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## An important message from Team Smartkeeda

Hi Folks! We hope you all are doing well. We would like to state here that this PDF is meant for preparing for the upcoming MockDrill Test of December 2020 Month at Testzone. In this Current Affairs PDF we have added all the important Current Affairs information in form of 'Key-points' which are crucial if you want to score a high rank in Current Affairs Mocks at Testzone. Therefore, we urge you to go through each piece of information carefully and try to remember the facts and figures because the questions to be asked in the Current Affairs MockDrill will be based on the information given in the PDF only.

We hope you will make the best of use of this PDF and perform well in MockDrill Tests at Testzone.

All the best!

Regards

Team Smartkeeda



### स्मार्टकीड़ा टीम की ओर से एक महत्वपूर्ण सन्देश!

मित्रों! हम आशा करते हैं की आप सभी स्वस्थ और कुशल होंगे। इस सन्देश के माध्यम से हम आपसे यह कहना चाहते हैं की ये PDF दिसम्बर माह में Testzone पर होने वाले MockDrill Test में आपकी तैयारी को बेहतर करने के लिए उपलब्ध करायी जा रही है। इस PDF में हमने कुछ अति आवश्यक 'Key-Points' के माध्यम से आपको सम-सामयिकी (Current Affairs) सूचनाओं से अवगत कराया है और अगर आप MockDrill में अपनी योग्यता सिद्ध करना चाहते हैं तो आपके लिए हर सूचना को पढना, समझना और उसे याद रखना भी अति आवश्यक है क्योंकि MockDrill में शामिल किए गए प्रश्न PDF में दी गयी सूचना या जानकारी पर ही आधारित होंगे।

हम आशा करते हैं की आप इस PDF का भरपूर लाभ उठाते हुए आने वाले MockDrill Test में बेहतर अंक प्राप्त करेंगे।

आभार,

टीम स्मार्टकीड़ा



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# National & States Affairs

**501.** With the recent inauguration of the “Haldibari-Chilahati” rail link, 5 out of 6 rail links are now operational. The Haldibari-Chilahati route is expected to enhance the connectivity to Assam and West Bengal from Bangladesh. [{Read more}](#)

## Key Points:

- “Haldibari-Chilahati Rail Link” is inaugurated – connecting Assam and West Bengal with Bangladesh (5<sup>th</sup> rail link)
- Assam: Capital – Dispur | CM – Sarbananda Sonowal | Governor – Jagdish Mukhi
- West Bengal: Capital – Kolkata | CM – Mamta Banerjee | Governor – Jagdeep Dhankar
- Bangladesh – Dhaka – Taka | PM – Sheikh Hasina | President – Abdul Hamid

**502.** Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar has launched a website of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Economic Diplomacy to provide a vast repository of resources on economic opportunities and news and facilitate two-way economic engagement. [{Read more}](#)

## Key Points:

- S. Jaishankar – launched a website on Economic Diplomacy
- Ministry of External Affairs – Subrahmanyam Jaishankar | Constituency – Gujarat

**503.** India is planning to establish a Regional Climate Centre for the Himalayan mountain region to provide weather-related services within the country as well as to its neighbours too. China is also building a similar regional climate centre in the same region. [{Read more}](#)

## Key Points:

- India – to establish a Regional Climate Centre for the Himalayan mountain region
- China: Capital – Beijing | Currency – Renminbi | President – Xi Jinping

**504.** Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath has approved the design, name and logo of the international airport to be constructed in Noida's Jewar. It will be named “Noida International Greenfield Airport” and a picture of ‘Stork’ - the state bird will be used in its logo. [{Read more}](#)

## Key Points:

- UP – approved the design, name & logo of the International Airport to be constructed in – Jewar, Noida
- Name – Noida International Greenfield Airport | Logo – ‘Stork’ - the state bird
- UP: Capital – Lucknow | CM – Yogi Adityanath | Governor – Anandiben Patel



**505.** As a part of the commemoration of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary in 2022, the Union Culture Ministry is planning to build a museum in Kolkata, an exhibition at the Victoria Memorial and cultural performances in West Bengal. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Culture Ministry – to build a Museum in Kolkata – for Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary in 2022
- Prahlad Singh Patel – Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture (Constituency – Damoh, Madhya Pradesh)
- West Bengal: Capital – Kolkata | CM – Mamta Banerjee | Governor – Jagdeep Dhankar

**506.** The world's tallest rail bridge on the Chenab in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory is expected to be completed by 2021. The 1,315-metre-long bridge between Bakkal and Kauri villages of Reasi is coming up at a height of 359 metres. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- The world's tallest rail bridge – on Chenab river – in Reasi, J&K – to be completed by 2022
- J & K: Capital – Srinagar | Lt. Governor – Manoj Sinha

**507.** On December 17, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has launched "PARESHRAM" portal along with 22 online services of Labour and Employees' State Insurance (ESI) department. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Odisha – launched "PARESHRAM" portal along with 22 online services of Labour & ESI department
- Odisha: Capital – Bhubaneswar | CM – Naveen Patnaik | Governor – Ganeshi Lal

**508.** 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. Farmers will be given benefit under the various schemes of agriculture department during these events. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Uttar Pradesh – to launch a special program named as "Kisan Kalyan Mission" to double the income of farmers
- UP: Capital – Lucknow | CM – Yogi Adityanath | Governor – Anandiben Patel

**509.** The first Glass Bridge of Bihar has been constructed in Rajgir Nature Safari. The 200-feet-high, 85-feet-long and 6-feet-wide glass bridge is set to open in 2021, welcoming 40 visitors at a time. The skywalk at Rajgir which



became operational in March 2020, is the nation's second such construction after Laxman Jhoola in Rishikesh. It is also the first sky-hanging rope walk in India. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- The first Glass Bridge of Bihar constructed in Rajgir district – set to open in 2021 (Height – 200 ft & length – 85 ft)
- Laxman Jhoola – located in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand
- Bihar: Capital – Patna | CM – Nitish Kumar | Governor – Phagu Chauhan

**510.** One of the world's largest furniture retailer Sweden-based Ikea opened its second store in Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra. The first store in India was opened in 2018 in Hyderabad. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- "Ikea" opened its 2<sup>nd</sup> store in Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra | 1<sup>st</sup> store – in Hyderabad (2018)
- HQs of IKEA – Delft, Netherlands | CEO – Jesper Brodin (Founded – in 1943, in Almhult, Sweden)

**511.** The first Centre of Excellence for skill development in the 'Power Sector' was inaugurated by the Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), R K Singh. The Centre of Excellence is located in Gurugram and it is an outcome of collaboration between the MSDE (India), France and Schneider Electric. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- R K Singh – inaugurated the 1<sup>st</sup> Centre of Excellence for skill development in the 'Power Sector' – in Gurugram, Haryana
- It is an outcome of collaboration between = MSDE (India) + France Government + Schneider Electric (France)
- MSDE Minister – Mahendra Nath Pandey (Constituency – Chandauli, UP)
- MoS for MSDE – R K Singh (Raj Kumar Singh)

**512.** The East Coast Railway (ECoR) has commissioned End of Train Telemetry (EOTT) system to run trains without guards. It is the first railway zone in the country to use the cutting edge technology for operation of trains without brake van and guards. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- East Coast Railway – commissioned End of Train Telemetry (EOTT) system (1<sup>st</sup> railway zone to do so)
- HQs of ECoR – Bhubaneswar, Odisha | Principal Chief Commercial Manager – Ajoy Kumar Behera



**513.** On December 19, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated and laid the foundation of total 33 National Highway (NH) projects in Karnataka via virtual mode. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Nitin Gadkari – inaugurated and laid the foundation of total 33 NH projects – in Karnataka
- Karnataka: Capital – Bangalore | CM – BS Yediyurappa | Governor – Vajubhai Vala

**514.** Uttar Pradesh is ready to set up India's first Leather Park as part of its mega leather cluster in Ramaipur village of Kanpur. Kanpur is popularly known as "Leather City of the World". [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Uttar Pradesh – to set up India's first Leather Park in Kanpur
- UP: Capital – Lucknow | CM – Yogi Adityanath | Governor – Anandiben Patel

**515.** The Telangana State government has declared Telangana Fiber Grid project (T-Fiber) as 'Vital Public Purpose Project' and accorded Right of Way (RoW) permission for laying the optical fibre network. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Telangana – declared "T-Fiber" as 'Vital Public Purpose Project'
- Telangana: Capital – Hyderabad | CM – K. Chandrashekar Rao | Governor – Tamilisai Soundararajan

**516.** Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami has launched a project to set up 2,000 mini-clinics across the state to provide essential healthcare services to the downtrodden/poor. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Tamil Nadu – launched a project to set up 2,000 mini-clinics across the state
- Tamil Nadu: Capital – Chennai | CM – Thiru Edappadi K. Palaniswami | Governor – Banwarilal Purohit

**517.** A Himalayan griffon vulture, a migratory bird species native to Himalayas, has been spotted in Point Calimere wildlife sanctuary in Tamil Nadu after a gap of 12 years. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Himalayan griffon vulture – spotted in Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu)
- Tamil Nadu: Capital – Chennai | CM – Thiru Edappadi K. Palaniswami | Governor – Banwarilal Purohit





**518.** The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) has launched a multilingual call centre for Aqua-farmers at Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh, which will address their technical issues and impart knowledge about efficient farming methods. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- MPEDA – launched a multilingual call centre for Aqua-farmers – at Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh
- HQs of MPEDA – Kochi, Kerala | Chairman – K S Srinivas
- Andhra Pradesh: Capital – Amravati (LC), Visakhapatnam (EC) & Kurnool (JC)
- CM – YS Jaganmohan Reddy | Governor – Biswabhusan Harichandan

**519.** On December 18, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has launched the “eVIN” - Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network in order to rationalize vaccine flow and distribution. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- J & K – launched “eVIN” - Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network
- J & K: Capital – Srinagar | Lt. Governor – Manoj Sinha



**520.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina has launched “Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Exhibition” during India-Bangladesh virtual summit, in New Delhi. The two prime ministers jointly unveiled a commemorative postal stamp issued by the government of India on the occasion of the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Narendra Modi + Sheikh Hasina = launched “Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Exhibition”
- A commemorative postal stamp issued by India – unveiled on birth centenary of ‘Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’
- Bangladesh – Dhaka – Taka | PM – Seikh Hasina | President – Abdul Hamid

**521.** The 20<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting was held virtually on December 17. France has finally obtained membership of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and became the association’s 23<sup>rd</sup> member. [{Read more}](#)



**Key Points:**

- France (23<sup>rd</sup> member) – obtained membership of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
- HQs of IORA – Ebene, Mauritius | Secretary Gen. – Dr Nomvuyo Nokwe | MC – 23 | Founded in – 1997

**522.** On December 16, India and the UK have launched a Virtual Vaccines Hub to facilitate the delivery of vaccines for Covid-19 and other viruses. It will foster cooperation between experts on clinical trials and regulatory approvals. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- India + UK = launched a Virtual Vaccines Hub to facilitate the delivery of Covid-19 vaccines
- UK – London – Pound Sterling | PM of UK – Boris Johnson

**523.** The Movimiento San Isidro or the San Isidro Movement (MSI), started two years ago in 2018 to protest state censorship of artistic works, and has now become a platform for Cuban dissidents both within and outside the Caribbean nation. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Movimiento San Isidro or San Isidro Movement (MSI) – related to Cuba
- Cuba – Havana – Peso | President – Miguel Díaz-Canel

**524.** One of Singapore's most popular attractions, its vibrant street "Hawker Culture" was designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Singapore's "Hawker Culture" – designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO
- Singapore – Singapore – Dollar | PM – Lee Hsien Loong | President – Halimah Yacob
- HQs of UNESCO – Paris, France | Director-General – Audrey Azoulay

**525.** France's President Emmanuel Macron announced a referendum to add the Climate Goals in constitution to fight against climate change. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- France – announced a referendum to add the Climate Goals in constitution
- France – Paris – Euro | President – Emmanuel Macron | New PM – Jean Castex



**526.** Two people died when category-five “Cyclone Yasa” passed through Fiji’s second-largest island “Vanua Levu” on December 17 night. The cyclone destroyed hundreds of buildings and caused hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of damage. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- “Cyclone Yasa” – passed through Fiji’s second-largest island “Vanua Levu”
- Fiji – Suva – Fijian Dollar

**527.** Google has a subsidiary called Project Loon, which comprises of helium-filled balloons that aim to deliver internet access to remote parts of the world. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Project Loon – a subsidiary of Google
- HQs of Google – California, United States | CEO – Sundar Pichai

**528.** “International Human Solidarity Day” is celebrated every year on December 20. The day has been observed since December 2002, when the United Nations General assembly established the World Solidarity Fund. On December 22, 2005, the UN General Assembly identified solidarity as a universal value. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- December 20 – “International Human Solidarity Day” – since 2002

## **Banking & Economic Affairs**

**529.** ICRA has forecast India’s GDP would contract 7.8% in FY21. The recovery under way in the Indian economy in Q3 FY2021 is fragile, according to ICRA rating agency. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- ICRA projected India’s GDP = (-7.8%) for FY21 [{Flexible News}](#)
- HQs of ICRA – Gurgaon, Haryana | President – Ramnath Krishnan | CEO – N. Sivaraman

**530.** IndusInd Bank in partnership with Mastercard announced the launch of its first metal credit card - “PIONEER Heritage” for the Bank’s ultra-high net worth segment of customers. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**



- IndusInd Bank + Mastercard = partnership to launch first metal credit card - "PIONEER Heritage"
- HQs of IndusInd Bank – Pune, MH | MD & CEO – Sumant Kathpalia | Tagline – "We Make You Feel Richer"
- HQs of Mastercard – New York, USA | CEO – Ajay Banga (From Jan 2021 - Michael Miebach)

**531.** The RBI has announced the 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort of Regulatory Sandbox initiative under the theme of "Cross-Border Payments". The first cohort was based on "Retail Payments" theme and two offline payments ideas 'eRupaya' and 'Payse' were selected by the RBI to push digital payments in the rural areas. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- RBI announced the 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort of Regulatory Sandbox initiative | Theme – "Cross-Border Payments"
- Theme of the 1<sup>st</sup> cohort – "Retail Payments"
- Two offline payments ideas namely 'eRupaya' & 'Payse' were selected by the RBI
- RBI: HQs – Mumbai | Governor – Shaktikanta Das (25<sup>th</sup>)

**532.** India's retail inflation based on the consumer price index (CPI) has declined marginally in November to 6.93%, from 7.61% recorded in October. The inflation rate for rural area was 7.20% and urban area 6.73% in November 2020. The food price inflation has also declined to 9.43% from 11% in the previous month. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- India's retail inflation based on CPI declined to – 6.93% in November (Rural – 7.20% | Urban – 6.72%)
- The Food Price Inflation declined to – 9.43% in November

**533.** The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has introduced "RuPay Contactless (Offline) feature", which also provides reloadable wallets within RuPay Card, for day to day transit payments. It has also introduced RuPay Contactless (Offline) feature for retail payments on pilot basis. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- NPCI introduced "RuPay Contactless (Offline) feature" for retail payments on pilot basis
- HQs of NPCI – Mumbai | Chairman – Biswamohan Mahapatra | MD&CEO – Dilip Asbe

**534.** On December, PayU - an online payments solutions provider, has collaborated with Google Pay to introduce tokenised payments flow for merchants. With this collaboration, PayU's merchants can offer Google Pay users the option to use their debit cards, credit cards, or Google Pay UPI to make repeated payments without having to physically share their card details. [{Read more}](#)



### Key Points:

- PayU + Google Pay = collaboration to introduce tokenised payments flow for merchants
- HQs of PayU – Netherlands | CEO – Laurent le Moal
- HQs of Google – California, United States | CEO – Sundar Pichai

**535.** The RBI has asked all regulated entities to upload 'Know Your Customer' (KYC) data pertaining to accounts of legal entities opened on or after April 1, 2021, onto the Central KYC Registry (CKYCR). The MD on KYC, dated February 25, 2016, has come into force with an immediate effect. [{Read more}](#)

### Key Points:

- The RBI has asked all entities to upload KYC data pertaining to accounts opened – on or after April 1, 2021
- RBI: HQs – Mumbai | Governor – Shaktikanta Das (25<sup>th</sup>)

**536.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the validity period of its Directions for the scam-hit Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank for a further period from December 23, 2020 to March 31, 2021, subject to review. [{Read more}](#)

### Key Points:

- RBI extended the validity period of its Directions for Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank – to March 31, 2021
- HQs of PMC Bank – Mumbai, Maharashtra | New Administrator – A K Dixit

**537.** ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund has launched the "ICICI Prudential Business Cycle Fund", an open-ended equity scheme. The New Fund Offer (NFO) opens on December 29 and closes on January 12. [{Read more}](#)

### Key Points:

- ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund – launched the "ICICI Prudential Business Cycle Fund"
- HQs of ICICI Prudential MF – Mumbai, Maharashtra | CEO – Nimesh Shah

## Defence Affairs

**538.** The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has approved 7 capital acquisition proposals for various weapons, platforms, equipment and systems required by the army, navy and air force at an approximate overall cost of Rs 28,000 Cr. Six of these acquisitions, worth Rs 27,000 Cr, will be made from Indian industry. [{Read more}](#)



**Key Points:**

- DAC – approved total 7 capital acquisition proposals for various military equipment worth Rs 28,000 Cr
- DAC – Chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh (Constituency – Lucknow, UP)

**539.** The 35<sup>th</sup> edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (Ind-Indo CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Indonesian Navy was conducted from 17 to 18 December 2020. Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kulish along with P8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) had participated in it. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- The 35<sup>th</sup> edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (Ind-Indo CORPAT) conducted from 17 to 18 December
- INS Kulish – participated
- Indonesia – Jakarta – Rupiah | President – Joko Widodo

**540.** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has handed over 3 indigenously developed systems to Army, Navy and Air Force at a function held in DRDO Bhawan. Rajnath Singh handed over the Indian Maritime Situational Awareness System (IMSAS) to the Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh, ASTRA Mk-I Missile to Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria and Border Surveillance System (BOSS) to the Chief of Army Staff General M M Naravane. Rajnath Singh has also presented Lifetime Achievement Award 2018 to NV Kadam for his contributions for developing control and guidance schemes for missiles. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Rajnath Singh – handed over 3 indigenously developed systems to Army, Navy and Air Force
- IMSAS – to the Indian Navy | ASTRA Mk-I Missile – to the IAF | BOSS – to the Indian Army
- NV Kadam – received “Lifetime Achievement Award 2018”
- Ministry of Defence – Rajnath Singh (Constituency – Lucknow, UP)

**541.** A Defence Cooperation Webinar and Expo between India and Maldives were held on December 17. The theme of the webinar was “Joint Indo Maldives High-Level Defence Engagement”. This webinar is a part of Aero India 21 series of webinars which is organised by Defence Ministry. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- A “Defence Cooperation Webinar and Expo” – held between India & Maldives
- Theme of the webinar – “Joint Indo Maldives High-Level Defence Engagement”
- Maldives – Male – Maldivian rufiyaa | President – Ibrahim Mohamed Solih



# Sports & Games

**542.** All India Football Federation (AIFF) has formally announced its candidature to host the “AFC Asian Cup-2027”. AIFF president Praful Patel and sports minister Kiren Rijiju formally launched the bid for the 2027 AFC Asian Cup in New Delhi. [{Read more}](#)

## **Key Points:**

- AIFF – announced its candidature to host the “AFC Asian Cup-2027”
- HQs of AIFF – Dwarka, Delhi | President – Praful Patel

**543.** Ministry of AYUSH & Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports have recently announced in a joint press conference to work at establishing ‘Yogasana’ as a competitive sports globally. Now, Yogasana will be a competitive sport in the country. [{Read more}](#)

## **Key Points:**

- Sports Ministry + AYUSH ministry formally recognised “Yogasana” as a Competitive sport in India
- Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports – Kiren Rijiju (Constituency – Arunachal West)
- MoS of AYUSH – Shripad Yesso Naik | Constituency – North Goa

**544.** Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Amir has decided to quit international cricket alleging 'mental torture' from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). Amir had announced retirement from Test cricket last year. [{Read more}](#)

## **Key Points:**

- Mohammad Amir (Pakistan) – announced retirement – from International Cricket
- Pakistan – Islamabad – Pakistani Rupee | PM – Imran Khan | President – Arif Alvi

**545.** Russia has been banned from using its name, flag and anthem at the next 2 Olympics or at any world championships for the next 2 years. The Court of Arbitration for Sport has also blocked Russia from bidding to host major sporting events for 2 years. [{Read more}](#)

## **Key Points:**

- Russia – banned from using its name, flag & anthem at the Olympics or at any world championships – for next 2 years
- Russia – Moscow – Russian Ruble | PM – Mikhail Mishustin | President – Vladimir Putin



**546.** Young Indian woman wrestler Anshu Malik has won a silver medal at the “Wrestling Individual World Cup” at Belgrade, Serbia in the 57kg category. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Anshu Malik – won a silver medal at the “Wrestling Individual World Cup” at Belgrade, Serbia
- [Serbia – Belgrade – Serbian Dinar](#)

**547.** The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has banned Mauritian badminton player ‘Kate Jessica Foo Kune’ for 2 years for an anti-doping violation. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Kate Jessica Foo Kune (Mauritius-Badminton) – banned for 2 years by the CAS
- [HQs of CAS – Lausanne, Switzerland](#)

**548.** On December 20, former Tamil Nadu and Chennai Super Kings pacer Vijaykumar Yo Mahesh, popularly known as Yomi, has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Vijaykumar Yo Mahesh (Yomi) – announced his retirement from Cricket (former Tamil Nadu & CSK pacer)
- [Tamil Nadu: Capital – Chennai | CM – Thiru Edappadi K. Palaniswami | Governor – Banwarilal Purohit](#)

**549.** Indian boxers have bagged total 9 medals including 3 Gold, 2 Silver and 4 Bronze at the Cologne Boxing World Cup held in Koln, Germany from December 16-20. The 3 gold medals were bagged by Amit Panghal, Manisha Moun and Simranjit Kaur. India has ended up at 2nd position in the total medal tally. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Indian boxers – bagged 9 medals (3 Gold + 2 Silver + 4 Bronze) – at the “Cologne Boxing World Cup” in Koln, Germany
- [3 Gold = Amit Panghal, Manisha Moun & Simranjit Kaur \(Boxers\) | India – stood at 2<sup>nd</sup> position in medal tally](#)

**550.** The Sports Ministry has approved the inclusion of 4 indigenous sports, including Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-Ta and Mallakhamba in the Khelo India Youth Games 2021, scheduled to take place in Haryana. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- The Sports Ministry – approved the inclusion of 4 indigenous sports in “Khelo India Youth Games 2021” in Haryana
- [4 indigenous sports: Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-Ta & Mallakhamba](#)
- [Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports – Kiren Rijju \(Constituency – Arunachal West\)](#)





# Important Days & Dates

**551.** The Minorities Rights Day is observed in India every year on December 18 by the National Commission for Minorities (NCM). The NCM was established under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992. And Ministry of Minority Affairs was set up in India in 2006. [{Read more}](#)

## **Key Points:**

- December 18 – “Minorities Rights Day” – by the National Commission for Minorities (NCM)
- Ministry of Minority Affairs – Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi (Constituency – Jharkhand) | Set up in – 2006

**552.** Every year, December 18 is celebrated as “International Migrants Day” by the United Nations. The day was appointed by the General Assembly of United Nations on December 4, 2000. This year, the theme is “Reimagining Human Mobility”. [{Read more}](#)

## **Key Points:**

- December 18 – “International Migrants Day” – by UNGA since 2000
- Theme – “Reimagining Human Mobility”

**553.** The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) observes December 18 as the “World Arabic Language Day” every year, honouring a language that is spoken by more than 290 million people around the world. This year, the theme is “Arabic Language Academies: Necessity of Luxury?” [{Read more}](#)

## **Key Points:**

- December 18 – “World Arabic Language Day” – by UNESCO
- Theme – “Arabic Language Academies: Necessity of Luxury?”
- HQs of UNESCO – Paris, France | Director-General – Audrey Azoulay

**554.** Bangladesh has observed the “Martyred Intellectuals Day” on 14 December to mark the day of brutality when Pakistani forces killed hundreds of intellectuals including teachers, doctors, journalists and others in Dhaka and other parts of Bangladesh in 1971. [{Read more}](#)

## **Key Points:**

- December 14 – “Martyred Intellectuals Day” – observed by Bangladesh
- Bangladesh – Dhaka – Taka | PM – Sheikh Hasina | President – Abdul Hamid



**555.** “Goa Liberation Day” is observed on December 19 every year in India and it marks the day Indian armed forces freed Goa in 1961 following 450 years of Portuguese rule. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- December 19 – “Goa Liberation Day”
- Goa: Capital – Panaji | CM – Pramod Sawant | Governor – Bhagat Singh Koshyari

## **Meetings, Conferences and Summits**

**556.** M. Venkaiah Naidu has inaugurated the 12<sup>th</sup> GRIHA (Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment) Virtual Summit 2020. He has also launched the ‘SHASHWAT’ magazine and the book ‘30 Stories Beyond Buildings’ during the event. The theme of Summit is “Rejuvenating Resilient Habitats”. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- M. Venkaiah Naidu – inaugurated the 12<sup>th</sup> “GRIHA Virtual Summit 2020”
- Theme of the Summit – “Rejuvenating Resilient Habitats”
- M. Venkaiah Naidu – launched the book ‘30 Stories Beyond Buildings’ during the event

**557.** The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the “India-Australia Joint Working Group” on Counter-Terrorism was held virtually on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 to discuss the ongoing counter-terrorism cooperation between the two countries. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the “India-Australia Joint Working Group” on Counter-Terrorism held virtually on 17<sup>th</sup> December
- Australia – Canberra – Australian Dollar | PM – Scott Morrison

**558.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of Joint Working Group (JWG) on shipping between India and Denmark was held on December 16, 2020 virtually. The delegation from Indian side was led by the Secretary of Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways - Dr. Sanjeev Ranjan. Both countries concluded the agreement for mutual cooperation between Gujarat Maritime University and Copenhagen Business School. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of Joint Working Group (JWG) on shipping held between – India and Denmark
- Indian delegation led by – Dr. Sanjeev Ranjan
- Gujarat Maritime University + Copenhagen Business School = agreement for mutual cooperation
- Denmark – Copenhagen – Danish krone



**559.** The 4<sup>th</sup> Bilateral Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting between the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) India and the National Narcotics Board BNN, Indonesia was held on December 17. The Indian delegation was led by Director General, Narcotics Control Bureau, Rakesh Asthana. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- The 4<sup>th</sup> Bilateral Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting held between – India and Indonesia
- The Indian delegation was led by – Rakesh Asthana
- HQs of NCB – New Delhi | Director General – Rakesh Asthana
- Indonesia – Jakarta – Rupiah | President – Joko Widodo

**560.** PM Narendra Modi has accepted the invitation of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to be part of the G7 meeting chaired by the UK in 2021, seeking to build a wider alliance against China's growing power. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- PM Narendra Modi accepted the invitation to be part of “G7 meeting – 2021” – to be chaired by the UK
- UK – London – Pound Sterling | PM of UK – Boris Johnson
- G7 member countries – US, UK, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, Canada | Founded in – 1975

**561.** External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has addressed the “Global Technology Summit-2020” organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and Carnegie India. The Theme of 2020 this summit is “Geopolitics of Technology”. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- S. Jaishankar – addressed the “Global Technology Summit-2020” | Theme – “Geopolitics of Technology”
- The summit is organised by = Ministry of External Affairs + Carnegie India

**562.** The Union Information and Broadcasting Minister, Prakash Javadekar has announced that India will hold a Global Media and Film Summit in 2021. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- India – will hold a “Global Media and Film Summit in 2021”
- Prakash Javadekar – Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Constituency – Maharashtra)



**563.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has delivered the inaugural address at 6th edition of India International Science Festival (IISF) 2020 on 22 December. The IISF was launched in the year 2015 as a celebration to promote science and technology. 'Vigyan Yatra' is a promotional activity of the IISF. This year the theme was "Science for Self-Reliant India and the Global Welfare". [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Narendra Modi – addressed the "India International Science Festival (IISF) 2020" | launched in – 2015
- 'Vigyan Yatra' – a promotional activity of the IISF
- Theme – "Science for Self-Reliant India and the Global Welfare"

## **Awards, Rewards, Recognition & Prizes**

**564.** Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has been awarded with the prestigious "Golden Peacock Environment Management Award" for the year 2020 by the Institute of Directors. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- SAIL – awarded with the "Golden Peacock Environment Management Award-2020"
- HQs of SAIL – New Delhi | CEO – Anil Kumar Chaudhary (till the end of 2020)

**565.** Robert Lewandowski is named the FIFA Best Men's Player for 2020 in its annual award ceremony. Lucy Bronze was voted the best women's player. While, Jurgen Klopp & Sarina Wiegman have been named Best FIFA Coach in men & women category respectively. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Robert Lewandowski – "FIFA Best Men's Player for 2020"
- Lucy Bronze – "FIFA Best Women's Player for 2020"
- Jurgen Klopp – "Best FIFA Men's Coach for 2020"
- Sarina Wiegman – "Best FIFA Women's Coach for 2020"
- HQs of FIFA – Zurich, Switzerland | President – Gianni Infantino

**566.** The Srinagar-based Amar Singh College is recognised with the 'Award of Merit' in the 2020 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. It is built nearly 80 years ago. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Amar Singh College (J&K) – 'Award of Merit' in 2020 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation
- J & K: Capital – Srinagar | Lt. Governor – Manoj Sinha



**567.** PM Narendra Modi has addressed the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India's (Assocham) foundation week via video conferencing. He has presented "ASSOCHAM Enterprise of the Century Award" to Ratan Tata. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- PM Narendra Modi – presented "ASSOCHAM Enterprise of the Century Award" to Ratan Tata
- HQ of Tata Group – Mumbai, Maharashtra | Chairman – N. Chandrasekaran

**568.** Musician Shankar Mahadevan and fashion designer Raghavendra Rathore have been named among 15 winners of the annual 21<sup>st</sup> Century Icon Awards, unveiled virtually from London, UK. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Shankar Mahadevan + Raghavendra Rathore = received the annual 21<sup>st</sup> Century "Icon Awards" – in London, UK
- UK – London – Pound Sterling | PM of UK – Boris Johnson

**569.** Veteran industrialist Ratan Tata was honoured with "Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace" award during the launch of the Federation of Indo-Israel Chamber of Commerce's international chapter in Dubai on December 21. The virtual ceremony was attended by senior officials from Israel, India and UAE. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Ratan Tata – honoured with "Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace" award
- The virtual ceremony was attended by senior officials from = Israel, India & UAE

**570.** Shri. Ravi Shankar Prasad has presented the "Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Telecom Skill Excellence Awards" for year 2018 including cash award of Rs 50,000 and Rs 30,000 respectively to both awardees. Sreenivas Karanam, Bangalore was selected for the 1<sup>st</sup> prize and Prof. Subrat Kar, New Delhi was selected for the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Ravi Shankar Prasad – presented the "Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Telecom Skill Excellence Awards-2018"
- 1<sup>st</sup> prize (Rs 50,000) – Sreenivas Karanam (Bangalore) | 2<sup>nd</sup> prize (Rs 30,000) – Subrat Kar



# Appointments & Resignations

**571.** The Appointments Committee of Cabinet has approved the appointment of Manoj Singh Rawat as the Additional Director General (ADG) of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). [{Read more}](#)

## Key Points:

- Manoj Singh Rawat – appointed as the Additional Director General (ADG) of the ITBP
- HQs of ITBP – New Delhi | DG – Surjeet Singh Deswal | ADG – Manoj Singh Rawat

**572.** Sukhbir Singh Sandhu has been given 6 months extension (i.e. up to July 21, 2021) as the chairman of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). Sandhu is a 1988-batch IAS officer of Uttarakhand cadre. [{Read more}](#)

## Key Points:

- Sukhbir Singh Sandhu – given 6 months extension as the Chairman of NHAI (up to July 21, 2021)
- HQs of NHAI – New Delhi | Chairman – Sukhbir Singh Sandhu

**573.** Annika Sorenstam was elected as President of the International Golf Federation on December 17, replacing the outgoing Peter Dawson. Sorenstam, a 72-time winner on the LPGA Tour and former No. 1 from Sweden, will take up the position on Jan. 1. [{Read more}](#)

## Key Points:

- Annika Sorenstam – elected as President of the International Golf Federation (by replacing - Peter Dawson)
- HQs of – Lausanne, Switzerland | President – Annika Sorenstam

**574.** Andhra Pradesh has recommended the transfer of the state's Chief Justice J. K. Maheshwari to the Sikkim High Court. The apex court collegium, which is headed by CJI Bobde, has also recommended elevation of Punjab and Haryana High Court's Justice S. Muralidhar as the Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court, and of Delhi High Court's Justice Hima Kohli as the Chief Justice of Telangana High Court. Similarly, other transfers are as mentioned below. [{Read more}](#)

## Key Points:

- Transfer of High Court Chief Justice of different States:

Chief Justice	Previous High Court	Present High Court
J. K. Maheshwari	Andhra Pradesh HC	Sikkim HC
S. Muralidhar	Punjab and Haryana HC	Orissa HC
Hima Kohli	Delhi HC	Telangana HC
Raghvendra Singh Chauhan	Telangana HC	Uttarakhand HC
Sanjib Banerjee	Calcutta HC	Madras HC
Pankaj Mithal	Allahabad HC	J & K HC
Sudhanshu Dhulia	Uttarakhand HC	Gauhati HC
Mohammad Rafiq	Orissa HC	Madhya Pradesh HC
Arup Kumar Goswami	Sikkim HC	Andhra Pradesh HC

**575.** Chief Executive Officer Arvind Krishna would take over as the Chairman of International Business Machines (IBM) from January 1, replacing Ginni Rometty, who stepped down as its long-time CEO earlier this year. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Arvind Krishna – would take over as the Chairman of IBM – from January 1, 2021
- HQs of IBM – Armonk, New York, USA | CEO – Arvind Krishna
- HQs of IBM India – Bengaluru, Karnataka | MD – Sandip Patel

## **Amount & Agreements**

**576.** India has signed a pact worth \$400 million with the World Bank in a bid to aid the poor and vulnerable reeling under the coronavirus crisis. The Dollar 400 million credit has been extended by World Bank's concessionary lending arm International Development Association (IDA). The first operation of Dollar 750 million was approved in May 2020. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- India + World Bank = signed a pact worth \$400 million to protect poor from Covid19 impact
- HQs of World Bank – Washington D.C., USA | Member Countries – 190
- President – David Malpass | MD & CFO – Anshula Kant

**577.** India has pledged \$1 million to the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) scientific research budget. It is the highest among contributions made by other world governments. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- India – pledged \$1 million to the WADA's scientific research budget
- HQs of WADA – Montreal, Canada | President – Sir Craig Reddie

**578.** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and India have signed a \$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. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- India + ADB = signed a \$4.21-million PRF facility for the infrastructure development projects in Tripura
- ADB: HQs – Mandaluyong, Philippines | President – Masatsugu Asakawa | Member countries – 68
- Tripura: Capital – Agartala | CM – Biplab Kumar Deb | Governor – Ramesh Bais



**579.** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India have signed a \$300 million loan agreement to upgrade rural power distribution networks to provide reliable electricity supply to consumers in the state of Uttar Pradesh. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- ADB + India = signed \$300 million loan agreement to upgrade power distribution network in Uttar Pradesh
- ADB: HQs – Mandaluyong, Philippines | President – Masatsugu Asakawa | Member countries – 68
- UP: Capital – Lucknow | CM – Yogi Adityanath | Governor – Anandiben Patel

## **Ranks, Reports & Surveys**

**580.** India is ranked 111<sup>th</sup> out of 162 countries in the “Human Freedom Index 2020” report released by the Cato Institute, plummeting 17 spots from its position in the last index. India registered a score of 6.43, which is lower than the average human freedom rating of 6.93 for the 162 countries. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- India – ranked 111<sup>th</sup> out of 162 countries in the “Human Freedom Index 2020” report – released by Cato Institute
- HQs of Cato Institute – Washington, D.C., USA | President & CEO – Peter N. Goettler

**581.** On December 18, Shri Piyush Goyal has launched “India-Australia Economic Strategy Report-2020” which is prepared by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). It aims at enhancing India Australia Bilateral Economic and Trade Relationship. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Piyush Goyal – launched “India-Australia Economic Strategy Report-2020” (prepared by - CII)
- HQs of CII – New Delhi | President – Uday Kotak | Director General – Chandrajit Banerjee

**582.** As per the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of “Ease of Doing Business - 2020” report released by the World Bank, India had jumped 14 places to the 63<sup>rd</sup> position on the ease of doing business ranking. India has improved its rank by 79 positions in five years (2014-19). [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**





- The 17<sup>th</sup> edition of “Ease of Doing Business - 2020” report – released by the World Bank
- India – 63<sup>rd</sup> position on the ease of doing business ranking | Topped by – New Zealand
- HQs of World Bank – Washington D.C., USA | Member Countries – 190
- President – David Malpass | MD & CFO – Anshula Kant

## **MoUs, Collaborations & Partnerships**

**583.** E-commerce major Snapdeal has partnered with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to allow shoppers to make QR-based digital payments at the time of accepting delivery of their orders. [{Read more}](#)

### **Key Points:**

- Snapdeal + NPCI = to allow shoppers to make QR-based digital payments during products delivery
- HQs of Snapdeal – New Delhi | CEO – Kunal Bahl
- HQs of NPCI – Mumbai | Chairman – Biswamohan Mahapatra | MD&CEO – Dilip Asbe

**584.** On December 17, Infrastructure Investment trust IndiGrid has announced a multi-year collaboration agreement with IBM to build an artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled asset management platform. The IBM Maximo Application Suite will allow IndiGrid to become future-ready by improving the overall health of its assets. [{Read more}](#)

### **Key Points:**

- IndiGrid + IBM = a multi-year collaboration agreement to build an AI-enabled Asset Management Platform
- HQs of IndiGrid – New Delhi | CEO – Harsh Shah
- HQs of IBM India – Bengaluru, Karnataka | MD – Sandip Patel

**585.** On December 17, Government of Karnataka and the British Council have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further increase bilateral cooperation in higher education. [{Read more}](#)

### **Key Points:**

- Karnataka + British Council = an MoU to increase bilateral cooperation in higher education
- Karnataka: Capital – Bangalore | CM – BS Yediyurappa | Governor – Vajubhai Vala
- HQs of British Council – London, UK | Director – Barbara Wickham OBE



**586.** On December 18, a “Joint Communique” was signed between Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI). The MoFPI has also signed 5 MoUs with TRIFED, NCDC, ICAR, NAFED & NSFDC for the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PM-FME) Scheme. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- MoFPI + MoTA = “Joint Communique” for the implementation of PM-FME Scheme
- Ministry of Tribal Affairs – Arjun Munda (Constituency – Khunti, Jharkhand)
- Narendra Singh Tomar – Ministry of Food Processing Industries (Morena, MP)

**587.** Assam’s Industries and Commerce Department has signed an MoU with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) under which a Project Management Unit (PMU) will be deployed by SIDBI with Government of Assam to develop MSME ecosystem in the State. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- SIDBI + Assam = an MoU to set-up a PMU to develop MSME ecosystem in the State
- HQs of SIDBI – Lucknow, UP | Chairman – Mohammad Mustafa
- Assam: Capital – Dispur | CM – Sarbananda Sonowal | Governor – Jagdish Mukhi

**588.** Indian Navy has signed an MoU with Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) for sharing ocean services data, expertise in operational oceanography. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Indian Navy + INCOIS (Hyderabad) = an MoU to share Ocean Services Data
- Chief of Indian Navy – Admiral Karambir Singh | Vice Chief – G. Ashok Kumar

## **Books & Authors**

**589.** Former Union minister Jairam Ramesh’s new book will uncover and narrate the story of phenomenal poem The Light of Asia that has shaped people’s thinking of the Buddha and his teachings. The book, titled “The Light of Asia: The Poem that Defined the Buddha”, will be published under Penguin’s ‘Viking’ imprint in May, 2021. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- “The Light of Asia: The Poem that Defined the Buddha” book – authored by Jairam Ramesh



**590.** Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu has released a book of English poems by Mizoram Governor P. S. Sreedharan Pillai, titled “Oh Mizoram”. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- “Oh Mizoram” book – written by P. S. Sreedharan Pillai | released by – M. Venkaiah Naidu
- Mizoram: Capital – Aizawl | CM – Zoramthanga | Governor – P. S. Sreedharan Pillai

**591.** Subrahmanyam Jaishankar has launched veteran journalist and media entrepreneur Prem Prakash’s book “Reporting India: My Seventy-Year Journey as a Journalist” at Kitaab online book launch event organized by Prabha Khaitan Foundation of Kolkata in association with Penguin India. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- “Reporting India: My Seventy-Year Journey as a Journalist” book – written by Prem Prakash
- The book is released by – S. Jaishankar (Ministry of External Affairs | Constituency – Gujarat)

## Obituaries

**592.** Italian cyclist Riccardo Ricco has been banned for life time by the National Anti-Doping Agency. He had already been handed a 12-year ban that was due to expire in 2024. He was also thrown off the Tour de France in 2008 for taking a blood-boosting drug. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Riccardo Ricco (Cyclist - Italy) – banned for life time by the National Anti-Doping Agency
- Italy – Rome – Euro | PM – Giuseppe Conte

**593.** Former Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier (Gerard Paul Francis Houllier) has passed away recently in December at the age of 73. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Gerard Houllier (France) – former Football Manager of Liverpool FC – passed away
- France – Paris – Euro | President – Emmanuel Macron | New PM – Jean Castex



# Science & Technology

**594.** The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) PSLV-C50 has successfully launched India's 42<sup>nd</sup> communication satellite "CMS-01" from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. This satellite will provide Telecom services in the Extended-C band of the Frequency spectrum. [{Read more}](#)

## Key Points:

- ISRO's PSLV-C50 – launched India's 42<sup>nd</sup> communication satellite "CMS-01" from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh
- HQs of ISRO – Bengaluru, Karnataka | Director – Kailasavadivoo Sivan | Formed in – 1969
- Andhra Pradesh: Capital – Amravati (LC), Visakhapatnam (EC) & Kurnool (JC)
- CM – YS Jaganmohan Reddy | Governor – Biswabhusan Harichandan

**595.** India will be producing about 300 million doses of "Sputnik V" COVID-19 vaccine in 2021. The developers of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine have stated that it had shown the efficacy of 91.4 per cent based on the final analysis. Russia has kept a price of \$10 per dose of Sputnik V vaccine for international markets. [{Read more}](#)

## Key Points:

- India – to produce about 300 million doses of "Sputnik V" COVID-19 vaccine in 2021
- Russia – Moscow – Russian Ruble | PM – Mikhail Mishustin | President – Vladimir Putin

**596.** The Geminids meteor shower, believed to be the strongest of the year, was active from December 4-20. The Geminids meteor showers are unique because their origin does not lie in a comet, but what is believed to be an asteroid or an extinct comet. The Geminids emerge from 3200 Phaethon. [{Read more}](#)

## Key Points:

- Geminids meteor shower – was active from December 4-20
- The Geminids emerge from 3200 Phaethon

**597.** The Roscosmos space agency of Russia has launched 36 UK telecommunications and internet satellites into space. A Soyuz rocket blasted off from the Vostochny cosmodrome in Russia's Far East. [{Read more}](#)

## Key Points:

- Russia – launched 36 UK telecommunications and internet satellites into space | Launched through – Soyuz rocket
- Russia – Moscow – Russian Ruble | PM – Mikhail Mishustin | President – Vladimir Putin



**598.** On December 17, Google has launched a machine learning tool namely “Multilingual Representations for Indian Languages” (MuRIL) for Indian languages to help researchers, students, and startups. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Google – launched a machine learning tool “Multilingual Representations for Indian Languages” (MuRIL)
- HQs of Google – California, United States | CEO – Sundar Pichai

**599.** Facebook has publicly launched its music-making app “Collab”, to take on short-video sharing apps like TikTok. Collab is a video editor app that enables people to record video in parallel, or simultaneously. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- Facebook – launched “Collab” a music-making app
- HQs of Facebook – California, United States | CEO – Mark Zuckerberg

**600.** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated India’s first advanced Hypersonic Wind Tunnel (HWT) test facility at the DRDO’s Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Missile Complex in Hyderabad. India is the 3<sup>rd</sup> country after the United States and Russia to have such a large facility. [{Read more}](#)

**Key Points:**

- India’s 1<sup>st</sup> advanced Hypersonic Wind Tunnel test facility inaugurated – at the Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Missile Complex
- DRDO’s Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Missile Complex – located in Hyderabad, Telangana
- Telangana: Capital – Hyderabad | CM – K. Chandrashekar Rao | Governor – Tamilisai Soundararajan





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