

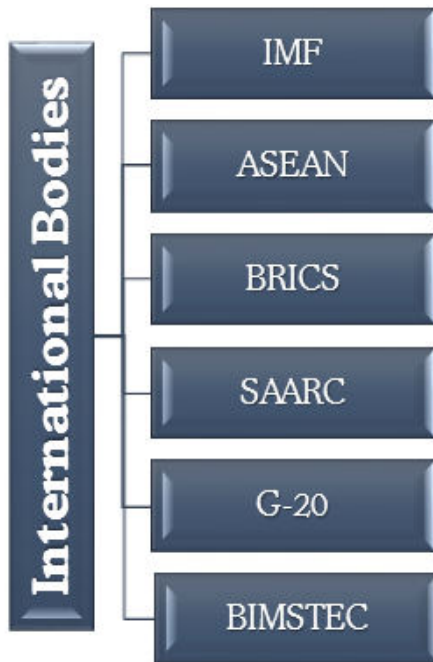
# **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

## *Chapter*

<b>1 International and National Affairs</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Financial Affairs</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>3 Political Affairs</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>4 Legal and Other Affairs</b>	<b>75</b>

***Lesson 1***

**INTERNATIONAL AND  
NATIONAL AFFAIRS**



### INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 189 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world.

Created in 1945, the IMF is governed by and accountable to the 189 countries that make up its near-global membership.

The IMF's primary purpose is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system—the system of exchange rates and international payments that enables countries (and their citizens) to transact with each other. The Fund's mandate was updated in 2012 to include all macroeconomic and financial sector issues that bear on global stability.

#### Fast Facts

- **Membership** : 189 countries
- **Headquarters** : Washington, D.C.
- **Executive Board** : 24 Directors each representing a single country or groups of countries
- **The largest borrowers** : Argentina, Ukraine, Greece, Egypt
- **The largest precautionary loans** : Mexico, Colombia, Morocco

#### Primary aims of IMF to:

- Promote international monetary cooperation;
- Facilitate the expansion and balanced growth of international trade;
- Promote exchange stability;
- Assist in the establishment of a multilateral system of payments; and
- Make resources available (with adequate safeguards) to members experiencing balance-of-payments difficulties.

## **IMF in News**

### ***Economic recovery for India in 2020-21: IMF***

The International Monetary Fund, which sharply cut India's growth rate, has projected a recovery in 2020-21, as per the statement of IMF's Chief Economist Gita Gopinath during the news conference in Davos for the release of the World Economic Outlook (WEO) update on January 20, 2020. The recovery is expected to come from the monetary stimulus that has been put in the system and some of it from the corporate tax cut. India's growth rate is expected to shoot up from the estimate of 4.8 per cent for the current fiscal year by 1 per cent to 5.8 per cent in 2020-21.

### ***IMF downgrades world growth, warns of 'precarious' 2020***

IMF cautions there are an abundance of "potential triggers" for the situation to turn negative quickly, including the possibility of more US tariffs on China or on European autos, as well as a no-deal Brexit and the high debt levels in many countries.

Global trade tensions and continued uncertainty are sapping the strength of the world economy, which faces a "precarious" 2020, the International Monetary Fund warned in July 2019. Trade conflicts are undercutting investment, and the IMF urged countries not to use tariffs in place of negotiations.

In its quarterly update of its World Economic Outlook, the IMF trimmed the global forecast issued in April by 0.1 this year and next, with growth expected to hit 3.2 percent in 2019 and 3.5 percent in 2020. But the report sounded the alarm, saying things could easily go wrong.

"The projected growth pickup in 2020 is precarious" and presumes there will be "stabilisation in currently stressed emerging market and developing economies and progress toward resolving trade policy differences," the IMF said.

*(For more information, students may visit <https://www.imf.org/external/>)*

## **THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the Founding countries of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

The current members of the group include Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. Brunei Darussalam joined on 7 January 1984, Viet Nam on 28 July 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia on 30 April 1999, making up ten Member States of ASEAN.

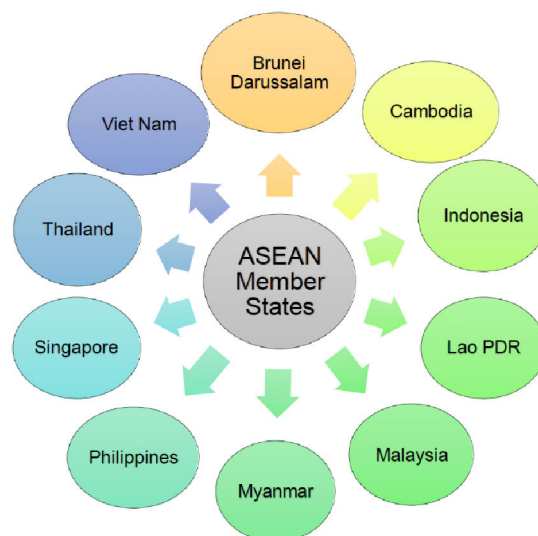
### ***Aim and Purpose***

As set out in the ASEAN Declaration, the aims and purposes of ASEAN are:

1. To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region

- through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations;
2. To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter;
  3. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields;
  4. To provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical and administrative spheres;
  5. To collaborate more effectively for the greater utilisation of their agriculture and industries, the expansion of their trade, including the study of the problems of international commodity trade, the improvement of their transportation and communications facilities and the raising of the living standards of their peoples;
  6. To promote Southeast Asian studies; and
  7. To maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organisations with similar aims and purposes, and explore all avenues for even closer cooperation among themselves.

### **ASEAN Member States**



(For more information, students may visit <https://asean.org/asean/about-asean/overview/>)

## **ASEAN in News**

### **35th ASEAN Summit**

The 35th summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the related summits were held in Bangkok, Thailand from 1-4 November 2019. Thailand holds the rotating chair of the ASEAN for 2019. The theme of the summit was '**Advancing Partnership for sustainability**'. The next ASEAN summit is to be conducted in Vietnam in 2020

### **India-ASEAN Summit 2019**

The 16th India-ASEAN summit was held on 3 November 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. Following are the key highlights of the summit:

- Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India expressed his commitment to further strengthen the partnership through stronger surface, maritime and air-connectivity and digital-link.
- India welcomed the recent decision to review the ASEAN-India FTA.
- India expressed its desire to strengthen partnership in the areas of maritime security, blue economy and humanitarian aid.
- Both sides agreed to continue the implementation of the Delhi Declaration, as the outcome of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit to mark the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations in January 2018, in order to further strengthen and deepen the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership in the coming years.

### **5th ASEAN Youth Video Contest**

The Awarding Ceremony of the 5th ASEAN Youth Video Contest was held on July 19, 2019 in Vientiane, Lao PDR, at the Gala Dinner of the Eleventh ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth.

Elia Pramana from Indonesia, Deanna See from Singapore and Anouluck Davong from Lao PDR were awarded as the 1st, 2nd and 3rd winners respectively. They received the awards from the Deputy Secretary-General of Lao Youth Union Somkiao Kingsada, also Chair of Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY), Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Kung Phoak, and Brian Ferinden of the U.S. Mission to ASEAN.

## **BRICS**

BRICS is an informal group of states comprising the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa.

On 20 September 2006, the first BRICS Ministerial Meeting was held at the proposal of Russian President Vladimir Putin on the margins of a UN General Assembly Session in New York. Foreign Ministers of Russia, Brazil and China and the Indian Defence Minister took part in the meeting. They expressed their interest in expanding multilateral cooperation.

In 2016, India became the head of the Association. The culmination of its presidency was the eighth summit of BRICS, which was held in the Indian state of Goa on 15-16 October. Its motto was 'The Formation of popular, inclusive and collective decisions'. The leaders of five countries signed the Declaration of Goa, which expressed a coherent position on issues related to the development of the Association and critical issues.

At the summit in Goa, the issues of energy, trade, banking cooperation, agriculture, space utilization and other common spaces, health, education, development of humanitarian contacts and tourism, the fight against poverty and social inequality were discussed. In addition to the Declaration was signed a number of sectoral agreements.

The BRICS presidency now was transferred to China.

*The World must unite as one to decisively confront global challenges. Corrective action must begin with the reform of institutions of global governance. This has been on the BRICS agenda since its inception.*

**Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India**

## **BRICS in News**

### **11th BRICS Summit**

The 11th BRICS Summit was organised on November 13-14, 2019 in Brasilia, Brazil. The theme of the summit was 'Economic Growth for an Innovative Future.'

#### *India's highlight at the Summit*

- Intra-BRICS trade accounts for just 15% of world trade, it needs to be increased. India invited business leaders of the member nations for investment, particularly in infrastructure development.
- India proposed to hold the first meeting of BRICS Water Ministers in India.
- India highlighted the menace of terrorism which has resulted in the loss of \$1 trillion to the world economy.

### **India R-27 deal with Russia**

India has signed a deal worth Rs. 1500 crore to buy R-27 air-to-air missiles from Russia. The objective of this deal is to boost the capabilities of Indian Air Force (IAF) in beyond visual targets. R-27 air-to-air missiles will be equipped on the Su-30MKI fighter jets.

R-27 is a medium-range air-to-air missile which was initially developed for MiG and Sukhoi fighter jets. Russia developed these missiles to add the capability to the Sukhoi and MiG warfare aircraft. Indian Air Force has signed Rs. 7600 crore deals in the past two months. These deals have done to acquire types of equipment under emergency requirements.

The R-27 (AA-10 Alamo) is an air-to-air guided missile. Russian firm Vypel and Ukrainian firm Artem manufacture this missile. Russian Air Force deployed these missiles in the 1990s on its fourth generation fighter jets.

The actual design of R-27 missile was started in 1962 while its production was started in 1986. More than 25 countries are taking services of this missile. R-27 missile can destroy air targets even in adverse weather conditions. Length of the missile is 4 meter while body diameter is 0.23 meter. Weight of the missile is 253 kilograms. Once missile air-launched, it can strike radio-emitting air targets during day and night. The R-27P1 has a range of 72km, while the R-27EP1 can engage targets within the range of 110km.

*(For more news, students may visit <http://infobrics.org/>)*

### **SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (SAARC)**

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka on 8 December 1985. SAARC comprises of eight Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Secretariat of the Association was set up in Kathmandu on 17 January 1987.

The objectives of the Association as outlined in the SAARC Charter are: to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life; to accelerate economic growth, social





progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials; to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia; to contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems; to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields; to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries; to strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests; and to cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.

Decisions at all levels are to be taken on the basis of unanimity; and bilateral and contentious issues are excluded from the deliberations of the Association.

### **SAARC in News**

#### ***4th Meeting of the SAARC Agriculture Ministers***

The Fourth Meeting of the SAARC Agriculture Ministers held in Thimphu, Bhutan on 27 June 2019, reaffirmed their commitments to further strengthen regional cooperation by promoting cooperation in Agriculture and Rural Development for enhancing food, nutrition and livelihood security of the Region. The Inaugural Session of the Meeting was attended by H.E. Dr. Tandi Dorji, Hon'ble Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Royal Government of Bhutan as the Chief Guest. While addressing the Meeting, Hon'ble Foreign Minister stated that in the rapidly changing regional and global state of affairs, SAARC would need to align itself to the emerging priorities and assured the unwavering support and commitment of the Royal Government of Bhutan to the SAARC processes. H.E. Lyonpo Yeshey Penjor, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Forests of Bhutan and H. E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial, Secretary General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) also addressed the Inaugural Session.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina on **March 11, 2019** jointly unveiled dozens of development projects in Bangladesh, through video conference. Both leaders unveiled e-plaques for supply of buses and trucks, inauguration of 36 community clinics, 11 water treatment plants, and extension of National Knowledge Network to Bangladesh.

National Knowledge Network will connect scholars and research institutes in Bangladesh, to India and the world. The buses and trucks would assist the efforts towards affordable public transportation; water treatment plants will help supply clean water; and community clinics will benefit about 2 lakh people, in Bangladesh. These projects show that India-Bangladesh relations are playing a key role in improving the quality of life of people.

#### ***9th Edition of SAARC Film Festival***

The 9th Edition of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Film Festival for the year 2019 was held at the National Film Corporation Cinema Hall, Colombo, Sri Lanka from July 2-7, 2019. Indian entries bagged 6 awards. Nagarkirtan, a Bengali film, was awarded the Best Feature Film. Best Director Award was conferred to Kaushik Ganguly for Nagarkirtan. Riddhi Sen won the best actor award and Prabuddha Bannerjee bagged Best Original Score for Nagarkirtan. Best Short Film Award was conferred to Na Bole Wo Haram directed by Nitish Patan. Special Jury Award for Direction and Story was conferred to 'Walking with the Wind', by Praveen Morchhale.

*(For more updates, students may visit <http://saarc-sec.org/>)*

## THE GROUP OF TWENTY (G-20)

The Group of Twenty (G20) is the premier international forum for global economic cooperation. The members of the G20 are: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, and the European Union.

G20 members account for 85 per cent of the world economy, 75 per cent of global trade, and two-thirds of the world's population, including more than half of the world's poor. G20 leaders meet annually at the G20 Summit. Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meet regularly. G20 ministerial meetings (e.g. trade, health, employment, agriculture) also occur as each G20 Presidency decides. G20 Engagement groups maintain a dialogue with policy makers. These groups represent civil society, business and labour leaders, the scientific and research community, think-tanks, women, and youth.

### G-20 in News

The G20 (Group of 20) Summit 2019 was held at the International Exhibition Centre, Osaka, Japan on June 28-29, 2019. It was the 14th meeting of the G20. The 2018 G20 Summit was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina and the 2020 G20 Summit will be held in the city of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The 17th G20 Summit will be held in India in 2022, the year the country would celebrate the 75th anniversary of its Independence. This is the most high-powered summit ever hosted in the Country. Leaders of all systemically important countries- including the full complement of G7 and BRICS are expected to be present.

*(For more updates, students may visit <https://g20.org/en/>)*

## THE BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVE FOR MULTI-SECTORAL TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BIMSTEC)

BIMSTEC is a regional organization comprising seven Member States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity. This sub-regional organization came into being on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration. It constitutes seven Member States: five deriving from South Asia, including **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka**, and two from Southeast Asia, including **Myanmar** and **Thailand**. Initially, the economic bloc was formed with four Member States with the acronym 'BIST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation). Following the inclusion of Myanmar on 22 December 1997 during a special Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok, the Group was renamed 'BIMST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation). With the admission of Nepal and Bhutan at the 6th Ministerial Meeting (February 2004, Thailand), the name of the grouping was changed to 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation' (BIMSTEC).

The objective of building such an alliance was to harness shared and accelerated growth through mutual cooperation in different areas of common interests by mitigating the onslaught of globalization and by utilizing regional resources and geographical advantages. Unlike many other regional groupings, BIMSTEC is a sector-driven cooperative organization. Starting with six sectors—including trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries—for sectoral cooperation in the late 1997,

it expanded to embrace nine more sectors—including agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change—in 2008.

### **BIMSTEC in News**

#### ***Indian prime minister's swearing-in ceremony***

Leaders from Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) countries and foreign envoys were invited to the prime minister's swearing-in ceremony held on May 30, 2019.

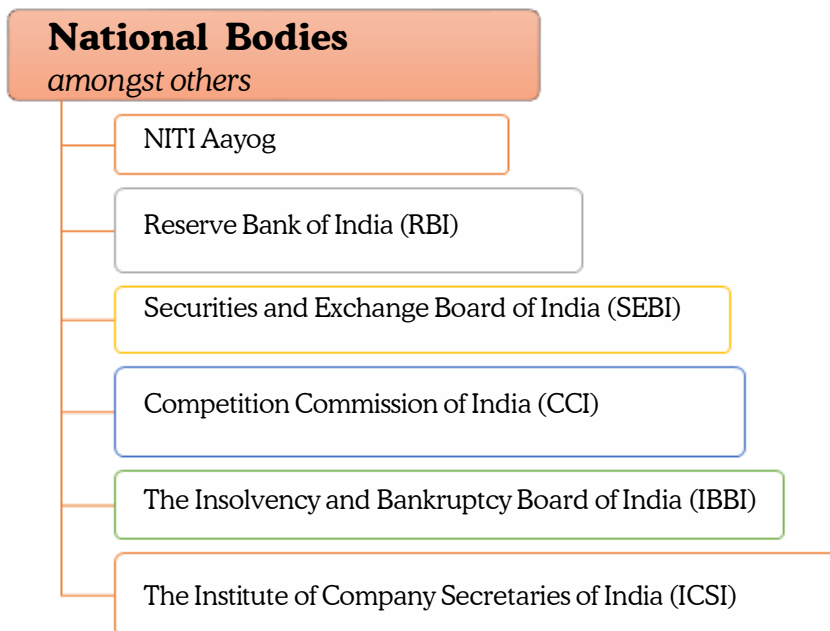
#### ***International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems***

The three day 'International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems' for BIMSTEC countries organized in New Delhi on December 11, 2019 by Department of Agricultural Research & Education, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare and Indian Council of Agricultural Research. All seven BIMSTEC countries participated in the Seminar.

The seminar was organized as a Government of India initiative as announced earlier by the PM of India at the 4th BIMSTEC Summit at Kathmandu in August 2019. The objective of this International Seminar was to have experience sharing to enable improvement of tropical smallholder farming systems for greater productivity and resilience to climate change through ecological approaches.

(For more information, students may visit <https://bimstec.org/>)

## **NATIONAL BODIES**



## **NITI AAYOG**

The NITI Aayog's precursor, the Planning Commission was established in March 1950 by a Government of India resolution with Prime Minister as Chairperson. The initial mandate was to establish heavy industries through public investment as a means for achieving rapid industrialization. The functions assigned to the Planning Commission were to assess and allocate plan resources, formulate plans and programs for area development, determine implementation methodology, identify resource constraints and appraise & adjust implementation. The Planning Commission from 1950 to 2014 formulated twelve five year plans. The Prime Minister announced the closure of the Planning Commission from the ramparts of Red Fort on August 15, 2014.

The Government of India, in keeping with its reform agenda, constituted the NITI Aayog to replace the Planning Commission. This was done in order to better serve the needs and aspirations of the people of India. An important evolutionary change from the past, NITI Aayog acts as the quintessential platform of the Government of India to bring States to act together in national interest, and thereby fosters Cooperative Federalism.

The NITI Aayog, established in 2015, is one of Indian democracy's youngest institutions. It has been entrusted with the mandate of re-imagining the development agenda by dismantling old-style central planning. The NITI Aayog was mandated to foster cooperative federalism, evolve a national consensus on developmental goals, redefine the reforms agenda, act as a platform for resolution of cross-sectoral issues between Center and State Governments, capacity building and to act as a Knowledge and Innovation hub. It represented a huge mandate for a nascent organization.

NITI Aayog is the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs. While designing strategic and long term policies and programmes for the Government of India, NITI Aayog also provides relevant technical advice to the Centre and States.

### **Present Constitution of NITI Aayog (as on February 03, 2020) is as under :**

*Chairperson-* Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister

*Vice Chairperson-* Dr. Rajiv Kumar

*Full-Time Members-* Shri V.K. Saraswat, Prof. Ramesh Chand, Dr. V.K. Paul

*Ex-officio Members-* Shri Raj Nath Singh, Minister of Defence; Shri Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs; Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs; Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare; Minister of Rural Development; Minister of Panchayati Raj.

*Special Invitees-* Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways; Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises; Shri Thaawar Chand Gehlot, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment; Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways; and Minister of Commerce and Industry; Shri Rao Inderjit Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Ministry of Planning.

*Chief Executive Officer-* Shri Amitabh Kant

### **Relevance of NITI Aayog**

- *Competitive Federalism* : Various reports of NITI Aayog like Healthy states Progressive India etc which give performance-based rankings of States across various verticals to foster a spirit of competitive federalism. It helps to identify the best practices in different States in various sectors and then try to replicate them in other States.
- *Cooperative federalism* : Due to composition of NITI Aayog, it gives better representation of states in this body which facilitate direct interactions with the line ministries, also helps to address issues in a relatively shorter time.
- *Greater Accountability* : NITI Aayog has established a Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office which collects data on the performance of various Ministries on a real-time basis. The data are then used at the highest policymaking levels to establish accountability and improve performance. Earlier, India had 12 Five-Year Plans, but they were mostly evaluated long after the plan period had ended. Hence, there was no real accountability.
- *Think tank of innovative ideas*: NITI Aayog is visualised as a funnel through which new and innovative ideas come from all possible sources — industry, academia, civil society or foreign specialists — and flow into the government system for implementation.
- *Convergence for resolution* : Being a common point for similar issues faced by different sectors, states etc., it acts as a convergence point and platform to discuss these issues.

### **NITI Aayog in News**

#### **States need to boost ease of doing business (Times of India dated February 03, 2020)**

State governments will now have to accelerate their move on ease of doing business to remove bottlenecks for investors and the taxpayer charter will help instil confidence and end harassment.

*“Most follow-up now has to be done at the level of the states. The Economic Survey gives the example of, if you want to run a restaurant, you need 43 clearances. In those 43 clearances, I doubt if more than one or two would be at the central government level, the rest would be municipal, state, that is where the rubber meets the road. Investment climate will be improved now by reforms of state governance and ease of doing business,” as per NITI Aayog.*

### **RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (RBI)**

The Reserve Bank of India was established on April 1, 1935 in accordance with the provisions of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

The Central Office of the Reserve Bank was initially established in Calcutta but was permanently moved to Mumbai in 1937. The Central Office is where the Governor sits and where policies are formulated. Though originally privately owned, since nationalisation in 1949, the Reserve Bank is fully owned by the Government of India.

The basic function of the apex bank is described in its Preamble as "to regulate the issue of Bank notes and keeping of reserves with a view to securing monetary stability in India and generally to operate the currency and credit system of the country to its advantage; to have a modern monetary policy framework to meet the challenge of an increasingly complex economy, to maintain price stability while keeping in mind the objective of growth."

### **RBI in News**

*Policy Rates as on February 03, 2020*

Policy Repo Rate	5.15%
Reverse Repo Rate	4.90%
Marginal Standing Facility Rate	5.40%
Bank Rate	5.40%

*Reserve Rates as on February 03, 2020*

Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)	4%
Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)	18.25

During October 2019, the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) slashed key repo rate for the fifth time in the year to boost demand and private consumption amid an economic slowdown.

While the RBI committee had slashed repo rate by 35 bps in the August policy meeting, it has reduced the key lending rate by an additional 25 bps after its latest bi-monthly review meeting. The repo rate or the rate at which RBI lends to banks has been revised to 5.15 per cent from 5.40 per cent. Likewise, the reverse repo rate has been adjusted to 4.90 per cent.

*(For more information, students may visit <https://www.rbi.org.in/>)*

### **SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA (SEBI)**

The Securities and Exchange Board of India was established on April 12, 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.

The Preamble of the Securities and Exchange Board of India describes the basic functions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India as "...to protect the interests of investors in securities and to promote the development of, and to regulate the securities market and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto"

Shri Ajay Tyagi is the present Chairman of Securities and Exchange Board of India. Shri G. Mahalingam, Ms. Madhabi Puri Buch, Shri. S. K. Mohanty and Shri Ananta Barua are the Whole Time Members.

## **SEBI in News**

### **SEBI - SCORES complaint issue**

The Supreme Court on January 27, 2020 has set a four-month deadline for SEBI to probe complaints received on its SCORES platform with regard to alleged wrongful disclosures by the promoters of Bharat Nidhi, PNB and Camac.

In November 2019, the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) had asked SEBI to probe these complaints but the SEBI challenged the tribunal order in the Supreme Court seeking stay on its operation and effect. A complete stay has not been granted by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has given only a relief to SEBI by diluting SAT's observations and extended the deadline for the probe without granting a stay on operation or effect of the order.

### **SEBI tighten the norms for pledging of shares**

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) tightened the norms for pledging of shares by promoters of listed companies.

The SEBI directed every listed firm to disclose detailed reasons for pledging of shares by its promoters along with the amount of stake pledged within two days if the total amount of shares pledged by the promoter or the promoter group crosses 50% of the total stake held by the promoter or if it is more than 20% of the concerned company's total share capital. At present, a listed firm needs to disclose about share pledges by its promoters within seven days of such an action.

*(For more information, students may visit <https://www.sebi.gov.in/index.html>)*

## **COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA (CCI)**

### **The Competition Act**

The Competition Act, 2002, as amended by the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2007, follows the philosophy of modern competition laws. The Act prohibits anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations (acquisition, acquiring of control and M&A), which causes or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.

### **The Competition Commission of India**

The Competition Commission of India has been established by the Central Government with effect from 14th October 2003 to achieve the objectives of the Competition Act. CCI consists of a Chairperson and 6 Members appointed by the Central Government.

It is the duty of the Commission to eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition, promote and sustain competition, protect the interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India.

The Commission is also required to give opinion on competition issues on a reference received from



a statutory authority established under any law and to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.

Shri Ashok Kumar Gupta, a 1981 Batch IAS officer, joined the Competition Commission of India as Chairperson in November, 2018. Dr. Sangeeta Verma and Shri Bhagwant Singh Bishnoi are the members of the Commission.

### **CCI in News**

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) organized the Fourth National Conference on Economics of Competition Law at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi on March 01, 2019. Dr. Krishnamurthy Subramanian, Chief Economic Advisor, Government of India was the Keynote Speaker at the Conference.

*(For more information, students may visit <https://www.cci.gov.in/>)*

### **THE INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY BOARD OF INDIA (IBBI)**

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India was established on 1st October, 2016 under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code). It is a key pillar of the ecosystem responsible for implementation of the Code that consolidates and amends the laws relating to reorganization and insolvency resolution of corporate persons, partnership firms and individuals in a time bound manner for maximization of the value of assets of such persons, to promote entrepreneurship, availability of credit and balance the interests of all the stakeholders.

It is a unique regulator which regulates a profession as well as processes. It has regulatory oversight over the Insolvency Professionals, Insolvency Professional Agencies, Insolvency Professional Entities and Information Utilities. It writes and enforces rules for processes, namely, corporate insolvency resolution, corporate liquidation, individual insolvency resolution and individual bankruptcy under the Code. It has recently been tasked to promote the development of, and regulate, the working and practices of, insolvency professionals, insolvency professional agencies and information utilities and other institutions, in furtherance of the purposes of the Code. It has also been designated as the 'Authority' under the Companies (Registered Valuers and Valuation Rules), 2017 for regulation and development of the profession of valuers in the country.

Dr. M. S. Sahoo currently serves as Chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India. Dr. Navrang Saini, Dr. (Ms.) Mukulita Vijayawargiya and Sh. Sudhaker Shukla are the Whole time members of the Board.

### **IBBI in News**

#### **Conference on 'Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016: Impact on Markets and the Economy'**

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) and Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, in partnership with the Faculty of Law and Commercial Law Centre, Harris Manchester College at the University of



Oxford, organised a Conference titled 'Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016: Impact on Markets and the Economy' in New Delhi on December 16, 2019.

### **Promulgation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019**

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved a proposal to promulgate an Ordinance and to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. The Amendment will remove certain ambiguities in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 and ensure smooth implementation of the Code.

### **Insolvency Research Foundation**

Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Hon'ble Vice President of India, in his inaugural address at Insolvency Research Foundation inauguration, said that the enactment of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code was one of the success stories of Indian economic reforms and that it played a critical role in reshaping the behaviour of borrowers.

He further said that the government has initiated a series of economic reforms to improve the investment climate in diverse areas and make India an attractive destination. As you all are aware, India has jumped by several ranks in the ease of doing business and stands at 77 positions.

*(For more information, students may visit <https://ibbi.gov.in>)*

## **THE INSTITUTE OF COMPANY SECRETARIES OF INDIA (ICSI)**

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) is the only recognized professional body in India to develop and regulate the profession of Company Secretaries in India. It is a premier national professional body set up under an act of Parliament, the Company Secretaries Act, 1980. ICSI functions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India. The Institute, being a pro-active body, focuses on best and top-quality education to students of Company Secretaries Course and best quality set standards for CS members.

ICSI has its headquarters at New Delhi, four Regional Offices at New Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and 70 Chapters across India.

ICSI has been contributing to the initiatives of Government of India that have potential to excel the social-economic growth of India.

### **ICSI in News**

#### **ICSI introduced CS Executive Entrance Test (CSEET) in place of Foundation Programme**

As per the requirement of Company Secretaries (Amendment) Regulations, 2020, the Institute has introduced CS Executive Entrance Test (CSEET) in place of the Foundation Programme. With the

introduction of CSEET from February 3, 2020, new registration to the Foundation Programme has ceased to exist w.e.f. February 3, 2020, CSEET is the only qualifying entrance test for registration to the CS Executive Programme.

CSEET has been introduced keeping in view the diverse academic standards of students seeking admission in the Company Secretaryship Course, to attract meritorious students and to test their aptitude for the Company Secretary profession. The candidates appearing/passed in class 12th examinations shall be eligible for appearing in the CSEET. All the students seeking admission in the Company Secretary Course including graduates/ post graduates, etc. shall be required to qualify the CSEET from February 3, 2020 onwards. The process of selecting meritorious candidates through CSEET will enhance the quality of future members to meet the expectations of the industry and the regulators.

(For more details: please visit [https://www.icsi.edu/media/webmodules/CSEET\\_PROSPECTUS.pdf](https://www.icsi.edu/media/webmodules/CSEET_PROSPECTUS.pdf))

### **National Conference of Corporate CS**

The two-day National Conference of Corporate CS on the theme '**Governance beyond Compliance: Expanding Horizons for Company Secretaries**' was inaugurated at Mumbai, Maharashtra on 4th January, 2020 and was concluded on 5th January, 2020.

### **Unique Document Identification Number**

In an attempt to pursue heightened sense of self-governance and strengthen the practising side of the profession of Company Secretaries, ICSI has rolled out a unique initiative in the form of Unique Document Identification Number or UDIN. It aimed at strengthening the framework of good governance UDIN shall serve the following purposes simultaneously:

- provide ease of maintaining Register of Attestation/ Certification services
- prevent counterfeiting of various attestations/ certifications
- ensure compliance w.r.t ceilings on the number of certifications/ attestations
- enable stakeholders & regulators to verify genuinity of documents signed or certified by Company Secretaries in Practice

Emphasizing on the need of UDIN, President, ICSI said, **“Under the mechanism, an alpha numeric number shall be generated for the identification of every document attested by Practising Company Secretaries which shall definitely act as a trust enhancer by facilitating verification that the document is genuinely signed or certified by a Company Secretary in Practice.”** The ICSI UDIN will be mandatory for every document except an e-form, signed or certified by a CS with effect from 1st October, 2019.

(For more information, students may visit <https://www.icsi.edu/home/>)

## SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES

### G7 SUMMIT

#### **About G7**

- G7 originally came into being in 1975 when the heads of the world's six leading industrial nations- the US, UK, France, Germany, Japan and Italy decided to hold a meeting in the wake of the oil shock of 1973 and the following financial crisis.
- The six countries were joined by Canada in 1976.
- Russia joined the group, which then became known as the G8, in 1998 but was suspended in 2014 after it annexed Crimea from Ukraine.
- Current members are - US, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. The group regards itself as "a community of values", with freedom and human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and prosperity and sustainable development as its key principles.

#### **G-7 Summit 2019**

#### **Key Highlights**

- 45th G7 summit, also known as Group of Seven, was held in Biarritz, France on 24–26 August 2019 on the theme “combating inequality” and its main focus was on the climate and biodiversity.
- Following five objectives were identified by the France for this Summit:
  - fighting inequality of opportunity, promoting in particular gender equality, access to education and high quality health services;
  - reducing environmental inequality by protecting our planet through climate finance and a fair ecological transition, preserving biodiversity and the oceans;
  - strengthening the social dimension of globalization through more fair and equitable trade, tax and development policies;
  - taking action for peace against security threats and terrorism which weaken the foundations of our societies; and
  - tapping into the opportunities created by digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI).
- G7 summit was hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron, the annual meet was attended by the seven state members.

- This year, France had also invited non-member countries who are playing an important part in world politics. The invited guest nations included India, Australia, Spain, South Africa, Senegal and Rwanda. These countries were invited as "Biarritz partner country".
- The US will take over the G7 Presidency from 1 January 2020.

### **India in G7 Summit**

- India has been invited to attend the G7 summit after a gap of almost 10 years.
- The last time India was invited to the summit was in 2005, when the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair had invited the then Indian PM Manmohan Singh to attend the G7 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland

## **G20 SUMMIT**

### **About G20**

The Group of Twenty (G20) is the premier international forum for global economic cooperation. The participants are leaders from 19 countries and the European Union (EU). The members of the G20 are: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Republic of South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, and the European Union (EU). In addition, leaders of invited guest countries and representatives of invited guest international organizations participate in the summit along with leaders from the G20 members.

The G20 Summit is formally known as the "Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy". As the "premier forum for international economic cooperation" (agreed by leaders at the Pittsburgh Summit in September 2009), representing more than 80% of the global GDP, the G20 has made continuous efforts toward achieving robust global economic growth. As globalization progresses and various issues become more intricately intertwined, the recent G20 summits have focused not only on macro economy and trade, but also on a wide range of global issues which have an immense impact on the global economy, such as development, climate change and energy, health, counter-terrorism, as well as migration and refugees. The G20 has sought to realize an inclusive and sustainable world through its contributions towards resolving these global issues.

The host country of the G20 summit leads the group over the course of one year from December through the following November as the G20 presidency. The G20 presidency also organizes relevant ministerial and working group meetings.

### **History of G20 Summit**

After the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997-1998, it was acknowledged that the participation of major emerging market countries is needed on discussions on the international financial system, and G7 finance ministers agreed to establish the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in 1999.

The G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meetings were centered on major economic and monetary policy issues amongst major countries in the global financial system and aimed at promoting cooperation toward achieving stable and sustainable global economic growth for the benefit of all countries. The participating members in the meetings were the same as the current G20 members.

In November 2008, the inaugural G20 Summit was held in Washington, D.C. in response to the global financial crisis that occurred in the wake of the collapse of the Lehman Brothers. The G20 Meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors was upgraded to the head of state level, as a forum for leaders from major developed and emerging market countries. In September 2009, the third summit was held in Pittsburgh where the leaders designated the G20 as the “premier forum for international economic cooperation.” From thereon, the summit meetings were held semi-annually until 2010 and annually from 2011 onwards.

### **G20 Summit 2019**

It was the first time for Japan to take on the G20 presidency. The G20 Osaka Summit was held on June 28-29, as well as relevant ministerial meetings in eight cities in 2019. The summit adopted the “Osaka Declaration”.

### **India at The G20 Summit**

- India has participated in all the G20 Summits held so far. India will host the G20 summit in 2022 for the first time (2020- in Saudi Arabia, 2021 – in Italy).
- India’s growth and development policies are very much aligned with the principles highlighted in the Osaka declaration.
- However, India refused to sign the declaration on "Osaka Track" - an overarching framework launched by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe promoting cross-border data flow - at the recently concluded G20 Summit in Japan. (The declaration described the Osaka Track as “a process which demonstrates the commitment to promote international policy discussions, inter alia, international rule-making on trade-related aspects of electronic commerce at the WTO.” Basically, it is an initiative seeks the removal of prohibitions on data localisation and urges nations to negotiate rules on data flows, cloud computing among others)
- India, Indonesia, Egypt and South Africa did not sign the declaration.

(For more details about G20, students may visit <https://g20.org/en/>)

### **India to host ‘No Money for Terror’ Conference 2020**

India will host ‘No Money for Terror’ conference in 2020. The announcement made at No Money for Terror conference in Melbourne, Australia. No Money for Terror conference organized by Financial

Intelligence Units (FIUs) of over 100 countries jointly called The Egmont Group. The countries which participated in the meeting should also effectively enforce the standards mandated by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and UN listings. The members are required to initiate discussion on Counter Financing of Radicalisation (CFR), which would prevent radicalization - an essential prerequisite of terrorism.

### **22ND NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON E-GOVERNANCE 2019**

The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG), in association with Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India and the State Government of Meghalaya organized the 22nd National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG) 2019 on 8-9th August, 2019 at Shillong, Meghalaya. The theme of this Conference was 'Digital India: Success to Excellence'. At the valedictory session of the two days conference, 'Shillong Declaration' on e-Governance was adopted after intensive deliberations during the sessions.

Over the two days, discussions were held on six sub-themes in Plenary sessions - India Enterprise Architecture (INDEA), Digital Infrastructure, Inclusion and capacity building, Emerging Technology for Practitioners, Secretariat Reforms, National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA). Four Breakout Sessions were held on sub-themes - One Nation One Platform, Engaging with Innovators and Industry, End-to-End Digital Services: IT initiatives of State Governments. An Exhibition was also organized during the event to showcase India's achievements in the field of e-Governance.

NCeG 2019 provided a platform for the delegates, including senior government officers from across the country, industry stalwarts and researchers, to share best practices, latest technology developments and leveraging them for achieving effective governance and public service delivery. The focus of all the sessions was on learning with each other's experiences to ensure effective e-governance for citizen satisfaction and achieve Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's vision of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'.

#### **Key Highlights of Shillong Declaration**

- Improve the citizen's experience with Government services by promoting timely implementation of India Enterprise Architecture (IndEA).
- Consolidate the plethora of successful State level e-Governance projects with a focus to replicate them as a common application software
- Take steps to further improve connectivity in North Eastern States by addressing the issues of telecommunications connectivity at grassroot level
- Take steps to enhance the activities of Electronics Sector Skill Council in North Eastern States and explore the possibility for opening an electronics skill center in Shillong
- Promote use of e-Office and move towards less paper State Secretariats in the North-Eastern States and in the District level offices.

### **NuGen Mobility Summit 2019**

The NuGen Mobility Summit 2019 was held at the International Centre for Automotive Technology Centre, ICAT in Gurugram, Haryana from 27-29 November 2019. The summit was addressed by the Minister of Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari. The 2019 NuGen Mobility Summit discussed the auto industry to think about future technologies as skilled man-power, cheap labour, and technology that are available in the auto sector.

### **NATIONAL YOUTH SUMMIT, 2019**

The National Youth Summit was held on September 7, 2019 in New Delhi organised by the Youth Awakening Mission, a youth wing of Paavan Chintan Dhara Charitable Trust, Ghaziabad. The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the summit. The summit aimed to work for the betterment and welfare of ourselves, society and country.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that today's India is full of youth power. Our youth have immense talent and energy. This talent and energy needs to be properly developed and utilized. Eight hundred million youth of our country, with their creative power, can take India to new heights of progress and human civilization.

The President said that we have to work for the betterment and welfare of ourselves, society and country. The role of education is the most important in awakening the right vision and prudence to achieve this objective. He said that a self-reliant and nation-loving person can contribute to nation-building by working in any field of life.

### **1st NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CYBERCRIME INVESTIGATION AND FORENSICS**

The First National Conference on Cyber Crime Investigation and Cyber Forensics was held on 4-5 September 2019 at Central Bureau of Investigation Headquarters in New Delhi. The objective was to create a platform and bring together investigators, forensic experts, academia and lawyers to discuss challenges related to cybercrime and ways to find solutions. Further, to create capacity building and a pool of competent investigators, judicial officers, prosecutors and digital forensic analysts who are digitally aware and to provide a platform for sharing good practices to learn from experiences of various State police and Law Enforcement Agencies, this conference was organised.

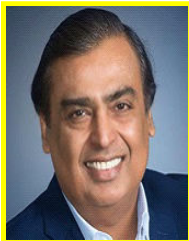
During the conference, various topics/themes of law enforcement interest, including, Mobile/Digital Forensics, Inter-LEA information/ intelligence exchange, obtaining digital evidence from abroad, online harming including child sexual abuse, Social Media, establishing standard formats for data exchange between service providers and LEAs, Intermediary liability, Admissibility of Electronic Evidence were discussed.



## BUSINESS PERSONALITIES AND LEADERS

### BUSINESS PERSONALITIES

#### **Mukesh Ambani**



Mr. Mukesh D. Ambani is the Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries Ltd. is a Chemical Engineer from the Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai (erstwhile the University Department of Chemical Technology, University of Mumbai). He pursued an MBA from Stanford University in the US. He has been on the Board of Reliance since 1977. Mr. Mukesh Ambani is a member of The Foundation Board of the World Economic Forum. He is an elected Foreign Member of the prestigious United States National Academy of Engineering. He is a member of the Global Advisory Council of Bank of America. Among others, he is also a member of International Advisory Council of The Brookings Institution.

#### **Azim Premji**



Azim Premji is an Indian business entrepreneur who served as chairman of Wipro Limited, guiding the company through four decades of diversification and growth to emerge as a world leader in the software industry. By the early 21st century, Premji had become one of the world's wealthiest people. Despite his vast personal wealth, Premji continued to be recognized for his modesty, lack of extravagance, and charity. In 2001, he established the non-profit Azim Premji Foundation, through which he aimed to improve the quality of elementary education in rural regions throughout India. By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the foundation had extended computer-aided education to more than 16,000 schools, with child-friendly content increasingly available in local languages. Premji's reputation remained that of a highly ethical entrepreneur whose operation served as a model for other Indian firms.

#### **Kumar Mangalam Birla**



Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla is the Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group. He is on the National Council of the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Apex Advisory Council of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India. Mr. Birla holds several key positions on various regulatory and professional Boards. He was a Director on the Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India. He was Chairman of the Advisory Committee constituted by the Ministry of Company Affairs and also served on The Prime Minister of India's Advisory Council on Trade and Industry. Mr. Birla has won recognition for his exemplary contribution to leadership processes and institution/systems building. SEBI had constituted a Committee on Corporate Governance under the Chairmanship of Shri Kumar Mangalam Birla, Member, SEBI Board to promote and raise the standard of Corporate Governance in respect of listed companies. The SEBI Board in its meeting held on January 25, 2000 considered the recommendation of the Committee and decided to make the amendments to the listing agreement.



**Tim Cook**

Tim Cook is the CEO of the most valuable company in the world, Apple. He took over Apple after the company's founder, Steve Jobs, succumbed to cancer in 2011. Cook has helped navigate Apple through the transition after Jobs' death as well as developing new product lines and opening Apple retail stores in China. He has also led a very public battle against the FBI and their demand that Apple creates a backdoor for users' iPhones.

**Bill Gates**

Gates founded Microsoft, the world's largest PC software company, and each year, he is consistently near the top of the list of the world's wealthiest people. Over the years, Gates has slowly transitioned away from Microsoft and into philanthropic ventures. His foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is working to provide clean water and sanitation (among other things) to third-world countries. Like Warren Buffett, Gates has also promised to leave the vast majority of his wealth to charity.

**Elon Musk**

Elon Musk was born in South Africa and is a businessman, inventor, and investor. Musk is most widely known for his founding of PayPal and SpaceX and his heavy involvement in Tesla Motors. His vision and passion for pushing the boundaries of technology and consumer integration have led to increased exposure to solar power, high-speed transportation, and artificial intelligence.

**Warren Buffett**

Warren Buffett is one of the most successful investors in the world. Some people have referred to him as the "Wizard of Omaha" (his birthplace is Omaha, Nebraska) and he is consistently named as one of the wealthiest people in the world. He has also pledged to give away nearly 99% of his accumulated wealth to philanthropic causes after his death.

## **LEADERS**

### ***Narendra Modi***

Shri Narendra Modi was sworn-in as India's Prime Minister on 30th May 2019, marking the start of his second term in office. The first ever Prime Minister to be born after Independence, Shri Modi has previously served as the Prime Minister of India from 2014 to 2019. He also has the distinction of being the longest serving Chief Minister of Gujarat with his term spanning from October 2001 to May 2014.

Beyond politics, Narendra Modi enjoys writing. He has authored several books, including poetry. He begins his day with Yoga, which strengthens his body and mind and instills the power of calmness in an otherwise fast-paced routine.

*(For more information, please refer <https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/pms-profile/>)*

### ***Donald J. Trump***

Donald J. Trump is the very definition of the American success story, setting the standards of excellence in his business endeavors, and now, for the United States of America.

A graduate of the Wharton School of Finance, President Trump has always dreamt big and pushed the boundaries of possibilities to the outermost region in his entire career, devoting his life to building business, jobs and the American Dream. This was brought to life by a movement he inspired in the people of America when he announced his candidacy for President of the United States in June 2015.

This movement would ultimately lead to one of the most unique Presidential campaigns in history. Ever the leader, Trump followed no rule book and took his message, 'Make America Great Again' directly to the people. Campaigning in historically democratic states and counties across the country, Trump was elected President in November 2016 in the largest electoral college landslide for a Republican in 28 years.

President Trump is working hard to implement his 'America First' platform, continuing his promise to the American people to lower taxes, repeal and replace Obamacare, end stifling regulations, protect borders, keep jobs in country, take care of veterans, strengthen military and law enforcement, and renegotiate bad trade deals, creating a government of, by and for the people.

He is making America First, again, restoring our nation's faith, ushering in a bright, new future now and for generations to come.

*(For more information, please refer <https://www.donaldjtrump.com/about/>)*

## **BUSINESS PERSONALITIES AND LEADERS IN NEWS**

### ***HOWDY, MODI-Shared Dreams, Bright Future***

India Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Trump shared the stage at the 'Howdy, Modi'

event in Houston on 22nd September, 2019 at NRG Stadium, Houston. The event showcased the special features of Indian culture and accomplishments of the Indian diaspora. The event highlighted the sharp shift in Indian diplomacy and the new levels of India-US bilateral relations. The event showcased the heightened friendship and warmth between the leader of one of the most powerful nations in the world and India. PM Modi and Trump went way out of the way to show their unparalleled camaraderie. The event also showed how the US is interested in exploring new avenues of cooperation with India. The event also sent out a very strong message -that the US-led by Donald Trump is standing firmly with India in its fight against terrorism.

### **Rajnath Singh becomes 1st Defence Minister to fly LCA Tejas**

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has scripted history by becoming first Defence Minister to fly Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) 'Tejas', an indigenously-built multi-role fighter aircraft. He undertook 30-minute sortie in LCA Tejas along with Air Vice Marshall Narmadeshwar Tiwari, at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) Airport in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Defence Minister even controlled 'Tejas' in the air for some time and was shown Avionics and Sophisticated Systems onboard the aircraft.

### **Commercial roll out of JioFiber by Mukesh Ambani**

Jio GigaFibre renamed Jio Fiber, has started its commercial services in India from September 5, 2019. The announcement was made on August 12, 2019 by Mukesh Ambani, Chairman of Reliance Industries Ltd. Jio Fiber is set to revolutionise the digital space in India and apart from the fixed internet connection, Jio Fiber connection will be accompanied by fixed-line phone service, set-top-box capable of gaming, Free 4K TV and Jio IoT services. At launch, Jio Fiber is expected to offer one of the cheapest broadband plans. With the few days remaining for the commercial launch of the Jio Fiber service, let us travel back in time and list out what we already know about the Jio GigaFiber's data plans and offers.

## **BOOKS AND THEIR AUTHORS**

### **'Karmayoddha Granth' on the life of PM Narendra Modi**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah released the book 'Karmyodha Granth', written on the life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on January 07, 2020. The book explains various works by PM Narendra Modi during his tenure. As per the book, Narendra Modi gave the states 10% of more budget which reflects the fulfillment of Antyodaya resolution of Pandit Deendayal.

The book informs that Health facilities are being provided to the people under Ayushman Yojana which was a dream project of Narendra Modi.

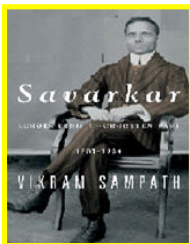
### **Turbulence and Triumph : The Modi Years** by Rahul Agarwal and Bharathi S Pradhan

A pictorial book traces the journey of Narendra Modi from his days as a young boy from Vadnagar in Gujarat to New Delhi's 7, Lok Kalyan Marg as the 14th Prime



Minister of India. The book titled **Turbulence and Triumph : The Modi Years** authored by Rahul Agarwal and Bharathi S Pradhan is replete with anecdotes from family, friends, colleagues, associates, testimonials of leaders from India and the world across party lines. It is published by Om Books International. The politician, the leader, the orator and the ascetic committed to the idea of a new India composed into a single frame by the authors.

**Savarkar** : *Echoes from a forgotten past, 1883-1924* by Vikram Sampath



Savarkar: Echoes from a forgotten past, 1883-1924 book describes the life of freedom **fighter and Philosopher Vinayak Damodar Savarkar**. He was popularly known as Veer Savarkar.

The first volume of the two-volume series covers the life of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (Veer Savarkar). It expresses and explains the incidents from his birth in 1883 to his conditional release to Ratnagiri in 1924. The uniqueness of the new book is the historian Vikram Sampath brought out the often missed aspects of politician Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's life and times.

**Listening, Learning and Leading** by Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu

The book 'Listening, Learning and Leading' was launched by Union Minister for Home Affairs, Shri Amit Shah on August 11, 2019 at Chennai. This book is based on Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu's two years in office. The book captures glimpses of the Vice President's 330 public engagements across the country during this period. This book gives a glimpse of his life after assuming the office of the Vice President of India.

**Vivekadeepini** by Adi Shankaracharya

Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu released a book titled Vivekadeepini, a concise book of aphorisms on July 07, 2019. It was initially written by Adi Shankaracharya who is one of India's greatest spiritual and literary geniuses.

Vivekadeepini is a summary of Prashnottara Ratnamalika written by Adi Shankaracharya. The book has compiled a select 36 verses drawn from 67 verses of Prashnottara Ratnamalika. The verses are written in Question-Answer format. It contains universal truths and are the starting point for reflection. The book has been translated into ten languages namely English, Hindi, Bengali, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi Gujarati and Odia. It has shown the glimpses of India's wisdom in most lucid language. The Vice President in the book has stressed the need to create a society that actually demonstrates 'share and care', which was the core of Indian philosophy.

## SPORTS

**'World Games Athlete of the Year' award**

Rani Rampal, captain of Indian women's hockey team, became the first hockey player in the world to win the prestigious 'World Games Athlete of the Year' Award. The World Games announced the

winner on January 31, 2020, after a 20-day voting process by sports lovers around the world. This award is given for outstanding performance, social concern, and good behavior. People across the world select the winner through voting.

### **2019 Spirit of Cricket Award**

Indian skipper Mr. Virat Kohli was named captain of both ICC Test and ODI teams of 2019 and awarded ICC 2019 'Spirit of Cricket' award. Rohit Sharma was also honoured with the ICC ODI Cricketer of the year 2019 award. The ICC Awards were announced on January 15, 2020.

### **ICC Cricket World Cup 2019**

The ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 was held in England and Wales, from 30 May to 14 July 2019. The ICC Cricket World Cup (CWC) takes place every four years. The 2019 event featured 10 teams and was the culmination of a global qualification process that ran over a 5-6 year period.

The top eight teams in the ICC one-day rankings at the given date (approximately 18 months prior to the CWC) qualified automatically. The final two teams came from the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier which took place in the year prior to the Cricket World Cup. This event is the culmination of the ICC World Cricket League series and regional qualification events which provide the opportunity for every ICC Member to progress through the qualification process and participate in the CWC.

All teams played each other in a full round robin format with the top four teams progressing to the semi-finals and the winners contesting the CWC final.

*(For more information, please visit <https://www.icc-cricket.com/about/events/icc-events/icc-cricket-world-cup>)*

### **Commonwealth Games Federation**

The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) is the organisation responsible for the direction and control of the Commonwealth Games and Commonwealth Youth Games, and for delivering on the vision of the Commonwealth Sports Movement to build peaceful, sustainable and prosperous communities globally by inspiring Commonwealth Athletes to drive the impact and ambition of all Commonwealth Citizens through Sport.

It is an organisation headquartered and incorporated in the UK, but working across 71 member nations and territories. The CGF is based at Commonwealth House on London's Pall Mall alongside, and working closely with, colleagues from the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum.

Next Commonwealth games will be hosted by England (July 27-August 07) at Birmingham. The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will demonstrate the very best of Global Britain to the world, showcasing the region's strengths of being connected and accessible; youth and inclusivity; and a focus on regeneration and rejuvenation. Birmingham is perfectly positioned to attract people to the Games and to ensure that the benefits of hosting extend from the city and region, to the UK and the Commonwealth.

*(For more information, please visit <https://thecgf.com/games#commonwealth-games>)*

## Olympic Games

### Summer Olympic Games (July 24 to August 09, 2020 at Tokyo, Japan)

Fifty-six years after having organised the Olympic Games, the Japanese capital will be hosting a summer edition for the second time, from 24 July to 9 August 2020. The Olympic Games in 1964 radically transformed the country. According to the organisers of the event in 2020, the Games of the XXXII Olympiad of the modern era will be “the most innovative ever organised, and will rest on three fundamental principles to transform the world: striving for your personal best (achieving your personal best); accepting one another (unity in diversity); and passing on a legacy for the future (connecting to tomorrow)”.

Aligning with the reforms advocated by Olympic Agenda 2020, the Tokyo Games will use as many existing competition venues as possible, namely those built for the Games in 1964, such as the prestigious Nippon Budokkan for judo, the Baji Koen Park for equestrian events, and the Yoyogi National Gymnasium for handball. The Tokyo National Stadium, where the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and athletics competitions will be staged, will be completely revamped and replaced by a new arena.

Japan has been an Olympic land since the Summer Games of 1964, which were the first to be staged in Asia. In 2020, the country will host its fourth Games, if we include the Winter Games of 1972 in Sapporo and of 1998 in Nagano.

### Winter Olympic Games (February 04- 20, 2022, at Beijing, People’s Republic of China)

Having won the bid for the 2022 Olympic Winter Games on 31 July 2015, Beijing is set to become the first city in the world to have hosted both the summer and winter editions of the Olympic Games.

With a vision of “Joyful Rendezvous upon Pure Ice and Snow,” Beijing 2022 will build on the legacies of the landmark Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and expects to encourage millions of people across China to embrace winter sports.

The 109 events in seven Olympic winter sports will be held in the three competition zones of central Beijing, Yanqing and Zhangjiakou.

### Khelo India Youth Games Programme

The Khelo India programme has been introduced to revive the sports culture in India at the grass-root level by building a strong framework for all sports played in our country and establish India as a great sporting nation.

To accomplish the above objectives, Khelo India programme has been divided into 12 verticals, namely:

(For more information, please visit <https://kheloindia.gov.in/about>)





### ***Kapil Dev to be the first chancellor of Rai Sports University***

The Haryana Government has appointed cricket legend Kapil Dev as the first Chancellor of Rai Sports University. Haryana Sports Minister Anil Vij had approved the proposal to upgrade the sports university on Sept 14th, 2019 in Sonapat. The Sports University of Haryana will be the third sports university established by a state government in the country after Swarnim Gujarat Sports University (Gandhinagar) and Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University (Chennai). The University will conduct academic and training programmes in physical education and sports sciences, including sports technology and sports medicine. This Course can embrace coaching for sports management, sports infrastructure engineering, sports scientific discipline, sports nutrition, sports journalism, and sports promoting.

### ***PV Sindhu won gold at the 2019 BWF World Championships***

V Sindhu became the first Indian to win the BWF World Championships, crushing Japan's Nozomi Okuhara 21-7, 21-7 in just 38 minutes in a one-sided final on August 25, 2019. With the win, Sindhu now has a full set of medals at World Championships - two bronze medals, two silver medals and a gold medal. She has become only the fourth singles player ever to have a full set of world championship medals.

## **LANGUAGE AND NATIONAL SYMBOLS**

### **LANGUAGES**

Today, 7,111 languages are spoken in the world and interestingly, just 23 languages account for more than half the world's population.

#### ***Languages in India***

*Official Language or Languages of a State (Article 345 of Constitution of India)*

Subject to the provisions of articles 346 and 347, the legislature of a State may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the Language or Languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that State: Provided that, until the Legislature of the State otherwise provides by law, the English language shall continue to be used for those official purposes within the State for which it was being used immediately before the commencement of this Constitution.

*Official languages for Communication between one State and another or between a State and the Union (Article 346 of Constitution of India)*

The language for the time being authorised for use in the Union for official purposes shall be the official language for communication between one State and another State and between a State and the Union: Provided that if two or more States agree that the Hindi language should be the official language for communication between such States, that language may be used for such communication.

Special provision relating to language spoken by a section of the population of a State (Article 346 of Constitution of India) - On a demand being made in that behalf the President may, if he is satisfied that a substantial proportion of the population of a State desire the use of any language spoken by them to be recognised by that state, direct that such language shall also be officially recognised throughout that State or any part thereof for such purpose as he may specify.

As per Ethnologue, number of individual languages listed for India is 460. Of these, 447 are living and 13 are extinct. Of the living languages, 419 are indigenous and 28 are non-indigenous. Furthermore, 64 are institutional, 119 are developing, 138 are vigorous, 112 are in trouble, and 14 are dying. Hindi is one of the main language of India and is spoken by around 40% of the Indian population. It belongs to Indo-Aryan branch of Indo-European language family. It is native language for most people living in Hindi belt of North India comprising Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. It is also spoken in many countries of the world including Pakistan, Mauritius, Trinidad, Surinam etc.

(For the country wise details of languages and other statistical information, please visit <https://www.ethnologue.com/browse/countries>)

### **Languages in News**

#### *International Mother Language Day 2020*

International Mother Language Day is celebrated across the globe on 21st February to celebrate the linguistic diversity that exists in the world. UNESCO has identified over 7000 languages that are used (read, written and spoken) in different countries across the world and 21st February has been marked to celebrate this 'Multilingualism'. MHRD also observed Matribhasha Diwas on 21st Feb to highlight the linguistic diversity of our country.

#### *Theme for 2020*

The central theme for International Mother Language Day 2020 is 'Languages without borders'. According to UNESCO, 'local, cross-border languages can promote peaceful dialogue and help to preserve indigenous heritage'.

#### *Importance for India*

India celebrated its cultural heritage under the aegis of 'Unity in Diversity' principle and languages are not an exception to this. India has 22 officially recognised languages, 1635 rationalised mother tongues, 234 identifiable mother tongues, according to Census 2001. This makes International Mother Language Day especially significant in the Indian context. Especially, with this year's theme being 'Languages without borders', it gives the diverse linguistic heritage of India to showcase its strength of how it has managed to house so many languages within the same geographic boundaries and used it as a tool to facilitate dialogue for conflict resolution.

#### *National Hindi Divas*

Hindi Divas is celebrated every year on September 14, marking the significance of the day when the



country's Constituent Assembly adopted Hindi as the official language of India. Hindi, which is written in the Devanagiri script, is one of the 22 scheduled languages of the country. Hindi is one of the official languages of the Union Government, with the other being English. Hindi Diwas is celebrated across the country by schools through poems, stories and cultural as well as literary programmes held to educate children. Social media users also take the opportunity to share quotes and poems to celebrate Hindi Diwas.

According to the organization Ethnologue, Hindi is the third most spoken language in the world.

The President of the country on this day presents the Rajbhasha awards in Delhi's Vigyan Bhawan to those who have contributed immensely to the growth and promotion of Hindi.

*Inclusion of Nepali and Santhali languages in the Scheme for grant of Senior/Junior Fellowships of Ministry of Culture and Tourism*

The Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism Shri Prahlad Singh Patel informed that 2 languages- Nepali and Santhali from the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution will be included in the Sub-Field of Field 'Literature' in the scheme component 'Award of Senior/Junior Fellowships to Outstanding Artistes in the Fields of Culture'. The Ministry of Culture regulates a scheme component namely Award of Senior/Junior Fellowships to Outstanding Artistes in the Fields of Culture. The Nodal Institute for handling the Scheme of Sr./Jr. Fellowship till selection process is the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT), Dwarka, Gujarat.

*Highest number of living languages*

According to Ethnologue, a directory of languages which lists 7,111 living languages (languages that are still being used and spoken by people) worldwide, Pacific island nation of Papua New Guinea, Country in Oceania tops the list with 840 living languages.

## **NATIONAL SYMBOLS**

National Symbols are intrinsic to the Indian identity and heritage. Indians of all demographics backgrounds across the world are proud of these National Symbols as they infuse a sense of pride and patriotism in every Indian's heart.

### ***National Flag***



The National Flag is a horizontal tricolour of deep saffron (kesaria) at the top, white in the middle and dark green at the bottom in equal proportion. The ratio of width of the flag to its length is two to three. In the centre of the white band is a navy-blue wheel having 24 spokes which represents the chakra.

The top saffron colour, indicates the strength and courage of the country. The white middle band indicates peace and truth with Dharma Chakra. The green shows the fertility, growth and auspiciousness of the land.

Its design is that of the wheel which appears on the abacus of the Sarnath Lion Capital of Ashoka. Its diameter approximates to the width of the white band and it has 24 spokes. The design of the National Flag was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India on 22 July 1947.

### **National Currency**

Indian Rupee is the official currency of the Republic of India and controlled by the Reserve Bank of India. The new symbol was officially adopted in 2010 and started in circulation on 8 July 2011.



### **State Emblem**



The state emblem is an adaptation from the Sarnath Lion Capital of Ashoka. In the original, there are four lions, standing back to back, mounted on an abacus with a frieze carrying sculptures in high relief of an elephant, a galloping horse, a bull and a lion separated by intervening wheels over a bell-shaped lotus. Carved out of a single block of polished sandstone, the Capital is crowned by the Wheel of the Law (Dharma Chakra).

### **National Bird**

The Indian peacock, *Pavo cristatus*, the National Bird of India, is a colourful, swan-sized bird, with a fan-shaped crest of feathers, a white patch under the eye and a long, slender neck. The male of the species is more colourful than the female, with a glistening blue breast and neck and a spectacular bronze-green tail of around 200 elongated feathers. The female is brownish, slightly smaller than the male and lacks the tail. The elaborate courtship dance of the male, fanning out the tail and preening its feathers is a gorgeous sight.



### **National Animal**



The magnificent tiger, *Panthera tigris* is a striped animal. It has a thick yellow coat of fur with dark stripes. The combination of grace, strength, agility and enormous power has earned the tiger its pride of place as the national animal of India.

### **National Flower**

Lotus (*Nelumbo Nucifera Gaertn*) is the National Flower of India. It is a sacred flower and occupies a unique position in the art and mythology of ancient India and has been an auspicious symbol of Indian culture since time immemorial.



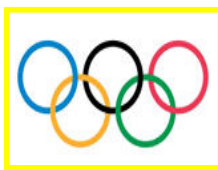
India is rich in flora. Currently available data place India in the tenth position in

the world and fourth in Asia in plant diversity. From about 70 per cent geographical area surveyed so far, 47,000 species of plants have been described by the Botanical Survey of India (BSI).

(For more details, please visit, <https://knowindia.gov.in/national-identity-elements/>)

### **Olympic Symbol**

#### *Definition*



“The Olympic symbol consists of five interlaced rings of equal dimensions (the Olympic rings), used alone, in one or in five different colours. When used in its five-colour version, these colours shall be, from left to right, blue, yellow, black, green and red. The rings are interlaced from left to right; the blue, black and red rings are situated at the top, the yellow and green rings at the bottom in accordance with the following graphic reproduction.” (Olympic Charter, Rule 8)

#### *Meaning*

“The Olympic symbol expresses the activity of the Olympic Movement and represents the union of the five continents and the meeting of athletes from throughout the world at the Olympic Games.” (Olympic Charter, Rule 8).

Some other symbols used in Olympic are as under :



## AWARDS AND HONOUR

The Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honours of India announced annually on the eve of Republic Day. The award seeks to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.

The Padma Awards are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year. The nomination process is open to the public. Even self-nomination can be made.

### **History and Relevance**

The Government of India instituted two civilian awards-Bharat Ratna & Padma Vibhushan in 1954. The latter had three classes namely Pahela Varg, Dusra Varg and Tisra Varg. These were subsequently renamed as Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri vide Presidential Notification issued on January 8, 1955.

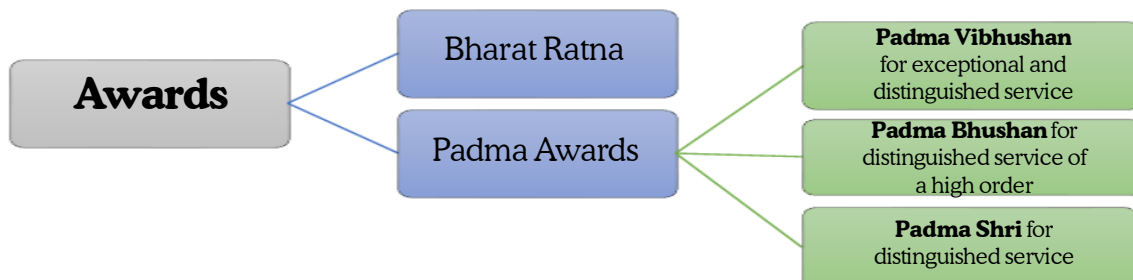
### **Bharat Ratna**

Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian award of the country. It is awarded in recognition of exceptional service/performance of the highest order in any field of human endeavour. It is treated on a different footing from Padma Award. The recommendations for Bharat Ratna are made by the Prime Minister to the President of India. No formal recommendations for Bharat Ratna are necessary. The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of three in a particular year. Government has conferred Bharat Ratna Award on 48 persons as on September 25, 2019. Shri Pranab Mukherjee (Veteran Leader and Statesman-13th President of India and Former Minister of Finance, Defense and External Affairs), Shri Nanaji Deshmukh (posthumously) (Veteran Social Worker whose work in the fields of education, health and particularly rural development built a new paradigm for empowering our villages), Shri Bhupen Hazarika (posthumously) (Legendary singer, lyricist, and poet whose music radiated the message of justice, harmony and brotherhood- popularised India's musical traditions globally) were the recipient of the Award for the year 2019.

### **Padma Awards**

Padma Awards, which were instituted in the year 1954, is announced every year on the occasion of Republic Day except for brief interruption(s) during the years 1978 and 1979 and 1993 to 1997.

The award is given in three categories, namely,



All persons without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex are eligible for these awards. However, Government servants including those working with PSUs, except doctors and scientists, are not eligible for these Awards.

The award seeks to recognize works of distinction and is given for distinguished and exceptional achievements/service in all fields of activities/disciplines.

These awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March/ April every year. In the year 2020, President has approved conferment of 141 Padma Awards including 4 duo cases (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one). The list comprises 7 Padma Vibhushan, 16 Padma Bhushan and 118 Padma Shri Awards. 33 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 18 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI and 12 Posthumous awardees. The complete list can be accessed by clicking the link <http://www.dashboard-padmaawards.gov.in/>. A summary of Awards bestowed as on February 03, 2020 are as under:

Bharat Ratna	48
Padma Vibhushan	314
Padma Bhushan	1271
Padma Shri	3123

### **Awards in the field of Cinema**

#### ***Dadasaheb Phalke Award***

To honour the Father of Indian Cinema, Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, the National Film Awards named the most prestigious and coveted award of Indian Cinema after him. He is the man who made the first Indian Feature film Raja Harishchandra in 1913. Popularly known as Dadasaheb Phalke, he then went on to make 95 films and 26 short films in a span of 19 years. The Dadasaheb Phalke Award was introduced in 1969 by the government to recognise the contribution of film personalities towards the development of Indian Cinema. The first recipient of this award was Devika Rani.

Dadasaheb Phalke Award is given to a film personality for his/her outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian Cinema. The award comprises of a Swarna Kamal, a cash Prize of Rs. 10,00,000/- (Rupees Ten Lakhs) certificate, silk scroll and a shawl.

Bollywood megastar Shri Amitabh Bachchan has honoured with India's highest award in cinema, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award on December 29, 2019. He was conferred the prestigious film honour for his 'outstanding contribution for the growth and development of Indian cinema'. The award comes in the year that marks Amitabh Bachchan's golden jubilee (50 years) in cinema.

## **Some other International Awards in News recently**

### ***The King Hamad Order of the Renaissance and Order of Zayed Award***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been conferred the King Hamad Order of the Renaissance by Bahrain's King Hamad Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa in recognition of his efforts to strengthen bilateral relations with the key Gulf nation during his visit to Bahrain in August, 2019. Narendra Modi, the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Bahrain to receive the honour. The King bestowed Bahrain Order - First Class on Prime Minister Modi in recognition of his efforts to strengthen bilateral relations with the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Abu Dhabi crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan also honoured Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the 'Order of Zayed', the UAE's highest civilian award during his visit to UAE, in recognition of his pivotal role in building the strategic relationship between the two countries.

### ***Order of St. Andrew Award***

Order of St. Andrew the Apostle' is awarded to prominent statesmen, public figures and those working in the fields of science, culture and arts in recognition of their exceptional services in promoting prosperity and glory of Russia. The order can also be awarded to foreign heads of state for outstanding services. The Order of St Andrew the Apostle is the highest order of the Russian Federation. The foreign awardees of the award included President of China Xi Jinping, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Geydar Aliev.

The award ceremony is usually held at the St. Andrew Hall of the Grand Kremlin Palace.

The Order was established in 1698 by Tsar Peter the Great, in honour of Saint Andrew, the first apostle of Jesus and patron saint of Russia.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was honoured with Russia's highest state decoration, the Order of St Andrew the Apostle in April 2019, for 'exceptional services' in promoting special and privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India and friendly relations between the Russian and Indian peoples.

### ***Order of the Distinguished Rule of Nishan Izzuddin***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the Maldives' highest honour 'Rule of Nishan Izzuddeen' during his two-day state visit to Maldives in June 2019, in recognition of the many services he has performed to cement the longstanding, amicable ties between the two countries, and for the assistance Indian government continues to provide to the Maldives under PM Modi's stewardship. The Most Honourable Order of the Distinguished Rule of Nishan Izzuddeen is the Maldives' highest honour accorded to foreign dignitaries.

### ***Global Goalkeeper Award***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the Global Goalkeeper award by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan launched by Indian government. The award was

presented by Bill Gates to PM Modi in New York on September 25, 2019. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, or the Clean India Mission, was one of the first few ambitious projects that PM Modi launched in his first term at the Centre in 2014. This award recognizes the progress India has made in providing safe sanitation under his leadership.

## INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY

### ***Namaste Trump event, February 24, 2020***

US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump visited India on February 24, 2020 along with daughter Ivanka Trump and son-in-law Jared Kushner. President Trump was welcomed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport. President Trump attended the 'Namaste Trump' event at the newly-constructed Motera Cricket Stadium at Ahmedabad. The 'Namaste Trump' event was witnessed by three-hour-long cultural programme and Trump's interaction with the people of Gujarat at the Motera Stadium.

President Trump's Ahmedabad visit was the first leg of his two-day visit to India. Later, he visited Taj Mahal, Agra on February 24, 2020 and New Delhi on February 25, 2020. During the State visit of President Donald J. Trump, following documents were concluded:

S.No	Title	Nodal Entity on the India side	Nodal Entity on the US side
1	Memorandum of Understanding on Mental Health	Department of Health and Family Welfare of the Government of the Republic of India	Department of Health and Human Services of the Government of the United States of America.
2	Memorandum of Understanding on the Safety of Medical Products	Central Drugs Standard Control Organization within the Directorate General of Health Services of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Republic of India	Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services of the United States of America.
3	Letter of Cooperation	Indian Oil Corporation Limited and ExxonMobil India LNG Limited	Chart Industries Inc.

### ***Howdy Modi event, September 2019***

*How PM's Outreach With 'Howdy Modi' Will Help Cement India's Image Abroad*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi played host to US President Donald Trump at Houston's NRG Stadium for an event during September 22, 2019 that saw around 50,000 Indian-Americans in attendance. No US President has ever addressed a community event along with an Indian Prime Minister before this. The event highlighted the sharp shift in Indian diplomacy and the new levels of India-US bilateral



relations. The event showcased the heightened friendship and warmth between two leaders, one representing the most powerful nation (USA) of the globe and the other the largest democracy of the world (India). PM Modi and Trump went way out of the way to show their unparalleled solidarity. The event also showed how the US is interested in exploring new avenues of cooperation with India. The event also sent out a very strong message that the US-led by Donald Trump is standing firmly with India in its fight against terrorism.

### ***Visit to the Far East Region of Russia***

PM Modi's visit to the Far East Region of Russia aims to diversify and further strengthen the bonds of the two nation's robust bilateral relations. PM Modi is the first Indian Prime Minister to ever visit this region. The key objective behind this visit is to participate in the 5th Eastern Economic Forum as the Chief Guest at the invitation of the Russian President and to conduct the 20th India-Russia Annual Summit.

India and Russia enjoy close bilateral relations, based on the strong foundation of their special and Privileged Strategic Partnership. India and Russia share strong military, trade and investment relations. Both the nations cooperate in the strategic fields of defence, civil nuclear energy and peaceful uses of space. Their relations are complemented by a desire to promote a multipolar world. India and Russia are also a part of the BRICS group of major emerging economies along with Brazil, China and South Africa. India and Russia are also a part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which is an east-Asian political, economic and security alliance.

### ***Defence Ministerial Meeting***

India and Japan organised a Defence Ministerial meeting, co-chaired by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Japanese Defence Minister Takeshi Iwaya, in Tokyo on September 2, 2019. The meeting involved discussions on various issues of mutual concern such as ways to further strengthen the existing bilateral co-operative arrangements and adopt new initiatives towards achieving peace and security in the region. Overall, India and Japan realized the need to strengthen Defence Equipment and Technology Co-operation.

### ***India signed 3 MoUs with Bahrain***

During the official talks between the two countries, India and Bahrain expressed satisfaction with the current state of bilateral relations and agreed to further broaden and deepen the engagement in diverse fields of mutual interest, and underlined the importance of enhancing high-level political exchanges, defence and higher education cooperation, trade and economic relations and people-to-people linkages. The two sides also noted the increasing trend of bilateral trade and existing potential for two-way investments reaffirmed their desire to provide favourable environments for trade and investments. MoUs in the area of Space Technology, International Solar Alliance and Cultural Exchange Programme were signed between two countries.

India and Bahrain, both sides reaffirmed their commitment towards reformed multilateralism and underlined the need to strengthen and reform multilateral system and institutions to address the aspirations of the developing countries.



The two nations also agreed that regional connectivity projects should be based on international law including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. They also reaffirmed the commitment to pluralism, values of tolerance, peaceful coexistence and religious freedom.

### ***Signing of MoUs with Bhutan***

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi during his visit to Bhutan in August 2019 discussed wide-ranging steps to strengthen the relationship with Bhutan and signed 10 MoUs in Power, IT, Education, Space research and Aviation sectors.

Apart from this, PM Modi announced an additional \$100 million to Bhutan under the SAARC currency swap framework to meet foreign exchange requirements. He along with Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering jointly inaugurated the SATCOM network and Ground Earth Station, developed with the assistance from ISRO for utilisation of South Asia Satellite in Bhutan.

### ***G20 Summit 2019 –Prime Minister met Saudi Crown Prince***

During his visit to G20 Summit at Osaka, Prime Minister had bilateral talks with Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed Bin Salman and discussed about deepening cooperation in trade and investment, energy security and counter-terrorism. Saudi Arabia is India's top supplier of crude oil but the two countries have expanded their relationship beyond energy, and their governments have agreed to build a strategic partnership.

The purpose of International diplomacy is to strengthen the state, nation, or organization it serves in relation to others by advancing the interests in its charge. To this end, diplomatic activity endeavours to maximize a group's advantages without the risk and expense of using force and preferably without causing resentment. It habitually strives to preserve peace; diplomacy is strongly inclined toward negotiation to achieve agreements and resolve issues between states. Even in times of peace, diplomacy may involve coercive threats of economic or other punitive measures or demonstrations of the capability to impose unilateral solutions to disputes by the application of military power. However, diplomacy normally seeks to develop goodwill toward the state it represents, nurturing relations with foreign nations and peoples that will ensure their cooperation.

## **ART AND CULTURE**

### ***Five archaeological locations to be developed into 'Iconic Sites'***

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in her Union budget 2020 speech that five archeological locations of India will be developed as 'iconic sites'. Each site will have an on-site museum. These five archeological locations are – Sivasagar (Assam), Rakhigarhi (Haryana), Dholavira (Gujarat), Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh) and Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu).

### ***550th Anniversary of Guru Nanak***

Recently, the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak was celebrated. On this occasion, the Kartarpur corridor was inaugurated. The corridor connects Dera Bana Nanak in Gurudaspur district in India with Gurudwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Pakistan to facilitate the visit of Indian pilgrims.

On October 24, 2019, India signed the Agreement with Pakistan for the operationalization of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor at Zero Point, International Boundary. The representatives from Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Home Affairs and the representatives from Punjab Government were present during the ceremony.

### ***Bharti Huda Site***

As per the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), a rural settlement had thrived at Bharati Huda in Jalalpur village in Odisha's Cuttack district, about 3600 years ago.

- This is based on the ancient artefacts and grain discovered by the ASI from the mentioned site in the year 2018.
- The age of the settlement was arrived at after radiocarbon dating of charcoal samples found at the site by the Inter University Accelerator Centre (IUAC) in New Delhi using Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS).

### ***Other Findings***

- The excavated site indicates existence of Chalcolithic culture in the valley as attested by the presence of mud structural remains, large quantity of potsherds, ground and polished stone tools, bone tools, beads of semi-precious stones, terracotta objects, huge quantity of faunal remains and carbonized grains.
- The site has cultural similarity with Golabai Sasan, Suabarei and other excavated and explored sites in the Mahanadi delta and partial similarity with the chalcolithic sites of middle Mahanadi valley and sites of central and eastern India.
- The inhabitants practised agriculture and animal husbandry as attested by the findings of domesticated varieties of rice and jute and evidence of domesticated cattle among the faunal remains as well as terracotta bull figurine.

### ***Virasat-e-Khalsa Museum***

Recently, the Asia Book of Records has listed the Virasat-e-Khalsa museum in Punjab's Anandpur Sahib town as the most visited museum on a single day in the Asian sub-continent.

The museum had witnessed a record footfall of 20,569 visitors on a single day on March 20, becoming the most visited museum in the Indian sub-continent on a single day.

### ***Iconic Tourist Sites Initiative***

The Government has recently launched the Iconic Tourist Sites Initiative. Under this initiative, 17 "Iconic Tourist Sites" will be developed by the government into world class tourist destinations to serve as a model for other tourism sites. The selected sites are as under:

- Taj Mahal & Fatehpur Sikri (Uttar Pradesh)

- Ajanta and Ellora (Maharashtra)
- Humayun Tomb, Qutub Minar and Red Fort (Delhi)
- Colva Beach (Goa)
- Amer Fort (Rajasthan)
- Somnath and Dholavira (Gujarat)
- Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh)
- Hampi (Karnataka)
- Mahablipuram (Tamil Nadu)
- Kaziranga (Assam)
- Kumarakom (Kerala)
- Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar)

The initiative will endeavour for the overall development from the tourism point of view, in and around these sites - which includes roads and infrastructure, hotels and lodges, connectivity and access.

Ministry of Tourism is the Nodal agency to implement the initiative.

## Sample Questions

1. Who has been appointed as the Interim Leader of International Monetary Fund's (IMF) recently?  
**(a) David Lipton**  
(b) AmmarHiouani  
(c) Arthur Javadyan  
(d) Nicolas Dujovne
2. Where was the G20 (Group of 20) Summit 2019 held?  
(a) Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
(b) Buenos Aires, Argentina  
**(c) Osaka, Japan**  
(d) Beijing, China
3. Which two countries set an ambitious \$50 billion target for bilateral trade by 2025 during G20 meet?  
(a) India and China  
(b) India and Japan  
**(c) India and Indonesia**  
(d) India and Russia
4. Where was the 43rd Session of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Committee held?  
(a) Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
**(b) Baku, Azerbaijan**  
(c) Yerevan, Armenia  
(d) New York, United States

5. Which film bagged Best Feature Film in 9th Edition of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Film Festival for the year 2019?
- (a) Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi
- (b) Nagarkirtan**
- (c) Gully Boy
- (d) Uri : The Surgical Strike
6. Name the deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), whose tenure was extended for one more year.
- (a) Viral Acharya
- (b) M K Jain
- (c) B P Kanungo
- (d) N S Vishwanathan**
7. Name the entity, to which Dr.NalinShinghal was appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD).
- (a) Bharat Electronics Limited
- (b) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited(BHEL)**
- (c) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation(ONGC)
- (d) GAIL Limited
8. Who among the following conferred with Global Goalkeeper Award recently?
- (a) Rajnath Singh
- (b) S Jaishankar
- (c) NarendraModi**
- (d) Ramnath Kovind
9. Which city hosted the Howdy Modi event wherein PM NarendraModi and US President Donald Trump shared the stage together?
- (a) Houston**

- (b) Boston
  - (c) Las Vegas
  - (d) New York
10. When is the International Day of Sign Languages observed across the world every year?
- (a) 21st September
  - (b) 22nd September
  - (c) 23rd September**
  - (d) 24th September

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***Lesson 2***

**FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**



## CURRENT DEVELOPMENT IN BANKING

### Brief about Reserve Bank of India

The Reserve Bank of India was established on April 1, 1935 in accordance with the provisions of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

The Central Office of the Reserve Bank was initially established in Calcutta but was permanently moved to Mumbai in 1937. The Central Office is where the Governor sits and where policies are formulated.

Though originally privately owned, since nationalisation in 1949, the Reserve Bank is fully owned by the Government of India.

Some of the main functions of RBI are as under:

### Main Functions of RBI

- Monetary Authority
- Regulator and supervisor of the financial system
- Manager of Foreign Exchange
- Issuer of Currency
- Development Role
- Regulator and supervisor of Payment and Settlement Systems
- Related Functions

i. *Monetary Authority*

- Formulates, implements and monitors the monetary policy.
- Objective: maintaining price stability while keeping in mind the objective of growth.

ii. *Regulator and Supervisor of the Financial System*

- Prescribes broad parameters of banking operations within which the country's banking and financial system functions.
- Objective: maintain public confidence in the system, protect depositors' interest and provide cost-effective banking services to the public.

- iii. *Manager of Foreign Exchange*
  - Manages the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999.
  - Objective: to facilitate external trade and payment and promote orderly development and maintenance of foreign exchange market in India.
- iv. *Issuer of Currency*
  - Issues and exchanges or destroys currency and coins not fit for circulation.
  - Objective: to give the public adequate quantity of supplies of currency notes and coins and in good quality.
- v. *Developmental Role*
  - Performs a wide range of promotional functions to support national objectives.
- vi. *Regulator and Supervisor of Payment and Settlement Systems*
  - Introduces and upgrades safe and efficient modes of payment systems in the country to meet the requirements of the public at large.
  - Objective: maintain public confidence in payment and settlement system
- vii. *Related Functions*
  - Banker to the Government: performs merchant banking function for the central and the state governments; also acts as their banker.
  - Banker to banks: maintains banking accounts of all scheduled banks.

RBI has 27 regional offices, most of them in state capitals and 04 Sub-offices. Banking Sector in news

### **Announcement in Union Budget 2020**

In Union Budget 2020, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Finance Minister announced the following related to:

#### **Financial Sector**

- Governance reforms to be carried out to bring in transparency and greater professionalism in PSBs. Few PSBs to be encouraged to approach the capital market to raise additional capital.
- Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) has been permitted to increase Deposit Insurance Coverage for a depositor, which is now Rs. one lakh to Rs. five lakh per depositor.
- Scheduled Commercial Bank's health under monitoring through a robust mechanism, keeping depositors' money safe.

- Cooperative Banks will be strengthened by amending Banking Regulation Act for increasing professionalism, enabling access to capital and improving governance and oversight for sound banking through the RBI.
- The limit for NBFCs to be eligible for debt recovery under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act 2002 is proposed to be reduced from Rs. 500 crore to asset size of Rs. 100 crore or loan size from existing Rs. 1 crore to Rs. 50 lakh.
- To meet the need for greater private capital, it is proposed to sell the balance holding of Government of India IDBI Bank to private, retail and institutional investors through the stock exchange.

### **Financial Market**

- Deepening Bond Market
  - Certain specified categories of Government securities to be opened fully for non-resident investors also.
  - FPI limit in corporate bonds increased to 15% from 9% of its outstanding stock.
- New legislation to be formulated for laying down a mechanism for netting of financial contracts.
  - Scope of credit default swaps to expand.
- Debt Based Exchange Traded Fund expanded by a new Debt-ETF consisting primarily of Government Securities.
  - To give attractive access to retail investors, pension funds and long-term investors.
- A Partial Credit Guarantee scheme for the NBFCs formulated post the Union budget 2019-20 to address their liquidity constraints.

### **Mega Bank Merger**

Ten big public sector banks (PSBs) have been merged into four. India will now have 12 Public Sector Banks from 27 in 2017. The merger of banks was announced by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on August 30, 2019. The banks which were merged together are Punjab National Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, United Bank of India, Indian Bank, Allahabad Bank, Canara Bank, Syndicate Bank, Union Bank of India, Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank. The government also unveiled governance reforms in public sector banks, providing their boards greater autonomy, flexibility to fix sitting fee of independent directors, longer term to directors at management committee of boards.

### Key Highlights

- Punjab National Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India to merge to form the country's second-largest lender.
- The merger of Syndicate Bank with Canara Bank will create the fourth largest public sector bank with Rs 15.20 lakh crore business and a branch network of 10,324 branches.
- Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank's merger with Union Bank of India will create India's fifth largest public sector bank with Rs 14.59 lakh crore business and 9,609 branches.
- The merger of Allahabad Bank with Indian Bank will create the seventh largest public sector bank with Rs 8.08 lakh crore business with strong branch networks in the south, north and east of the country.

<i>Anchor bank</i>	<i>Amalgamating bank</i>	<i>PSB rank by size</i>
Punjab National Bank	Oriental Bank of Commerce United Bank of India	2nd largest
Canara Bank	Syndicate Bank	4th largest
Union Bank of India	Andhra Bank Corporation Bank	5th largest
Indian Bank	Allahabad Bank	7th largest

*Source: Finance ministry*

Motive behind the merger of PSBs are enhanced capacity to increase credit; Banks with a strong national presence and international reach; Reduction in lending cost; Next Generation technology for the banking sector; improved ability to raise market resources.

### **Revision in norms for concurrent audit system of banks**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revised the norms for concurrent audit system of banks. Concurrent audit aims at shortening the interval between a transaction and its independent examination. Some of the revised norms included the option to consider whether concurrent audit should be done by bank's own staff or external auditors (which may include retired staff of its own bank) continues to be left to the discretion of individual banks.

The revised norms state that head of internal audit in the bank should participate in selection of concurrent auditors where such function is outsourced and should be responsible for the quality review (including skills of the staff employed) of the work of the concurrent auditors reporting to her/

him. The norms further stated that the bank should frame a policy for fixing accountability in cases of serious acts of omission or commission noticed in the working of bank's own staff or retired staff, working as concurrent auditors.

A quarterly review containing important features brought out during concurrent audits should be placed before the Audit Committee of the Board of Directors (ACB)/Local Management Committee ((LMC). The zone-wise findings of concurrent audit may be reported to ACB/LMC on a quarterly basis.

### ***Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, 2019***

The Parliament approved the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2019. It will help to tackle the menace of illicit deposit taking activities in the country, which at present are exploiting regulatory gaps and lack of strict administrative measures to dupe poor and gullible people of their hard earned savings.

The Act provides for a mechanism to ban unregulated deposit schemes and protect the interest of depositors.

It amends three laws, i.e the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992, and the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002.

### ***State Bank of India revised Service Charges w.e.f. October 01, 2019***

The State Bank of India has revised service charges for deposits and withdrawal on October 1 encompassing cash withdrawal, average monthly balance, deposits and withdrawals which affect scores of customers in many ways.

On maintenance of average monthly balance (AMB), starting October 1, SBI has reduced the minimum average monthly balance requirement for urban centers from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 3,000.

Under the revised rules, if someone does not maintain Rs 3,000 as average monthly balance and falls short by 50 per cent (that is Rs 1,500) the individual will be charged Rs. 10 plus GST. If the account holder falls short by more than 75 percent, it will invite a fine of Rs. 15 plus GST.

In semi-urban branches, SBI account holder needs to maintain an average monthly balance of Rs 2,000. In rural branches, the minimum average monthly balance will be Rs 1,000.

If the shortfall is less than 50 per cent for semi-urban branches, then the extra charge will be Rs 7.50 plus GST. For between 50-75 per cent, the fine is Rs 10 plus GST and for above 75 per cent shortfall, the charge will be Rs 12 plus GST.

In case of AMB of Rs 1,000 at rural branches, a shortfall of less than 50 per cent , charges are Rs 5 plus GST. For shortfall of over 50 per cent up to 75 per cent, the fees will be Rs 7.50 plus GST, while shortfall over 75 percent will attract fine of Rs 10 + GST.

National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) and Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) charges have also changed. While NEFT and RTGS transactions through digital means are free, fees are imposed at branches.

NEFT transaction up to Rs 10,000, will invite Rs 2 plus GST charges. For a transaction above Rs 2 lakh via NEFT, the bank will charge Rs 20 plus GST. For RTGS transfer between Rs 2 lakh to Rs 5 lakh, a customer must pay Rs 20 plus GST. RTGS transfer above Rs 5 lakh will be charged Rs 40 plus GST.

As per the new charges on Deposits and Withdrawals, cash deposits in savings account will be free for up to 3 transactions in a month. After that, the account holder will be charged Rs 50 plus GST for every transaction.

The maximum limit for deposit of cash at non-home branch is Rs 2 lakh per day. Thereafter, the non-home branch manager gets to decide if the bank can accept more cash.

Meanwhile, account holders with an average monthly balance of Rs 25,000 can perform free cash withdrawal twice a month. Those with average monthly balances between Rs 25,000 to Rs 50,000 can avail 10 free cash withdrawals. Charges for transactions beyond the free limit are Rs 50 plus GST. For above Rs 50,000 up to 1,00,000, the charges are Rs 15 plus GST, while those above Rs 1,00,000 have unlimited transactions.

### ***RBI restricts PMC Bank's operations***

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had put Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank under directions for six months. This means a restriction on the bank's functions like lending and withdrawals by customers. As per directions, a depositor will be allowed to withdraw a sum not exceeding ₹ 1,000 (Rupees one thousand only) of the total balance in every savings bank account or current account or any other deposit account by whatever name called, subject to conditions stipulated in the RBI Directions. Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank Limited, Mumbai, Maharashtra without prior approval in writing from the Reserve Bank, will also not be able to grant or renew any loans and advances, make any investment, incur any liability including borrowal of funds and acceptance of fresh deposits, disburse or agree to disburse any payment whether in discharge of its liabilities and obligations or otherwise, enter into any compromise or arrangement and sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of any of its properties or assets except as notified in the RBI directions dated September 23, 2019. The directions shall remain in force for a period of six months from the close of business of the bank on September 23, 2019.

### ***ICICI Bank to open 450 new branches***

On September 23, 2019, ICICI Bank announced expansion of its retail network in the country by adding 450 new branches in FY'20. Of these, the Bank has already added 320 branches so far and has also crossed the milestone of having 5,000 branches across the country. The milestone branch was set up at Thane in Maharashtra.

*(For further details, please visit <https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/NotificationUser.aspx>)*

## **CURRENT DEVELOPMENT IN FINANCE/STOCK MARKETS**

### ***Disinvestment in LIC***

On disinvestment, the Finance Minister in her Union Budget 2020 speech announced to sell a part of its holding in LIC by way of Initial Public Offer (IPO). She mentioned that listing of companies on stock exchanges discipline a company and provides access to financial markets and unlocks its value. It also gives opportunity for retail investors to participate in the wealth so created.

### ***Tax Concession for Foreign Investments***

In order to incentivize the investment by the Sovereign Wealth Fund of foreign Governments in the priority sectors, the Union Budget 2020 proposed to grant 100% tax exemption to the interest, dividend and capital gains income in respect of investment made in infrastructure and other notified sectors before 31st March, 2024 and with a minimum lock-in period of 3 years.

### ***Abolition of Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) and Concessional Corporate Tax***

In order to increase the attractiveness of the Indian Equity Market and to provide relief to a large class of investors, Union Budget 2020 has proposed to remove DDT, and adopt the classical system of dividend taxation, under which the companies would not be required to pay DDT. The dividend shall be taxed only in the hands of the recipients at their applicable rate. The move will encourage more distribution of profits by companies, thereby also increasing the purchasing power of shareholders. It will attract Global investors and more funds into the economy to set up their operation in India. In order to remove the cascading effect, it has also proposed to allow deduction for the dividend received by holding company from its subsidiary.

India stays globally competitive and a favoured destination for investment, a bold historic decision has been taken to reduce the corporate tax rate for new companies in the manufacturing sector to an unprecedented level of 15%. For existing companies, the rate has been brought down to 22%. As a result, corporate tax rates are now amongst the lowest in the world.

### ***Reduction of Corporate Tax Rates***

Government has brought in the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2019 to make certain amendments in the Income-tax Act 1961 and the Finance (No. 2) Act 2019. This was announced by the Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt Nirmala Sitaraman during the Press Conference in Goa on September 20, 2019. The salient features of these amendments are as under:

- a. In order to promote growth and investment, a new provision has been inserted in the Income-tax Act with effect from FY 2019-20 which allows any domestic company an option to pay income-tax at the rate of 22% subject to condition that they will not avail any exemption/incentive. The effective tax rate for these companies shall be 25.17% inclusive of surcharge & cess. Also, such companies shall not be required to pay Minimum Alternate Tax.
- b. In order to attract fresh investment in manufacturing and thereby provide boost to 'Make-in-



- India' initiative of the Government, another new provision has been inserted in the Income-tax Act with effect from FY 2019-20 which allows any new domestic company incorporated on or after 1st October 2019 making fresh investment in manufacturing, an option to pay income-tax at the rate of 15%. This benefit is available to companies which do not avail any exemption/incentive and commences their production on or before 31st March, 2023. The effective tax rate for these companies shall be 17.01% inclusive of surcharge & cess. Also, such companies shall not be required to pay Minimum Alternate Tax.
- c. A company which does not opt for the concessional tax regime and avails the tax exemption/incentive shall continue to pay tax at the pre-amended rate. However, these companies can opt for the concessional tax regime after expiry of their tax holiday/exemption period. After the exercise of the option they shall be liable to pay tax at the rate of 22% and option once exercised cannot be subsequently withdrawn. Further, in order to provide relief to companies which continue to avail exemptions/incentives, the rate of Minimum Alternate Tax has been reduced from existing 18.5% to 15%.
  - d. In order to stabilise the flow of funds into the capital market, it is provided that enhanced surcharge introduced by the Finance (No.2) Act, 2019 shall not apply on capital gains arising on sale of equity share in a company or a unit of an equity oriented fund or a unit of a business trust liable for securities transaction tax, in the hands of an individual, HUF, AOP, BOI and AJP.
  - e. The enhanced surcharge shall also not apply to capital gains arising on sale of any security including derivatives, in the hands of Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs).
  - f. In order to provide relief to listed companies which have already made a public announcement of buy-back before 5th July 2019, it is provided that tax on buy-back of shares in case of such companies shall not be charged.
  - g. The Government has also decided to expand the scope of CSR 2 percent spending. Now CSR 2% fund can be spent on incubators funded by Central or State Government or any agency or Public Sector Undertaking of Central or State Government, and, making contributions to public funded Universities, IITs, National Laboratories and Autonomous Bodies (established under the auspices of ICAR, ICMR, CSIR, DAE, DRDO, DST, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) engaged in conducting research in science, technology, engineering and medicine aimed at promoting SDGs.

## Sample Questions

1. The Reserve Bank of India barred which of the following bank from doing business for six months?
  - (a) Mizoram Co-operative Apex Bank
  - (b) Repco Bank
  - (c) TNSC Bank
  - (d) Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative Bank**
2. Which bank has revised the service charges for deposits, cash withdrawals, non-maintenance in Average Monthly Balance (AMB) from October 1, 2019?
  - (a) ICICI Bank
  - (b) State Bank of India**
  - (c) Canara Bank
  - (d) HDFC Bank
3. Who has launched Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS) Services recently?
  - (a) State Bank of India
  - (b) India Post Payments Bank**
  - (c) NABARD
  - (d) Punjab National Bank
4. Name the new Export Credit Insurance Scheme (ECIS) launched by Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) to ease the lending of loan to exporters.
  - (a) NIRVIK (Niryat RinVaigyanik Yojana)
  - (b) NIRVIK (Niryat RinVikash Yojana)**
  - (c) NIRVIK (Niryat Rashtriya Vikash Yojana)
  - (d) NIRVIK (Niryat Rashtriya Vaigyanik Yojana)

5. Which Payment bank has launched “Bharosa” savings account services by which customer can get personal accident insurance up to Rs 5 Lakh, even with the minimum balance of Rs.500?

**(a) Airtel Payments Bank**

(b) India Post Payments Bank

(c) Jio Payments Bank

(d) Paytm Payments Bank

6. Which Bank’s president, Take hiko Nakao has announced his resignation effective from January 16, 2020?

(a) New Development Bank

(b) African Development Bank

(c) World Bank

**(d) Asian Development Bank (ADB)**

7. Who will head the committee constituted by Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to suggest possible measures and regulations in creating the ‘social stock exchanges’ ?

(a) Ananta Barua

(b) Ajay Tyagi

(c) Madhabi Puri Buch

**(d) Ishaat Hussain**

8. Who headed the expert committee that recommended Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to revise the guidelines on concurrent audit system?

**(a) Yezdi Hirji Malegam**

(b) T. N. Manoharan

(c) Kamlesh Shivji Vikamsey

(d) Swaminathan Gurumurthy

9. What is the increased loan limit for small exporters sanctioned by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in order to boost credit to the export sector?
- (a) Rs 30 crore
  - (b) Rs 20 crore
  - (c) Rs 25 crore
  - (d) Rs 40 crore**
10. Who was appointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Federal Bank?
- (a) Shyam Srinivasan**
  - (b) Shubhalakshmi Panse
  - (c) Balakrishnan Krishnamurthy
  - (d) Siddhartha Sengupta

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***Lesson 3***

**POLITICAL AFFAIRS**

## CURRENT POLITICAL SCENARIO

### Union Council of Ministers (as compiled on February 04,2020)

Source: <https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/union-council-ministers-2019>

<b>Shri Narendra Modi</b>	<p><b>Prime Minister</b> and also in-charge of:</p> <p>Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions;</p> <p>Department of Atomic Energy;</p> <p>Department of Space; and</p> <p>All important policy issues; and All other portfolios not allocated to any Minister.</p>
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### Cabinet Ministers

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|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Shri Raj Nath Singh        | Minister of Defence   |
| 2. Shri Amit Shah             | Minister of Home Affairs  |
| 3. Shri Nitin JairamGadkari   | Minister of Road Transport and Highways; and<br>Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises                       |
| 4. Shri D.V. SadanandaGowda   | Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers   |
| 5. Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman    | Minister of Finance; and<br>Minister of Corporate Affairs   |
| 6. Shri Ramvilas Paswan       | Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution  |
| 7. Shri Narendra Singh Tomar  | Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare;<br>Minister of Rural Development; and<br>Minister of Panchayati Raj      |
| 8. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad   | Minister of Law and Justice;<br>Minister of Communications; and<br>Minister of Electronics and Information Technology |
| 9. Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal  | Minister of Food Processing Industries  |
| 10. Shri Thaawar Chand Gehlot | Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment  |

11. Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar Minister of External Affairs
12. Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' Minister of Human Resource Development
13. Shri Arjun Munda Minister of Tribal Affairs
14. Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani Minister of Women and Child Development; and Minister of Textiles
15. Dr. Harsh Vardhan Minister of Health and Family Welfare; Minister of Science and Technology; and Minister of Earth Sciences
16. Shri Prakash Javadekar Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; and Minister of Information and Broadcasting
17. Shri Piyush Goyal Minister of Railways; and Minister of Commerce and Industry
18. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas; and Minister of Steel
19. Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi Minister of Minority Affairs
20. Shri Pralhad Joshi Minister of Parliamentary Affairs; Minister of Coal; and Minister of Mines.
21. Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
22. Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise
23. Shri Giriraj Singh Minister of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries
24. Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat Minister of Jal Shakti

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**Ministers of State (Independent Charge)**

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1. Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar Ministry of Labour and Employment
2. Shri Rao Inderjit Singh Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation; Ministry of Planning
3. Shri Shripad Yesso Naik Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH)



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|----|---------------------------|--|
| 4. | Dr. Jitendra Singh        | Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region                          |
| 5. | Shri Kiren Rijju          | Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports                                     |
| 6. | Shri Prahalad Singh Patel | Ministry of Culture; and<br>Ministry of Tourism.                         |
| 7. | Shri Raj Kumar Singh      | Ministry of Power; and<br>Ministry of New and Renewable Energy           |
| 8. | Shri Hardeep Singh Puri   | Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs; and<br>Ministry of Civil Aviation |
| 9. | Shri Mansukh L. Mandaviya | Ministry of Shipping   |

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**Minister of State**

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- |     |                             |  |
|-----|-----------------------------|--|
| 1.  | Shri Shripad Yesso Naik     | Ministry of Defence  |
| 2.  | Dr. Jitendra Singh          | Prime Minister's Office<br>Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions<br>Department of Atomic Energy<br>Department of Space |
| 3.  | Shri Kiren Rijju            | Ministry of Minority Affairs   |
| 4.  | Sushri Debasree Chaudhuri   | Ministry of Women and Child Development  |
| 5.  | Shri Raj Kumar Singh        | Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship   |
| 6.  | Shri Hardeep Singh Puri     | Ministry of Commerce and Industry  |
| 7.  | Shri Mansukh L. Mandaviya   | Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers  |
| 8.  | Shri Faggansingh Kulaste    | Ministry of Steel  |
| 9.  | Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey  | Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  |
| 10. | Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal      | Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs; and<br>Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises  |
| 11. | General (Retd.) V. K. Singh | Ministry of Road Transport and Highways  |
| 12. | Shri Krishan Pal            | Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment   |

13. Shri Danve Raosaheb Dadarao Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
14. Shri G. Kishan Reddy Ministry of Home Affairs
15. Shri Parshottam Rupala Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
16. Shri Ramdas Athawale Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
17. Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti Ministry of Rural Development
18. Shri Babul Supriyo Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
19. Shri Sanjeev Kumar Balyan Ministry of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries.
20. Shri Dhotre Sanjay Shamrao Ministry of Human Resource Development; Ministry of Communications; and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
21. Shri Anurag Singh Thakur Ministry of Finance; and Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
22. Shri Angadi Suresh Channabasappa Ministry of Railways
23. Shri Nityanand Rai Ministry of Home Affairs
24. Shri Rattan Lal Kataria Ministry of Jal Shakti; and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
25. Shri V. Muraleedharan Ministry of External Affairs; and Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
26. Smt. Renuka Singh Saruta Ministry of Tribal Affairs
27. Shri Som Parkash Ministry of Commerce and Industry
28. Shri Rameswar Teli Ministry of Food Processing Industries
29. Shri Pratap Chandra Sarangi Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises; and Ministry of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries
30. Shri Kailash Choudhary Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

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Source: <https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/union-council-ministers-2019>

### Appointment of New Governors

Union Government appointed five new Governors on September 1, 2019 as under:

Name of Governor	States
Tamilisai Soundararajan	Telangana
Kalraj Mishra	Rajasthan
Bandaru Dattatreya	Himachal Pradesh
Arif Mohammed Khan	Kerala
Bhagat Singh Koshyari	Maharashtra

Himachal Pradesh Governor Kalraj Mishra was transferred to Rajasthan and former Union Minister Bandaru Dattatreya was appointed in his place as the Governor of Himachal Pradesh. Kalraj Mishra will be replacing Kalyan Singh in Rajasthan.

Former civil aviation minister Arif Mohammed Khan was appointed as the Governor of Kerala. Khan replaces former CJI P Sathasivam, whose five-year term came to an end. Senior BJP leader Bhagat Singh Koshyari was appointed as the new Governor of Maharashtra. Koshyari would be succeeding Vidya Sagar Rao, whose five-year term came to an end recently.

### COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENTS

#### COMMITTEES

- Constitution of Committees to Reviews Defence Procurement Procedure
- Committee Report on CSR
- High Powered Committee of Chief Minister constituted for 'Transformation for India Agriculture'
- Constitution of three member Committee to look into assets, liabilities of J&K

### ***Constitution of Committee to Review Defence Procurement Procedure***

The Defence Ministry has approved setting up of a Committee to review the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP). The committee has been formed under the Chairmanship of Director General (Acquisition). The aim of this committee is to speed up procurement and incorporate suitable changes in order to strengthen the Centre's 'Make in India' initiative. It will review the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2016 and Defence Procurement Manual (DPM) 2009.

### ***Committee Report on CSR***

The Committee chaired by Mr. Injeti Srinivas, Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs submitted its recommendations to the Honourable Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs on Corporate Social Responsibility.

The main recommendations include, making CSR expenditure tax deductible, provision for carry forward of unspent balance for a period of 3 – 5 years, aligning Schedule 7 with the SDGs by adopting a SDG plus framework (which would additionally include sports promotion, Senior Citizens' welfare, welfare of differently abled persons, disaster management and heritage protection), balancing local area preferences with national priorities, introducing impact assessment studies for CSR obligation of 5 crore or more, and registration of implementation agencies on MCA portal. The other recommendations include developing a CSR exchange portal to connect contributors, beneficiaries and agencies, allowing CSR in social benefit bonds, promoting social impact companies, and third party assessment of major CSR projects.

*(For full report, please refer MCA website [www.mca.gov.in](http://www.mca.gov.in))*

### ***High Powered Committee of Chief Ministers constituted for 'Transformation for Indian Agriculture***

Government constituted a high-powered committee of chief ministers for transformation of agriculture and raising farmers' income. The nine-member committee, chaired by Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, will suggest measures to boost agricultural export, raise growth in food processing, attract investments in modern market infrastructure, value chains and logistics. The committee will suggest modalities for adoption and time bound implementation of agriculture sector reforms and will submit its report within two months of the date of notification.

### ***Constitution of three member Committee to look into assets, liabilities of J&K***

A three-member panel has been formed by the Union Government to oversee the implementation of bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories. The 3-member advisory committee will be headed by former defence secretary Sanjay Mitra and its members include retired IAS officer Arun Goyal and retired Indian Civil Accounts Service officer Giriraj Prasad.

The Committee will have to oversee the distribution of assets and liabilities between the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The Union Territory status will come into effect from October 31.

### ***11th BJP National President***

Mr. Jagat Prakash Nadda became the 11th National President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on January 20, 2020. He was elected unopposed to the position.

Mr. Nadda had emerged as the only candidate for the top post following a nomination process at the party's headquarters in New Delhi. He would be succeeding Amit Shah, who had helmed the party for five and a half years.

Nadda had been appointed as BJP's working president in June 2019, after Amit Shah was sworn into the Union Cabinet as the Minister of Home Affairs. Under Amit Shah's reign as President, the party had swept the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections with a massive majority.

### ***Michael Debabrata Patra becomes Deputy Governor of RBI***

The Government has appointed Michael Debabrata Patra as the Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved his name for a three-year tenure.

Michael Debabrata Patra has replaced Viral Acharya who resigned from the post in July 2019. Earlier, Michael Debaprata was working as an Executive Director at the RBI. He was overseeing four departments, Department of Statistics and Information Management, Monetary Policy, Departments of Economic and Policy Research.

### ***Indian advocate Harish Salve appointed as Queen's Counsel***

Senior Indian Advocate Harish Salve has been appointed as the Queen's Counsel (QC) for the courts of England and Wales. The title of the Queen's Counsel is conferred upon those who have demonstrated particular skill and expertise in the legal field.

Harish Salve's appointment was announced when the UK's Ministry of Justice released the new list of silk appointments on January 13, 2020. The renowned lawyer will be formally appointed to the position on March 16, 2020.

## **Appointments**

- Appointment of Four new Supreme Court Judge
- Appointment of Principles Secretary to the Prime Minister
- Appointed as a next Cabinet Secretary is Rajiv Gauba

### ***Appointment of Four new Supreme Court judges***

The Supreme Court (SC) appointed four new judges, increasing the total strength of judges to 34 from 31 as sanctioned under the amended law. The four new judges who took oath are Chief Justice V. Ramasubramanian of Himachal Pradesh, Chief Justice Krishna Murari from Punjab and Haryana High Court, Rajasthan Chief Justice S.A. Ravindra Bhat and Kerala Chief Justice Hrishikesh Roy.

The Central government had on 18 September cleared the SC collegiums-recommended names of judges for the appointment. Post the enactment of the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Bill of 2019 into law, the judicial strength of the apex court has been increased to 34.

### ***Appointment of Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister***

Dr. P.K. Mishra, who was serving as the Additional Principal Secretary to Prime Minister, has been appointed as Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. The fresh appointment was necessitated after Nripendra Misra, Modi's Principal Secretary since the beginning of his previous term, stepped down recently.

In another top appointment in the PMO, former Cabinet Secretary P.K. Sinha, who was appointed as Official on Special Duty (OSD) in the PMO, has now been appointed as Principal Advisor to the PM from September 11, 2019.

### ***Rajiv Gauba appointed as the next Cabinet Secretary***

Mr. Rajiv Gauba has been appointed as new Cabinet Secretary for tenure of two years. Before joining as Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Gauba was Secretary, Home Affairs. His appointment as Cabinet secretary was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).

Gauba is a 1982-batch IAS officer of the Jharkhand cadre. He initially joined as the Officer on Special Duty in the Cabinet Secretariat. He will now replace the incumbent P K Sinha, who is a 1977 batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre. Mr. Gauba is the 32nd Cabinet Secretary of India.

### ***Arvind Krishna new CEO of IBM***

Indian-origin Arvind Krishna has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of International Business Machines (IBM) replacing Virginia 'Ginni' Rometty. He will take over the responsibilities of the CEO from April 6.

Arvind Krishna currently leads IBM's business unit that helps the organization in the cloud and data platform. It is a platform where the company's clients build the future. Arvind Krishna will be responsible for IBM's security, IBM Research wing, Cognitive Applications, and IBM Cloud.

## GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES/SCHEMES

### ***Announcement on Government Initiatives/schemes in Union Budget 2020***

- **National Policy on Official Statistics** lay down a roadmap towards modernised data collection, integrated information portal and timely dissemination of information. This policy to enables the private sector to build Data Centre parks throughout the country enable firms to skillfully incorporate data in every step of their value chains. National Policy on official statistics aims to use latest technology to enable real time monitoring of increasingly complex economy.
- **National Logistics Policy** to create a single window e-logistics market and will focus on generation of employment, skills and making MSMEs competitive. A National Logistics Policy will be released soon and it will clarify the roles of the Union Government, State Governments and key regulators. It will create a single window e-logistics market and focus on generation of employment, skills and making MSMEs competitive.
- **New Education Policy** : Our education system needs greater inflow of finance to attract talented teachers, innovate and build better labs. Therefore, steps would be taken to enable sourcing External Commercial Borrowings and Foreign Direct Investment so as to able to deliver higher quality education.
- **National Skill Development Agency** to give special thrust to infrastructure-focused skill development opportunities.
- **Vivad Se Vishwas**

Under the proposed, 'Vivad se Vishwas' scheme, a taxpayer would be required to pay only the amount of the disputed taxes and will get complete waiver of interest and penalty, provided he pays by 31st March, 2020. Those who will avail the scheme after 31st March, 2020 will have to pay some additional amount. The scheme will remain open till 30th June 2020.

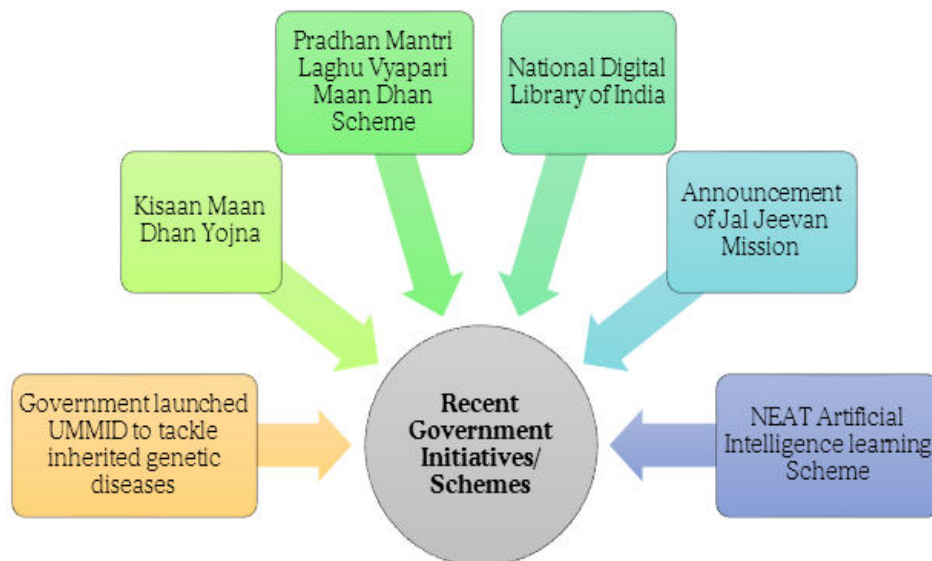
- A new scheme **NIRVIK** to achieve higher export credit disbursement has been announced during Union Budget 2020, which provides for higher insurance coverage, reduction in premium for small exporters and simplified procedure for claim settlements. This scheme is expected to support export of around ₹ 30 lakh crore by the end of 5th year. This scheme enables digitally refund to exporters, duties and taxes levied at the Central, State and local levels, such as electricity duties and VAT on fuel used for transportation, which are not getting exempted or refunded under any other existing mechanism.
- **National Technical Textiles Mission** is proposed be set up with a four-year implementation period from 2020-21 to 2023-24 at an estimated outlay of Rs 1480 crore to position India as a global leader in Technical Textiles.



- **Village Storage Scheme**

- To be run by the SHGs to provide farmers a good holding capacity and reduce their logistics cost.
- Women, SHGs to regain their position as Dhaanya Lakshmi.

**Government launched UMMID to tackle inherited genetic diseases**



Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan has launched the Unique Methods of Management and treatment of Inherited Disorders (UMMID) initiative. He also inaugurated the National Inherited Diseases Administration (NIDAN) Kendras. It is supported by Department of Biotechnology (DBT) under the Ministry of Science and Technology. UMMID aims to tackle inherited genetic diseases of newborn babies. The initiative will ensure proper treatment to children and create awareness amongst the masses. UMMID initiative aims to work towards achieving wellness by promoting the prevention of genetic diseases under the National Health Policy, 2017 of the government.

**Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana on the 12th of September at Ranchi, Jharkhand. The Scheme shall secure the lives of 5 Crore Small and Marginal Farmers by providing a minimum pension of Rs 3000 per month on attaining the 60 years of age. The scheme has an outlay of Rs 10,774 Crores for the next three years. The small and marginal farmers who are currently between the ages of 18 to 40 years can apply for the scheme

***Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan Dhan Scheme***

The scheme came into force on the 22nd day of July, 2019. The provisions of this scheme shall apply to the laghu vyaparis, who are self-employed and working as shop owners, retail traders, rice mill owners, oil mill owners, workshop owners, commission agents, brokers of real estate, owners of small hotels, restaurants and other laghu vyaparis.

All shopkeepers and self-employed persons, as well as retail traders with GST turnover below Rs 1.5 crore and aged between 18-40 years, can enrol for the scheme. Government has earmarked Rs 750 crore for the scheme in the Union Budget 2019-20.

Interested persons can enrol themselves through over 3.25 lakh common service centres spread across the country. The government will make a matching contribution in the subscribers' account.

***National Digital Library of India***

Human Resource Development Ministry under its National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology, NMEICT has launched the National Digital Library of India project to develop a framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility.

As of now, there are more than 3 crore digital resources available through the National Digital Library. The contents cover almost all major domains of education and all major levels of learners. More than 50 lakh students have registered themselves in the National Digital Library with about 20 lakh active users.

National Digital Library has been integrated with UMANG App and users can register through [www.ndl.gov.in](http://www.ndl.gov.in) or through the mobile app.

***Announcement of Jal Jeevan Mission***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his 73rd Independence day speech announced that the government will launch a Jal Jeevan Mission to bring piped water to households. It seeks to converge with other Central and State Government Schemes to achieve its objectives of sustainable water supply management across India.

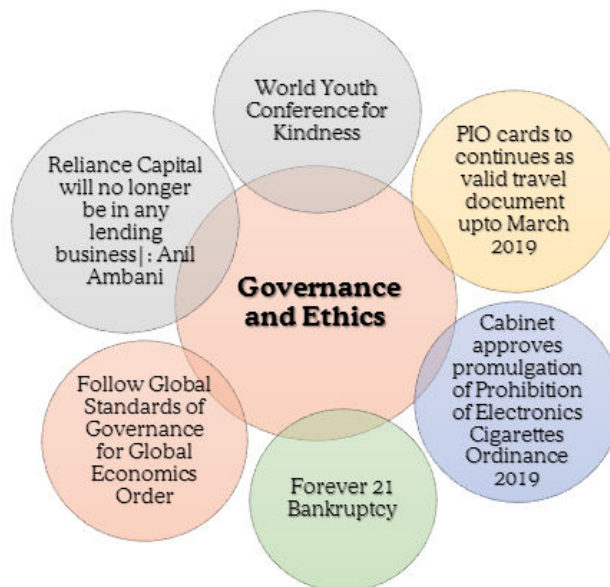
***NEAT Artificial Intelligence learning scheme***

The Ministry of Human Resource Development announced a new PPP Scheme, National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) under which technology will be used for better learning outcomes in Higher Education. The objective is to use Artificial Intelligence to make learning more personalised and customised as per the requirements of the learner. This requires development of technologies in adaptive learning to address the diversity of learners.

Apart from the above schemes, the government has recently announced/launched the following schemes:

1. Partial Guarantee Scheme
2. Gold Monetisation Scheme
3. Policy Reforms for Start ups

### **GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS**



#### ***World Youth Conference for Kindness***

In order to impart critical competencies (i.e. empathy, compassion, mindfulness and critical inquiry) in global youth to inspire, empower and enable them to transform themselves and build long-lasting peace in their communities, UNESCO MGIEP organised the first World Youth Conference on Kindness in New Delhi, India on the theme 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Gandhi for the Contemporary World: Celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi'.

This conference was organised with the aim to impart critical competencies (i.e. empathy, compassion, mindfulness and critical inquiry) in global youth to inspire, empower and enable them to transform themselves and build long-lasting peace in their communities. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, the conference aimed to provide global youth and policymakers an innovative, engaging and inspiring platform to come together and strive to discover ground-breaking pathways to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

***PIO cards to continue as valid travel document upto March 2020***

The Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) cards along with valid foreign passport will be considered for exit or entry into India till 31 March 2020. Government of India had earlier advised all PIO card holders to convert their cards to Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) cards by 30 September 2019.

***Cabinet approves promulgation of Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Ordinance 2019***

Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Promulgation of Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement) Ordinance, 2019. The decision is being seen as a major health and wellness initiative for the country. Any manufacturing, production, import, export, transport, distribution or advertisement (including online advertisement), sale (including online sale) of e-cigarettes shall be a cognizable offence punishable. Committing the offence might lead to an imprisonment of up to 1 year or fine up to Rs.1 lakh or both for 1st offence and imprisonment of up to 3 years and fine up to Rs.5 lakh for a subsequent offence. Storing of e-cigarettes shall also be punishable with an imprisonment up to 6 months or fine up to Rs. 50,000 or both.

***Forever 21 Bankruptcy***

Low-price fashion chain Forever 21, a one-time hot destination for teen shoppers that fell victim to its own rapid expansion and changing consumer tastes, has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

The privately held company based in Los Angeles will close up to 178 stores. The company once had more than 800 stores in 57 countries. The company would now focus on maximizing the value of its US stores and shutter certain international locations.

***Follow Global Standards of Governance for Global Economic Order***

Aditya Birla Group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla said that with changing times the core business philosophy is rapidly moving away from shareholder capitalism to stakeholder capitalism which includes investors, customers, employees and value chain partners. Indian corporates need to hold themselves accountable to global standards of governance if India wishes to re-shape the global economic order. He further said that increasingly all the stakeholders are demanding a higher value, order, accountability and additionally the businesses will have to earn their license to operate in the society as a whole. "As the ease of doing business improves, the way of doing business needs to change... If we want to make our mark in the world we have to be prepared for the world to leave its mark on us.

***Reliance Capital will no longer be in any lending business: Anil Ambani***

Anil Ambani-run Reliance Capital which has credit as well as insurance and mutual fund verticals, has decided to shutter its two lending arms by December, 2019. The company

Reliance Capital has two credit verticals – Reliance Commercial Finance and Reliance Home Finance with a cumulative asset of over Rs 25,000 crore.

This is second major business that the Anil Ambani-led group is exiting after its once flagship Reliance Communication was shuttered two years ago and is now under the bankruptcy process. Its defence business Reliance Naval is also under severe financial stress.

## Sample Questions

1. Akhilesh Das Gupta, the former Union Minister has passed away. He was associated with which political party?
  - (a) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
  - (b) Indian National Congress (INC)**
  - (c) All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)
  - (d) Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)
2. Which fast fashion retailer has filed for bankruptcy?
  - (a) Forever 21**
  - (b) H&M
  - (c) Zara
  - (d) Topshop
3. Who has taken over as the new IAF Chief?
  - (a) Air Marshal RKS Bhaduria**
  - (b) Air Marshal RNS Thakur
  - (c) Air Marshal SN Gupta
  - (d) Air Marshal Ratul Shah
4. Who was appointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Federal Bank ?
  - (a) Shyam Srinivasan**
  - (b) Shubhalakshmi Panse
  - (c) Balakrishnan Krishnamurthy
  - (d) Siddhartha Sengupta

5. Which Committee has been constituted by the Union Government to oversee the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) into Union Territories?
- (a) Sanjay Mitra Committee**
- (b) Rajnath Singh Committee
- (c) Amit Shah Committee
- (d) Ajay Kumar Committee
6. Recently, Anshula Kant has appointed as MD and CFO of World Bank Group after resigning from the post of Managing Director of which of the following Bank?
- (a) Punjab National Bank
- (b) State Bank of India**
- (c) IDFC Bank
- (d) HDFC Bank
7. Who is present union cabinet Minister of Corporate Affairs?
- (a) Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman**
- (b) Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari
- (c) Shri Prakash Javedkar
- (d) Shri Piyush Goyal
8. What was the last position served by Arun Jaitley before taking retirement from his political career citing his health issues ?
- (a) External Affairs Minister
- (b) Home Affairs Minister
- (c) Finance Minister**
- (d) Defence Minister
9. Name the new Export Credit Insurance Scheme (ECIS) launched by Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) to ease the lending of loan to exporter .
- (a) NIRVIK (Niryat Rin Vaigyanik Yojana)

**(b) NIRVIK (Niryat RinVikashYojana)**

(c) NIRVIK (Niryat Rashtriya Vikash Yojana)

(d) NIRVIK (Niryat Rashtriya Vaigyanik Yojana)

10. Name the monthly pension scheme launched by Prime Minister NarendraModi for small and marginal farmers between the age of 18-40 years in Ranchi, Jharkhand on September 12, 2019 .

(a) Kisan Maan- AdarshYojana

**(b) Kisan Maan-DhanYojana**

(c) Kisan Maan-SansadYojana

d) Kisan Maan-Pension Yojana

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***Lesson 4***

**LEGAL  
AND  
OTHER AFFAIRS**



## **RECENT IMPORTANT JUDGMENTS PASSED BY SUPREME COURT, HIGH COURTS AND TRIBUNALS IN INDIA**

### **SUPREME COURT**

The Supreme Court of India is the highest judicial court and the final court of appeal under the Constitution of India, the highest constitutional court, with the power of judicial review.

India is a federal State and has a single and unified judicial system with three tier structure, i.e. Supreme Court, High Courts and Subordinate Courts.

### **Constitutional Provisions**

The Indian constitution provides for a provision of Supreme Court under Part V (The Union) and Chapter 6 (The Union Judiciary).

Articles 124 to 147 in Part V of the Constitution deal with the organisation, independence, jurisdiction, powers and procedures of the Supreme Court.

The Indian constitution under Article 124(1) states that there shall be a Supreme Court of India constituting of a Chief Justice of India (CJI) and, until Parliament by law prescribes a larger number, of not more than seven other Judges.

The Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of India can broadly be categorised into original jurisdiction, appellate jurisdiction and advisory jurisdiction. However, there are other multiple powers of the Supreme Court.

### **Organisation of Supreme Court**

- Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Bill of 2019 has added four judges to strength. It increased the judicial strength from 31 to 34, including the CJI.
- Originally, the strength of the Supreme Court was fixed at eight (one chief justice and seven other judges).
- The Parliament is authorised to regulate them.

The judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President. The CJI is appointed by the President after consultation with such judges of the Supreme Court and high courts as he deems necessary.

The other judges are appointed by the President after consultation with the CJI and such other judges of the Supreme Court and the high courts as he deems necessary. The consultation with the chief justice is obligatory in the case of appointment of a judge other than Chief justice.

### **Supreme Court clears Chardham highway project, connecting four holy places in Uttarakhand**

Supreme Court cleared the decks for the Chardham highway project during August 2019, which will connect four holy places of Uttarakhand through 900-km all-weather roads.

The apex court also asked the Union Environment and Forest Ministry to form the high-powered committee by to look into environmental concerns. A bench comprising Justices Rohinton Fali Nariman and Surya Kant modified an earlier order of National Green Tribunal by constituting a fresh high-powered committee consisting the representatives from Physical Research Laboratory, Wildlife Institute of India and Defence Ministry and submit its recommendations within four months.

As per the decision, the committee shall hold quarterly meetings thereafter to ensure compliance and may suggest any further measure after each review meeting. The committee shall consider the cumulative and independent impact of the Chardham project on the entire Himalayan valleys.

The Committee will also suggest the areas in which afforestation should be taken and the kind of saplings to be planted. In case of non-survival of any sapling, further plantation should be done and compensatory afforestation should be ten times the number of trees cut.

### ***Some recent important judgement by Supreme Court of India***

*NGOS receiving Substantial Financing from Government come under RTI Act:*

In the case of D.A.V. College Trust and Management Society & Ors vs. Director of public Instructions & Ors. (Civil Appeal No. 9828 of 2013) Judgement dated September 17, 2019, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Pragraphs 26, 28&29 observed that:

..... In our view, 'substantial' means a large portion. It does not necessarily have to mean a major portion or more than 50%. No hard and fast rule can be laid down in this regard. Substantial financing can be both direct and indirect. To give an example, if a land in a city is given free of cost or on heavy discount to hospitals, educational institutions or such other body, this in itself could also be substantial financing. The very establishment of such an institution, if it is dependent on the largesse of the State in getting the land at a cheap price, would mean that it is substantially financed. Merely because financial contribution of the State comes down during the actual funding, will not by itself mean that the indirect finance given is not to be taken into consideration. The value of the land will have to be evaluated not only on the date of allotment but even on the date when the question arises as to whether the said body or NGO is substantially financed.....

.....Another aspect for determining substantial finance is whether the body, authority or NGO can carry on its activities effectively without getting finance from the Government. If its functioning is dependent on the finances of the Government then there can be no manner of doubt that it has to be termed as substantially financed.

While interpreting the provisions of the Act and while deciding what is substantial finance one has to keep in mind the provisions of the Act. This Act was enacted with the purpose of bringing transparency in public dealings and probity in public life. If NGOs or other bodies get substantial finance from the Government, we find no reason why any citizen cannot ask for information to find out whether his/her money which has been given to an NGO or any other body is being used for the requisite purpose or not.....

*Accused Charged With Food Adulteration Cannot Be Acquitted Merely Because Deficiency Was Marginal:*

In the case of *Raj Kumar vs. The State of Uttar Pradesh (Criminal Appeal No. 1541 of 2019)* judgement dated 4th October 2019 the Apex Court observed that:

..... We are of the considered view that once standards are laid down by the Legislature then those standards have to be followed. In items like milk which is a primary food, under the Act, it is not necessary to also prove that the food item had become unfit for human consumption or injurious to health. In cases of food coming under the Act, it is not required to prove that article of food was injurious to health. In this case, the only question to be determined is whether the article complies with the standards laid down or not? If it fails to comply with the standards then it will have to be treated as an adulterated article even if it is not rendered injurious to health deviation from the prescribed standard cannot be ignored.....

### **HIGH COURTS IN INDIA**

India has a cohesive judiciary system and the Supreme Court is the apex court. The High Court is the supreme judicial body in a state. According to Article 214, each state of India shall have a High Court. It is the final interpreter of the constitution. Article 215 and 26 of the India Constitution states that every High Court shall be a court of record and shall have all the powers of such a court including the power to punish for contempt of itself. Every High Court shall consist of a Chief Justice and such other Judges as the President may from time to time deem it necessary to appoint.

There are following 25 High Courts in India, three having control over more than one State. Delhi has a High Court of its own among the Union Territories.

Allahabad	Delhi	Jharkhand	Manipur	Rajasthan
Andhra Pradesh	Gujarat	Karnataka	Meghalaya	Sikkim
Bombay	Gauhati	Kerala	Orissa	Telangana
Calcutta	Himachal Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh	Patna	Tripura
Chhattisgarh	Jammu & Kashmir	Madras	Punjab and Haryana	Uttarakhand

### **ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS**

The enactment of Administrative Tribunals Act in 1985 opened a new chapter in the sphere of administering justice to the aggrieved government servants. Administrative Tribunals Act owes its origin to Article 323-A of the Constitution which empowers Central Government to set-up by an Act of Parliament, Administrative Tribunals for adjudication of disputes and complaints with respect to

recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to the public service and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union and the States. In pursuance of the provisions contained in the Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985, the Administrative Tribunals set-up under it exercise original jurisdiction in respect of service matters of employees covered by it. As a result of the judgement dated 18 March 1997 of the Supreme Court, the appeals against the orders of an Administrative Tribunal shall lie before the Division Bench of the concerned High Court.

The Administrative Tribunals exercise jurisdiction only in relation to the service matters of the litigants covered by the Act. The procedural simplicity of the Act can be appreciated from the fact that the aggrieved person can also appear before it personally. The Government can present its case through its departmental officers or legal practitioners. Thus, the objective of the Tribunal is to provide for speedy and inexpensive justice to the litigants.

The Act provides for establishment of Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) and the State Administrative Tribunals. The CAT was set-up on 1 November 1985. There are 17 Benches and 21 Circuit Benches in the Central Administrative Tribunal all over India. In addition to the Ministries and Departments of Central Government, the Government of India has notified about 214 organizations under section 14 (2) of the Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985 to bring them within the jurisdiction of the Central Administrative Tribunal, from time to time. In addition the Central Administrative Tribunal, Principal Bench is dealing with the matters of Govt. of National Capital Territory of Delhi.

### **NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL**

The Central Government has constituted National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) under section 408 of the Companies Act, 2013 (18 of 2013) w.e.f. 01st June 2016.

In the first phase the Ministry of Corporate Affairs have set up eleven Benches, one Principal Bench at New Delhi and ten Benches at New Delhi, Ahmadabad, Allahabad, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Chennai, Guahati, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai. These Benches will be headed by the President and 16 Judicial Members and 09 Technical Members at different locations.

### **NATIONAL COMPANY LAW APPELLATE TRIBUNAL**

National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) was constituted under Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013 for hearing appeals against the orders of National Company Law Tribunal(s) (NCLT), with effect from 1st June, 2016.

NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by NCLT(s) under Section 61 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC), with effect from 1st December, 2016. NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India under Section 202 and Section 211 of IBC.

NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal to hear and dispose of appeals against any direction issued or decision made or order passed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) – as per the amendment brought to Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013 by Section 172 of the Finance Act, 2017, with

effect from 26th May, 2017. Hon'ble Justice Shri S.J. Mukhopadhaya, former Judge of the Supreme Court, is now the Chairperson of NCLAT.

## **INSTITUTE OF COMPANY SECRETARIES OF INDIA**

### ***About the Institute of Company Secretaries of India***

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) is the only recognized professional body in India to develop and regulate the profession of Company Secretaries in India. It is a premier national professional body set up under an act of Parliament, the Company Secretaries Act, 1980. ICSI functions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India. The Institute provides top-quality education to the students of Company Secretaries (CS) Course and best quality set standards to CS Members. At present, there are more than 60,000 members and about 3,00,000 students on the roll of ICSI.

ICSI has its headquarters at New Delhi, four Regional Offices at New Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai; one ICSI - Centre for Corporate Governance, Research and Training (CCGRT), Navi Mumbai, one ICSI Centre of Excellence, Hyderabad and 74 Chapters across India. ICSI has been contributing to the initiatives of Government of India that have potential to excel the social-economic growth of India.

### ***ICSI in News***

#### ***Company Secretaries (Amendment) Regulations, 2020***

The Gazette Notification on the Company Secretaries (Amendment) Regulations, 2020 has been published on 3rd February, 2020 in the Official Gazette of India. (Same is available [https://www.icsi.edu/media/webmodules/Gazette\\_Notification\\_dated\\_03022020\\_CS\\_Regulations\\_Amendments\\_2020.pdf](https://www.icsi.edu/media/webmodules/Gazette_Notification_dated_03022020_CS_Regulations_Amendments_2020.pdf)). With the introduction of new regulations, New Admissions to the Foundation Programme of CS Course stands discontinued and unique and innovative concept of CS Executive Entrance Test (CSEET) has been introduced for the admission in to CS Executive programme.

#### ***ICSI launched UDIN to improve Corporate Governance***

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) has rolled out an initiative in the form of a Unique Document Identification Number (UDIN) in an attempt to pursue heightened sense of self-governance and strengthen the practising side of company secretaries.

UDIN will provide ease of maintaining register of attestation and certification services. It will prevent counterfeiting of various attestations and certifications besides ensuring compliance with regard to ceilings on the number of certifications and attestations.

Under the mechanism, an alpha numeric number will be generated for the identification of every document attested by practising company secretaries, which will act as a trust enhancer by facilitating verification that the document is genuinely signed or certified by a company secretary in practice

The ICSI UDIN is mandatory for every document except an e-form, signed or certified by a company secretary w.e.f October 1, 2019.

### ***Celebration of 51st Foundation Day of ICSI***

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI), incorporated by the Government of India on 4th October, 1968, is country's premier professional body promoting good corporate governance, risk management and compliances - completed 51 years of its establishment on 4th October, 2019. To mark the 51th Foundation Day of the ICSI, a commemoration event was hosted by ICSI in the august presence of His Excellency Shri Ram Nath Kovind, Hon'ble President of India at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

### ***Celebration of 47th National Convention of Company Secretaries***

The Institute organizes every year an annual mega congregation of Company Secretaries National Convention of Company Secretaries, to deliberate on the National and International development in corporate & industry arena, topics of national importance, social & cultural issues, exemplified role of professionals in carrying forward the legacies of systems, processes aligning with the growth mantra.

This year, 47th National Convention of Company Secretaries on 'Empowering New India-Reform, Perform, Transform' is being organised during November 14-16, 2019 at JECC, Jaipur.

(For more information, students may visit <https://www.icsi.edu/home/>)

## **CURRENT UPDATES ON ENVIRONMENT, BIO-DIVERSITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Bhutan introduced 'Sustainable Development Fee' for regional tourists***

Bhutan has recently introduced a new system for regional tourists called 'Sustainable Development Fee'. The lower house of 'Tshogdu' or Bhutan's Parliament passed legislation that tourists from India, Maldives, and Bangladesh have to pay a certain amount for their stay in the country.

As per the new policy, regional tourists have to pay 1200 Bhutanese Ngultrum (USD 16.85) as a sustainable development fee per day from July 2020. According to the reports, tourists have to pay this fee because tourists disturb Bhutan's ecology during their trip.

### ***Supreme Court allowed relocation of African Cheetah to India***

The Supreme Court allowed the introduction of **African Cheetah** to suitable habitat in India on January 28, 2020. It directed that the habitat should be chosen carefully after examining if the animal can adapt to Indian conditions.

A petition filed by National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), which sought permission to relocate African Cheetah from Namibia to India as a pilot project, as Indian cheetah is deemed extinct. The Supreme Court stated that the African cheetahs can be introduced to the Kuno National Park in

Madhya Pradesh or any other part of the country following a detailed study on all the aspects of its relocation.

### **World Ozone Day 2019**

World Ozone Day is also known as the International Day for the preservation of the Ozone Layer. It is observed annually on September 16 to commemorate the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The Montreal Protocol was signed in 1987.

The theme of World Ozone Day 2019 was 32 Years and Healing. World Ozone Day 2019 theme was celebrated over three decades of international cooperation to protect and heal the ozone layer and the climate under the Montreal Protocol. It was aimed to increase awareness of climate change and ozone depletion. It served as a reminder that humans must keep up their momentum to ensure healthy people and a healthy planet. World Ozone Day 2018 theme was "Keep Cool and Carry on: The Montreal Protocol", which aimed to urge everyone to carry on the exemplary work of protecting the ozone layer and the climate under the Montreal Protocol.

### **Swachhta hi Seva 2019**

Swachhta hi Seva 2019 was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Mathura on September 11, 2019. The Swachhta hi Seva 2019 theme was '**plastic waste awareness and management**'.

Swachhta hi Seva is a massive nationwide awareness and mobilization campaign on Swachhta. The Swachhta hi Seva 2019 campaign was organized from September 11 till October 2, 2019. Prime Minister had set the goal of making India ODF by October 2, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM).

Swachhta hi Seva 2019 campaign launch was jointly organized by Animal Husbandry and Dairy and Drinking Water and Sanitation department of the central government along with the state government of Uttar Pradesh.

The campaign has also involved a nationwide shramdaan for plastic waste collection and segregation on October 2. The collected plastic waste then was recycled and effectively disposed before Diwali, i.e on October 27, 2019

### **Ban on Single use Plastic**

India has imposed a nation-wide ban on single-use plastic on October 2, 2019, on the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. As per reports, six single-use plastic items were scrapped with effect from the day including plastic bags, straws, cups, plates, small bottles and certain types of sachets.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has set the goal to make India free of single-use plastics by 2022, had appealed to the nation to stop the use of single-use plastic in his speech on India's Independence Day.



### *Why to ban Single use Plastic?*

With climate and environment becoming a rising global concern, plastic pollution and plastic waste management have become the focal point of worry. Millions of tons of plastic is being produced every year, which is not biodegradable. Hence, the countries across the globe are adopting and implementing strategies aimed at eliminating the use of single-use plastic.

As per National Geographic only 9% percent of the plastic items are recyclable, the rest ends up either buried in the land or water bodies, eventually reaching the oceans, leading to polluting of water bodies and killing of marine life.

Most of the plastic is not biodegradable and over a period of time the plastic breaks up and releases toxic chemicals into the water bodies, which in turn make their way into food and water supplies. If the plastic does not end up in the water, it ends up as a huge pile of waste that is hard to dispose of. Many of the south Asian countries have become global dump yards of plastic. The plastic pile-up is not only affecting the human body but also choking the environment.

The UN Environment head Erik Solheim had also highlighted earlier that plastic pollution is one of the world's biggest environmental threats and countries have to come up with a better plastic waste management and disposal plan to deal with the huge plastic dump that is degrading the environment.

### ***NGT forms panel to examine illegal sand mining in Yamuna River***

The National Green Tribunal formed a Committee to examine the allegations of illegal sand mining in Yamuna River. The decision was taken by an NGT bench headed by NGT Chairperson, Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel.

The NGT formed the committee to examine the issue after Delhi Jal Board CEO Anil Kumar Singh moved the green panel alleging illegal sand mining in the Yamuna. The NGT bench directed Delhi's District Magistrate, Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to look into the issue and take appropriate action in accordance with the law. Delhi's Pollution Control Committee will be the nodal agency for coordination and compliance of the task.

### ***BASIC meeting on Climate Change***

BASIC countries (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) held their 28th Ministerial meeting on Climate Change in August 2019 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. In this meeting, India was represented by Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar.

BASIC countries expressed concern about climate change and its adverse effects and reaffirmed their commitment to successful implementation of UNFCCC, its Kyoto Protocol and its Paris Agreement, based on recognition of the needs and special circumstances of developing countries and in accordance with principles of Equity and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) in light of different national circumstances. They jointly urged developed countries to fulfill their climate finance commitments of mobilizing \$100 billion annually by 2020 for developing countries. They called for responsible, comprehensive, urgent and ambitious actions against



climate change, including in the urban environment. They reiterated to work together ahead of the United Nations Session on Climate Change and the next Conference of Parties (CoP25) in Chile. It was also decided that China will host the next meeting of the BASIC Ministers.

### ***Launch of State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index (SARAL)***

Ministry of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy (IC) and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, launched the State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index–SARAL. The State of Karnataka has been placed at the first rank in the Index that evaluates Indian states based on their attractiveness for rooftop development. Telangana, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh have got 2nd, 3rd and 4th rank respectively.

SARAL has been designed collaboratively by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and Ernst & Young (EY). It was launched during the Review Planning and Monitoring (RPM) Meeting with States and State Power Utilities. SARAL currently captures five key aspects –

- (i) robustness of policy framework
- (ii) implementation environment
- (iii) investment climate
- (iv) consumer experience
- (v) business ecosystem

It encourages each state to assess the initiatives taken so far, and what it can do to improve its solar rooftop ecosystem. This will help states to channelize investments that can eventually help the sector grow. In addition, such an exercise is likely to create a more conducive environment for solar rooftop installations, encourage investment and lead to accelerated growth of the sector.

## **LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMPUTERS AND SPACE SCIENCE**

### ***RBI launches 'MANI' app to assist visually challenged to identify currency notes***

The Reserve Bank of India has launched 'MANI' mobile app to help the visually challenged in identifying the denomination of currency notes. The application was launched by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on January 1, 2020.

The RBI mobile app will enable the visually disabled to identify the denomination of a currency note using the application. The MANI app will work offline as well after its installation.

### ***Aditya L1: ISRO's First Solar Mission***

The Aditya L1 mission will be the country's first solar mission. This will help scientists to study the sun's Corona. There will be six scientific payloads on this 400 kg satellite. It will be placed in the halo orbit near the L1 point of the Sun-Earth system. The Aditya-L1 can now provide observations of the Sun's photosphere (soft and solid X-rays), chromosphere (UV) and the corona (visual and NIR) along with additional experiments.

### ***ISRO, DRDO sign MoU to provide critical technologies for Human Space Mission***

ISRO and DRDO have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoU) to develop human-centric systems for the Human Space Mission to demonstrate ISRO's human space flight capabilities. The MoU was signed by a delegation of ISRO scientists led by Human Space Flight Centre Director Dr. S Unnikrishnan Nair with various DRDO labs to provide technologies for human-centric systems and technologies specific to the Human Space Mission.

Under the agreement, the technological capabilities existing in DRDO labs for defence applications will be customised to meet the requirements of ISRO's human space mission. DRDO will be providing critical technologies to ISRO such as space crew health monitoring and emergency survival kit, space food, parachutes for the crew module's safe recovery and radiation measurement and protection.

### ***Chandrayaan-2 mission***

Chandrayaan-2 mission was a highly complex mission, which represented a significant technological leap compared to the previous missions of ISRO, which brought together an Orbiter, Lander and Rover with the goal of exploring South Pole of the Moon. This was a unique mission which aimed at studying not just one area of the Moon but all the areas combining the exosphere, the surface as well as the sub-surface of the moon in a single mission. Chandrayaan-2 aims for enhancing our understanding of the Moon, stimulate the advancement of technology, promote global alliances and inspire a future generation of explorers and scientists.

### ***Gaganyaan Mission***

ISRO aims to launch its maiden Human Space Mission, Gaganyaan before the 75th anniversary of India's independence in 2022. The Human Space flight Programme aims to carry three people to space to orbit the Earth for roughly about 7 days and bring them safely back to the ground. The crewed space mission is planned to be launched aboard ISRO's GSLV Mk III in December 2021.

### ***First Indigenous High-Temperature Fuel Cell System launched***

The President of India Ram Nath Kovind launched the first Indigenous High-Temperature Fuel Cell System developed by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) under 'New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI)'. The launched was made at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on the occasion of 78th Foundation Day CSIR. The system has been developed under India's flagship program 'New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI)'. The 5.0

kW fuel cell system generates power in a green manner. It uses methanol or bio-methane, with heat and water as bi-products for further use. This further amounts to more than 70% efficiency, which otherwise may not be possible by other energy sources. Fuel Cells developed are based on High-Temperature Proton Exchange Membrane (HTPEM) Technology.

### ***Digital Census -2021***

To promote Digital India, 2021 census will be conducted through a mobile phone application, moving away from traditional pen and paper. The process of a 'Pen-Paper Census' would be transformed to a 'Digital Census' in the 2021 Census exercise by using the latest technology.

Census data will be collected through a mobile app. This is for the first time that the mobile app will be used for the census exercise. India will be moving from the pen and paper census to digital data, which will be a big revolution in the country's census exercise.

In this process, people would be able to upload the details of self and family on the newly developed mobile app themselves. Besides maintaining the data in paper forms, availability of data in digital form would help in its detailed multi-dimensional analysis and utilisation for public welfare using latest software.

### ***CHC Farm Machinery: Multilingual Mobile App launched for farmers***

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare launched a multilingual Mobile App called 'CHC Farm Machinery' for the farmers during a conference on National Conference on Crop residue Management held in New Delhi. With the help of the app, farmers can now get affordable access to cutting-edge technology at their doorsteps. It connects farmers with Custom Hiring Service Centers (CHC) in their area. It will allow farmers to avail custom hiring services of CHCs located in a radius of 50 km. This multilingual Mobile App for Custom Hiring Centers Agricultural Machinery will help local growers of various states across India with the Custom hiring services of Farm Machinery Banks, Custom hiring Centers & Hi-tech Hubs developed under different Schemes of DAC&FW, MoA&FW without any computer support system.

### ***First Mobile Science Exhibition***

Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (Independent charge), Prahlad Singh Patel flagged off a mobile science exhibition van in Leh, the first such vehicle in the region, which will hold lectures and sky observation sessions for school students, among other programmes.

The van will have science exhibits and hold exhibitions throughout the year at schools in rural areas, except during vacations.

The Mobile Science Exhibition (MSE) programme was originally launched as the Mobile Science Museum (MSM) in 1965 with the mission: 'If the people cannot visit the museum, let the museum visit the people at their doorsteps'. The Culture Ministry will launch 25 Mobile Science Exhibition buses across the country. "The country had a total of 23 science exhibition vans. This year, 25 more vans are

added and will now be 48. The programmes aim to popularise science and technology among students as well as the people. The buses will travel to schools throughout the year except during vacations and aim to create scientific awareness among children in rural areas. Each specially designed bus contains 20 interactive exhibits.

## Sample Questions

1. Which place won the Best Swachh Iconic Place award in Swachh Bharat Mission Awards?  
**(a) Vaishno Devi**  
(b) Golden Temple  
(c) Shirdi  
(d) Lotus Temple
2. Which among the following Ministries won the Swachh Bharat award in Swachhta Action Plan category?  
(a) Ministry of Women and Child  
(b) Ministry of Urban Development  
(c) Ministry of Defence  
**(d) Ministry of Railways**
3. Which country recently established a space command SpaceCom dedicated to space War?  
(a) China  
(b) Russia  
**(c) USA**  
(d) India
4. Which political leader will be bestowed with an award from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan?  
**(a) Narendra Modi**  
(b) Smriti Irani  
(c) Dr Harsh Vardhan  
(d) Rajnath Singh

5. What is the name of Chandrayaan 2 lander from which Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) lost its contact when it was 2.1 Km away from the surface of the moon?

**(a) Vikram Lander**

(b) Viking 2 Lander

(c) Phoenix Lander

(d) Mars Polar Lander

6. The Institute of Company Secretaries of India has launched UDIN which provide ease of maintaining register of attestation and certification services. What is the Full form of UDIN.

**(a) Unique Document Identification Number**

(b) Uniform Document Identification Number

(c) Unique Document Identity Number

(d) Uniform Document Identity Number

7. ISRO and \_\_\_\_\_ join hands for the development of human-centric systems for the Human Space Mission.

**(a) DRDO**

(b) HAL

(c) NASA

(d) Space X

8. What is the name of the rover of Chandrayaan 2 mission?

(a) Vikram

(b) Virat

(c) Drona

**(d) Pragyan**

9. India has proposed to undertake deep ocean mining under which of the following projects?

**(a) Samudrayaan**

(b) Samudramanathan

- (c) Samudravisarjan
  - (d) Samudrajal
10. What is the name of India's first manned space mission?
- (a) Chandrayaan-3, 2021
  - (b) Mangalyaan-2
  - (c) Gaganyaan, 2021**
  - (d) Astrosat

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