

DECEMBER 2019

**MONTHLY UPDATES ON
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

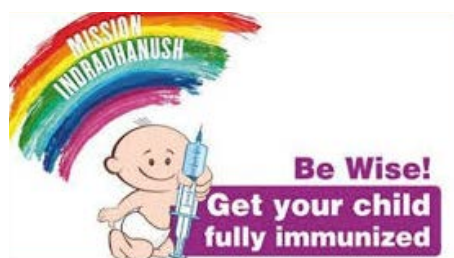
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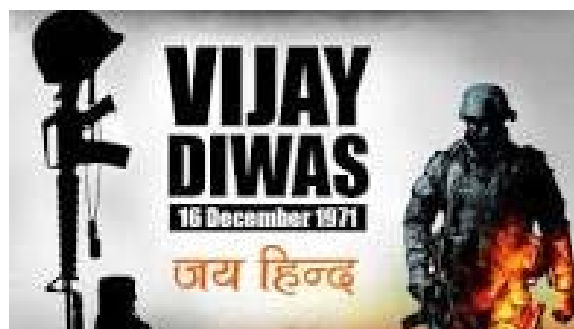
- General **Bipin Rawat**, the chief of Indian Army, appointed as the country's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). Chief of Defence Staff will be a 4-star General, the principal military advisor to the defence minister, and the head of the Department of Military Affairs. Lt Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane will be the next Chief of Indian Army and currently he is serving as Vice Chief of the Army. He will succeed Gen Bipin Rawat.



- After signing the 'Bilateral Annual Haj 2020 Agreement' between India and Saudi Arabia, India has become the 1st country to make the entire process for pilgrims going on Haj completely digital. In this, 2 lakhs Indian Muslims going for Haj in 2020 will be provided by the following facilities.
 - An online application,
 - e-visa
 - Haj mobile app,
 - 'e-MASIHA' (Health facility)
 - 'e-luggage pre-tagging'.
- Hemant Soren**, the leader of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha sworn in as the 11th Chief Minister of Jharkhand.
- Under the Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0, the centre is launching a nationwide vaccination drive to prevent eight diseases. It aimed at immunizing children under the age of 2 years and pregnant women against 8 vaccine-preventable diseases that is, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, measles, meningitis and Hepatitis B. Also, in some areas, the vaccination for Japanese encephalitis and Hemophilus influenza will be provided.



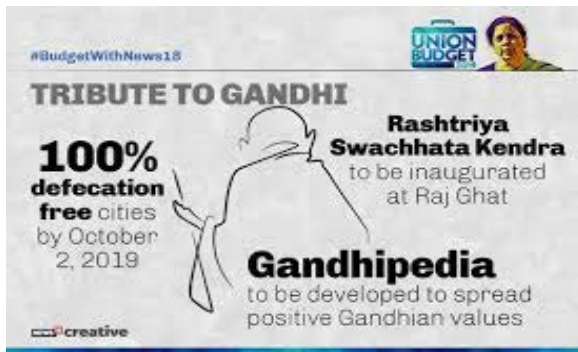
- '**Bhartiya Poshan Anthem**' has launched by the Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu. This anthem aims to take the message of making India malnutrition free to all corners of the country. The concept of this anthem was given by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD). Lyricist Prasoon Joshi penned it and sung by Shankar Mahadevan.
- Vijay Diwas** celebrated on 16 December in the country to commemorate India's victory over Pakistan in Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. This war began on December 3 and officially ended on December 16 and Pakistan surrendered to India.



- In the Human Development Index 2019 which is released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), India ranked 129th among 189 countries. This index is based on the 3 dimensions that is, life expectancy, education and per capita income which are directly related to the human development.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) advanced a loan of \$206 millions to develop water supply and sewerage infrastructure in cities of Tamil Nadu.
- Walmart India** launched a co-branded credit card in partnership with HDFC Bank for members of its Best Price Modern Wholesale "B2B Cash & Carry" stores, offering "free credit up to 50 days."
- In the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 which is released by **World Economic Forum** (WEF), India slipped to rank 112th which was four places down from previous year. Iceland has topped in this list and remains the world's most gender-neutral country while Yemen was ranked the worst (153rd). The most improved countries were Albania, Ethiopia, Mali, Mexico and Spain.
- In Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) which was jointly presented by the Germanwatch, New Climate Institute and Climate Action Network, India placed at rank 9. Along with India, only UK (7th) ranked in the high category among the G20 countries while other 8 were placed in the worst category. The first three places in this index remained unoccupied and Sweden (4th rank) and Denmark (5th) were one of the best among all.



- ⊙ An agreement has been signed between India and US to facilitate the transfer of defence technology, held at Washington DC.
- ⊙ The 'Good Governance Index' has released by the Central Government on the occasion of Good Governance Day to assess the state of governance in Indian States and Union Territories. Its objective is to provide quantifiable data to compare the state of governance in all states and Union Territories of the country and to enable them to formulate and implement suitable strategies for improving governance and shift to result oriented approaches and administration.
- ⊙ 'Borderman', a yearly magazine was released by Nityanand Rai, Minister of State for Home Affairs on the occasion of 55th raising day of BSF (Border Security Force) organized by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ⊙ To develop 'Gandhipedia', an online repository of books, letters and speeches written by Mahatma Gandhi, the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) and IIT (Indian Institutes of Technology) Gandhinagar and Kharagpur have joined hands.



- ⊙ Braille version of the book "Exam Warriors" written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, has launched by the Social Justice and Empowerment Minister.
- ⊙ 'Turbulence and Triumph: The Modi Years', a book jointly authored by Rahul Agarwal and Bharathi S Pradhan was released in New Delhi. This book is about the life journey of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi from his days as a young boy in Gujarat to becoming the Prime Minister of India.

Economy

- ⊙ A uniform tax rate of 28% has fixed by the Goods and Services Tax or GST Council on both state-run and private lottery. Also, it decided to rationalise the GST rate of 18% on woven and non-woven bags. It was for the first time that the GST Council resorted to voting to decide on an issue as it fixed a uniform tax rate on both state and private lotteries.
- ⊙ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has waived NEFT and RTGS transfer charges for savings account holders. The new rule will be effective from January 1, 2020. Also, RBI announced round-the-clock transactions will be allowed 24x7 facility under the National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) system on all days including weekends and holidays from December 16. After the usual banking hours, these transactions will set to be automated initiated using 'Straight Through Processing (STP)' modes by the banks.



- ⊙ In the announcement made by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) charges for businesses with over Rs. 50 crore annual revenues will be waived off from January 1, 2020.
- ⊙ The Government of India has approved the release of Rs. 8,655 crores as fresh capital to three public sector banks which are, Allahabad Bank (Rs. 2,153 crores), Indian Overseas Bank (Rs. 4,630 crores) and UCO Bank (Rs. 2,142 crores) for preferential allotment of shares.
- ⊙ A Group of Ministers (GoM) has been constituted to expedite revival plan of state-owned telecom corporations BSNL & MTNL. This will fast-track and oversee the implementation of the Rs. 69,000 crores revival plan for these corporations.
- ⊙ HDFC ERGO general insurance company which is currently the India's third-largest non-life insurance provider in the private sector, launched "My: health Woman Suraksha policy" which is a comprehensive medical insurance scheme specially designed for women.



- ⊙ Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB) signed an MoU with Canara, HSBC, Oriental Bank of Commerce and Life Insurance Company Ltd. for bancassurance (for selling life insurance products through the branches of KVGB).
- ⊙ The Reserve Bank of India has capped the permissible exposure limit of a lender on a Peer-to-Peer lending (P2P) platform for all borrowers. The aggregate exposure has been set at Rs 50 lakh at any given point of time. The step has been taken to protect the consumers interest.
- ⊙ HDFC Bank has become the 3rd Indian firm to cross \$100 billion mark in market capitalisation.
- ⊙ It has joined the league of Reliance Industries Ltd, which has a market cap of \$140.74 billion, and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) that has a market cap of \$114.60 billion.
- ⊙ Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has announced the payment of Rs. 1,12,000 crores as Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) refunds to exporters.
- ⊙ The Online trucking platform **BlackBuck** has partnered with private lenders IDFC Bank and Yes Bank to provide FASTags to truck owners free of cost.
- ⊙ A new semi-closed prepaid payment instrument (PPI) has introduced by the Reserve Bank of India which can be used for the transaction of goods and services up to a limit of Rs. 10,000. The loading facility of the instrument will be linked only from a bank account.
- ⊙ 'eBkray', an e-auction platform has launched by the Finance Minister to enable online auction of attached assets by banks.
- ⊙ HDFC Life Insurance has partnered with Paytm to expand its distribution and enable customers of Paytm to purchase insurance products from HDFC Life.
- ⊙ Xiaomi has formally launched its lending platform "Mi Credit" in India for Android devices which will help individuals to avail loan up to Rs. 1 lakh.
- ⊙ The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a \$250 million loan for Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL).
- ⊙ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed for \$490 million loan for public-private partnership (PPP) project through the hybrid-annuity model (HAM) to upgrade about 1,600 km of state highways and major district roads in the state of Madhya Pradesh.
- ⊙ The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a unit of the World Bank Group, has anchored an investment round of \$200 million in Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Limited (MMFSL).
- ⊙ The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has announced a loan of \$210 million for irrigation and solar energy projects in India. \$145 million will be used to improve irrigation services and strengthen flood risk management in West Bengal and \$65 million for a 250-megawatt solar project in Rajasthan.
- ⊙ \$500 million has provided by Export-Import Bank of India to Bangladesh for defence-related procurement in the neighbouring country.

Science and Technology

- ⊙ 'RISAT-2BR1', a Radar imaging earth observation satellite will launch by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on PSLV-C48 from the First Launch Pad (FLP) of Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. It weights around 630 kg and will be placed into an orbit of 576 km at an inclination of 37 degrees. With RISAT-2BR1, PSLV-C48 will also carry 9 other customer satellites of other countries.



- ⊙ Biosimilar medicine of Trastuzumab named 'Ontruzant' has approved by the World Health Organization to make cheaper breast cancer treatment at an affordable rate to women globally.

Sports

- ⊙ Indian chess player **R. Praggnanandhaa** won the FIDE Open category of the London Chess Classic held in London.



- Indian wrestlers **Vinesh Phogat** and **Sakshi Malik** won the finals and claimed gold medals at the Senior Wrestling National Championships in Jalandhar, Punjab.



- Leander Paes, the Indian tennis ace has announced his retirement from Tennis in 2020 as a professional tennis player.
- The 13th edition of South Asian Games has officially kicked off after the opening ceremony at Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Russia has banned by World Anti-Doping Agency for 4 years to participate in global sporting events including the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.
- Ashleigh Barty** and **Rafael Nadal** won the title of International Tennis Federation's (ITF) World Champions in singles for 2019. The awards will be given at the 2020 ITF world champions 2nd June, in Paris.



- Abu Dhabi Grand Prix has won by Mercedes racer **Lewis Hamilton** held in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
- M.S. Dhoni**, the former India skipper and wicket-keeper batsman has been named as the Captain of Cricket Australia's (CA) ODI team of the decade.
- Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League T20 cricket championship has inaugurated by Bangladesh's Prime Minister **Sheikh Hasina** to mark Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary in 2020.
- GS Lakshmi**, Indian match referee is set to become the first woman match referee to officiate a men's ODI match.

- India opener **Smriti Mandhana** was named in both the International Cricket Council's ODI and T20 teams of the year.



- Indian weightlifter **Mirabai Chanu** won the women's 49kg category gold medal at the 6th Qatar International Cup in Doha.
- Wasim Jaffer has become the first player in Indian cricket to feature in 150 Ranji matches.
- Actor Suniel Shetty has been selected as the brand ambassador of National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA).
- Rani Rampal**, the Indian women's hockey team captain and **Saurabh Chaudhary**, the ace pistol shooter won the Sports Person of the Year awards at the FICCI India Sports Awards 2019.
- Cricketer **Rohit Sharma** has announced as the brand ambassador of the top tier of Spanish club football 'La Liga' in India.

Persons in News

- Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** has ranked 34th and Entrepreneur Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw ranked 65th in 'The World's 100 Most Powerful Women'. This list has been topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, followed by President of the European Central Bank Christine Lagarde at the 2nd spot and Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, ranked 3rd. Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ranked at 29th position. Greta Thunberg, the Swedish environment activist ranked 100th in this list.
- Soma Roy Burman** has appointed as the new Controller General of Accounts (CGA). She is the 24th CGA and the seventh woman to hold this coveted position.
- Lieutenant General **Podali Shankar Rajeshwar** appointed as the 14th Commander-in-Chief of the Andaman & Nicobar Command (CINCAN).
- Sundar Pichai** promoted as the CEO of Alphabet Inc. after Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin have announced that they are stepping down from the leadership role of the parent company Alphabet.

- Sweden's Environment Activist **Greta Thunberg** has been named as the 'Time magazine's Person of the Year' for 2019. She is the youngest person to be chosen by the magazine in a tradition that started in 1927. Bob Iger, the chairman and CEO of the Walt Disney Company has named as the 'Businessperson of the year', 'The Public Servants', federal workers of the US named as the 'Guardians of the year', United States women's national soccer team named as the 'Athlete of the year' and the singer 'Melissa Jefferson' named as the 'Entainer of the year'.



- K Vijay Kumar** appointed as a senior security advisor in the Union Home Ministry which is headed by Amit Shah.
- Arnab Goswami**, editor-in-chief of Republic TV has elected as the president of the governing body of News Broadcasters Federation (NFB).
- Hari Mohan** took over the charge as Chairman of Ordnance Factory Board (OFB). He will replace Saurabh Kumar who superannuated from the services.
- C. Sugandh Rajaram** has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Ghana.
- IAS officer **Ravi Mittal** has appointed as the new Secretary, Information and Broadcasting Ministry.
- Masatsugu Asakawa** has appointed as the president of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) board.



- Girish Chandra Chaturvedi** has appointed as the chairman of the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd.

- R.N. Ravi**, the governor of Nagaland took additional charge of Meghalaya as governor.
- British Prime Minister **Boris Johnson** has won the historic UK General Election as his Conservative Party crossed the magic number of 326 required for a majority in the Parliament.
- Sridhar Patra** appointed as the chairman-cum-managing director of National Aluminium Company Ltd (NALCO).



- Atul Karwal**, senior IPS officer of Gujrat cadre has appointed as the director of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy by Union Government.
- English cricketer **Laura Alexandra** Marsh announced her retirement.



- Devesh Srivastava** has appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director (MD) of the General Insurance Corporation India.
- CV Ramulu**, former High Court Judge Justice CV Ramulu has appointed as the Lokayukta of Telangana and V Niranjan Rao, former Law Secretary has appointed as UPA Lokayukta.
- Manuel Marrero Cruz**, the President of Cuba has appointed as the Cuba's first prime minister in more than 40 years since its scrapping in 1976.
- Dr. Monisha Ghosh** has appointed as the first woman Chief Technology Officer of the US government's Federal Communications Commission (FCC).
- Sangita Reddy**, Joint Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals Group, has appointed as the President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) for 2019-20.

- ⊙ **Harsh Vardhan** Shringla has appointed as the new Foreign Secretary.
- ⊙ **Niranjan Hiranandani** has appointed as the president of The Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India (Assocham).
- ⊙ **S.S. Deswal** has taken the additional charge to head Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
- ⊙ General **Manoj Mukund Naravane** took charge as the 28th Chief of Army Staff.
- ⊙ **Atal Bhujal Yojana** (Atal Jal) has launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It scheme aims to improve groundwater management and aims to bring behavioral changes at the community level for sustainable groundwater resource management. It will promote panchayat led ground water management and behavioural change with primary focus on demand side management. The focused states of this scheme are Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Plans and Policies

- ⊙ A drive has launched by the central government to enroll one crore beneficiaries under the **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan** (PM-SYM) and the National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed Persons (NPS-Traders) by March next year.
- ⊙ A start-up policy has unveiled by the **Pondicherry** government which aims to create a corpus fund of Rs. 10 crores to support the setting up of start-up incubators and to develop co-working spaces.



Awards and Honours

- ⊙ **Sahitya Akademi Awards** announced in 23 languages by the Sahitya Akademi. Seven books of poetry, four novels, six short stories, three essays and one non-fiction, autobiography and biography have won these awards for 2019. The list is as follows:



S. No.	Title/Genre	Language	Author
1	Chanakya (Novel)	Assamese	Joysree Goswami Mahanta
2	Antheen (Short Stories)	Punjabi	Kirpal Kazak
3	BareekBaat (Short Stories)	Rajasthani	Ramswaroop Kisan
4	Prajnachakshusham (Poetry)	Sanskrit	Penna Madhusudan
5	Sisirkali (Short Stories)	Santali	Kali Charan Hembram
6	Jeejal (Short Stories)	Sindhi	Ishwar Moorjani

S. No.	Title/Genre	Language	Author
7	Sool (Novel)	Tamil	Cho Dharman
8	Septabhoomi (Novel)	Telugu	Bandi Narayana Swamy
9	Sawaneh-E-Sir Syed: Ek Bazadeed (Biography)	Urdu	Shafey Kidwai
10	Ghumer Darja Thele (Essays)	Bengali	Chinmoy Guha
11	Akhai Athumniphrai (Poetry)	Bodo	Phukan Ch. Basumatary
12	Chheelate Hue Apne Ko (Poetry)	Hindi	Nand Kishore Acharya
13	Kudi Esaru (Autobiography)	Kannada	Vijaya
14	Akh Yaad Akh Qayamat (Short Stories)	Kashmiri	Abdul Ahad Hajini
15	The Words (Poetry)	Konkani	Nilba A Khandekar
16	Jingik Oriaoon Kariat (Poetry)	Maithili	Kumar Manish Arvind
17	Bandralta Darpan (Essays)	Dogri	Om Sharma Jandriari
18	An Era of Darkness (Non-Fiction)	English	Shashi Tharoor
19	Mojma Revu Re (Essays)	Gujarati	Ratilal Borisagar
20	Achan Piranna Veedu (Poetry)	Malayalam	V. Madhusoodanan Nair
21	EiAmadi Adungeigi Eethat (Novel)	Manipuri	L. Birmangol Singh (Beryl Thanga)
22	Kadachit Ajoonahi(Poetry)	Marathi	Anuradha Patil
23	Bhaswati (Short Stories)	Odia	Tarun Kanti Mishra

⊙ **Kamareddy** district of Telangana has been awarded by the United Nations International Children's and Education Fund (Unicef)-2019 Award for effective implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission in water sanitation and for the construction of individual sanitary lavatories, swachh darpan wall paintings, swachh survekshan, swachh sundar shouchalay and many other activities.

⊙ English author **Tony Joseph** won the 12th 'Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize'. He was awarded for his book, 'Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From' released in 2018.

⊙ The Mumbai Central station of Railways got the 'Eat Right Station' certification with four stars rating by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) which is a part of 'Eat Right India' movement launched last year.

⊙ At the 26th edition of the World Travel Awards, **Abu Dhabi** has been selected as the world's leading Sports tourism Destination. This award ceremony was held in Muscat, Oman.

⊙ Miss South Africa **Zozibini Tunzi** crowned as the Miss Universe 2019 in Atlanta, US. Tony-Ann Singh of Jamaica won the title of the Miss World 2019 beauty pageant.

⊙ **Lionel Messi** has won the Ballon d'Or award for the world's best player in the 6th time of the row.



⊙ Late Former Finance Minister **Arun Jaitley** has awarded by the Economic Times (ET) Lifetime Achievement Award for Public Service 2019.



- ⊙ American actor **Joaquin Rafael Phoenix** has awarded by the PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) 'Person of the Year' Award 2019.
- ⊙ The New Zealand cricket team has been awarded the **Christopher Martin-Jenkins Spirit of Cricket** award.
- ⊙ Kairat Abdrakhmanov from Kazakhstan, Nicholas Emiliou from Cyprus, Frantisek Ruzicka from Slovakia and Volodymyr Yelchenko from Ukraine have been honoured with 'The Diwali – Power of One' award 2019. This award is also known as 'Oscars of Diplomacy' in recognition and celebration of the work, especially at the United Nations, for a secure and peaceful world.
- ⊙ **Gulu Mirchandani**, the founder chairman of Mirc Electronics Ltd. (Onida) has been awarded by the Lifetime Achievement Award for his extensive contribution to the consumer electronics industry (CEAMA).
- ⊙ Bollywood actor **Shilpa Shetty's** fitness app "Shilpa Shetty App" has awarded as the Google Play's Best Apps of 2019 in the category of 'Personal Growth'.
- ⊙ '**Zuri**', an application created by the Gurugram-based startup blue Sky Analytics won the Copernicus Masters Award (also known as Space Oscars) in the category of the Social Entrepreneurship.
- ⊙ Railway Sports Promotion Board has won the FICCI India Sports Awards 2019 under the category of Best Company Promoting Sports.
- ⊙ The National Florence Nightingale Awards 2019 has given by the President of India to 36 awardees at an event in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Late Lini Sajeesh who died while on duty caring for a Nipah (NiV) virus-infected patient in Kerala also awarded by this award.
- ⊙ **Abiy Ahmed**, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia received the Nobel Peace Prize of 2019 for his efforts to achieve international peace and co-operation.



- ⊙ The **World Habitat Award** has won by the Odisha for Odisha Liveable Habitat Mission, also known as Jaga Mission, works for the benefit of millions of urban-poor people living in slums.

