



# Monthly Updates On ***CURRENT AFFAIRS***

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**OCTOBER 2019**

## **NATIONAL**

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- India has ranked down by 10 places to rank 68th in the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) Report, released by World Economic Forum (WEF). This report is based on 103 indicators distributed across the 12 pillars on which the performance of the countries can be evaluated.
- According to the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2019, India has slipped to 102nd rank in 2019 (which was 95th in 2010) due to the increase in the number of children under the age of 5, having low weight and height. Chad, Madagascar, Yemen and the Central African Republic are in the extremely alarming hunger category.
- The Central Government of India has increased the Dearness Allowance (DA) by 5% (that is, from 12% to 17%) of the employees and pensioners of the Central Government. The cost of the exchequer will be Rs. 16,000 crores which will be effective from July 2019.
- To accelerate social entrepreneurship and innovation in India (as the critical drivers of sustainable development), Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India launched Youth Co:Lab. This will help young entrepreneurs and innovators to connect with governments, mentors, incubators and investors, who will help to equip them with entrepreneurial skills.
- The Union Cabinet approved the inclusion of 5300 families of Jammu and Kashmir-1947 under the development package, who initially opted to move outside the state, but later returned and settled in the Jammu & Kashmir. Under this scheme, these families will get one-time financial assistance of Rs. 5.5 lakhs.
- Chenani-Nashri Tunnel, the longest tunnel of India in Jammu and Kashmir will be named after Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the founder of Bhartiya Jansangh.
- India's largest Charkha, made up of plastic wastes, inaugurated by Union Minister Smriti Irani in Noida on the eve of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth jointly inaugurated 2 projects that is, phase-1 of the Metro Express and a new ENT Hospital, in Mauritius via a video conference.
- India's first private train 'Tejas Express' entirely run by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), flagged off by Uttar Pradesh's Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. It will run between Delhi and Lucknow.
- First India Sports Summit 2019 inaugurated by Minister of State for Youth and Sports Kiren Rijju in New Delhi.

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- The 2nd India-China Informal Summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and China's President Xi Jinping held at Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu.
- 'One Nation One Tag-FASTag' inaugurated by Union Road Transport & Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi to roll out the process for having a .unified electronic system across the country.
- 41st DRDO Directors Conference in New Delhi inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- Chief Justice of 7 High Courts have been appointed by President Ramnath Kovind. These 7 courts are, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana, Guwahati, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim High Courts.
- The second pair of Mi-24V helicopters handed over by the India to war-torn Afghanistan for boosting the capability of the Afghan Air forces.

## **ECONOMY**

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- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reduced the policy repo rate by 25 basis points (bps) in its 4th Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Committee meeting.
- The State Bank of India became the first Indian bank to have a branch in the Australian state of Victoria after opening its Melbourne office.
- 'Express FD' has been launched by Axis Bank, India's third largest private sector bank. It allows a customer to open an FD account through digital mode in 3 minutes, without opening a saving account with the bank.
- UCash, Digilocker and an app (all are digital products) has been launched by UCO bank in Kolkata, West Bengal.
- The merger proposal of Indiabulls Housing Finance and Lakshmi Vilas Bank has been rejected by the Reserve Bank of India.
- To form 'Kerala Bank', the government of Kerala got the go ahead by the Reserve Bank of India. Under this project, the Kerala government will amalgamate 13 District Cooperative Banks (except Malappuram District Cooperative Bank) with Kerala State Cooperative Bank to form the Kerala Bank.
- 'FD Health', a fixed deposit scheme that comes with an in-built critical insurance policy (that will be provided to only the primary holder of the FD account), has been launched by ICICI Bank.
- 'SBI Card Pay' has been announced by SBI Card, which will allow contactless payment using mobile phones at PoS terminals.
- Vreedhi Financial Services (VFS) has got a non-banking finance company license from the RBI to provide credit and other services to micro-enterprises which operate in tier II/III cities and small towns.
- A penalty of Rs. 35 lakhs has been imposed on Tamilnad Mercantile Bank by RBI, for violating norms on fraud classification and notification.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

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- A team of astronomers has discovered 20 new moons of Saturn which increased its total number of moons to 82. It overtook the Jupiter (which has 79 moons) as the planet with most moons.
- The children's agency, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), became the first UN organization to hold and make transactions in cryptocurrency. It joined a number of other aid agencies that accept donations in cryptocurrencies, such as American Red Cross.
- A satellite, ICON (or Ionospheric Connection Explorer) has been launched by NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) to explore the mysterious, dynamic region where air meets space.

- NASA astronauts Jessica Meir and Christina Koch made history by conducting first all women spacewalk outside International Space Station (ISS).
- 'TechSagar', a platform launched by National Cyber Security Coordinator's office in partnership with Data Security Council of India (DSCI). It is an online portal of India's technological capability, which lists every technology-based business and research entities. It aims to facilitate new opportunities for businesses and academia to collaborate, connect and innovate, in future.

## SPORTS

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- Indian swimmers N. Wilson Singh and Satish Kumar Prahapati won the gold medal in 10 metre platform synchronized diving event at the Asian age Group Championship held in Bengaluru.
- Jamaican track and field athlete Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce won gold medal in 100 metre race of IAAF World Championship 2019 held in Doha.
- Indian fencer Bhavani Devi won the silver medal in the women's sabre individual event at the Tournoi satellite competition in Belgium.
- Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton (of Mercedes) won the 2019 Russia Formula One Grand Prix at Sochi Autodrom race track in Russia.
- Indian cricketer Harmanpreet Kaur has become the first Indian to play 100 T20 International matches.
- US gymnastics star Simone Biles has become the most decorated woman gymnast after clinching a record-extending 15th world championship gold medal in Stuttgart.
- Indian Chess player Raunak Sadhwani has become India's 65th GrandMaster at the age of 13 years, 9 months and 28 days after defeating Russian GrandMaster Alexander Motylev.

## PERSONS IN NEWS

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- KS Dhatwalia, the senior Indian Information Service officer appointed as the Principal Director General of Press Information Bureau (PIB).
- SS Mallikarjuna Rao appointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive of the Punjab National Bank (PNB).
- Indian Economist Surjit Bhalla has been appointed as the executive director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by the union government for a period of three years.
- Anita Pai and Jasneet Bachal are appointed as the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Marketing Officer, respectively by Yes Bank Ltd.
- Vikas Varma appointed as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Mastercard India, (a payment technology major).
- SBI chairman Rajnish Kumar has been appointed as the new chairman of Indian Banks' Association and will succeed Sunil Mehta. The MD & CEO of IDBI Bank Rakesh Sharma will be honorary secretary of IBA for 2019-20.
- Secretary of Cricket Association of Uttarakhand, Mahim Verma appointed as the new Vice President of BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India).
- Girish Chandra Murmu and Radha Krishna Mathur appointed as the 1st Lieutenant Governors of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh respectively by the Union Government.
- Satya Pal Malik and P.S. Sreegharan Pillai have been appointed as the governors of Goa and Mizoram, respectively by the union government.

- American technology company NVIDIA's CEO Jensen Huang has topped the list of the Best-Performing CEOs in the World, 2019 compiled by the Harvard Business Review (HBR) features 100 CEOs. Among the top 10 chief executives on the list, 3 spots have been occupied by the Indian-origin CEOs. Rank 6 is fetched by Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen followed by MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga was ranked 7th and Microsoft chief Satya Nadella on the 9th spot. Tim Cook (the CEO of Apple) ranked 62nd in the list while India-born CEO of DBS Bank Piyush Gupta is on the 89th spot.
- António Luís Santos da Costa GCIH (popular as Antonio Costa) has been re-elected as the 119th Prime Minister of Portugal after winning the general elections.
- Saad Hariri, the Prime Minister of Lebanon, has resigned from the portfolio amid anti-government protests.
- Kais Saied is elected as the 5th President of Tunisia after a landslide victory in recently concluded Presidential runoff in which he won against his rival, Nabil Karoui.

## PLANS AND POLICIES

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- NITI Aayog with Institute for Competitiveness as the knowledge partner released the India Innovation Index (III) 2019. According to this report, Karnataka is the most innovative major state in India. Sikkim and Delhi top among the northeastern & hill states, and union territories/city-states/small states respectively. Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh are the most efficient states in translating inputs into output.
- To develop the National Sports University at Imphal, Manipur, NBCC (India) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Department of Sports under Union Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) which will cost approximate Rs. 400 crores.
- The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) have launched an Automated Real Time Performance Smart-board for effective monitoring and measurement of key programmes (include Digital India, Aadhaar, Digital Payments, etc.) of government.
- The Union Ministry of Tourism launched 'Audio Odigos' (Audio Guide facility App) for 12 sites of India, during the ongoing celebrations of nationwide 'Paryatan Parv 2019'. This year is the 3rd edition of Paryatan Parv.
- To collaborate as well as strengthen the implementation of government's flagship health insurance scheme, 'Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana' (PM-JAY), the National Health Authority (NHA) of India has joined hands with Google.
- The eDant Seva, an initiative under the National Oral Health Program, was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family welfare. It aims to sensitize the importance of maintaining oral health, provide information about nearest oral health service facility and oral health information collected from authentic scientific sources.
- DHRUV, the Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme, launched from Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is a 14 day learning programme. The programme was launched by Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' in presence of Dr. K. Sivan, Chairman of ISRO and others.
- GEMINI, a device that will provide information related to disaster warning, has launched by the Government of India. This is exclusively designed for fishermen about disasters when they are 10 to 12 km away from the coast.
- Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN) scheme launched by the Union Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan at the conference of Central Council of Health and Family Welfare. This scheme will provide free medicines for pregnant women and focus to bring down the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in India.

- 'Yuva Sahakar' (Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme) launched by Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar at the opening ceremony of first ever 'India International Cooperatives Trade Fair' in New Delhi.
- On October 16, 2019, to mark World Food Day, the Health and Family Welfare Ministry launched the Food Safety Mitra Scheme. The main objective of this scheme is to scale up Eat Right India movement along with Fit India movement.
- 'Tamanna' (Try And Measure Aptitude And Natural Abilities), an online aptitude test, has launched by Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), to help students make right career choices.
- 'Mukhya Mantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana' launched by CM Yogi Adityanath, in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. This scheme will provide Rs. 15,000 to every family where a girl child is born which will be released in a phased manner.
- A Letter of Understanding (LoU) has signed between the state government of Odisha and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) to provide safe drinking water to every household in the state for 24-hours. The project has been named as 'Drink from Tap Mission'.

## AWARDS AND HONOURS

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- The Nobel Prize 2019 announced in 6 different fields that is, Physiology or Medicine, Physics, Chemistry, Literature, Peace, and Economic Sciences. Winners are –
  - **Physiology or Medicine:** William G. Kaelin (USA), Sir Peter J. Ratcliffe (United Kingdom), Gregg L. Semenza (USA); for the discoveries of how cells sense and adapt the oxygen availability.
  - **Physics:** James Peebles (Canada), Michel Mayor (Switzerland), Didier Queloz (Switzerland)
  - **Chemistry:** John B. Goodenough (Germany), M. Stanley Whittingham (United Kingdom), Akira Yoshino (Japan)
  - **Economics:** Abhijit Banerjee (India), Esther Duflo (France), Michael Kremer (USA)
  - **Literature (2018):** Olga Tokarczuk (Poland)
  - **Literature (2019):** Peter Handke (Austria)
  - **Peace:** Abiy Ahmed Ali (Ethiopia)
- The Nobel Prize was first distributed on 1901 in the remembrance of Alfred Nobel. The winner receives a full cash prize, valued this year at 9-million kronor (\$ 918,000), a gold medal and a diploma.
- The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation awards were announced at a ceremony held in Penang, Malaysia. 4 heritage landmarks from India were chosen for the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation 2019.
- President Ram Nath Kovind presented the most effective Swachhta Ambassador award to Former Indian cricketer Sachin Tendulkar on the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- England all-rounder Ben Stokes has been voted Professional Cricketers' Association player of the year at the Professional Cricketers' Association awards.
- Kyrgyzstan's human rights lawyer Azizbek Ashurov awarded by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) prestigious Nansen Award.
- 'Spirit of Kerala', a short film from Kerala has won the People's Choice Award at the My Rode Reel Film Competition. This film is based on a boat race and directed by Arun Joseph.
- NASA astronaut Nick Hague has honoured by Russia's highest honour, 'The Order of Courage' for his 'courage and high professionalism' shown during life-threatening conditions.

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- The Vice President of India V.P. Venkaiah Naidu was conferred 'The Order of the Green Crescent', the highest Civilian Honour of Comoros, by the President of Comoros, Azali Assoumani.
- Ramesh Pandey, Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer has been selected for the prestigious Asia Environmental Enforcement Award by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- Australian professional tennis player and former cricketer Ashleigh Barty has been awarded Australian sport's highest individual honour 'The Don' Award at the annual Sport Australia Hall of Fame.
- The pioneer of the Chipko Movement Chandi Prasad Bhatt will be awarded the 31st Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration for the years 2017 and 2018, for his services in promoting and preserving the national integration.
- Noted director and producer Priyadarshan was conferred the Madhya Pradesh government's National Kishore Kumar Samman for 2018-19 at a function in Khandwa, MP. He made several blockbuster Malayalam and Hindi films.
- Booker Prize 2019 has been jointly won by Margaret Atwood and Bernardine Evaristo after judges flout the rules by declaring a tie.
- Footballer Leo Messi (Barcelona Captain) received his 6th Golden Shoe as the top scorer in the European leagues.
- Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra has been named orchestra of the year at the Gramophone Awards 2019.
- K. Parasaran, the scholar, legal luminary and former Attorney General of India has been awarded by the 'Most Eminent Senior Citizen Award' by the Vice President Venkaiah on the occasion of Elder's Day celebration.
- 'Gully Boy', a Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt-starrer film, won the title 'Best Film from India' award in the regional finals at the Asian Academy Creative Awards ceremony.
- Netflix series 'Delhi Crime' won for Best Actress, Best Direction, Best Drama Series, Best Editing and Best Original Programme at the Asian Academy Creative Awards.
- The first National Corporate Social Responsibility Awards have been conferred by the President Ram Nath Kovind to the companies for their outstanding contribution in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility.