls, Iowa, his hometown. Raja Chari’s father Srinivas Chari left for the US from Hyderabad at a young age for an engineering degree.
- He is a colonel in the US Air Force and joins the mission with extensive experience as a test pilot.
- For Raja Chari, this will be the first spaceflight. He became a Nasa astronaut in 2017.

NATIONAL

PM Modi inaugurates world’s largest renewable energy park in Gujarat
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the 30,000 megawatt (MW) capacity hybrid renewable energy park in Kutch district of Gujarat. It will be the largest renewable energy park of its kind in the world. It is expected to play a major role in fulfilling India’s vision of generating 450 GW (4,50,000 mw) of power by 2030.
- The park is being constructed between Khawda and Vighakhot villages near India-Pakistan border.
- The renewable park will have two dedicated zones, one each for the wind energy and solar energy.
- It will be spread over 72,600 hectares of waste land, including 49,600 hectares for solar project and 23,000 hectares of land for wind power.
SPORTS

Qatar to host 2030 Asian Games, 2034 edition in Saudi Arabia

- The 2030 Asian Games were awarded to Doha, Qatar and the 2034 event went to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia after a deal was struck between the rival nations. Doha beat Riyadh for the 2030 Games in the vote at the Olympic Council of Asia’s (OCA) general assembly.
- The vote took place amid a bitter and long-running political dispute between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Saudi Arabia is one of four countries which has imposed a trade and travel boycott on Qatar since 2017. The OCA reached a deal to vote on the 2030 host but to give the other candidate the 2034 event.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISRO sets up dedicated control centre ‘NETRA’ for SSA

- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has set up a dedicated Space Situational Awareness (SSA) Control Centre named “NETRA”, at its ISTRAC campus at Peenya, Bengaluru. The ISRO SSA Control Centre ‘NETRA’ was formally inaugurated by ISRO Chairman K Sivan.
- The “NEtwork for space object TRacking and Analysis (NETRA)” will monitor, track and protect India’s space assets. It will function as a hub of all SSA activities within India.
- It has been set up as a ‘Directorate of Space Situational Awareness and Management (DSSAM)’ aiming to protect high valued space assets from space debris close approaches and collisions.
- The state-of-the-art facility, dedicated to SSA activities, will also help to coordinate between Indian agencies, their foreign counterparts and international bodies.
- The main elements of NETRA would be a radar, an optical telescope facility, and a control centre.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Arabic Language Day observed globally on 18 December

- UN Arabic Language Day is observed annually on December 18 every year. The day was established by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2010 to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity as well as to promote equal use of all six of its official languages throughout the Organization.
- December 18 was chosen as the date for the Arabic language as it is “the day in 1973 when the General Assembly approved Arabic as an official UN language “.

International Migrants Day is celebrated on 18 December

- The International Migrants Day is observed globally on 18 December every year. In December 2000, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 18 December as International Migrants Day after considering the large and increasing number of migrants in the world.
- The theme of International Migrants Day 2020 is ‘Reimagining Human Mobility’.
- The day marks the anniversary of the adoption of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which was adopted by the United Nations (UN) on 18 December 1990.
SUMMITS AND MOU’S

PM Modi holds virtual summit with Sheikh Hasina
- The Government of India and Bangladesh held a virtual summit to hold comprehensive discussions on the entire spectrum of the bilateral relationship, including further strengthening cooperation in the post-C-19 era. The meeting was led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina.
- The two leaders jointly inaugurated the Chilahati-Haldibari rail link, which would connect the borders of the two neighbouring countries. The rail route lies between Haldibari in West Bengal and Chilahati in Bangladesh. It is re-opened after a gap of 55 years. The railway line has been defunct after rail links between India and then East Pakistan snapped in 1965.
- Both the leaders also digitally inaugurated the digital exhibition in the honour of Mahatma Gandhi and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rehman.
- The Indian side also released a postal stamp to commemorate Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- Apart from this, the two sides signed 7 MoUs and agreements in various fields.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Kylie Jenner tops Forbes’ list of highest-paid celebrities of 2020
- American media personality and reality TV star, Kylie Jenner has been crowned the highest-paid celebrity of 2020 by Forbes. The top-earning stars in the world earned a combined of $6.1 billion in 2020 with Kylie Jenner. Setting aside Kylie’s history with Forbes, the financial experts there calculated her earning this year to be at $590 million after she sold a majority of her beauty brand’s stake to Coty Inc.
- Ranked at number 2 on the list by making $170 million was American rapper and record producer Kanye West, who is also coincidentally Kylie’s brother-in-law. In addition to Tyler Perry, Howard Stern, and Dwayne Johnson, A-lister athletes like Roger Federer, Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Neymar and LeBron James helped round out the top 10. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the entertainment industry, this year’s combined total of USD 6.1 billion was USD 200 million lesser than that of 2019.

SAIL gets Golden Peacock Environment Management Award 2020
- Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has been awarded with the prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award for the year 2020 in the Steel Sector by the Institute of Directors. The company has been the winner of this award for successive two years and this bears testimony to the efforts made by it for sustainable and environmentally responsible steel making. This award is one of the most coveted awards in the category.
- SAIL, as its Corporate Responsibility for Environment Protection continuously focuses on adopting various environmental measures including, upgrading of pollution control facilities, treatment & recirculation of wastewater from individual units & outfalls, enhancement in the green cover in & around Plants & Units, efficient handling of different solid wastes (viz. process waste, hazardous waste, canteen/township waste), carbon sequestration through afforestation, eco-restoration of mined out area, among others.
Also, the impact of SAIL’s initiatives and best practices on improving cleaner environment, reducing emissions & discharges, mitigating impacts of climate change and helping the Company to conduct its operations in environmentally benign manner has been recognized.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

India pledges USD 1 million to WADA to support Clean Sport
- India has pledged a sum of USD 1 million to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), towards its scientific research budget, to ensure an atmosphere of Clean Sport globally. The contribution made by India is the highest among contributions made by other world governments, including China, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. This contribution is over and above the annual contribution made to WADA’s core budget by India.
- The sum will be used by WADA to develop innovative anti-doping testing and detection methods, and further strengthen WADA’s independent Investigations and Intelligence Department. The total contribution of all member nations will be matched by an equal sum by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to create a corpus of USD 10 million.

Canara Bank unveils “FX 4 U” for forex remittance via Internet Banking
- Canara Bank has launched FX 4 U that enables its entire internet banking users to handle forex transactions hasslefree. FX 4 U is used for forex remittance through internet banking. With this development, eligible customers will be able to undertake remittance facility in adherence to the FEMA regulations 1999.
- Once the letter of credit (LC) module is activated, the corporate customers can make and submit LC applications with documents through internet banking.
- Corporate customers can make and submit the LC applications along with documents through internet banking once the LC module is activated.
- The transactions that are submitted through internet banking will flow seamlessly to the Centralized Process Centre – Forex Transactions(CPCFT), where the Compliance and accounting will be done and transmitted through The Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT).

Current Affairs PDF- December 17, 2020

NATIONAL

Indian Coast Guard’s OPV ‘Sujeet’ commissioned in Goa
- Indian Coast Guard’s (ICG) Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) ‘Sujeet’, which is second in the series of 5 OPVs was commissioned at the Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) in Vasco Town, Goa by Raj Kumar, Secretary (Defence Production).
- The vessel has been designed and built indigenously by GSL. The 1st ship in series – ICGS (ICG Ship) Sachet was commissioned by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in May 2020. The ship was commissioned in the presence of K Natarajan, Director General of Indian Coast Guard and others.
- Sujeet has been equipped with features like Integrated Bridge System, Integrated platform
management system, power management system and high power external fire-fighting.

- It is capable of carrying 1 twin-engine helicopter, 4 high-speed boats, 2 inflatable boats for boarding operations, search and rescue, law enforcement and maritime patrol.
- The ship will be based at Goa and will be deployed extensively for EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) surveillance and other duties.
- The ship will be 105 metres long and weigh 2400 tonnes.
- At present, ICG has stated that it has 155 ships and 62 Aircraft at its disposal with 35 more ships in various stages of construction at shipyards across India.

Maharashtra Government introduces Unified Development Control Rules for Real Estate

- The Government of Maharashtra has approved the Unified Development Control and Promotion Regulations, (UDCPR), to strengthen and bring uniformity in the real estate construction laws of the state. This uniform set of regulations will specify everything from the height of buildings to the width of roads and the size of amenity spaces.
- The new set of rules will apply on all municipal corporations, councils and Nagar panchayats in the entire state except Mumbai and some neighbouring areas like hill stations, eco-sensitive zones and specified corporation areas.
- It will help to increase the stock of affordable housing projects and improve ease of doing business as well as help the developers to improve their resource management.

OBITUARY

Former Australian Test cricketer all-rounder Eric Freeman passes away

- Former Australia Test all-rounder, Eric Freeman has passed away. He made his Test debut against India at the Gabba (Brisbane Cricket Ground) in 1968 during which his opening scoring shot was a six, and he became the first player to achieve the feat.
- Freeman received the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2002 for his services to sport. After retiring from cricket in the 1973-74 season he took up the career as administrator, coach and broadcaster. Freeman was also an elite football player, representing Port Adelaide and he topped the club’s goalkicking list in all five of his complete seasons.

Aerospace Scientist Shri Roddam Narasimha passes away

- Eminent aerospace scientist and Padma Vibhushan awardee, Roddam Narasimha has passed away. He had served at the prestigious Indian Institute of Science (IISc), where he taught Aerospace Engineering from 1962 to 1999. He also served as the director of the National Aerospace Laboratories from 1984 to 1993.
- The central government bestowed the second-highest civilian award of India, Padma Vibhushan on him in 2013 for his contribution in the field of aerospace engineering. Together with the Missile Man of India and former president Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, Prof Narasimha had authored a book —“Developments In Fluid Mechanics and Space Technology”.
APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati elected as Vice President of ABU

- The CEO of Prasar Bharati, Shashi Shekhar Vempati has been elected as the Vice President of Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) for a period of three years. Prasar Bharati is India’s largest public broadcasting agency.
- The Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia–based Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), is one of the largest broadcasting associations in the world.

SUMMITS AND MOU’S

Gol inks $1-bn loan pact with NDB to support Indian Economy

- The Government of India and the New Development Bank (NDB) have signed a loan agreement worth $1,000 million for ‘supporting India’s economic recovery from C-19’. The loan has a tenor of 30 years, including a 5-year grace period. The programme will support Indian Government in mitigating the adverse economic impact of C-19 pandemic and enable economic recovery in the rural areas.
- The loan will support expenditures on rural infrastructure related to natural resource management (NRM) and rural employment generation under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).
- The programme will support the government in mitigating the adverse economic impact of C-19 pandemic and enable economic recovery in the rural areas through natural resource management works which will facilitate economic activity and employment generation to stimulate rural demand.
- The programme will improve the livelihood of rural poor along with providing income opportunities to migrant workers who returned home due to job loss caused by C-19 pandemic.

Norway signs MoU with Clean Ganga Mission in India

- The Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO) has signed an MoU with cGanga, a think-tank of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) for development of sludge management framework in India. Through this initiative, Norway intends to deepen the relationship with India especially in the prevention of climate change and conservation of the environment.

India and World Bank sign $400 million project to protect India’s poor

- The Government of India and the World Bank have signed a $400 million project to protect vulnerable groups in urban and peri-urban areas across the country impacted by C-19. This is the second such assistance in the series of two ‘Accelerating India’s C-19 Social Protection Response Programme’. Under the first operation, $750 million was approved by World Bank in May 2020.
- World Bank will support India in its efforts at providing social assistance to the poor and vulnerable households, severely impacted by the C-19 pandemic.
• The programme will strengthen the capability of state and central governments in India to provide coordinated and adequate social protection to the poor and vulnerable from the shocks triggered by the C-19 pandemic.

RANKING

India ranks 131 in Human Development Index 2020
• According to the report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), India has been dropped two spots to 131 among 189 countries in the 2020 Human Development Index.
• Norway topped the index, followed by Ireland, Switzerland, Hong Kong and Iceland, the report showed.
• Niger is the lowest ranked country at 189, placed among Low human development category, with a score of 0.394.
• India(131), Bhutan (129), Bangladesh (133), Nepal (142), and Pakistan (154) were ranked among countries with medium human development.
• In the BRICS grouping, Russia was 52 in the human development index, Brazil 84, and China 85.
• Between 1990 and 2019, India’s life expectancy at birth increased by 11.8 years, mean years of schooling increased by 3.5 years, and expected years of schooling increased by 4.5 years.
• India’s GNI per capita increased by about 273.9% between 1990 and 2019. Life expectancy for Indian’s at birth was 69.7 years in 2019, slightly lower than the south Asian average of 69.9 years, but slightly higher than the average of medium human development index groupings in the world at 69.3 years.
• The Human Development Index measures average achievement of the countries in 3 basic dimensions of human development i.e. life expectancy, education and per capita income.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Om Birla releases book on 19th anniversary of Parliament attack
• Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has released a book on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of the Parliament attack on 13 December.
• He released the book ‘The Shaurya Unbound’ (English Version) and ‘Samundar Samawe Boond Mein’ (Hindi Version) was released on the 2001 incident. As many as 14 people including the five terrorists died during the incident.

Current Affairs PDF- December 16, 2020

NATIONAL

GRSE Kolkata launches ‘Himgiri’, its 1st Ship of Project 17A
• Himgiri, which is the first of the three Project 17A ships being built at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata was launched. The launch of ‘Himgiri’ has showcased GRSE’s commitment towards the building of three state-of-the-art warships of P17A for Indian Navy.
Under the Project 17A program, a total of seven ships, four at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) and three ships at GRSE are being built with enhanced stealth features, advanced indigenous weapon and sensor fit along with several other improvements. P17A ships are the first gas turbine propulsion and largest combat platforms ever built at GRSE. Since its inception, Project 17A has upheld India’s vision for Atmanirbhar Bharat.

NITI Aayog releases ‘Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India’
- NITI Aayog has released a white paper titled ‘Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India’ on 14 December 2020. The ‘Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India’ is a continuation of the work on Health Systems Strengthening. The building blocks for this vision are an interdependent federated system of governance between the Centre and states.
- The vision of this white paper is to make India’s public health surveillance system more responsive and predictive to enhance preparedness for action at all levels.
- The citizen-friendly public health surveillance system will ensure individual privacy and confidentiality, enabled with a client feedback mechanism.
- India aims to provide regional and global leadership in managing events that constitute a public health emergency of international concern.
- Public health surveillance (PHS) is an important function, requiring primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of care.
- The white paper lays out India’s vision of 2035 for public health surveillance through the integration of the three-tiered public health system into Ayushman Bharat.

OBITUARY
‘Hind Kesari’-winning wrestler Sripati Khanchanale passes away
- Noted Indian wrestler, Sripati Khanchanale, who had won the prestigious ‘Hind Kesari’ title in 1959, passed away. In 1959, Khanchanale won the ‘Hind Kesari’ title by defeating wrestler Rustam-e-Punjab Battasingh at the New Railway Stadium in Delhi.
- The prestigious ‘Hind Kesari’ title commands the highest respect in the Indian wrestling world. He was also a recipient of the Shiv Chhatrapati award, which is given by the Maharashtra government.

Eswatini’s Prime Minister, Ambrose Dlamini passes away
- Ambrose Dlamini, the Prime Minister of Eswatini, a country in Southern Africa, has passed away after contracting coronavirus.
- He was appointed as the tenth prime minister of the country in October 2018.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS
RBI re-appoints Uday Kotak as MD of Kotak Mahindra Bank
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the re-appointment of Uday Kotak as Managing Director of Kotak Mahindra Bank for a further period of three years, with effect from January 1, 2021. Kotak is founder managing director and promoter of the bank.
- RBI has also approved the appointment of part-time chairman Prakash Apte and Dipak Gupta as
Joint MD of the bank for a period of three years.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Nation Observes 49th Vijay Diwas on 16 December 2020

- In India, Vijay Diwas (also called Victory Day) is celebrated every year on December 16. The country is celebrating the 49th Vijay Diwas in 2020. Vijay Diwas is observed to commemorate the service, valour, and sacrifices of the gallant men of the Indian Armed Forces’ victory over Pakistan in 1971 war.
- The Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 which began on December 3 lasted for 13 days and officially ended on December 16, after which Pakistan surrendered to India. It was on this day in 1971, the chief of the Pakistani forces, General AA Khan Niazi, along with 93 thousand troops, had surrendered unconditionally to the allied forces consisting of Indian Army and Mukti Bahini. The end of the war also resulted in subsequent secession of East Pakistan into Bangladesh.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

UNEP announces 2020 Champions of the Earth Award

- The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has announced six laureates of the 2020 Champions of the Earth award, the UN’s highest environmental honour. The Champions were chosen for their transformative impact on the environment and their leadership in urging bold and decisive action on behalf of the planet and its inhabitants.

The Champions of the Earth Award is presented in 5 categories:
1. Lifetime Achievement,
2. Inspiration and Action,
3. Policy Leadership,
4. Entrepreneur Vision,
5. Science and Innovation.

- The 2020 Champions of the Earth Award has been bestowed upon 6 individuals. The list of winners is given below.

Policy Leadership:
- Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama of Fiji, honoured in the Policy Leadership category for his global climate action work and his commitment to climate-responsive national development.

Inspiration and Action:
- Yacouba Sawadogo (Burkina Faso), also honoured in the Inspiration and Action category for teaching farmers his traditional nature-based solution to regenerate their soil and turn barren land into arable land and forest across Africa.

Inspiration and Action:
- Nemonte Nenquimo (Ecuador), awarded in the Inspiration and Action category for her leadership and unifying work with indigenous communities that halted drilling in Ecuador’s Amazon rainforest.

Science and Innovation:
- Dr Fabian Leendertz (Germany), honoured in the Science and Innovation category for his discoveries in zoonotic and his work in One Health.
Entrepreneur Vision:
- Mindy Lubber (USA), recognized in the Entrepreneurial Vision category for her commitment to turning capital markets green by mobilizing top investors and companies and making the business case for climate action and sustainability

Lifetime Achievement Award:
- Professor Robert D. Bullard (USA) who was awarded the Champion of the Earth Lifetime Achievement award for his commitment and service to environmental justice.
- The UN Environment Program (UNEP) is presenting the Champions of the Earth Award since 2005, to inspire and motivate more people to act for nature. The award recognizes outstanding environmental leaders from the public and private sectors, and from civil society for their pioneering initiatives aimed at healing the planet amid natural and man-made threats and whose activities have had a positive impact on the environment.

Myanmar’s Paul Sein Twa receives Goldman Environmental Prize 2020
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Asia Regional Office awarded Paul Sein Twa, for Goldman Environmental Prize 2020 for Asia. This award is given to him for his efforts in promoting the self-determination of the Karen people in managing their natural resources.
- Paul is the co-founder of the Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN), established in 2001.
- Paul and his team at KESAN supported Karen indigenous communities in establishing the Salween Peace Park in Myanmar and on the border of Thailand.
- The Peace Park represents a unique community-based approach to conservation in one of Asia’s biodiversity hotspots.
- The Salween Basin is home to vast stretches of teak forests, teeming with tigers, sun bears, and clouded leopards.
- The Goldman Environmental Prize is one of the most prestigious environmental prizes awarded annually to grassroots environmental activists, one from each of the world’s six geographic regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Islands and Island Nations, North America, and South and Central America.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS
A book titled ‘Dharma’ authored by Amish Tripathi
- The 2nd non-fiction book by author Amish Tripathi is titled “Dharma: Decoding the Epics for A Meaningful Life”.
- The book offers practical, philosophical lessons drawn from ancient Hindu epics. It is co-authored by his sister Bhavana Roy. It is to be published by Westland. His last non-fiction book ‘Immortals India’ was launched in 2017.

BANKING AND ECONOMY
India Post Payments Bank unveils new digital payment app ‘DakPay’
- The India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) along with Department of Posts (DoP) launched a digital payment application called ‘DakPay’ on 15 December 2020, in an effort to provide Digital
Financial inclusion at the last mile across India. The app was launched by Union Minister for Communications, Electronics & Information Technology and Law & Justice, Ravi Shankar Prasad.

- The app ‘DakPay’ will facilitate the customers of the DoP and IPPB in easy digital transactions and other banking and postal services.
- This innovative App will help people transfer and receive money with ease and those who do not have smartphones can also do money transaction on this App with the assistance of postmen.
- DakPay is not just a digital payment app but a suite of digital financial and assisted banking services provided by India Post and IPPB through the trusted Postal network across the nation to cater to the financial needs of various sections of the society.

### Current Affairs PDF- December 15, 2020

#### NATIONAL

**9th Sustainable Mountain Development Summit held in Dehradun**

- The 9th edition of Sustainable Mountain Development Summit (SMDS) held in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. The four-day-long summit was organised by Indian Mountain Initiative (IMI) and hosted by Sustainable Development Forum Uttarakhand (SDFU), Dehradun.
- The theme for 2020 SMDS was ‘Emerging Pathways for Building a Resilient Post COVID-19 Mountain Economy, Adaptation, Innovation and Acceleration’.
- The Summit deliberated on issues such as migration, water security, climate resilience and innovative solutions for the farm sector, and disaster risk reduction in the Indian Himalayas.
- The focus of the summit was on building pathways toward a resilient and sustainable mountain economy in the context of a post-C-19 scenario and Climate Change.

**Ola to set up world’s largest scooter factory in Tamil Nadu**

- The SoftBank-backed mobility platform, Ola has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Tamil Nadu government, to set up its first factory in the state, at an investment of Rs 2,400 crore. Upon completion, the Ola factory in Tamil Nadu will be the largest scooter manufacturing facility in the world. Initially, the factory will have an annual manufacturing capacity of 2 million units.
- The factory is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of an AtmaNirbhar Bharat and will make India a manufacturing hub for two-wheeled electric vehicles. The new factory will also reduce the dependence of India on import of electric vehicles, boost local manufacturing, create jobs and also improve the technical expertise in the country.

#### SPORTS

**Odisha to host 2023 FIH Men’s Hockey World Cup**

- The International Hockey Federation (FIH) had announced that the 2023 FIH Men’s Hockey World Cup will be hosted in Odisha, for a second consecutive time. The tournament will be held at two venues, Bhubaneswar and Rourkela. The Men’s Hockey World Cup 2018 was also hosted by Odisha.
The 2023 tournament will be the 15th edition of the Men’s FIH Hockey World Cup. It will be held at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar and at the Biju Patnaik Hockey Stadium in Rourkela. FIH Hockey World Cup is held after every four years.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**ISRO to launch communication satellite CMS-01**
- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch a communication satellite CMS-01, formerly named GSAT-12R, on December 17, using its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) rocket’s XL variant numbered as PSLV-C50. The CMS-01 will be a replacement for GSAT-12 that weighed 1,410 kg and was launched on July 11, 2011, with a mission life of eight years.
- CMS-01 is a communication satellite envisaged for providing services in Extended-C Band of the frequency spectrum, which will include the Indian mainland, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands. The 42nd communication satellite of India, it will have a mission life of seven years.
- The 44-metre-high four staged/engine PSLV-C50 is the 22nd flight of PSLV in ‘XL’ configuration (with six strap-on motors hugging the first stage).
- The PSLV in the normal configuration is a four-stage/engine expendable rocket powered by solid and liquid fuels alternatively with six booster motors strapped on to the first stage to give higher thrust during the initial flight moments.
- The Indian space agency has PSLV variants with two and four strap-on motors, larger PSLV-XL and the Core Alone variant without any strap-on motors. The choice of the rocket to be used for a mission depends on the weight of the satellite and the orbit where the satellite has to be orbited.

**SUMMITS AND MOU'S**

**India and Austria inks MoU on Technology Cooperation**
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology of the Republic of Austria on Technology Cooperation in the Road Infrastructure Sector. The MoU will further strengthen ties, promote long-standing bilateral relations and enhance trade and regional integration between the two countries.
- The MoU aims to create an effective framework for bilateral cooperation in the field of road transportation, road/highways infrastructure development, management and administration, road safety and intelligent transport systems between both countries.
- The Indo-Austria bilateral cooperation in the road transport sector would be beneficial both from the perspective of enhanced road safety as well as attractive financing possibilities for the sector, thus fostering and intensifying the already good relations between the two countries, through this MoU in the transport sector.

**India and Uzbekistan inks 9 Agreements to strengthen strategic partnership**
- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev co-chaired the virtual Summit held between the two countries, to strengthen strategic partnership among
them. The Government of India also approved a US $448 million Line of Credit for four developmental projects in Uzbekistan in the fields of road construction, sewerage treatment and information technology.

- India and Uzbekistan signed nine Agreements and Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) in various areas including in the field of:
  1. Solar Energy
  2. Digital Technologies
  3. High Impact Community Development Projects
  4. Trade, Economic and Investment Cooperation
  5. Defence and Security
  6. Civil Nuclear Energy
  7. Connectivity
  8. Culture, Education and People-to-People Contacts
  9. Terrorism

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

**UNESCO launches Bangabandhu award on creative economy**

- UNESCO has launched an international award named after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman following Bangladesh’s proposal. The UN agency’s executive board unanimously adopted the proposal on UNESCO-Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman International Prize for the “Creative Economy” in its 210th session. This is the first time a UN agency launched an award named after Bangabandhu.
- The award will create the opportunity to spread Bangabandhu’s ideals across the world and inspire the global cultural activists to contribute to the field of the creative economy.
- It will also play a “special” role in branding and image-building of Bangladesh.
- The award will be given every two years with $50,000 prize money – three times in six years. The renewal of the award will be discussed later.
- The first UNESCO-Bangabandhu award is set to be given in the 41st session of the UNESCO’s general conference in November 2021. Bangladesh proposed the award in August 2019.
- The UNESCO launches awards in recognition of the contribution of leaders in several fields, such as education, culture, science and technology, with the financial help of the member states. It had launched 22 awards named after noted individuals or organisations.

**Ashraf Patel wins Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award – India 2020**

- Ashraf Patel, the founder member and Board member of Pravah and ComMutiny – The Youth Collective (CYC) has been declared as the winner of the Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) Award – India 2020. The award was presented by the Union Minister of Women & Child Development & Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani.
- The SEOY award “recognizes entrepreneurs who implement innovative, sustainable and scalable solutions to solve India’s social problems. It is the 11th edition of the annual award, instituted by the Schwab Foundation and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation in 2010.
BANKING AND ECONOMY

CRISIL slows contraction rate for India at -7.7% in FY21
- Rating agency CRISIL has lowered the contraction rate of India’s GDP and now expects the growth rate of the Indian economy to contract 7.7% in the ongoing fiscal 2020-21, compared to the 9% forecast in September 2020, due to “faster-than-expected” recovery in the second quarter. For the fiscal 2021-22 (FY22), CRISIL expects the growth to bounce back to 10%.

RBI to set up Automated Banknote Processing Centre in Jaipur
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to set up an Automated Banknote Processing Centre (ABPC) in Jaipur for the receipt, storage and dispatch of currency notes. The functions of the ABPC will also include processing of banknotes received from currency chests (CCs) and bank branches and destruction of soiled banknotes in an automated manner. The volume of banknotes in circulation has increased three-fold from March 2001 to March 2019 and is expected to rise further in the years to come.
- RBI is the sole issuer of banknotes of the country and responsible for the management of currency and all its aspects.
- RBI is supplied with banknotes from four printing presses and coins from four mints.
- The new banknotes and coins are received at 19 issue offices of the bank located across the country from where these are further distributed to about 3,300 CCs operated by scheduled banks under an agency agreement with the RBI.
- The CCs act as storehouses and the currency stored there is distributed to various bank branches/ATM network for distribution to the public.
- The unfit notes withdrawn from circulation are verified through a Currency Verification and Processing System (CVPS) and destroyed by shredding.

Current Affairs PDF - December 14, 2020

National

PM Narendra Modi addresses International Bharati Festival 2020 virtually
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has addressed the International Bharathi Festival 2020 through video conferencing. The festival was organised by Vanavil Cultural Centre in Chennai to celebrate the 138th birth anniversary of Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathi, an eminent writer, poet and journalist from Tamil Nadu.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi also conferred the 2020 Bharathi Award to the noted writer Seeni Viswanathan, who is credited with compiling the voluminous works of Bharathi in chronological order.
- The Bharathi Award is conferred every year since 1994, to eminent persons who have done laudable service in any field of social relevance.
International

India, Iran and Uzbekistan to hold talks today on joint use of Chabahar port
- India, Iran and Uzbekistan will hold the First Trilateral Working Group Meeting today on the joint use of the strategically located Chabahar port. The announcement regarding the meeting was made by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- The Meeting will be jointly chaired at Secretary Level by India and at Deputy Minister level by Iran and Uzbekistan.

Banking and Economy

RBL Bank, ICICI Prudential join hands for Bancassurance partnership
- RBL Bank and ICICI Prudential have joined hands under a bancassurance partnership. 398 RBL Bank branches across 28 states will distribute ICICI Prudential Life’s protection and savings products.
- The protection products of ICICI Prudential Life will help the bank’s customers to develop a strong financial plan and its long-term savings products will help the customers of the bank to achieve their financial goals.

Awards

UNESCO to launch international prize in the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh MujiburRahman
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation has decided to launch the 'UNESCO-Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh MujiburRahman International prize'. The prize will be launched in the field of 'creative economy' starting from November 2021.
- As per UNESCO, the prize will be creating a knowledge-sharing mechanism by celebrating, capturing, and communicating the best practice in the development of creative entrepreneurship. The international prize by the UN agency will be 50 thousand dollars and will be given once every two years for the global economic initiatives of the youth.
- UNESCO has also declared 2021 as an ‘International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development’. Presently, there is a total of 23 UNESCO international awards in the name of international organisations and celebrities.

Obituary

US Pilot Chuck Yeager, first man to fly faster than speed of sound, passes away
- US Air Force officer and test pilot Chuck Yeager, who in 1947 became the first pilot in history to have exceeded the speed of sound in level flight, has passed away. He was 97.(Level flight means flying at a constant altitude, not going up and down.)
- As a test pilot, on October 14, 1947, Yeager became the first human to officially break the sound barrier, when he flew the experimental Bell X-1 aircraft at Mach 1 (speed of sound) at an altitude of 45,000 ft (13,700 m).
- Yeager had been associated with World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War and his three-war active-duty flying career spanned more than 30 years.
Renowned Sanskrit Scholar Vidyavachaspati Govindacharya passes away
- Renowned Sanskrit scholar Vidyavachaspati Bannanje Govindacharya has passed away due to age-related illness. He was 85.
- Govindacharya was conferred the Padma Shri in 2009.
- He was well versed in Veda Bhashya, Upanishad Bhashya, Mahabharata, Ramayana and Puranas and had written commentaries on Veda Suktas, Upanishads, Shata Rudriya, Brahma Sutra Bhashya, and Gita Bhashya.
- He had authored around 150 books and translated several texts from Sanskrit to Kannada.

Sports
Max Verstappen wins 2020 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix
- Max Verstappen (Red Bull – Netherlands) won the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2020, held on 13 December 2020 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.
- This was his second victory of the season and 10th victory of his career.
- The race was the 17th and final round of the 2020 Formula One World Championship.
- Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes – Finland) stood second, followed by world champion Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes-Great Britain) at third place.

Days
National Energy Conservation Day
- The National Energy Conservation Day is celebrated every year on 14 December by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under Ministry of Power.
- The day is celebrated to raise awareness among the general public about the importance of energy conversation and energy efficiency, as well as holistic development for overall effort towards climate change mitigation.
- The Energy Conservation Act in India was executed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) in the year 2001.
- BEE is a constitutional body that comes under Government of India and helps in the development of policies and strategies in order to reduce the energy use.

Current Affairs PDF- December 13, 2020

National
PM Modi to address FICCI’s 93rd AGM, Annual Convention
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the inaugural address at FICCI’s 93rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Annual Convention on December 12, 2020 via video conferencing.
- Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has organised the convention from December 11 to 14, 2020.
- The theme for the FICCI 93rd AGM is ‘Inspired India’.
- FICCI AGM is the annual high-powered flagship event where Cabinet Ministers, Secretaries to
Govt of India, Global Industry Captains, Diplomats, Political party leaders, and other thought leaders participate.

- More than 10000 delegates are virtually participating in this mega event from across the globe.
- The Prime Minister also inaugurated the virtual FICCI Annual Expo 2020. It will start from 11 December 2020 and will continue for a period of a whole year.

2020 and will continue for a period of a whole year.

- Finance Ministry notifies updated viability gap funding scheme
- The Viability Gap Funding (VGF) scheme was notified by the Ministry of Finance under which various infrastructure projects will be selected for financial support to provide a boost to the sector. According to the VGF scheme, the Empowered Committee (EC) chaired by the economic affairs secretary will sanction a funding amount of up to Rs 200 crore, while projects requiring more than Rs 200 crore would be approved by the Empowered Committee, after the approval from the Minister of Finance.
- The VGF scheme will be known as the ‘Scheme for Financial Support to PPPs’ (Public-Private Partnerships) in the infrastructure sector. This will be a central sector scheme and administered by the Finance Ministry.

Banking and Economy

BSE launches e-agricultural spot market platform ‘BEAM’

- BSE Ltd. has launched an electronic spot platform, BSE E-Agricultural Markets Ltd (BEAM), for agricultural commodities through its subsidiary BSE Investments Ltd.
- BEAM will function as a national level, institutionalised, electronic, transparent commodity spot trading platform in line with the Prime Minister’s vision to create a single market.
- With the help of BEAM, farmers in one state will be able to reach out to markets in other states and auction their produce.
- The farmers will be able to discover best prices for their produce based on the quality, as well as build capacity to help intermediaries, processors and exporters procure from states.
- Equitas Small Finance Bank launches 3-in-1 account for saving, trading & demat
- Equitas Small Finance Bank Ltd, (SFB) has launched a 3-in-1 account, which allows its customers to invest in a wide variety of financial products using a single platform.
- A 3-in1 account (savings +trading+ demat) will help the customers to keep all their banking and financial investments under one umbrella entity. The bank will provide stock broking and demat services through referral arrangement with brokerage firms for trading and depository services.
- The financial products offered through the 3-in-1 account includes direct equity and F&O trading, MF investment across all AMCs, ETFs, corporate FDs, corporate bonds, government bonds, insurance products, National Pension Scheme (NPS) and initial public offerings.

Awards

Ashraf Patel Wins Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) Award – India 202

- Ashraf Patel, the founder member and Board member of Pravah and ComMutiny – The Youth Collective (CYC) has been declared as the winner of the Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY)
Award – India 2020.
- It is the 11th edition of the annual award, instituted by the Schwab Foundation and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation in 2010.
- The award was presented by the Union Minister of Women & Child Development & Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani.

Obituary

Italy’s 1982 Football World Cup Legend Paolo Rossi passes away
- Italy’s legendary footballer, Paolo Rossi, who led the country to victory in the 1982 World Cup, has passed away. He was 64.
- Rossi scored 6 goals to help Italy to win the 1982 FIFA World Cup title against Brazil. This was the third World Cup title for Italy and their first since 1938./
- He was awarded the Golden Boot as top goalscorer, and the Golden Ball for the player of the tournament, 1982 Ballon d’Or as the European Footballer of the Year and World Player of the Year in 1982, for his performances.

Appointments and Resignations

Sabrina Filzmoser and Flavio Canto appointed IJF Climate Ambassadors
- Austria’s Sabrina Filzmoser and Brazil’s Flavio Canto have been appointed as International Judo Federation (IJF) climate ambassadors by IJF President Marius Vizer, in a bid to spread the message of environmentalism.
- The pair are now expected to talk about global warming and use judo as a positive influence in delivering this message.

Ranking

Lakshadweep declared first UT to become 100% organic
- The Ministry of Agriculture has declared Lakshadweep as India’s first Union Territory to become 100 per cent organic.
- All farming activity in the UT is carried out without the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, which provides access to safer food choices and making agriculture a more environment-friendly activity.
- Lakshadweep is second only to Sikkim, which was India’s first state to be declared completely organic. This comes after the UT received proper certifications and declarations under the Centre’s ParamparagatKrishiVikasYojana.