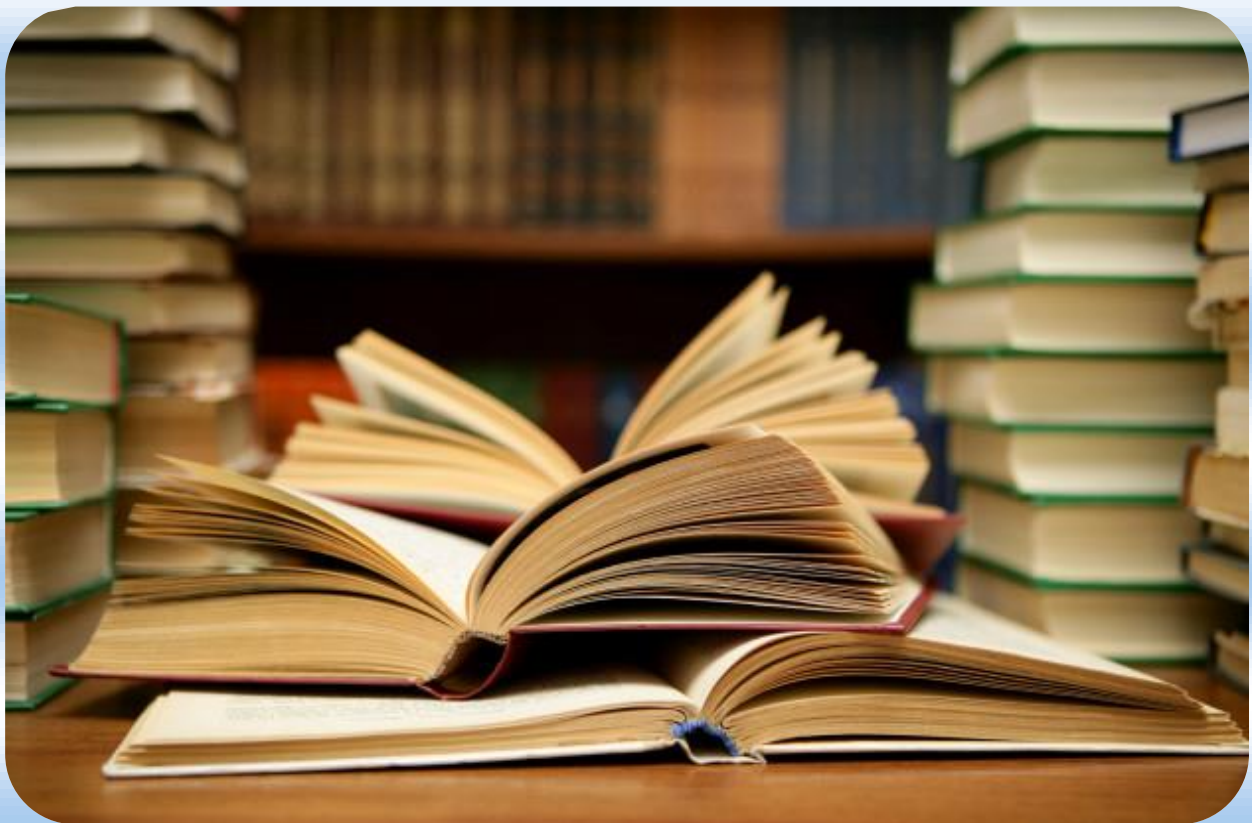


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## GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



# OCTOBER-2019

# NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## ***Modi – Xi Second Informal Summit in Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu***

Mamallapuram: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will accord a warm welcome to Chinese President Xi Jinping when he arrives in this coastal town on Friday for an informal summit during which the two leaders are expected to attempt a strategic re-balancing in bilateral ties, strained by a hardline approach on the Kashmir issue from both sides.



## ***India extends over \$60 million line of credit to Comoros***

India will extend a Line of Credit of USD 20 million to Comoros for strengthening bilateral defence and maritime cooperation, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu announced on Friday. Addressing the parliament of Comoros at Moroni, the capital of the island nation after holding bilateral talks with President Azali Assoumani, Naidu said even as political stability and peaceful transition takes place in Comoros, terrorism has, time and again, threatened.

## ***Surjit S Bhalla appointed as Executive Director for India at IMF***

NEW DELHI: Eminent economist Surjit S Bhalla was on Tuesday appointed as the Executive Director for India on the board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), an official order said. Bhalla (71) will succeed former RBI deputy governor Subir Gokarn, who died in the US on July 30 after a brief illness. Gokarn, who died at the age of 59, was appointed as the executive director for India on the board of the IMF in November 2015. .

## ***Sourav Ganguly set to be new BCCI president***

In a dramatic turn of events, former captain Sourav Ganguly emerged as consensus candidate to be BCCI's new President after Brijesh Patel appeared to have grabbed the coveted post. Union Home Minister Amit Shah's son Jay Shah will be the new secretary while Arun Dhumal will be the new treasurer. Dhumal is younger brother of MoS Finance and former BCCI president Anurag Thakur. Monday is the last day to file nomination but no election will be held since all candidates have emerged unopposed after weeks of lobbying and hectic parleys.

### ***Sajjan Jindal appointed Vice Chairman World Steel***

The World Steel Association (Worldsteel) has elected Sajjan Jindal, Chairman and Managing Director, JSW Steel, as Vice-Chairman of the association for one year. It also elected YU Yong, Chairman, HBIS Group Co, as Chairman. Other office bearers include TV Narendran, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Tata Steel, and Lakshmi Mittal, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, ArcelorMittal. The World Steel Association is one of the largest industry representation in the world and represents 85 per cent of the world's steel production.

### ***Pankaj Kumar appointed CEO of UIDAI***

The government on Tuesday appointed Pankaj Kumar, a 1987-batch IAS officer, as the new Chief Executive Officer of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), as part of a major reshuffle in the top bureaucracy that saw the appointments of new secretaries in crucial ministries. The government also appointed former journalist Ashok Malik, who was press secretary to President Ram Nath Kovind until recently, as Policy Advisor in the Ministry of External Affairs in the rank of Additional Secretary on contract basis.

### ***Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde appointed as 47th Chief Justice of India***

NEW DELHI: President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday appointed Justice SA Bobde, the senior-most judge in the Supreme Court after CJI Ranjan Gogoi, as the next Chief Justice of India. Bobde will be the 47th CJI. He will hold office till April 23, 2021. A notification issued by the law ministry under Article 124 (2) said that the President was pleased to appoint Justice Bobde as the next CJI with effect from Nov 18, 2019.

### ***Raunak at 13, becomes India's 65th Grand Master***

Last October, in the opening round of Chess.com Isle of Man International at Douglas, Viswanathan Anand escaped to a 74-move win over a 12-year-old Raunak Sadhwani, an International Master rated 2438. "I was very, very lucky to win," admitted Anand as he reflected on the game where the youngster temporarily gained a winning position. "When I saw the pairing, I knew it could be tough because Sadhwani was ridiculously under-rated.

### ***Praveen Kumar wins Gold in Wushu World Championship***

Praveen Kumar made history on Wednesday as he became the first Indian man to win a gold medal at the Wushu World Championships. Praveen's phenomenal feat came after he defeated Philippines' Russel Diaz in the 48kg category. The Indian saw off his Filipino opponent 2-1 in the men's sanda event of the 15th World Wushu Championships held in Shanghai. He had earlier defeated Uzbekistan's Khasan Ikromov 2-0 in the semifinal on Tuesday to set up the summit clash with Diaz.

### ***CBDT launches Documentation Identification Number***

NEW DELHI : The Documentation Identification Number (DIN) system of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has come into existence from Tuesday with the generation of about 17,500 communications with DIN on the very first day, the Finance Ministry said in a statement. In a press release, the Finance Ministry said: "This path-breaking DIN system has been created as per the direction of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

### ***RBI cuts Repo Rate***

NEW DELHI: The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India on Friday slashed the short-term lending rate, repo rate, by 25 basis points in its fourth bimonthly policy review. The MPC decided to continue with an accommodative stance as long as "it is necessary to revive growth, while ensuring that inflation remains within the target." 6-0 vote in favour of rate cut All members of the MPC voted in favour of reducing.

### ***FSSAI launches 'Trans Fat Free' logo***

Union health minister Harsh Vardhan on Friday formally launched the "Trans Fat Free" logo during the 8th International Chefs Conference in the national Capital. The use of the logo by restaurants and food manufacturers, however, is voluntary. As part of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)-led 'Eat Right India' movement, the target is to reduce the industrially produced trans fatty acids on food supply to less than 2% by 2022.

### ***RBI Consumer Confidence Survey, 2019***

Mumbai: Consumer confidence dipped to six-year low in September as sentiment around employment, income and discretionary spending declined, according to Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s monetary policy released on Friday. Consumer confidence weakened in September, with both the current situation index and the future expectations index recording declines, said the RBI in its consumer sentiment survey report. The Current Situation Index (CCI) fell into 89.4 in September from 95.7 recorded in the July round of survey, the data showed. In September 2013, it had touched 88.

### ***SEBI new rule to impact foreign funds***

Mumbai: Mauritius and Cayman Islands, which serve as key offshore bases for foreign investors trading on Indian stock exchanges, have again come under the glare of the Indian capital market regulator. A new rule announced by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) a fortnight ago will severely impact foreign funds from jurisdictions that do not belong to the 39-member club of Financial Action Task Force. The FATF is an inter-governmental policymaking body that was established.

### ***Government launches National E-Assessment Scheme***

It aims to facilitate faceless assessment of income tax returns through completely electronic communication under which taxpayers will receive notices on their registered e-mails as well as on registered accounts on the web portal [www.incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in](http://www.incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in) with real-time alert by way of SMS on their registered mobile number, specifying the issues for which their cases have been selected for scrutiny. The replies to the notices can be prepared at ease by the taxpayers at their own residence or office and be sent by email.

### ***Ind-Ra lowers India's GDP growth forecast in 2019-20 to 6.1% from 6.7% in August 2019***

NEW DELHI: India Ratings and Research on Thursday pared India's gross domestic product (GDP) forecast for 2019-20 to 6.1%, the second downgrade in two months. The agency had revised its GDP growth estimate to 6.7% from its earlier forecast of 7.3% in August. The downward revision follows the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) estimating first quarter growth at 5%, lower than India Ratings' estimate of 5.7%. "Although India Ratings had cited a slowdown in both urban and rural areas,

### ***Air India: 1st airline in world to use Taxibot on A-320 aircraft***

Air India on Tuesday became the first airline in the world to use a Taxibot on a A320 aircraft with passengers onboard. Taxibot is a robot-used aircraft tractor for taxiing an aircraft from parking bay to runway and vice versa. On Tuesday morning, the national carrier's Chairman and Managing Director Ashwani Lohani flagged off flight AI665 - which was carried to runway using Taxibot at terminal 3 of the Delhi airport - to Mumbai.

### ***CBIC launches programme to strengthen Make in India***

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has launched a revamped and streamlined programme to attract investments into India and strengthen Make in India through manufacture and other operations under bond scheme, of Customs Act, 1962. The Section enables conduct of manufacture and other operations in a customs bonded warehouse. The scheme has been modernized with clear and transparent procedures.

### ***Team Cashless India: Mastercards' campaign to promote digital payments in India***

Mastercard, along with cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni, on Wednesday announced the launch of a nationwide initiative to accelerate the acceptance and adoption of digital payments. Titled 'Team Cashless India', the initiative brings consumers and merchants to the forefront of the digital payments dialogue. The campaign encourages all Indians to nominate one or more merchants who currently do not accept digital payments. Mastercard will work together with Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), acquirer banks and fintech.



### ***RIL becomes first Indian company to hit Rs. 9 lakh crore m-cap***

Oil-to-telecom major Reliance Industries (RIL) on Friday became the first company in India to hit the market capitalisation of Rs 9 lakh crore. RILNSE -0.62 % was also the first company to reach Rs 8 lakh crore mark in August last year. The market-cap of Mukesh Ambani-led company stood at Rs 9.03 lakh crore when the stock traded at Rs 1,428, up 2 per cent at 10.45 hours (IST) on Friday ahead of its September quarter earnings due later in the day.

### ***IIT-Delhi Endowment Fund: 1 billion USD***

New Delhi: Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi (IIT-Delhi) has stepped up an effort to garner \$1 billion dollar over the next six years as endowments from industry and alumni including Sachin Bansal. The endowment fund will be announced on 31 October, two days ahead of its Golden Jubilee convocation ceremony on 2 November. IIT-Delhi director V Ramgopal Rao has already had a meeting with Bansal, investment firm Westbridge Capital's managing director.

### ***Govt launches BHIM 2.0***

NEW DELHI : The IT Ministry on Monday unveiled a slew of new initiatives and programmes, including BHIM 2.0 that packs-in new functionalities, supports additional languages and has increased transaction limits. Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad also launched a StartUp Hub portal and Indian Software Product Registry at IT Ministry's MeitY Start-up Summit. BHIM app, a UPI based payment interface developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) that allows real time fund transfer, was launched in December, 2016.

### ***Indian Railways set to carry E-commerce consignment***

The railways' initiative to rope in Amazon for transporting its goods by train was flagged off by the Eastern Railways on Monday, when the Sealdah-Dankuni EMU local carried a consignment of the e-commerce giant on board. Under the pilot project, the railways will allow e-commerce consignments on its EMU services in the non-peak hours. The project has initially been launched for a period of three months, where a total consignment of 7 MT has been allowed to be carried per day.

### ***What is MeitY StartUp Hub portal?***

NEW DELHI: India has set up a hub for startups, which will act as a platform to connect with incubators, accelerators, mentors, and eventually, angel funds and venture capitalists. Union Minister for IT and Electronics, Ravi Shankar Prasad, will later this week formally inaugurate the platform, where nearly 1,000 startups and 130 incubation centres have currently gone live. The Ministry of Electronics and IT, which set up the "social media platform for startups", has appointed.

### ***Govt. accords 'Maharatna' status to Power Grid Corp, HPCL***

The government on Wednesday accorded 'Maharatna' status to state-owned Hindustan Petroleum and Power Grid Corporation, thus giving them greater operational and financial autonomy. Two separate orders to this effect were issued by the Department of Public Enterprises, under the Ministry of Heavy Industry and Public Enterprises.



### ***Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Council abolished***

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir government issued formal orders on Thursday for abolition of legislative council and opening of new administrative secretariat in Ladakh under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, which was passed in August. Through this legislation the central government revoked the special status granted to J&K and bifurcated the state into two Union territories of J&K and Ladakh. The government issued orders under section 57 of J&K Reorganisation.

### ***Gaganyaan training begins in Russia: VSSC Chairman at Citizen Familiarization Program***

India's first 'Gaganyaan' human space flight mission is slated to take off in 2022 and the training for its crew, drawn from among experienced Indian Air Force pilots, has already commenced in Russia, according to S Somnath, Director, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC). Inaugurating the citizen familiarisation programme, participated by invited senior citizens as part of the World Space Week -2019 at the VSSC campus, he said the short duration mission to be undertaken at the low earth orbit (LEO) within 300-400 km from Earth.

### ***Researchers developed renewable energy storage device***

Researchers have developed a new dielectric capacitor -- a device that stores energy like a battery -- taking inspiration from how the French pastry, croissant, is made by folding multiple layers of dough. The researchers, including those from Queen Mary institute of London in the UK, found that by pressing and folding a polymer film capacitor (a capacitor with an insulating plastic film), they were able to store 30 times more energy than the best-performing commercially available dielectric capacitor.

### ***TechSagar: National Repository of India's cyber tech capabilities***

The National Cyber Security Coordinator's office in partnership with Data Security Council (DSCI) of India on Monday launched TechSagar – a platform to discover India's technological capability through a portal. The portal will list business and research entities from the IT industry, startups, academia, and individual researchers. As India aspires to become a trillion dollar digital economy, the repository will facilitate new opportunities for businesses and academia to collaborate, connect and innovate in future.

### ***ISRO to launch 14 small satellites***

The PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has bagged new rides for 14 small spacecraft of four international customers. They are being accommodated as minor secondary passengers on the next three PSLV flights, according to Spaceflight, the U.S. company that arranges such flights for agencies seeking to put their spacecraft into orbits. The ISRO will have one of its earth observation satellites as the larger primary payload on each of the three PSLV flights.

### ***What is Cosmic Yeti?***

Scientists have accidentally discovered what they describe as “the footprints a monstrous galaxy” in the early universe. No evidence of any such galaxy had ever been found before. Hence, the scientists have equated these to the mythical Yeti:



### ***Credit Suisse's Global Wealth Report 2019***

Mumbai: Wealth creation in India slowed to a crawl in the year ended 30 June even as household debt jumped, a Credit Suisse study found. India's total household wealth grew by 5.2% in dollar terms in the period, the Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report released on Monday said. Net wealth per adult grew at 3.3%, sharply slower than the average 11% growth rate reported in the 20 years to 2019, the report said. India, however, remains one of the fastest wealth creators in the world, with household wealth in dollar terms growing faster than any other region.



### ***Lucknow-based school enters Guinness Book of World Records***

A Lucknow-based school has won the Guinness World Record for becoming the 'world's largest school' in terms of strength of students. City Montessori School (CMS) has won the global award for having 55,547 students in 2019-20, as stated by CMS founder, Jagdish Gandhi. Speaking to ANI, Gandhi said, "I started this school with only five children, and I never imagined that one day it would become the largest school in the world. All of this has been possible due to the blessings of the parents who sent their children to our school."

### ***Four Indian sites win UNESCO Cultural Heritage Conservation Awards***

UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation announced recently where India bagged four awards in three categories. India's Flora Fountain and three other landmarks in Mumbai are among the four sites that have been chosen from India. UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation were declared at a function held in Malaysia. Award of Merit has given to Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue and Our Lady of Glory Church. Award of Distinction has given to Vikram Sarabhai Library, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India.

## **INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS**

### ***Sri Lanka removed from FATF's Grey List***

Sri Lanka has been removed from the "Grey List" of the international terror financing watchdog FATF, according to a media report. The island nation will no longer be subject to the Financial Action Task Force's monitoring under its on-going global anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) compliance process, the Colombo Gazette reported on Saturday.

### ***UAE to establish 1st graduate-level, research-based AI university in world***

The government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has recently announced the establishment of the world's first graduate-level, research-based AI university. This university has named - Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI). This university will enable graduate students, governments and businesses to advance the artificial intelligence field. The university has been named after Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

### ***US sanctions on Turkey***

President Donald Trump also phoned his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan to demand an immediate truce, Vice-President Mike Pence said. Mr Pence said he would travel to the region "as quickly as possible". The move comes after criticism of a US troop withdrawal from the region which some say gave Turkey a "green light". The Turkish offensive, which began last week, aims to push the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) from the border region. Turkey considers the biggest militia in the SDF a terrorist organisation.

### ***Kais Saied elected as new President of Tunisia***

Kais Saied has been sworn in as Tunisia's new president. The 61-year-old law professor has no prior political experience, never held office and barely ran a campaign. Saied sealed a resounding victory in a runoff election on October 13, largely buoyed by a groundswell of support from young voters.



### ***Rafael Grossi elected new Director General of IAEA***

Rafael Mariano Grossi of Argentina has been elected as the new Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In the final balloting held today, Grossi received the required majority from the IAEA Board of Governors to be appointed new Director General. Grossi succeeds Yukiya Amano of Japan, who passed away in July. The Argentine received the support of 24 members of the 35-nation Board of Governors, ahead of Romania's Cornel Feruta with 10 votes.

### ***Typhoon 'Mitag' approaches Northern Taiwan***

Taipei, Sept. 30 (CNA) Typhoon Mitag is strengthening as it approaches Taiwan, carrying strong winds and torrential rains, which are expected to affect the northern and northeastern areas of the country until Tuesday, the Central Weather Bureau (CWB) said Monday. As of 12:15 a.m. Monday, Mitag was located 290 kilometers south-southeast of Yilan County, moving in a north-northwesterly direction at a speed of 27 kilometers per hour, the CWB said.

### ***PM Modi inaugurates Metro Service and ENT hospital in Mauritius***

New Delhi, Oct 3 : Prime Minister Narendra Modi jointly inaugurated a metro express service and a hospital in Mauritius with Mauritian premier Pravind Jugnauth via video on Thursday and described the projects as a symbol of New Delhi's strong commitment towards the development of the island nation. Both the projects will serve the people of Mauritius, he said in his address.

### ***Pakistan PM on a three-day visit to China – To take up J&K issue; To engage in high level talks – oil, hydropower, steel***

Pakistan will engage China at the highest level for talks on several big projects in the fields of hydropower, oil refinery and steel mills as part of the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) during Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to the country, a senior minister has said. Prime minister Khan will arrive in Beijing on Tuesday on a two-day visit to China, Pakistan's all-weather ally, during which he would meet the country's top leadership.

### ***UN Financial Crisis***

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday dismissed concerns that the United Nations is on the verge of going broke because members have not paid their dues, with the United States leading the pack. "So make all Member Countries pay, not just the United States!" Trump tweeted after UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that the organization won't be able to pay its bills and salaries if debtor nations don't cough up their unpaid dues.

### ***Saudi Arabia allows women to serve in Armed Forces***

Saudi Arabia announced on Wednesday it will allow women in the kingdom to serve in the armed forces as it embarks on a broad programme of economic and social reforms. The move is the latest in a series of measures aimed at increasing the rights of women in the kingdom, even as rights groups accuse Riyadh of cracking down on women activists. "Another step to empowerment," the foreign ministry wrote on Twitter, adding that women would be able to serve as private first class, corporal or sergeant.

### ***India joins WEF's G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance on Technology Governance***

India has joined the league of 15 of the world's leading city networks and technology governance organisations that will work towards advancing the responsible and ethical use of smart city technologies. The G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance on Technology Governance will create global norms and policy standards for the use of connected devices in public spaces, a World Economic Forum (WEF) release said. The Global Smart Cities Alliance's founding set of institutional partners.

### ***FATF Plenary meet: Pakistan to be scrutinized***

Beijing's stand on Islamabad would take centre-stage at the six-day Financial Action Task Force (FATF) plenary meeting, which is being held in Paris in the backdrop of this weekend's second informal summit between PM Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping. At the Mamallapuram summit held on the eve of the FATF meet beginning Sunday, Xi is understood to have recognized the importance of working together to ensure that the international community strengthens the framework against training.

### ***2nd Indo-French Knowledge Summit held in France***

The second edition of the Indo-French Knowledge Summit with a focus on higher education, research and innovation will take place at the Universite de Lyon in France. The summit is being organised by the Embassy of France in India, in partnership with Universite de Lyon, Campus France, and Emylon Business School, on the French side.



### ***India Bangladesh old rail links of 1965 prewar to be reopened***

The first rail line between India and Dhaka was opened in 2008 when Maitree express between Dhaka and Kolkata was started. In 2017 Bandhan express was also started between Kolkata and Khulna. On 21st of last month, Railway Minister of Bangladesh and India's High Commissioner Riva Ganguly Das jointly laid the foundation stone for up-gradation and laying of missing tracks from Chilhati in Bangladesh to the border. This 7.5 kilometre long track will connect West Bengal to Assam via Bangladesh.





### ***Chile declares state emergency in Santiago***

A state of emergency has been declared in the Chilean capital after simmering protests against a rise in metro fares spilled out into widespread vandalism and violence fuelled by rising cost-of-living pressures. As ordained by Chile's dictatorship-era constitution, the state of emergency will apply to Santiago and can last for 15 days. It grants the government additional powers to restrict citizens' freedom of movement and their right to assembly. Ominously, soldiers will return to the streets for the first time since an earthquake devastated parts of the country in 2010.

### ***EU calls for ceasefire in Afghanistan***

European Union officials called Sunday for a ceasefire in Afghanistan, saying the breakdown in US-Taliban talks presented an opportunity to push for a truce, as the US defense secretary made an unexpected visit to Kabul. US President Donald Trump last month declared talks with the insurgents "dead", citing a Taliban attack that killed a US soldier. Negotiations had been in the final stages for a deal that would have seen the US pull troops from Afghanistan after 18 years in return for various Taliban guarantees.

### ***Indonesia's President Joko Widodo sworn in for second term***

Indonesia's President Joko Widodo has been sworn into office for his second and final five-year term amid a string of fresh challenges around security, corruption and economic slowdown. Widodo, a former furniture salesman popularly known as Jokowi, took oath at a ceremony in the capital, Jakarta, attended by politicians and foreign dignitaries that was broadcast live on national television on Sunday.

### ***WFP launches campaign 'Feed Our Future' against hunger and malnutrition in India***

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) have launched a cinema advertisement campaign 'Feed Our Future' to raise awareness and take steps against hunger and malnutrition in India. The campaign launch event included a panel discussion hosted by TV host Mini Mathur, which had actor-director Nandita Das and filmmakers Neeraj Ghaywan and Anubhav Sinha sharing their perspectives over cinema and social change.

### ***India trains Nepali officers in AML and CFT***

The second group of eighteen officers of Nepal has begun their training on 'Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism' at the National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN), Bengaluru on Monday. This is a special tailor-made course designed at the request of Nepal for a total of 60 officers. It is an example of India's commitment to enhance the capacities of various agencies of Nepal.



### ***India Pakistan sign Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Agreement***

The Kartarpur corridor is a new entry point giving access to the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Punjab. Tensions between the two countries have often made it hard to access and this is being seen as rare cooperation. Sikhism was born in Punjab, a region that was divided during the partition of British India in 1947.



### ***India relaxes e-visa rules for Chinese nationals***

BEIJING: India has announced significant relaxations in its e-visa policy for Chinese nationals, the Indian embassy in Beijing said, at a time when the leaders of the two nations had met for the second informal summit. "October 2019 onwards, Chinese nationals can apply for an e-Tourist visa (e-TV) of a 5-year validity with multiple entries. The visa fee for this 5-year multiple entry e-TV will be USD 80," a statement by the embassy reads.

### ***Indians no longer require Visa to visit Brazil***

SAO PAULO: Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro said on Thursday the South American nation will drop its requirement that visiting Chinese and Indian tourists or business people obtain visas. Bolsonaro, a far-right politician, came to power at the beginning of the year and has made it a policy to reduce visa requirements from a number of developed countries. But the announcement, made during an official visit to China, is the first he has made expanding that policy to the developing world.

### ***PM Modi to meet Germany's Merkel***

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet business leaders of both countries during the German leader's visit next week to discuss ways to intensify economic partnership. Merkel will be in India on November 1 for the fifth biennial Inter Governmental Consultations (IGC), according to an official release from the Ministry of External Affairs on Friday. "The Chancellor will be accompanied by several Ministers and State Secretaries of the Federal Government, as well as a high-powered business delegation.

### ***Kartarpur visit: Pakistan to issue tourist visas to non-Indian Sikhs***

The Pakistan government will issue tourist visas to non-Indian Sikhs visiting the Kartarpur corridor and other 'gurdwaras' in the country during the 550th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev. Under the Kartarpur Corridor agreement between India and Pakistan, pilgrims coming from India for one day would not require visa but they can only visit Gurudwara Baba Guru Nanak. However, those coming from other countries will need a visa and be free to visit other religious places.

### ***MIT researchers develop new technology to remove CO2 from air***

Researchers have developed a new technology to capture carbon dioxide from a stream of air -- virtually at any concentration level -- an advance that may pave the way for new strategies to reduce atmospheric greenhouse gas levels. The researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US said that while most methods of removing carbon dioxide from a stream of gas required higher concentrations

### ***2019 Nobel Prize***

The 2019 Nobel Prize announcements are underway this week, with the first prize, in the category of physiology or medicine, going to a trio of scientists for their work on cells' ability to sense and react to oxygen availability. The Nobel Prize in physics, chemistry and literature have been announced and the prizes in peace and economic sciences will follow over the next few days.



### ***Three Indian-origin CEOs featured in HBR's top 10 best-performing CEOs***

NEW YORK: Three Indian-origin CEOs, Shantanu Narayen, Ajay Banga and Satya Nadella are among the world's top 10 best-performing chief executives, featured in a list compiled by the Harvard Business Review (HBR). 'The Best-Performing CEOs in the World, 2019' list by the HBR features 100 CEOs and has been topped by American technology company NVIDIA's CEO Jensen Huang. Among the top 10 chief executives on the list, three spots have been occupied by the Indian-origin CEOs.

### ***World's oldest known natural pearl discovered on Abu Dhabi Island***

The 8,000-year-old pearl was found during excavations at Marawah Island which also revealed the earliest architecture in the UAE. Authorities said the discovery proved that pearls had been traded in the region since Neolithic times. The pearl will go on display later this month at the Louvre gallery, Abu Dhabi.



### ***World Bank's Ease of Doing Business***

India climbed 14 rungs in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2020 survey to stand at 63, among 190 countries, making it the one of world's top 10 most improved countries for the third consecutive time. The sharp rise in the ranking underscores the reformist credentials of the Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government and may help the country lure multinational companies, looking at alternatives to China for investment amid Beijing's trade war with the US.

### ***2019 Booker Prize: Margaret Atwood and Bernardine Evaristo jointly win***

Judges tore up the rule book on Monday, awarding the prestigious Booker Prize for Fiction jointly to Canadian author Margaret Atwood for *The Testaments* and Anglo-Nigerian author Bernardine Evaristo for *Girl, Woman, Other*. Atwood becomes only the second female author to win the award twice, sharing the £50,000 prize at the 50th anniversary ceremony at London's Guildhall. The award has been shared twice before, in 1974 and 1997, when the rules were changed to supposedly prevent it from happening again.

