

My Notes....

NATIONAL

MUMBAI AND HYDERABAD JOINED UCCN

UNESCO has announced that Mumbai and Hyderabad have been included in its network of 'Creative Cities' on the occasion of World Cities Day 2019 on 31 October 2019. Mumbai has been designated as Creative City of Films and Hyderabad as a Creative City of Gastronomy.

What

1. By joining the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), the cities pledge to share their best practices and develop partnerships involving public and private sectors as well as civil society to strengthen creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural activities, goods and services.
2. The network covers seven creative fields: crafts and folk arts, media arts, film, design, gastronomy, literature and music.
3. The network brings together cities that base development on creativity in music, arts and folk crafts, design, cinema, literature, digital arts or gastronomy.
4. Till now, Varanasi (music), Chennai (music) and Jaipur (crafts & folk art) were in the network, which was expanded to 246 members, with the inclusion of 66 cities, including Mumbai and Hyderabad.
5. Previously, in 2010, haleem was honoured with the Geographical Indication (GI) status, thus becoming the first meat-based product from India to win the prestigious tag. Hyderabad's staple long-grained rice and meat dish, biryani, on the other hand has been repeatedly recognised as one of the country's best gastronomic offerings.
6. That the south Indian city pitched its dishes as an "adaptation of world cuisine", made relevant in the local context, is perhaps what helped it bring home the honour.
7. While filling out Hyderabad's entry, local officials stressed how these were recipes historically brought from all over the globe, particularly West Asia and Central Asia that have over time, blended with local flavours resulting in universally acclaimed dishes.

Flashback

1. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.
2. The 180 cities which currently make up this network work together towards a common objective: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level.

INDIA SLIPS IN GHI 2019

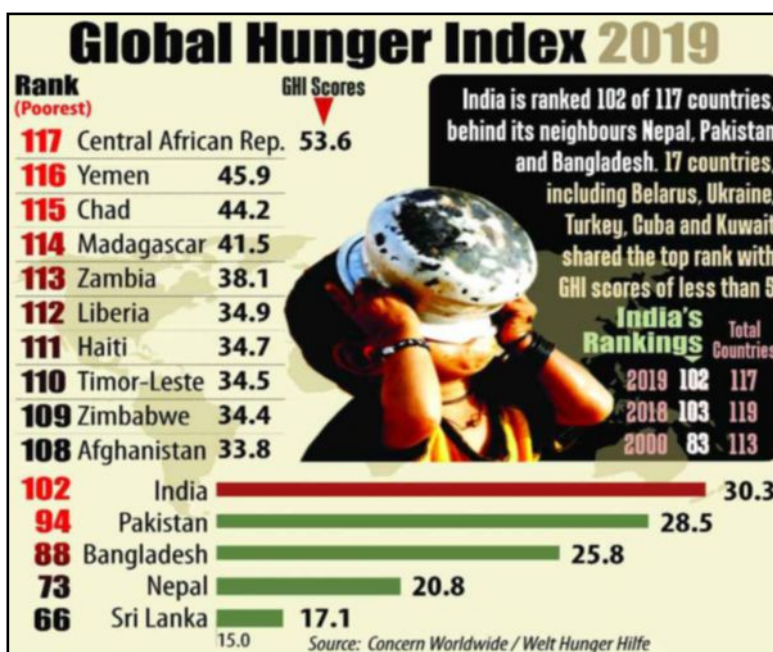
India slipped to 102 position in the 2019 Global Hunger Index featuring 117 countries, behind Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Over one in every five children in **India is "wasted" (low weight for height)**, the highest for any country in the report.

The share of wasting (or low weight for height) among children in India rose from 16.5 per cent in the 2008-2012 period to 20.8 per cent in 2014-2018. Just 9.6 per cent of all children between 6 and 23 months of age are fed a “minimum acceptable diet”, the report said.

What

1. The government, last year, assured it is working to achieve the goal of **‘zero hunger’** by 2030. In 2018, India ranked 103rd among 119 countries on the global hunger index.
2. The report, prepared jointly by Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide and German organisation Welt Hunger Hilfe has said India suffers from a level of hunger that is **“serious”, at the very end of the category** with a 30.1 GHI score.

3. The Global Hunger Index or GHI scores countries on a 100-point “severity scale”, where zero is the best score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst. With a score of 30.3, India suffers from a level of hunger that is serious.



4. In 2000, India was ranked 83 out of 113 countries. Now, with 117 countries in the fray, it has dropped to 102 ranks.
5. It's GHI score has also decelerated — from 38.9 in 2005 to 32 in 2010 and then from 32 to 30.3 between 2010 and 2019.
6. Seventeen countries, including Belarus, Ukraine, Turkey, Cuba and Kuwait, shared the top rank with GHI scores of less than five, the Global Hunger Index that tracks hunger and malnutrition said on 16 October 2019.
7. Countries like Yemen and Djibouti, which are conflict ridden and facing severe climate issues respectively, fared better than India on that front, according to the report.
8. Neighbouring countries like Nepal (73), Sri Lanka (66), Bangladesh (88), Myanmar (69) and Pakistan (94) are also in the **‘serious’ hunger category**, but have fared better at feeding its citizens than India.
9. **China (25) has moved to a ‘low’ severity category** and Sri Lanka is in the **‘moderate’ severity category**.
10. However, India has shown improvement in other indicators such as the under-5 mortality rate, prevalence of stunting among children and prevalence of undernourishment owing to inadequate food.

- The **report also mentions the central government's Swachh Bharat programme**, saying open defecation is still being practised. Even with new latrine construction, however, open defecation is still practised.

The GHI score is calculated on four indicators:

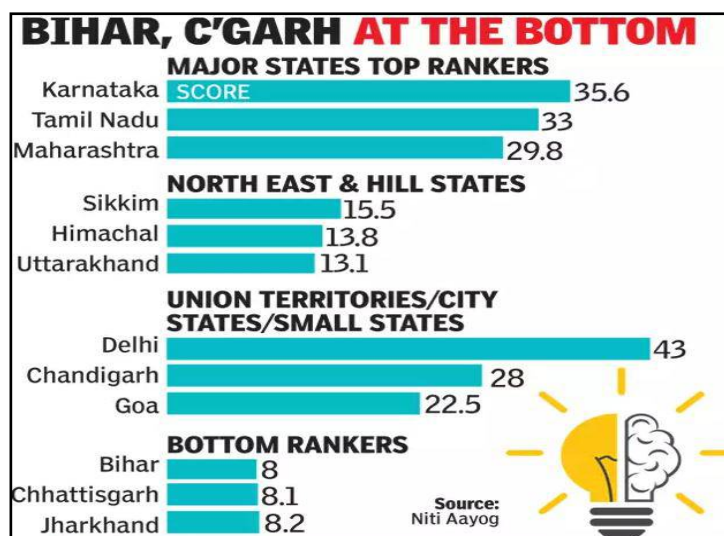
- Undernourishment
- Child wasting, the share of children under the age of five who are wasted (that is, who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition)
- Child stunting, children under the age of five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition
- Child mortality, the mortality rate of children under the age of five.

NITI INNOVATION INDEX

Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Telangana and Haryana have been ranked as top five states in innovation in NITI Aayog's first Innovation Index released on 17 October 2019. The index, released by Aayog's vice chairman Rajiv Kumar and CEO Amitabh Kant, has been developed into the lines of Global Innovation Index.

What

- Chattisgarh, Bihar and Jharkhand are at the bottom of the index among states. Among north-eastern states, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have top the index while Delhi, Chandigarh and Goa have topped the list among union territories in the country.
- The idea behind the index, which has been developed over the last one-and-a-half year, is to analyse innovation at state level.
- The index ranks the states based on their innovation capability, the challenges and opportunities that lie for states and actions needed by policy makers to foster innovation.
- The index is based on seven pillars which include five enablers and two performance indicators some of which include human capital, investment, knowledge workers and knowledge output.
- NITI Aayog's first ever India Innovation Index aimed at examining the innovation capabilities and performance of Indian states.
- The index attempts to create an extensive framework for the continual evaluation of the innovation environment of 29 states and seven union territories.
- It intends to rank states and UTs based on their index score, recognise opportunities and challenges, and assist in tailoring governmental policies to foster innovation.

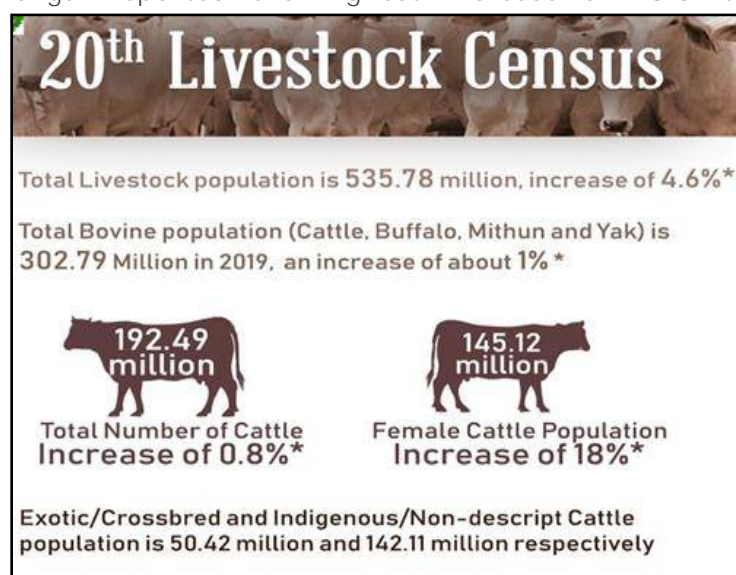


LIVESTOCK CENSUS-2019

India's indigenous cattle numbers continue to decline, notwithstanding the government's efforts to promote conservation of desi breeds through the Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM). The total population of indigenous and nondescript cattle is estimated at 139.82 million in 2019, which is 6% lower than 151.17 million in the previous 2012 census and it has been falling since 1992 from the peak at 189.37 million. As farmers preference shift to animals yielding more milk, the crossbred cattle population has jumped to 50.42 million in 2019 from 39.73 million in 2012, an increase by 27%, according to the Livestock Census-2019, released on 16 October 2019. Total livestock population increased to 535.78 million, with the number of cows rising 18% to 145.12 million as compared to 2012.

What

- The population of sheep, goat and mithun grew in double digits while the count of horses and ponies, pigs, camels, donkeys, mules and yaks declined.
- Among the states, West Bengal reported the highest increase of 23.32% in livestock population, followed by Telangana (22.21 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (15.79%), Bihar (10.67%) and Madhya Pradesh (11.81%). However, the livestock population witnessed a decline of 1.35% in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan (1.66%) and Gujarat (0.95%).
- As per the 20th livestock census, the share of cattle is 35.94%, goat (27.8%), buffaloes (20.45%), sheep (13.87%) and pigs (1.69%).
- Total bovine population (cattle, buffalo, mithun and yak) rose by 1% to 302.79 million compared to 2012 census. Mithun is the state animal of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The total number of cattle in the country in 2019 is 192.49 million showing an increase of 0.8% over previous census. The female cattle (cow's population) is 145.12 million, increased by 18% over the previous census (2012).
- The exotic/crossbred and indigenous/non-descript cattle population is 50.42 million and 142.11 million, respectively.
- The indigenous/non-descript female cattle population increased 10% in 2019 as compared to previous census.
- The population of the total exotic/crossbred cattle rose 26.9% in 2019 as compared to previous census.
- The other livestock including mithun, yak, horses, ponies, mules, donkeys, camels together contribute around 0.23% of the total livestock and their total count is 1.24 million.



- The 20th Livestock Census was conducted with the participation of all States and Union Territories. It covered about 6.6 lakhs villages, 89,000 urban wards and involved more than 27 crore households and non-households.

DHARMA GUARDIAN 2019

The second edition of bilateral annual military 'Exercise Dharma Guardian – 2019 between Indian and Japan Army commenced on 19 October 2019 at the Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School (CIJWS) at Vairengte in Mizoram. Defence PRO Lt Col P Khngsai said that the Japanese contingent is represented by 34th Infantry Regiment, 1st Div of Japanese Ground Self Defence Force (JGSDF), while the Indian side is represented by a battalion of the Dogra Regiment.

What

- Twenty-five soldiers from the battalions are participating in this joint exercise.
- The aim of the exercise is a joint training of troops in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in both mountainous terrains.
- Exercise Dharma Guardian – 2019 will further cement the long-standing strategic ties between India and Japan.
- As part of the exercise, important lectures, demonstrations and drills related to counter insurgency and counterterrorism operations will be conducted.
- Both the army will also share their valuable experiences in countering such situations as also refine drills and procedures for joint operations.
- The exercise will culminate with a 72 hours validation phase which will test the skills of soldiers in conducting joint operations in a counterterrorism scenario.



FIRM ELECTED TO REDEVELOP PARLIAMENT

Central government on 25 October 2019 announced that it has chosen Ahmedabad-based firm HCP Design, Planning and Management for its ambitious project of redeveloping Parliament and Central Vista, and development of a new common central secretariat. Urban Affairs Minister of State (independent charge) Hardeep Singh Puri said the firm will have open public consultations within a fixed timeframe.

What

- The revamp of Central Vista is expected to be done by November 2021, the Parliament by August 2022 and common central secretariat by 2024.
- Mr. Puri said the selected bid came with a price that was 40% below the estimated cost of ₹448 crore. The consultancy cost would be ₹229.75 crore.

3. The Ministry's Central Public Works Department had floated a Request for Proposal on September 2 and held a pre-bid meeting on September 12 with 24 participants attending it.
4. Of the six bids received, the one by HCP Design had been picked by a jury headed by School of Planning and Architecture director Dr. P.S.N Rao.
5. Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra said HCP had got the highest marks at 79%. The proposed new buildings would have a life of 250 years.
6. Reiterating that the buildings built between 1911 and 1930 — the Parliament House, North and South Blocks and Rashtrapati Bhavan — **would “remain intact”, Mr. Puri said there are no plans to damage heritage structures.**

Flashback

1. The Ahmedabad-based HCP, founded by architect Hasmukh C. Patel in 1960, has worked in several projects in the last six decades, including the refurbishment of the Eden Gardens stadium in Kolkata, IIM-Ahmedabad flyover, and the Aga Khan Academy in Hyderabad.
2. The firm was also involved in the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project where Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently held a mammoth event to celebrate **Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.**
3. Mr. Puri said he expects the final cost to be 40% less than the estimate.

CONDUCT OF ELECTION RULE AMENDED

Disabled and people over 80 years of age can now cast their votes through postal ballot, the government said, in a move that will help increase voter turnout. At present, voting through postal ballot is available to armed forces and those assigned poll duties. On the recommendation of the Election Commission, the Ministry of Law and Justice has amended the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, allowing senior citizens and persons with disabilities in the absentee voter list.

What

1. The absentee voter refers to a vote cast by someone who is unable to go to the polling station.
2. Officials said that in both these categories there are people who are unable to reach the polling stations and thus are unable to cast their votes.
3. This will enable people from these two categories to cast their votes with ease and will also thus increase the voter turnout.
4. The poll officer will attest the absentee voter in the case of senior citizens and person with disability in the form 13A.
5. In the last Lok Sabha elections, about 60.14 per cent of absentee voters voted through e-postal ballot while in 2014, during the general election, this figure was just 4 per cent.

INTERNATIONAL

CHILE CANCELS COP25, APEC MEET

Chile has withdrawn as host of an APEC trade summit in November where the United States and China had been expected to take major steps toward ending a 15-month-old trade war that has slowed world economic growth. Chilean President Sebastian Pinera **said he had taken the “painful” decision** to cancel the summit in Santiago, as well as a high-profile international gathering on climate change in December, to focus on restoring law and order and pushing through a new social plan. Riots, arson and protests over inequality this month have left at least 18 people dead, 7,000 arrested and Chilean businesses hit with losses of around \$1.4 billion. The metro public transport system in the capital suffered nearly \$400 million in damages.

What

1. The APEC summit was scheduled to bring together 20 world leaders, including U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, on Nov. 16-17.
2. U.S. and Chinese negotiators were racing to have the text of an interim trade agreement ready in time for Trump and Xi to sign at the meeting.
3. Chile will also not be able to host the COP25 global climate summit between Dec. 2 and Dec. 13, said Pinera, who fired almost half his cabinet this week – including his finance, interior and economy ministers – in a bid to quell the protests, to little effect.
4. The climate summit would have brought delegates from around 190 nations to talks aimed at thrashing out details of how to reduce global emissions to meet the Paris climate agreement.
5. **The cancellations are a further blow to Chile’s much-vaunted image as one of the most stable countries in Latin America.**
6. **Chile was “deeply sorry for the problems and inconveniences that this decision will mean for both APEC and the COP. But as President of all Chileans I always have to put the problems and interests of the Chileans, their needs, their desires and their hopes.**

Why was Chile hosting COP25?

1. COP25 was originally supposed to be hosted by Brazil.
2. But in November last year, just two months after being announced as the summit’s host nation, then President-elect Jair Bolsonaro pulled out.
3. The far-right leader said this was due to the change of government and budget restrictions, according to local media. However, he had recently chosen a foreign minister who claimed “climate alarmism” was just a plot by “cultural Marxists”.
4. A month later, Chile was selected to host the climate conference instead. Costa Rica, the other frontrunner, withdrew because of the costs involved in hosting.

What’s going on in Chile?

1. At least 20 people have been killed since the mass protests in Chile began.
2. While many protests were peaceful, there were also deadly incidents of arson and looting, as well as violent clashes between the security forces and protesters.

3. They have shown little sign of abating despite Mr Piñera announcing measures to ease Chileans' discontent with high levels of inequality and other grievances.
4. More than 7,000 people have been arrested and the response by Mr Piñera's government to the protests has come in for heavy criticism.
5. He declared a state of emergency and night-time curfews in many of Chile's major cities, but the measures only seemed to further incense protesters.
6. A rally is estimated to have drawn more than a million people to the streets of Santiago, in what organisers said was the largest demonstration since democracy was restored in Chile in 1990.

KARTARPUR AGREEMENT INKED

India and Pakistan on 24 October 2019 signed an agreement to operationalise Kartarpur Corridor. The agreement was meant to be originally signed on October 23 but was delayed by a day. Home Ministry officials met their Pakistani counterparts at zero point and inked the agreement ahead of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak on November 12.

What

1. With the signing of this agreement, a formal framework has been laid down for operationalisation of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) joint secretary S C L Das said.
2. While India has been urging Pakistan to reconsider its stand to impose a \$20 service fee on pilgrims, Islamabad is yet to take a decision on the issue.
3. **Today's development comes days after the first significant escalation on the LoC since the dilution of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, with the Army targeting several terrorist launchpads in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir.**
4. Pilgrims who wish to visit the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur in Pakistan will be allowed to carry a maximum of Rs 11,000 and a 7-kg bag, and will not be allowed to venture beyond the shrine.
5. A 10-member panel -- Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Executive Committee (KSCEC) -- has been constituted under the chairmanship of the deputy commissioner-cum-chief

Flashback

1. The Kartarpur Corridor is an under-construction border corridor between the neighbouring nations of India and Pakistan, connecting the Sikh shrines of Dera Baba Nanak Sahib (located in Punjab, India) and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur (in Punjab, Pakistan).
2. Currently under planning, the corridor is intended to allow religious devotees from India to visit the Gurdwara in Kartarpur, 4.7 kilometres (2.9 miles) from the Pakistan-India border, without a visa.
3. The Kartarpur Corridor was first proposed in early 1999 by the prime ministers of India and Pakistan, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif, respectively, as part of the Delhi-Lahore Bus diplomacy.
4. On 26 November 2018, the foundation stone for the Kartarpur corridor was laid down on the Indian side. Two days later, the foundation stone was laid down on the Pakistani side.

administrator, Dera Baba Nanak (DBN) Development Authority, Punjab, to coordinate and facilitate the day-to-day functional aspects of Dera Baba Nanak-Kartarpur Sahib corridor.

6. Sri Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, had spent more than 18 years of his life at the gurdwara Kartarpur, located on the banks of the river Ravi.

FATF RETAINS PAKISTAN IN GREY LIST

International terror financing watchdog FATF on 18 October 2019 retained Pakistan on the Grey List and warned the country of action for its failure in combating money laundering and terror financing. The decision was taken after a five-day plenary of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

What

1. The FATF noted that Pakistan addressed only five out of the 27 tasks given to it in controlling funding to terror groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, responsible for a series of attacks in India.
2. It was again decided by consensus that FATF would retain Pakistan on the Grey List and warn Pakistan that if it did not complete its full Action Plan and show significant and sustainable progress action will be taken.
3. Pakistan was placed on the Grey List by the Paris-based watchdog in June last year and was given a plan of action to complete it by October 2019, or face the risk of being placed on the Black List with Iran and North Korea.

Flashback

1. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the Ministers of its Member jurisdictions.
2. The objectives of the FATF are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

PEACE PARK DEAL

The scheduled closing of an Israeli-Jordan **“peace park”** is a fitting reflection of **the countries’ relations** as they mark the 25th anniversary of their landmark peace agreement. The deal was signed at an emotional ceremony on Oct. 26, 1994, attended by **Israel’s then**-prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, the late King Hussein and President Bill Clinton. All three leaders delivered moving speeches promising warm relations and a better future.

What

1. The agreement began with great hopes, but has been plagued by mistrust, disappointment and missed opportunities.
2. **Now the Naharayim Park and its “Island of Peace” are being shuttered.**

3. Though the peace deal is intact and remains a vital strategic asset for both countries, there is a sense on both sides that it should have delivered much bigger dividends.
4. The Island of Peace is an area in northern Jordan bordering the Jordan River. The park is at the confluence of the Jordan River and Yarmouk River.
5. The 1994 Israel–Jordan peace treaty recognized the area to be under Jordanian sovereignty **but leased Israeli landowner's freedom of entry**. The 25-year renewable lease ends in 2019.
6. The Jordanian government announced its intention to end the lease, the treaty gives Jordan the right to do so only on one condition-that a one year prior notice is given, which coincided with the announcement in October 2018.

WIPO REPORT ON PATENT

China accounted for nearly half of global patent filings last year, with a record 1.54 million applications, led by telecoms and computer technology, the U.N.'s World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) said on 16 October 2019. China's share, up 11.6 percent from 2017, included requests received by China's intellectual property office from foreign innovators and companies seeking patent protection there, representing one in 10 filings.

What

1. The United States ranked a distant second, with nearly 600,000 patent applications, down 1.6 percent on the previous year and the first drop in a decade, WIPO said in a report.
2. In all, innovators worldwide filed 3.3 million patent applications, 14.3 million trademark applications, and 1.3 million industrial design applications, with Asia accounting for more than two-thirds.
3. China ranked first in all three categories and had as many patent filings as the next 10 places combined, including Japan (3rd), South Korea (4th) and the European Patent Office (5th).
4. Asia is "increasingly the global hub for intellectual property applications", WIPO director-general Francis Gurry said, noting "impressive increases" in India.
5. China has been a major driving force and the volume of applications coming out of China or going into China, the volume of applications in the Chinese office is really quite extraordinary.

Flashback

1. WIPO is the global forum for intellectual property (IP) services, policy, information and cooperation. It is a self-funding agency of the United Nations, with 192 member states.
2. Its mission is to lead the development of a balanced and effective international IP system that enables innovation and creativity for the benefit of all.
3. Its mandate, governing bodies and procedures are set out in the WIPO Convention, which established WIPO in 1967.

EU NATIONS AGREE BREXIT DELAY

European Union on 28 October 2019 agreed a **3-month flexible delay to Britain's** departure from the bloc as Prime Minister Boris Johnson pushes for an election after opponents forced him to request an extension he had vowed never to ask for. Just three days before the United Kingdom is due to leave the EU on Oct. 31, Brexit is hanging in the balance as British politicians are no closer to reaching a consensus on how, when or even if the divorce should take place. Johnson, who became prime minister by pledging – “do or die” – to deliver Brexit on Oct. 31, was driven into requesting a postponement after he was defeated in parliament over the sequencing of the ratification of his divorce deal.

What

1. The 27 countries that will remain in the EU after Brexit agreed on 28 October 2019 to put off Brexit until the end of January with an earlier departure possible should the faction-ridden UK parliament ratify their separation deal.
2. The EU27 has agreed that it will accept the UK's request for a **Brexit 'flexextension' until 31 January 2020,** European Council President Donald Tusk said, referring to the idea of a “flexible extension”.
3. But EU member states will need Britain to formally respond to its offer of a 3-month delay to Brexit **before launching a “written procedure” whereby governments** will have 24 hours to accept or reject the delay.
4. **Britain's departure has already** been delayed twice – from March 29 and April 12 – **after Johnson's** predecessor, Theresa May, failed three times to get her deal ratified by parliament.
5. With British politics still paralysed over carrying out Brexit 3-1/2 years after a 52%-48% referendum vote in favour of Leave, Johnson is demanding parliament approve an election on Dec. 12 in return for more time to adopt his deal.
6. The EU, forged from the ruins of World War Two as a way to prevent another devastating conflict in Europe, is **fatigued by Britain's Brexit crisis but keen not to be held responsible for an economically tumultuous “no-deal” Brexit.**

Definition of 'Brexit'

1. It is an abbreviation for the term **“British exit”, similar to “Grexit”** that was used for many years to refer to the possibility of Greece leaving the Eurozone.
2. Brexit refers to the possibility of Britain withdrawing from the European Union (EU).
3. The EU is an economic and political union involving 28 European countries. It allows free trade and free movement of people, to live and work in whichever country they choose.
4. The UK joined in 1973 (when it was known as the European Economic Community). If the UK leaves, it would be the first member state to withdraw from the EU.

ECONOMY

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS 2020 REPORT

India has moved 14 places to be 63rd among 190 nations in the **World Bank's** ease of doing business ranking released on 24 October 2019 on the back of multiple

economic reforms by the Narendra Modi government. However, it failed to achieve the government's target of being at 50th place. The country was 77th among 190 countries in the previous ranking last year, an improvement by 23 places. The report assesses improvement in ease of doing business environment in Delhi and Mumbai.

What

1. Sustained business reforms over the past several years has helped India jump 14 **places to move to 63rd position in this year's global ease of Doing Business** rankings.
2. India put in place four new business reforms during the past year and earned a **place among the world's top ten improvers for the third consecutive year.**
3. India still lags in areas such as enforcing contracts (163rd) and registering property (154th). **It takes 58 days and costs on average 7.8% of a property's value to register it, longer and at greater cost than among OECD high-income economies.**
4. It takes 1,445 days for a company to resolve a commercial dispute through a local first-instance court, almost three times the average time in OECD high-income economies.
5. The latest reforms are in the Doing Business areas of Starting a Business, Dealing with Construction Permits, Trading Across Borders and Resolving Insolvency.
6. In Doing Business 2020, India along with other top improvers implemented a total of 59 regulatory reforms in 2018/19—accounting for one-fifth of all the reforms recorded worldwide.
7. **India's impressive progression in the Doing Business rankings over the past few years is a tremendous achievement, especially for an economy that is as large and complex as India's.**
8. Special focus given by the top leadership of the country, and the persistent efforts made to drive the business reforms agenda, not only at the central level but also at the state level, helped India make significant improvements. The focus now needs to be on continuing this trend to maintain and improve its ranking.
9. Doing Business acknowledges the 10 economies that improved the most on the ease of doing business after implementing regulatory reforms.
10. The establishment of a modern insolvency regime in 2016 as part of a comprehensive strategy to reform corporate law paved the way for a gradual increase in the number of reorganizations, despite some implementation challenges.
11. As a result, the overall recovery rate for creditors has jumped from 26.5 to 71.6 cents on the dollar. India now is by far the best performer in South Asia on this component and does better than the average for OECD high-income economies.

Doing business ranking is based on quantitative indicators on

- Regulation for starting a business
- Dealing with construction permits
- Getting electricity
- Registering property
- Getting credit
- Protecting minority investors
- Paying taxes
- Trading across borders
- Enforcing contracts
- Resolving insolvency

12. Completing the procedures required to build a warehouse now costs only 4% of the warehouse value. Building quality control measures were also improved, and now **only six economies in the world score better than India's 14.5 out of 15 on this index.**
13. Importing and exporting became easier for companies for the fourth consecutive year. With the latest reforms, India now ranks 68th globally on this indicator and performs significantly better than the regional average. The time necessary for the logistical processes of exporting and importing goods has been significantly reduced.
14. Apart from India, other countries on this year's 'top 10 performers' list are Saudi Arabia (62), Jordan (75), Togo (97), Bahrain (43), Tajikistan (106), Pakistan (108), Kuwait (83), China (31) and Nigeria (131). New Zealand, Singapore and Hong Kong topped the list this year.

INDIA IN FINANCIAL INCLUSION REPORT

India is placed among the top nations with the most conducive environment for financial inclusion in terms of allowing non-banks to issue e-money, proportionate customer due diligence and effective consumer protection, a report said on 31 October 2019. According to The Economist Intelligence Unit's 2019 Global Microscope on Financial Inclusion report, the overall environment for financial inclusion has improved globally with India, Colombia, Peru, Uruguay and Mexico having the most favourable conditions for inclusive finance.

What

1. Within the overall framework for promoting digital financial inclusion, the report identified four basic enablers - allowing non-banks to issue e-money, presence of financial service agents, proportionate customer due diligence and effective financial consumer protection.
2. Only four countries - Colombia, India, Jamaica and Uruguay - scored perfectly across all four parameters.
3. In these countries, a range of providers are capable of providing digital financial services to people on the margins of the formal financial system, regulations control for some of the risks inherent in these services, and clear rules mark out spaces appropriate for innovation to achieve greater financial inclusion, the report said.
4. South Africa, India, Mexico, Tanzania and Uruguay were among the top countries that safeguard e-money via some sort of deposit insurance or protection.
5. This type of protection provides security to users of these new technologies, avoids creating regulatory imbalances between different types of institution, and ensures that digital financial inclusion does not place new consumers in the financial system at a disadvantage compared to those transacting with more traditional institutions.
6. Additionally, these countries require financial institutions to maintain liability for the actions of their agents, ensuring that customers whose nearest access point is an agent do not receive less protection than customers who can visit a bank branch.
7. In India, the Reserve Bank has prepared a draft National Strategy for Financial Inclusion to deepen financial services' coverage in the country. The long-awaited strategy is expected to be finalised in 2019 and will cover a five-year period.

8. The RBI has set up a high-level committee to review the existing status of digitisation and devise a medium-term strategy for increasing digital payments, the report said.
9. In August 2019, the RBI released the Enabling Framework for Regulatory Sandbox (RS), which creates the basis for a regulatory sandbox that will allow fintech start-ups to live-test innovative products and services.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

BRAHMOS TEST FIRED SUCCESSFULLY

The Indian Air Force has carried out successful firing of BrahMos surface-to-surface missiles from a mobile platform at Trak Island in Andaman Nicobar islands. The drill to check the IAF's capability to hit targets with "pin-point" accuracy at targets close to 300 KM was conducted on 21 and 22 October 2019. "Surface-to-surface missiles were fired by IAF at Trak Island in the Andaman Nicobar group of islands, adding the missile engaged the designated mock targets close to 300 KM away.

What

1. A direct hit on the target was achieved in both the cases. Firing of the missile has enhanced IAF's capability to engage ground targets with pinpoint accuracy from a mobile platform. The 2.5-tonne surface-to-surface missile has a range of around 300 km.
2. BrahMos Aerospace, an India-Russian joint venture, produces the missile that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft, or from land platforms.
3. The various variants of the BrahMos missiles are produced by BrahMos Aerospace, which was set up as a joint venture between India and Russia.
4. **India's** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) had signed an inter-governmental agreement with the Russian Federal State Unitary Enterprise NPO Mashinostroyeniya (NPOM) to establish BrahMos Aerospace.
5. BrahMos Aerospace produces missiles that can be launched from land, air and water platforms such as submarines, ships and aircraft.

BrahMos surface-to-surface variants

1. The first BrahMos surface-to-surface variant was test-fired from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur in June 2001 in a vertical launch configuration.
2. Another test was conducted in the same test range from a mobile launcher in June 2004.
3. Another BrahMos surface-to-surface missile was launched in March 2009, which successfully targeted and hit a building among a cluster of building in an urban setup. India is the only country with this advanced technology.
4. Further, BrahMos created a new world record in September 2010 by becoming the first cruise missile to be tested at supersonic speeds in a steep-dive mode.

FIRST NATIONAL REPOSITORY OF CYBER TECH

The National Cybersecurity Coordinator's office in partnership with Data Security Council of India (DSCI), a not-for-profit, industry body on data protection set up by Nasscom, has opened **India's first national cybertech's repository** portal named TechSagar(www.techsagar.in). The repository facilitates several opportunities for innovation through collaboration, and also endeavours to provide direction for a strategic cyber roadmap of the country in R&D, industry development, and strengthening the preparedness of national security.

What

1. Techsagar is an excellent example of a project management, PP model and a time-bound program that DSCI and its partners have created. With the launch of TechSagar, we have sown the seed for start-ups to prosper in cyber tech.
2. TechSagar covers 25 technology areas such as IoT, AI/ML, Block Chain, Cloud and Virtualisation, Robotics and Automation, AR/VR, Wireless and Networking, and more.
3. It allows targeted search, granular navigation and drilldown methods using more than 3000 niche capabilities. As of now, the repository features 4000+ entities from industry, academia and research including large enterprises and start-ups providing a **country-level view of India's cyber competencies**.
4. The national technology repository is one of the most strategic projects that DSCI has embarked on since it came into being.
5. **This repository which will enable targeted search of India's tech capabilities and open gates for innovation and collaboration across Industry and Academia.**
6. Vinayak Godse, vice president, DSCI, who headed this project, said, **"We have worked in detailing of decomposition of these various technologies and writing its definitions.**
7. It is a tool for creating intelligence about the technology in a granular level. We have started the journey and we will be improving its product mapping and looking at use cases.
8. Additionally, this portal will also help in optimising the investment and developing the strategic road map for large global companies and tech startups.

FIRST-EVER INDIAN BRAIN ATLAS

Researchers at the International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad (IIIT-H) have created the first-ever Indian Brain Atlas. The study has revealed that the Indian brain, on an average, is smaller in height, width and volume when compared to Western and other eastern populations. This will help in early diagnosis of **Alzheimer's and other brain-related ailments**. Jayanthi Sivaswamy of the Centre for Visual Information Technology, who worked on the project, said that the Montreal Neurological Institute (MNI) template, which is used as the standard, was created using Caucasian brains. This, according to the researchers, is not ideal to analyse brain differences in the Indian population.

What

1. The average Indian brain is smaller in height, width, and volume as compared to the western and eastern population like the Chinese and Korean according to the **first-ever 'Indian Brain Atlas' created by researchers of the International Institute of Information Technology-Hyderabad (IIITH).**

2. These differences are found even at the structure level like the volume of **hippocampus and so on. But overall, the 'IBA 100 is more' comparable to the** Chinese and Korean atlases than the distant Caucasian one, according to the research team led by professor from the Centre for Visual Information Technology Jayanthi Sivaswamy.
3. Construction of the Indian human brain atlas was done in collaboration with the Department of Imaging Sciences and Interventional Radiology, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram.
4. Montreal Neurological Institute (MNI) and International Consortium for Brain Mapping (ICBM) had created the first digital human brain atlas in 1993 and had also released other brain atlases, widely used as a standard in neuroscience studies.
5. **However, these 'standard' brain templates were created using Caucasian brains and** are not ideal to analyse brain differences from other ethnicities such as the Indian population.

FREE MAPPING OF INDIAN GENOMES

Anyone looking for a free mapping of their entire genome can sign up for the IndiGen initiative, a programme managed by the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) and the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB). Those who do get their genes mapped this way will get a card and access to an **app, which will allow them and doctors to access** "clinically actionable information" on their genomes.

What

1. The programme is a culmination of a six-month project by the CSIR in which 1000 Indians, had their genomes scanned in detail. They were chosen from across the land to represent the width of genetic variability.
2. The aim of the exercise was twofold: To **test if it's possible to rapidly and reliably** scan several genomes and advise people on health risks that are manifest in their gene and, understand the variation and frequency of certain genes that are known to be linked to disease.
3. **Not everyone who signs up will be guaranteed a scan. There's already a backlog of at least 400 individuals and in a year or so,** CSIR scientists say, partnerships it is negotiating with several pathological laboratories, will see such scans being performed by companies for a price.

CHANDRAYAAN-2 DETECTS ARGON-40

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) on 31 October 2019 said that the **Chandra's Atmospheric Composition** Explorer-2 (CHACE-2) payload on Chandrayaan-2 has detected Argon-40 (40Ar) from the lunar exosphere. Among the radiogenic gases on the lunar surface, 40Ar is one of the isotopes of Argon, a noble gas.

What

1. Argon is an important constituent of the lunar exosphere. It originates from the radioactive disintegration of Potassium-40 (40K), which has a half-life of 1.2 X 10⁹ years.

2. The statement further read that 40K nuclide, which is present deep below the lunar surface, disintegrates to 40Ar, which, in turn, makes way up to the lunar exosphere through seepages and faults.
3. The detection of 40Ar is significant for Isro, **but this won't be the first time that the isotope has been studied, given that it has a high escape rate.**
4. Aside from water, the most significant lunar volatiles are the radiogenic gases, of which argon-40 is the most easily detected, both in situ and as retrapped ions in rocks returned from the surface on the moon.
5. Argon-40 escapes from Moon at a surprisingly high rate that is between 3% and 6% of its total production.

Flashback

1. Chandrayaan-2 is the second lunar exploration mission developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) after Chandrayaan-1.
2. It consisted of a lunar orbiter, the Vikram lander, and the Pragyan lunar rover, all of which were developed in India.
3. The main scientific objective is to map and study the variations in lunar surface composition, as well as the location and abundance of lunar water.
4. The spacecraft was launched on its mission to the Moon from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre on 22 July 2019 by a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III (GSLV Mk III).
5. The lander deviated from its intended trajectory starting at 2.1 kilometres (1.3 mi) altitude and had lost communication when touchdown confirmation was expected.

PEGASUS SPYWARE

WhatsApp identified that a bug in the **app's call function** was used to install a **malicious code into users' phones**. On October 29, it identified the malicious code as Pegasus, a spyware developed by an Israeli company, NSO. WhatsApp and its parent company Facebook have sued NSO in a U.S. court.

How does Pegasus come into your phone?

1. The code is transmitted by calling the target phone on WhatsApp. The code enters the phone even if the call is not answered.
2. According to some reports, the **log of that call gets erased**. According to The Citizen's Lab of the University of Toronto, which worked with WhatsApp on identifying spyware victims, this is only one of the ways of delivering Pegasus.
3. It notes several other cases such as alarming SMSs that prompt targets to click on a link

What does Pegasus do?

1. Once installed, **Pegasus can send the target's contacts**, calendar events, phone calls and messages on communication apps like WhatsApp and Telegram to the **spyware's controller**.
2. It could steal messages from even services that offer encryption because it was taking the messages before the encryption process.

3. The controller can also turn the phone into a spying device by switching on its camera or microphone.

Who was targeted?

1. According to reports, over 100 human-rights activists, lawyers, and journalists were targeted across the globe. This included several lawyers and journalists in India.
2. **Apple's iOS security update 9.3.5 take care of the vulnerability exploited by Pegasus.** Google, in a earlier blogpost, says it identifies infected Android phones and disable the malware and informs the targets.

WORLD'S FIRST FEMALE SPACEWALKING TEAM

The **world's first female spacewalking team made history high above Earth** on 18 October 2019, floating out of the International Space Station to fix a broken part of the power network. As NASA astronauts Christina Koch and Jessica Meir emerged one by one, it marked the first time in a half-century of spacewalking that a woman floated out without a male crewmate. **America's first female spacewalker** from 35 years ago, Kathy Sullivan, **was delighted. She said It's good to finally have enough women in the astronaut corps and trained for spacewalking for this to happen.**

What

1. NASA leaders along with women and others around the world cheered Koch and Meir on. At the same time, many noted that this will hopefully become routine in the future.
2. NASA originally wanted to conduct an all-female spacewalk last spring, but did not have enough medium-size suits ready to go.
3. Koch and Meir were supposed to install more new batteries in a spacewalk next week, but had to venture out three days earlier to deal with an equipment failure that occurred over the weekend.
4. They need to replace an old battery charger for one of the three new batteries that was installed last week by Koch and Andrew Morgan.
5. Meir, making her spacewalking debut, became the 228th person in the world to conduct a spacewalk and the 15th woman.
6. It was the fourth spacewalk for Koch, who is seven months into an 11-month mission that will be the longest ever by a woman.

JET ENGINE TECHNOLOGY PROJECT SUSPENDED

A key Indo-US project aimed at sharing technology for building fighter jet engines **has been 'suspended' after the two sides could not come to an agreement on specifics**, with a lack of initiative from the industry. India and the US have now identified new technologies for joint development of future warfare systems under the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), including drone warfare, light weight arms and networked systems.

What

1. Under the 2012 DTTI, India and the US set up joint working groups (JWGs) for cooperation on aircraft carriers and jet engine technology.

2. Confirming that the fighter jet engine programme has been suspended, Ellen M Lord, undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, who was in the capital for a DTTI review meeting said there are other aspects of aircraft technology that can be worked on.
3. The original project is suspended right now. But we are talking about other potential engine working group items.
4. We could not come to an understanding of what exportable technologies would be useful to the Indians and we did run into a challenge in terms of US export controls.
5. The official said other areas of cooperation are being identified. We think there is an enormous amount of aircraft technology that we could together. The teams are working for areas of common interest that we can export.
6. The **development is a setback to India's plan to create a jet engine** that could power future indigenous fighter aircraft including the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft, a fifth-generation aircraft.
7. The two sides had set up a Joint Working Group on Jet Engine Technology and had been meeting regularly.
8. India has been working on the indigenous Kaveri engine but has not been able to **get the requisite power. It was pinning its hopes on the "hot engine" technology**, considered by the US as the crown jewel in jet engine technology.
9. A similar initiative to share jet engine technology by France as part of the offsets for the Rafale deal has also been stalled.
10. Efforts to revive the project to revitalise the Kaveri engine were made during the recent visit of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to France.

MISCELLANEOUS

MIYAWAKI METHOD FOR TREE PLANTING

West Bengal government's panchayat & rural development department has decided to create forests across the state using the Miyawaki method, a Japanese method of tree planting that helps in building dense, native forests. The government would be using the 100 day work scheme to implement it. The Miyawaki method involves planting dozens of native species in the same area, which becomes maintenance-free after the first three years. This method ensures plant growth is 10 times faster and the resulting plantation is 30 times denser than usual.

What

1. The first such forest would be coming up on 1,000 acres in the village of Shibganj, in Shyampur-I block in Uluberia subdivision in Howrah district. This forest would be named after the famous Swedish environment activist, Greta Thunberg.
2. Besides Howrah, the other districts where such afforestation has been planned are Purulia, Birbhum, Murshidabad, Bankura, Jhargram, Malda, Uttar Dinajpur, Purba Bardhaman and South 24 Parganas.
3. According to the plan for the pilot project, 3,280 saplings would be planted on 1,000 acres, which would be able to increase their sizes by 30 times in just seven months with the help of the Miyawaki Method.

4. The plants to be planted are native species like bahera, bael (wood apple), jamun (blackberry), mango, haritaki, babla, banyan, palash, shirish, tal, karamcha and mahua.

5. Preparations for the pilot project are on in full swing. A 10-day workshop was organised in

Shibgunge where 36 officials from various districts participated.

Flashback

1. Japanese botanist and plant ecology expert, D. Akira Miyawaki invented this unique method of plantation.
2. In Miyawaki method multi-layered saplings are planted close to each other. This blocks sunlight from reaching the ground and prevents weeds from growing, thus keeping the soil moist.
3. The close cropping further ensures that the plants receive sunlight only from the top thus enabling them to grow upwards rather than sideways.
4. This is one of the reasons why the saplings grow tall in a short span. Growing the saplings close also ensures space for more trees to be planted.

UNICEF REPORT ON MALNUTRITION

Malnutrition caused 69 per cent of deaths of children below the age of five in India, according to a UNICEF report released. In its report — **The State of the World's Children 2019**, UNICEF said that every second child in that age group is affected by some form of malnutrition. This includes stunting (35 per cent), wasting (17 pc) and overweight (2 pc). Only 42 pc of children (in the age group of 6 to 23 months) are fed at adequate frequency and 21 pc get adequately diverse diet. Timely complementary feeding is initiated for only 53 per cent of infants aged 6-8 months. About Indian **women's health, it said every second woman is anaemic. It also said that anaemia is the most prevalent in children under the age of five years. Its prevalence among adolescent girls is twice that of adolescent boys.**

What

1. The first UNICEF report in 20 years on child nutrition, UNICEF found that one in three children under the age of five years — around 200 million children worldwide — are either undernourished or overweight. And in India, every second child is affected by some form of malnutrition.
2. The report said 35% of Indian children suffer from stunting due to lack of nutrition, 17% suffer from wasting, 33% are underweight and 2% are overweight.
3. According to government figures, stunting and wasting among children in the country has reduced by 3.7 per cent and the number of underweight children have reduced by 2.3 per cent from 2016 to 2018.
4. Among countries in South Asia, India fares the worst (54%) on the prevalence of children under five who are stunted, wasted or overweight. Afghanistan and Bangladesh follow at 49% and 46%, respectively. Sri Lanka and the Maldives are the better performing countries in the region, at 28% and 32%, respectively.
5. India also has the highest burden of deaths among children under five per year, with over 8 lakh deaths in 2018. It is followed by Nigeria, Pakistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, at 8.6 lakh, 4.09 lakh and 2.96 lakh deaths per year, respectively.

6. **The report said “an alarmingly high number of children” are suffering the consequences of poor diets and a “food system that is failing them”.**
7. **“Almost two in three children between six months and two years are not fed food that supports their rapidly growing bodies and brains. This puts them at risk of poor brain development, weak learning, low immunity, increased infections and in many cases, death,”** it said.
8. UN officials said in India. Poverty, urbanisation as well as climate change are some of the factors that are driving poor diet. Only 61% Indian children, adolescents and mothers consume dairy products at least once a week, and only 40% of them consume fruit once a week.

INTERPOL TO HOLD GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN INDIA

The Interpol will hold its General Assembly in India in 2022 to coincide with the **75th year of the country’s independence. A proposal in this regard was given to Interpol Secretary General Jürgen Stock by Union Home Minister Amit Shah when the two met during the former’s official visit in August.**

What

1. The Interpol (International Criminal Police Organisation) is an inter-governmental organisation having 194 member countries including India.
2. Headquartered in Lyon, France, it was formed in 1923 as the International Criminal Police Commission, and started calling itself Interpol in 1956.
3. India, one of its oldest members, joined the organisation in 1949.
4. The Interpol helps police in all of its member countries to work together, enables them to share and access data on crimes and criminals, and offers a range of technical and operational support.
5. The General Assembly is its governing body and it brings all countries together once a year to take decisions.
6. India hosted the Interpol General Assembly only once in 1997. This **year’s** General Assembly, which concluded on 18 October 2019, took place in Chile.

QS INDIA RANKINGS 2020

On 22 October 2019, the QS Indian University Rankings were released — this is **the second edition of the standalone rankings for India’s higher education institutions.** The rankings include public, private, higher education or deemed universities. The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) dominate the list, with seven IITs figuring in the top ten rankings. Like last year, IIT-Bombay leads followed by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc). This year, IIT-Delhi has improved its performance by one rank to overtake IIT-Madras.

What

1. IIT-Delhi now stands third in the ranking. Delhi University, University of Hyderabad and the Indian Institute of Science are the only other non-IIT institutions in the top ten.
2. Among the top 10, the rankings of the University of Hyderabad and Indian Institute of Technology, Madras have fallen by one spot each.

INDIA IMPROVES RANKING IN MMGPI

India has marginally improved its ranking to 32nd position in terms of providing pension and retirement benefits to citizens compared to last year, according to a report. The country's score in the Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index (MMGPI) 2019 rose to 45.8 from 44.6 last year. The MMGPI, which covers 37 countries, is based on how they fare on providing pension and retirement benefits to citizens across different income groups. India stood at 32nd position in 2019 out of 37 countries, while it was ranked at 33rd place in 2018 out of 34 countries in the list.

What

1. **India's index value increased largely due to the improvement in all three sub-indices of adequacy, sustainability and integrity.**
2. As per the index, the improvement was due to a slight increase in scores across various dimensions, including net household savings, greater flexibility in managing retirement and part time work, steady progress in governance and reporting around private pension plans.
3. The report said that the draft wages and social security reforms that have been initiated in India indicate the intent of policy makers in creating an inclusive and sustainable pension system.
4. Given the demographic diversity and the large percentage of workforce in the unorganised sector, reforms in the pension system will take time to manifest themselves.
5. The report added that index value can further be enhanced by complementing above reforms with greater participation of organised sector in supplemental pension plans.
6. With the general trend moving towards defined contribution voluntary plans, the companies are focusing on building awareness among employees on the need to save towards retirement.
7. Enhanced communication and awareness should increase engagement and greater participation in pension arrangements in the organized sector. Efforts by the government to introduce new pension system have shown good results.
8. It cited the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) which is available to all citizens below the age of 40, but is aimed at the unorganised sector and encourages them to save voluntarily before retirement.
9. The report also mentioned new schemes introduced by the government for different segments of workers in the unorganised sector like the PM Karam Yogi Maan-Dhan Scheme for retailers and shopkeepers, PM Kisan Pension Yojana (PM-KMY) for small and marginal famers and the recently announced contributory scheme Pradhan Mantri Shram-Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM) that covers workers in the unorganized sector with equal contribution by the government.
10. In the overall list, the Netherlands had the highest index value (81.0), while Thailand had the lowest value (39.4).
11. Sub-index wise, Ireland had the highest score for adequacy (81.5), Denmark for sustainability (82.0) and Finland for integrity (92.3).
12. Thailand scored the lowest for adequacy (35.8), Italy for sustainability (19.0) and Philippines for integrity (34.7).

47TH CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

President Ram Nath Kovind on 29 October 2019 approved the appointment of Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde as the 47th Chief Justice of India. He will take oath on November 18. CJI-designate Bobde will be sworn for tenure of one year and five months; he will retire on April 23, 2021.

What

1. As per convention, CJI Ranjan Gogoi had recommended the name of Justice Bobde as his successor on October 19. Justice Bobde is the senior-most judge in the Supreme Court after the CJI.
2. Justice Bobde had played a key role in settling differences between the four Supreme Court judges — Justices Gogoi, J Chelameswar, Madan Lokur and Kurian Joseph (now retired) — who held a press conference against then CJI Dipak Misra in January 2018.
3. A former Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court, he has been part of important cases, including the sexual harassment case against Gogoi.
4. The CJI had assigned Bobde to decide on the subsequent steps in the case after he came under severe criticism for calling a special Supreme Court sitting on April 20 to trash the complaint.
5. Bobde was on the bench which gave a judgment in the Aadhaar case, the right to life case and is also hearing the ongoing Ayodhya title dispute.

MARY KOM IN BOXING'S ATHLETE AMBASSADORS GROUP

Six-time world champion M C Mary Kom has been included in a 10-strong athlete ambassadors group to represent boxers in the build-up to **next year's** Tokyo Olympic Games by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Task Force for the sport, **adding to the iconic pugilist's innumerable achievements**. Mary Kom will represent the Asian bloc in the group, which also comprises the likes of Ukrainian legend Vasyl Lamachenko (Europe), a two-time Olympic and world gold-medallist who now plies his trade in the professional circuit, and five-time world champion and 2016 Olympic gold-winner Julio Cesar La Cruz (Americas) among others.

What

1. The 36-year-old Indian recently surpassed herself as the most successful boxer in the history of the world championships when she claimed her eighth medal, a **bronze, at the marquee event's latest edition in Russia**.
2. She is also an Olympic bronze medallist in the 51kg category besides being a five-time Asian champion and a Commonwealth and Asian Games gold-medallist.
3. One female and one male ambassador per region will take on the role of engaging with the boxing community both in-person and digitally, the IOC said in a statement.
4. They will also help the Boxing Task Force (BTF) take into account **the athletes'** voice in all areas of its planning for the qualification events and the boxing tournament at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.
5. The creation of an Athlete Ambassadors Group was announced in August this year, and they had to be first nominated by the respective National Olympic Committee (NOC), **NOC Athletes' Commission and the National Federation (NF)**.

INDIA IMPUNITY INDEX

India is one of the 13 worst countries when it comes to impunity for killings of journalists, according to Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), an international non-profit working on press freedom across the world. In its latest Impunity Index published, CPJ stated that between September 1, 2009 and August 31, 2019 there were 17 cases of unsolved murders of journalists in the country. India however is at the bottom of the impunity table of the 13 countries, as only countries with more than 5 unsolved journalist killings in the last decade are mentioned in the index.

What

1. The other twelve nations that are mentioned in the index, starting from the country where journalist killings have maximum impunity are Somalia, Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, the Philippines, Afghanistan, Mexico, Pakistan, Brazil, Bangladesh, Russia and Nigeria.
2. According to the index, India did not see a single journalist being killed in 2019 till August 31. However, five journalists were killed in the country in 2018, of which four were murders with confirmed motives, and one was killed in crossfire.
3. India had seen the same number of journalists being killed in 2016 and 2017, while four journalists were killed in 2015.
4. The bloodiest years for journalists in India since 1992, the year since CPJ data is available, have been 1997, with seven journalists being killed, followed by 2013 when six journalists were killed.
5. Kashmiri senior journalist and editor of Rising Kashmir Shujaat Bukhari, who was shot dead by unidentified gunmen last year is mentioned as being murdered for his work.