

### Kerala launches 'Vijayamritham' and 'Sahachari' schemes to support differently-abled people

The state government of Kerala has launched two social welfare schemes named 'Vijayamritham' and 'Sahachari' to honour differently-abled people as well as NSS, NCC and Student Police Cadet (SPC) units who work for their care and welfare.

The 'Vijayamritham' scheme has been introduced to provide financial assistance for differently-abled people who battled odds and scored high marks in degree, PG and professional courses.

#### Recently Kerala in News

- Kerala is best performing state in NITI Aayog's School Education Quality Index (SEQI).
- Nadubhagam Chundan snake boat wins 67th Nehru Trophy in Alappuzha.

### Jamaica's Toni-Ann Singh Wins Miss World 2019

Toni-Ann Singh of Jamaica was announced as the winner of the Miss World 2019 beauty pageant held at the ExCeL London.

The 23-year-old Toni-Ann Singh is a women's studies and psychology student at US' Florida State University.

#### Related Info:

- Miss India 2019 winner is Suman Rao from Rajasthan.
- Miss South Africa Zozibini Tunzi crowned 2019 Miss Universe.

### Ankur Garg appointed as chief commercial officer at AirAsia India

AirAsia India on Sunday announced the appointment of Ankur Garg as its chief commercial officer (CCO), a role in which he will be in-charge of areas such as network and revenue management, marketing and sales and cargo.

Ankur Garg will replace Mr. Sanjay Kumar, AirAsia India's Chief Operation Officer (COO).

#### AirAsia India:

Headquarters: Bangalore, India

Chairman: S. Ramadorai

CEO: Sunil Bhaskaran

### India celebrates Vijay Diwas on 16 December

The nation celebrates Vijay Diwas today to commemorate India's victory over Pakistan in 1971 war and remember the martyrs who laid down their lives during the war.

### Second edition of BWF World tour finals 2019 held in Guangzhou, China

BWF World Tour Finals badminton winners list

Men's singles - Japan's Kento Momota

Women's singles - China's Chen Yufei

Men's doubles - Mohammad Ahsan & Hendra Setiawan

Women's doubles - Chen Qingchen & Jia Yifan

Mixed doubles - Zheng Siwei & Huang Yaqiong

### NASA will launch rover 'MARS 2020' in the year 2020

NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) announced to launch its rover 'MARS 2020' in the year 2020.

The rover has been built and managed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

The rover will land on Mars and explore a landscape shaped by water which is the 'Jezero Crater', the site of an ancient delta.

#### NASA

Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States

Founder: Dwight D. Eisenhower

Founded: 29 July 1958

### Gujarat police was honoured with the Presidents Colours award

Gujarat Police was recently honoured with President's Colour for its services and courage. This honour is the biggest honour given by the President to the Armed Forces, Para Military Forces and State Police Forces.

Gujarat became the seventh state police force in India to be bestowed with the honour of the President's Colours.

#### Recently Gujarat in News

- World's first CNG port terminal to be built at Bhavnagar port in Gujarat
- The GoI has launched the first ever common foundation course called the "Aarambh" for civil servants at the Statue of Unity, Kevadia, Gujarat.
- Gandhinagar becomes Gujarat's first kerosene free district.

### Viswanathan Anand launched his autobiography 'Mind Master'

Indian chess Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand's autobiography 'Mind Master: Winning Lessons from a Champion's Life' was released in Chennai.

The book was authored by [Viswanathan Anand](#) and [Susan Ninan](#) and published by Hachette India.

The book covers wonderful memories of Viswanathan Anand's journey.

Viswanathan Anand was born in Mayiladuthurai, Tamil Nadu

He became the first grandmaster from India in 1988.

### Madhya Pradesh govt to host Orchha festival in March 2020.

Namaste Orchha festival marking the cultural landscape of Madhya Pradesh will be held in the ancient town in March 2020.

Orchha, a town in Bundelkhand region, is famous for its Ram Raja temple besides numerous monuments and royal palaces.

#### Recently Madhya Pradesh in News

- The state government of Madhya Pradesh has announced 5% reservation in government jobs.
- Madhya Pradesh government offers cows for adoption online.

### Vice Chief of Indian Army Lt General Manoj Mukund to be appointed as 28th Chief of Army Staff

Lt Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane will be the next Chief of Army Staff of India.

Lt Gen Naravane will succeed Gen Bipin Rawat, who will retire on the 31st December.

Before taking charge as vice chief of the Army Staff in September, Lt Gen Naravane was heading the Eastern Command of the Army which takes care of India's nearly 4,000-km border with China.

#### Related Info:

- The motto of Indian Army: Service Before Self
- Chief of the Naval Staff: Admiral Karambir Singh
- Chief of the Air Staff: Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa

### UNESCO removes 'racist' Belgian carnival from heritage list.

A Belgian carnival has been removed from UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list after officials found the "recurrence of racist and anti-Semitic representations" to be incompatible with its principles.

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity announced it would remove [the Aalst Carnival](#) from its heritage list.

#### UNESCO

- Headquarters: Paris, France
- Director General: Audrey Azoulay

### SBI inks \$277 million pact with Germany based KfW bank for energy-efficient housing programme in India

A loan agreement has been signed between State Bank of India (SBI) and German development bank KfW for USD 277 million to establish an energy-efficient housing programme in India.

The programme will be a part of Indo-German Development Cooperation which is guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### SBI:

- Founded: 1 July 1955
- Chairman: Rajnish Kumar

### Former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf sentenced to death for high treason

Pakistan's former military ruler Pervez Musharraf was sentenced to death in the high treason case by a special court.

Musharraf is facing treason charges for suspending the Constitution and imposing emergency rule in 2007, a punishable offence for which he was indicted in 2014.

#### Pakistan

- Prime Minister: Imran Khan
- President: Arif Alvi
- Pakistani high commissioner to India: Moin-ul-Haq

### Music festival Tansen Samaroh began in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.

The Tansen Music Festival or the Tansen Sangeet Sammelan or the Tansen Utsav is held every year in order to celebrate the memory of one of the greatest artists in Indian history, Tansen.

The festival attracts thousands of musicians and aspiring singers from all over India. Artistes from the US, Greece, Iran, and Belgium will perform in different sessions of the Tansen festival.

*Governor of Madhya Pradesh: Lal Ji Tandon*

#### Recently MP in News

- Madhya Pradesh CM to inaugurate International Film Festival in Khajuraho
- Madhya Pradesh govt to host Orchha festival in March 2020.
- Madhya Pradesh government offers cows for adoption **online**.

### BrahMos Missile successfully test-fired from Chandipur, Odisha

India successfully conducted a developmental trial of the land-attack version of BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from Chandipur Integrated Test Range, off Odisha coast.

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### Axis Bank launches co-branded credit card with IndianOil Corporation

Axis Bank announced its partnership with Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) to launch a co-branded credit card for customers who prefer cashless and hassle-free payments.

This partnership is an effort from Axis Bank and IOCL to expand their presence in the fast-developing credit card ecosystem in India, with an aim to offer attractive rewards and benefits for its customers.

#### Axis bank

- Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Tagline: Badhti ka naam zindagi.
- CEO: Amitabh Chaudhry.

### Moody's cuts India's growth forecast to 4.9% for FY20

Moody's Investors Service has lowered India's gross GDP growth projection for the 2019-20 fiscal year to 4.9 per cent from 5.8 per cent.

The major factors responsible for weakening economic growth were rural financial stress, low job creation and liquidity constraints, Moody's Investors Service said in a report.

#### Moody's

- Headquarters: New York, United States
- CEO: Raymond W. McDaniel Jr

### Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launches 'Jalsathi' programme

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has launched the 'Jalsathi' programme to ensure the supply of safe drinking water to all households in the state.

The Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO) and women federations in Bhubaneswar signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the implementation of the Jalsathi programme.

#### Recently Odisha in News

- Odisha Government has decided to set up 45 fast track courts to expedite the trial of cases relating to women and children.
- Chief Minister of Odisha has launched a smart learning phone application 'MadhuApp' for school children.
- National Tribal Craft Mela- 2019 held in Bhubaneswar.
- Odisha tagged with Maharashtra under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

### Apple, Amazon, Google partner to make smart home devices more compatible

Amazon.com Inc, Apple Inc and Alphabet Inc's Google are partnering to lay the groundwork for better compatibility among their smart home products.

### Tripura gets its first Special Economic Zone (SEZ)

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has notified the setting up of the first-ever Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Tripura.

The SEZ is being set-up at Paschim Jalefa, Sabroom, South Tripura District, which is 130 km away from Agartala.

The estimated cost for the project is around Rs.1550 Crore.

#### Tripura

- Capital: Agartala
- Chief minister: Biplab Kumar Deb
- Governor: Ramesh Bais

### International Tea Day: December 15

The International Tea Day is observed annually on December 15 is celebrated since 2005 to draw global attention of governments and citizens towards the impact of the global tea trade on workers and growers also to request for price supports and fair trade.

### Deepika Padukone to receive Crystal Award by the World Economic Forum (WEF)

Deepika Padukone won the 26th Annual Crystal Award for spreading awareness about the importance of mental health.

She has been very active on mental health issues and her own battle with clinical depression for the past two years.

The winners will be honoured at the opening session of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2020 on 20 January 2020. She is the only Indian actress to appear in the list of winners of Davos 2020.

### PM Modi chairs first National Ganga Council meet in Kanpur

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the first meeting of the National Ganga Council in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh.

The Council which has been given overall responsibility for the superintendence of pollution prevention and rejuvenation of River Ganga Basin, including Ganga and its tributaries.

### Haryana Police adopted a unique barcoding software " Trakea " to make forensic reports tamper-proof

Tareka software is used to ensure that 1000s of digital forensic reports are stored safe and secure. It offers a foolproof security to the samples collected from the crime scene.

This Software features two stages of bar coding to maintain the secrecy of the samples. The samples and reports are sent through biometrically authorized chain. The cases are allocated to the biotechnology experts through automated case allocation.

### Dilip Kumar honoured by World Book of Records

Legendary actor Dilip Kumar was honoured by the World Book of Records, London on his 97th birthday

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Although the Bollywood icon could not collect the award, the Certificate of Honour was presented to his family members including his brother Aslam Khan, wife Saira Banu, his sisters Saeeda Khan and Farida Khan.

### **Edelweiss AMC launches India's 1st corporate bond 'Bharat Bond ETF'**

Edelweiss Asset Management Company (AMC), a Group company of Edelweiss today announced the public issue of India's first Corporate Bond ETF called the Bharat Bond ETF.

Edelweiss aims to raise an initial amount of Rs 3,000 crore through this bond from institutional players with a green shoe option of Rs 2,000 crore in the 3-year maturity period and Rs 4,000 crore with a green shoe option of Rs 6,000 crore in the 10-year maturity bucket.

### **Andhra Assembly passes Bills enabling separate commissions for SCs, STs**

The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly passed two Bills that enable setting up of separate Commissions for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

The Andhra Pradesh State Commission for Scheduled Castes Bill was tabled by Social Welfare Minister P Viswarup. Both the Bills were passed by voice vote, which is taken by noting the relative strength and volume of calls of aye and no.

#### **Recently AP in News**

- Andhra Pradesh is to set up virtual police station (VPS) in the Andhra University.
- AP Assembly passes Disha Bill to award death penalty to rapists within 21 days.
- Andhra Pradesh launches 'Nadu-Nedu' programme.
- AP Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched YSR Vahana Mitra scheme.

### **Nagaland Governor R N Ravi to hold additional charge of Meghalaya**

Nagaland Governor R N Ravi has been given additional charge of Meghalaya. The decision has been taken by the President of India in the wake of the "absence of leave" of Tathagata Roy, Governor of Meghalaya.

The move assumes significance as the state has witnessed protests against the amended Citizenship Act, that seeks to grant Indian citizenship to religious minorities of Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Pakistan facing persecution there.

### **Ministry of Coal to establish "Sustainable Development Cell" to promote environmentally sustainable coal mining**

The Ministry of Coal has decided to establish a Sustainable Development Cell (SDC) in order to promote environmentally sustainable coal mining in the country.

It will address environmental concerns during the decommissioning or closure of mines.

### **Rashtrapati Bhavan hosted university heads' conference**

Rashtrapati Bhavan hosted a conference of 46 Heads of Central Universities and Institutes of Higher Learning in several fields including agriculture, pharmaceuticals, aviation, design, petroleum and energy.

### **Google Earth covers 98 percent of the entire population**

Search engine giant Google has revealed that its powerful mapping service, Google Earth now covers more than 98 percent of the world.

It has captured 10 million miles of Street View imagery, a distance that could circle the globe more than 400 times.

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### Google

CEO: Sundar Pichai

Founded: 4 September 1998

Headquarters: California, United States

Parent organization: Alphabet Inc

### Madhya Pradesh CM to inaugurate International Film Festival in Khajuraho

Madhya Pradesh, the Chief Minister Kamal Nath inaugurates the 7-Day International Film Festival in Shilpkala village of Khajuraho.

The International Khajuraho Film Festival is being organized by the Prayas Sanstha in collaboration with the State Government.

#### Recently MP in News

- Madhya Pradesh govt to host Orchha festival in March 2020.
- The state government of Madhya Pradesh has announced 5% reservation in government jobs.
- Madhya Pradesh government offers cows for adoption online.

### India Ranks 112 in WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2020

India has slipped to the 112th spot from its 108th position in 2018 in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2020, which covered 153 economies.

Last year, in 2018, India was on the 108th position on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report. The report also highlights that as per the present scenario, workplace inequality will not be erased until the year 2276.

While Iceland remains the world's most gender-neutral country.

Yemen at 153 is the worst ranked country in this list.

### Intel Acquires AI chip startup Habana Labs For \$2 Billion

Intel has announced that it will acquire Israeli chip startup Habana Labs for \$2 billion.

Habana Labs stands out as one of the first to deliver working hardware with impressive performance claims for both training and inference processing. Habana Labs launched its Goya chip for inference processing in September 2018, claiming roughly 3X performance advantage over NVIDIA with lower latency.

### Sridhar Patra appointed as the CMD of NALCO

The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appointed Sridhar Patra as the new chairman-cum-managing director (CMD) of National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO).

Sridhar Patra is at present Director (Finance) in the National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO).

He has been appointed as the CMD of NALCO till the date of his superannuation, i.e. October 31, 2024.

### Government Instant Messaging System (GIMS)

Government Instant Messaging System (GIMS) is a prototype of an Indian equivalent of popular messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp and Telegram for secure internal use.



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GIMS seeks to replace existing platforms like WhatsApp, Telegram and Signal which are being used by a majority of government departments and organisations.

It is designed and developed by the Kerala unit of National Informatics Centre (NIC).

### **Ben Stokes wins BBC Sports Personality of the Year award 2019**

English cricket player Benjamin Andrew Stokes (Ben Stokes), was named as the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year 2019.

Ben Stokes was awarded for his key role in England's win in the 2019 cricket World Cup which was held in England and Wales in the United Kingdom.

### **World's first liquefied hydrogen carrier 'Suiso frontier' launched in Japan**

Japanese public multinational corporation has launched the world's 1st ocean-going liquid hydrogen carrier ship named as 'Suiso Frontier' at a ceremony held at Kobe Works yard, Japan.

Weighing approximately 8,000 tonnes, Suiso Frontier was launched by Kawasaki Heavy Industries at its Kobe Works yard and marks the first stage in the Australia-Japan pilot project to produce liquefied hydrogen from brown coal.

### **Amitabha Bagchi wins DSC prize for South Asian Literature 2019**

Amitabha Bagchi's novel Half the Night Is Gone has won the \$25,000 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2019.

The winner was announced at the IME Nepal Literature Festival and he was awarded the prize by the Nepalese Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali and DSC Prize co-founder Surina Narula.

### **Smriti Mandhana named in ICC Women's ODI & T20 teams of the year.**

Indian women's cricket player Smriti Mandhana was named in both ICC women's ODI and T20 teams of the year.

ICC Women's ODI Team of the Year:

Alyssa Healy (Australia), Smriti Mandhana (India), Tamsin Beaumont (England), Meg Lanning (Australia), Stafanie Taylor (West Indies), Ellyse Perry (Australia), Jess Jonassen (Australia), Shikha Pandey (India), Jhulan Goswami (India), Megan Schutt (Australia), Poonam Yadav (India).

### **Fifth EAC meeting of 15th Finance Commission held in New Delhi**

The 5th meeting of the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) of the 15th Finance Commission was held in New Delhi. After the meeting, Chairman NK Singh stated that future revenue is the most critical issue for the Finance Commission. He further stated that tax regime needs predictability and certainty.

### **India signs \$250 million loan agreement with ADB to expand energy efficiency investments in India**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$250 million loan to Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) to expand energy efficiency investments in India that will benefit agricultural, residential and institutional consumers.

In addition, \$46 million financing will be provided from the Clean Technology Fund (CTF), to be administered by ADB.

EESL will also explore business models to generate greater public demand for e-vehicles to support India's current push for electric vehicles.

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ADB

President: Takehiko Nakao

Headquarters: Mandaluyong, Philippines

Founded: 19 December 1966

### **Deepak Punia named 2019 UWW's 'Junior Freestyle Wrestler of the Year'**

World championships silver medallist Deepak PUNIA has been named United World Wrestling's (UWW) Junior Freestyle Wrestler of the Year.

Deepak Punia is the first Indian wrestler in 18 years to win a junior world title at the Junior World Championships held in Talinn, Estonia in August 2019.

### **International Migrants Day observed on 18 December**

The International Migrants Day is observed on 18 December every year to protect the rights of migrant workers and members of their families.

The International Migrants Day is observed by the United Nations since 1990 in order to protect the rights of the migrants.

Theme: "We Together"

### **Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad launches National Broadband Mission 2020**

The Union government has launched National Broadband Mission to provide Broadband access to all villages by 2022.

The mission aims to connect 600,000 villages across India with an investment of Rs 7 lakh crore in the next 4 years from both government and private sector.

Broadband access to all villages by 2022.

Facilitate universal and equitable access to broadband services for across the country and especially in rural and remote areas.

Laying of incremental 30 lakhs route km of Optical Fiber Cable and increase in tower density from 0.42 to 1.0 tower per thousand of population by 2024.

### **Union Home Minister Amit Shah lays foundation for Bharat Vandana Park in Dwarka, New Delhi**

Shri Amit Shah, Union Home Minister today laid the foundation stone of Bharat Vandana Park at Sector 20, Dwarka in New Delhi.

The park will be a major tourist attraction covering an area of 200 acres at a cost of Rs.550 crores, the park is located near the Indira Gandhi International Airport and metro station.

*Amit Shah Constituency: Gandhinagar*

### **GEM launches National Outreach Programme "GEM Samvaad"**

A national outreach Programme, GeM Samvaad, was launched by Anup Wadhawan, Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India and Chairman, GeM in New Delhi.

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The outreach programme will take place with stakeholders across the country and with local sellers in order to facilitate the on-boarding of local sellers on the marketplace while catering to specific requirements and procurement needs of buyers.

### **HDFC Bank crosses \$100 billion in market cap**

HDFC Bank has become the 3rd Indian firm to cross \$100 billion mark in market capitalisation.

Reliance Industries Ltd (\$140.74 billion)

Tata Consultancy Services (\$114.60 billion)

HDFC Bank is now ranked 110th in the list of world's most valued companies. Among the world's most valued banks and financial companies which have a market cap of over \$100 billion, HDFC Bank is ranked at 26th position.

#### **HDFC Bank**

Managing Director: Aditya Puri

Headquarters: Mumbai

### **Sahitya Akademi announced 22 winners for the 2019 Sahitya Akademi Awards**

Sahitya Akademi has announced the winners of the 2019 Sahitya Akademi Awards in 23 languages.

In Hindi, Nand Kishore has been awarded for his Poetry 'Chilte Hue Apne Ko'.

In English, Dr Shashi Tharoor has been awarded for his Non-Fiction 'An Era of Darkness'.

In Tamil, Cho Dharman has been awarded for his Novel 'Sool'.

In Gujarati, Ratilal Borisagar has awarded for his Essays 'Mojama Revu Re'.

### **Thawarchand Gehlot launches Braille version of 'Exam Warriors'**

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot released the Braille Edition of the book "Exam Warriors" authored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The braille version in English and Hindi has been printed by Rajasthan Netraheen Kalyan Sangh in Jaipur.

The book contains a detailed-deion of the animated picture and various yoga asanas which will let students imagine the pictorial graphics with ease.

*Thaawarchand Gehlot Constituency: Shajapur, Madhya Pradesh.*

### **India is world's third largest producer of scientific articles**

India has become the world's third-largest publisher of science and engineering articles, according to a US government agency data. With over 1.35 lakh scientific papers published.

China has topped the report as the world's largest publisher while the US stands at second position.

### **Gem Partners with UCO Bank and Bank of Maharashtra for Payment Related Services**

The Government e-Marketplace signed two MoUs with Bank of Maharashtra and UCO Bank on 16 Dec 2019 to offer a number of services including transfer of funds through GeM Pool Accounts (GPA), advising of Performance Bank Guarantees (e-PBG) and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) to the registered users on the portal.

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The MOU was signed by S Suresh Kumar, Additional CEO (GeM) and Anil Kumar, General Manager, UCO Bank and V D Kolhatkar, Field General Manager, Bank of Maharashtra.

### **Environmental Sustainability and Economic Development Summit held in Delhi**

Union Minister Prakash Javadekar addressed a Summit on "Environmental Sustainability and Economic Development in Delhi.

Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change: Prakash Javadekar

Prakash Javadekar elected to the upper house Rajya Sabha as a Member of Parliament from Maharashtra.

### **Chennai Corporation of Tamil Nadu launches country's first waste exchange platform**

Chennai residents can now buy and sell reusable and recycled products online as the Greater Chennai Corporation has launched a new website that facilitates waste-trading.

'www.madraswasteexchange.com' is India's first waste exchange platform for vendors and buyers of waste to connect. The website will be run as a pilot for the next three months, after which more features will be added to the platform.

### **RBI to waive off NEFT, RTGS transfer charges for savings account**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has now instructed banks to make all online payments done through NEFT and RTGS free of cost for savings account holders. Several banks have already made it free while others have been asked to do so from January 2020.

### **Fiat Chrysler And Peugeot Sign \$50 Billion Merger Deal**

French carmaker Peugeot SA and US-Italian automotive manufacturer Fiat Chrysler have signed an agreement to create the world's fourth largest automaker.

The combined revenue of the two entities will be close to 170 billion euros i.e. \$190 million.

The agreement between Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and Peugeot SA provides for a 50:50 merger of their busi

### **International Human Solidarity Day: 20 December**

International Human Solidarity Day is observed on 20 December every year.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) identified solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values and designated 20 December of each year as International Human Solidarity Day.

The Day aims to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity. It encourages debate on the ways to promote solidarity for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals including poverty eradication.

### **ADB, India Sign \$ 490 Million Loan Upgrade Madhya Pradesh Roads**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India today signed a \$490 million loan for public-private partnership (PPP) project to upgrade about 1,600 km of state highways and major district roads from single-lane to two-lane widths in the state of Madhya Pradesh. An additional \$286 million investment will be mobilized through private sector participation under the PPP modality.

The project will upgrade 750 km of state highways and 850 km of MDRs to two-lane and all-weather standards with road safety features.

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It will also develop an e-maintenance system, which can record defects or required maintenance, along with a training program to develop capacity on contract implementation and project finance in the Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation.

### **ADB**

Headquarters: Manila, Philippines

President: Takehiko Nakao

### **Devesh Srivastava takes charge as CMD of GIC Re**

The government has appointed Devesh Srivastava as chairman and MD of national reinsurer General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re).

Mr. Srivastava began his career with Oriental Insurance Company in Delhi. Subsequently, in 1999 Mr. Srivastava's services were transferred to GIC Re.

General Insurance Corporation India

Headquarters: Mumbai

### **Ethiopia launches its first satellite**

Ethiopia launched its first satellite, a landmark achievement for the country's space program that caps a banner year for the African space industry.

Solomon Belay, director-general of the Ethiopian Space Science and Technology Institute, announced the satellite was designed by Chinese and Ethiopian engineers and the Chinese government paid about \$6m of the more than \$7m manufacturing costs.

The 70-kilogram remote sensing satellite is to be used for agricultural, climate, mining and environmental observations.

### **Ethiopia**

Capital: Addis Ababa

Currency: Ethiopian Birr

Prime minister: Abiy Ahmed

### **Govt approves ₹436 crores for digital upskilling of IT workforce**

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has approved Rs.436 crore for Future Skills PRIME (Programme for Reskilling/Upskilling of IT Manpower for Employability) over a period of three years.

The programme the next level of the Future Skills platform seeks to skill 412,000 professionals in new technology such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, Internet of Things, Big Data, cybersecurity, social and mobile, etc.

Union Minister for Law and Justice, Communications and Electronics and Information Technology: Ravi Shankar Prasad

*Ravi Shankar Prasad Constituency: Patna Sahib*

### **Indian men's football team ranked 108th in latest FIFA rankings**

The Indian men's football team remained static at 108th spot in the year-ending FIFA rankings.

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India, however, lost 11 places throughout the year.

Belgium ranked the first position while In the Asian rankings, Japan is followed by Iran (33), Korea (40), Australia (42) and continental champion Qatar (55).

Qatar will host FIFA World Cup 2022

### **FIFA:**

President: Gianni Infantino

Headquarters: Zürich, Switzerland

### **Indian Navy & Coast Guard conduct largest-ever anti-hijacking Exercise 'Apharan'**

The Indian Navy, in collaboration with Indian Coast Guard, Cochin Port Trust, and other concerned stake holders, conducted a large-scale Anti Hijacking Exercise off the Port of Kochi.

The exercise Apharan aimed to streamline the response mechanism. It focused on the preparedness of the navy to thwart any attempt by to hijack a merchant vessel or attempt forced entry of a rogue or commandeered merchant vessel into Kochi harbour.

*Chief of the Naval Staff: Admiral Karambir Singh*

### **Afghanistan first country to recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia**

The Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP) has been recognised formally by the National Department of Regulation of Medicines and Health Products of the Ministry of Public Health of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. It will also be used based on the requirement as reputable pharmacopoeia in the laboratory of medicines and health products quality.

Afghanistan has become the first country to recognize IP pursuant to the efforts of Department of Commerce and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

### **Fitch cuts India GDP growth forecast to 4.6% in FY20**

Fitch Ratings on Friday cut its growth forecast for India to 4.6 per cent for the 2019-20 fiscal from the previous estimation of 5.6 per cent after factoring in significant deceleration in past few quarters due to credit squeeze and deterioration in business and consumer confidence.

### **Portugal announces Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize**

Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa announced the setting up of a Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize in order to help promote Mahatma Gandhi's ideals.

Every year, the Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize would be inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's different thoughts and quotes. The first edition of this prize will be dedicated to animal welfare as Mahatma Gandhi said that the greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated.

### **Portugal**

Capital: Lisbon

Currency: Euro

### **DRDO successfully flight-tests Pinaka Missile System off Odisha coast**

Pinaka Missile System developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) was successfully flight-tested from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the Odisha Coast.

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The Pinaka is an Artillery Missile System capable of striking into enemy territory up to a range of 75 kilometres with high precision.

The mission achieved all the objectives including enhancing the range, accuracy and sub-system functionality.

The missile was fired from Pinaka launcher system in deployment configuration. The flight article was tracked by multiple range systems viz. Telemetry, Radars, Electro-optical targeting system (EOTS), etc.

### DRDO

Chairman: G Satheesh Reddy

Headquarters: New Delhi

### weightlifter Mirabai Chanu wins gold in Qatar International Cup

Former world champion weightlifter from Manipur, Saikhom Mirabai Chanu clinched gold at the 6th Qatar Cup International Weightlifting Championship in Doha.

Mirabai Chanu won gold under the women's 49 kg category at the event, which is a qualifying event for Tokyo 2020.

The 24-year-old weightlifter, who bagged gold in the 2018 Commonwealth Games, managed to register only one clean lift in both the snatch and clean and jerk categories. She lifted 83kg in snatch and 111kg in clean and jerk to finish on top of the podium.

### RBI to buy, sell govt bonds worth Rs 10,000 Crore

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will simultaneously purchase and sell government securities worth 10,000 crore rupees under a special Open Market Operation (OMO).

The exercises are done by the central bank when the proceeds from the sale of short-term securities are used to buy long-term government securities or bonds in a bid to bring down interest rates on long-term securities.

### RBI

Headquarters: Mumbai

Founded: 1 April 1935

Governor: Shaktikanta Das

### PM Modi addresses ASSOCHAM Annual Conference in Delhi

PM Modi addressed the annual meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) in New Delhi. This is to celebrate the 100 years of ASSOCHAM.

Theme: New India Aspiring for 5 trillion USD

ASSOCHAM

Headquarters: New Delhi

President: Balkrishan Goenka

### Wipro ties up with NASSCOM to launch Skilling Platform

Wipro has partnered with Indian IT industry apex body, NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Companies) to launch 'Future Skills' platform to train 10,000 students from over 20 engineering

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colleges in India with new age technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, cyber security and internet of things.

### **NASSCOM**

Headquarters: Noida, Uttar Pradesh

President: Debjani Ghosh

### **Andhra Pradesh topped in organizing Fit India School Week**

Andhra Pradesh tops in organizing Fit India School Week more than 21,000 schools receive FIT India flag.

The Fit India School week has so far been organized by 26,845 schools. Andhra Pradesh tops the chart with 13,839 Fit India Schools celebrating FIT India Week. Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh are distant second & third with 1,967 and 1,504 schools respectively.

### **Recently AP in News**

- Andhra Pradesh is to set up virtual police station (VPS) in the Andhra University.
- AP Assembly passes Disha Bill to award death penalty to rapists within 21 days.
- Andhra Pradesh launches 'Nadu-Nedu' programme.
- AP Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched YSR Vahana Mitra scheme.

### **International Astronomical Union names new star 'Sharjah'**

The International Astronomical Union announced the names of the newly discovered stars and planets, where the name "Sharjah" was chosen for a star with "Barjeel" being the name of one of its planets.

The announcement was made during a press conference of the IAU in the French capital, Paris, celebrating the centennial of the union.

*International Astronomical Union Headquarters: Paris, France*

### **Meghalaya Assembly to pass resolution to bring state under ILP**

The Meghalaya Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Government of India to implement Inner Line Permit in the state under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.

The one-day special session was conducted with the sole intention to pass the resolution in view of the demand by the indigenous residents of the state for implementation of the ILP.

### **Recently Meghalaya in News**

- 4th edition of India International Cherry Blossom Festival Celebrated in Shillong.
- Justice Muhammad Raffiq sworn in as Chief Justice of Meghalaya High Court.

### **Meghalaya:**

- Chief Minister: Conrad Sangma
- Governor: Tathagata Roy

### **IPS officer Atul Karwal appointed as Director of National Police Academy**

The Union Government appointed a senior Gujarat Cadre IPS officer Atul Karwal, as Director of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad.