

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS 15TH TO 21ST DECEMBER 2019

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Carnival of Aalst removed by UNESCO

- The officials found the "**recurrence of racist and anti-Semitic representations**" to be incompatible with its principles of the **2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**.
- **The carnival of Aalst of Belgium**, was initially added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity in **2010**.

NATIONAL NEWS

GEM Samvaad

- The outreach programme will facilitate **on-boarding of local sellers on the marketplace** and caters to specific requirements and procurement needs of buyers.
- **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)**, commenced on 9th August **2016**, is the national public procurement portal that offers end to end solutions for all procurement needs of Central and State Government Departments, PSUs, autonomous institutions and local bodies.

Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize

- Mr Antonio Costa announced the award while addressing the **2nd meeting of the National Committee for Commemoration of the 150th Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi** at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The **Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize** is initiated in order to help perpetuate Mahatma Gandhi's ideals inspired by his different thoughts and quotes.

Afghanistan: First Country to Recognise Indian Pharmacopoeia

- The National Department of Regulation of Medicines and Health Products of the **Ministry of Public Health of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan** has formally recognised the **Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP)**.
- The **Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC)** ensures the quality of medicinal products, the legal and scientific standards in the form of Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP).

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BANKING

ADB signed \$490 million Loan Agreement with GOI

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Government of India (GOI) have signed a **\$490 million loan** on 20th Dec 19, for a **public-private partnership project to upgrade Indian state's roads**.
- Under the project, about **1600 kilometres of state highways and major district roads** will be upgraded from **single-lane to two-lane widths** in Madhya Pradesh.

REPORTS

Global Gender Gap Report 2020

- The Global Gender Gap Report measures the **gender gap in political, economic and social spheres in a country**.
- The WEF Gender gap report points out that it will take **71 years to fully close the gender gap in the South Asia region** with the current rate of improvement in Gender Gap.

APPOINTMENTS

Name of the Person	Designation
Lt Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane	Next Chief of Army Staff
Air Marshal RJ Duckworth	Senior Air Staff officer

AWARDS AND HONOURS

Award	Awardee
Visitor's Award - for Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences	Prof. Sibnath Deb
Visitor's Award- for Research in Physical Sciences	Prof. Sanjay Puri
Visitor's Award - for Research in Biological Sciences	Prof. Asad Ullah Khan
Visitor's Award- for Technology Development	Dr Shaon Ray Chaudhuri
Sahitya Akademi Awards	
Name of the Person	Category
Sri Kumar Manish Arvind (Maithili), Sri V. Madhusoodanan Nair (Malayalam), Dr Phukan Ch. Basumatary (Bodo), Smt. Anuradha Patil (Marathi), Prof. Penna Madhusudan(Sanskrit), Dr Nand Kishore Acharya (Hindi) and Sri Nilba A. Khandekar (Konkani)	Poetry
Sri Bandi Narayana Swamy (Telugu), Sri L. Birmangol Singh (Beryl Thanga) (Manipuri), Sri Cho. Dharman (Tamil) and Dr JoysreeGoswami Mahanta (Assamese)	Novel

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Sri Abdul Ahad Hajini (Kashmiri), Sri Tarun Kanti Mishra(Odia), Sri Kirpal Kazak (Punjabi), Sri Ram Swaroop Kisan (Rajasthani), Sri Kali Charan Hembram(Santali) and Sri Ishwar Moorjani (Sindhi)	Short Stories
Dr Chinmoy Guha(Bengali), Sri Om Sharma Jandriari (Dogri) and Sri Ratilal Borisagar (Gujarati)	Essays
Dr Shashi Tharoor (English) for his book 'An Era of Darkness'	Non-fiction
Dr Vijaya(Kannada)	Autobiography
Prof. Shafey Kidwai (Urdu)	Biography

IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Day	Theme
14 th December 2019	Martyred Intellectuals Day	To commemorate the intellectuals killed by the Pakistan army on this day in 1971.
15 th December 2019	International Tea Day	To draw global attention to the impact of the global tea trade on workers and growers for price supports and fair trade.
16 th December 2019	Vijay Diwas	To commemorate India's victory over Pakistan in 1971 war.
18 th December 2019	Minorities Rights Day	By National Commission for minorities in India.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Ministry of MSME approved Changes in the Interest Subvention Scheme

- **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** is the nodal agency for the implementation of the scheme.
- The **"Interest Subvention Scheme for Incremental credit to MSMEs 2018"** will be implemented over **2018-19 and 2019-20**.
- The Scheme will be in operation for a period of **two financial years FY 2019 and FY 2020**.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Haryana Police to use Trakea in Forensic Reports

- Haryana Police has adopted a **unique barcoding software named Trakea**, to ensure **forensic reports** of the criminal investigation system are presented without being tampered in the courts of law.

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- The software was originally designed by a **prisoner Amit Mishra**, a software engineer by profession who was lodged in **Bhondsi jail** for 13 months.

National Broadband Mission

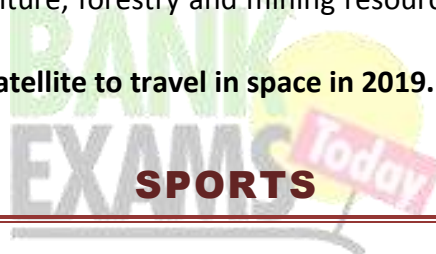
- Develop a **Broadband Readiness Index (BRI)** to measure the availability of digital communications infrastructure.
- Investment of **\$ 100 billion (Rs 7 Lakh Crore)** from **stakeholders** including Rs 70,000 crore from **Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)**.

Pinaka Missile System

- **The Pinaka MK-II Rocket** is modified as a **missile** by integrating with the Navigation, Control and Guidance System to improve the end accuracy and enhance the range.
- The Navigation system of the Pinaka missile is also aided by the **Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS)**.

Ethiopia Launched its First Satellite

- The satellite will operate from space at about **700km above the Earth surface** and will provide a fuller picture of the country's agriculture, forestry and mining resources and **improve responses to flooding and other disasters**.
- The ETRSS-1 will be the **99th satellite to travel in space in 2019**.



FIH New World Ranking System for 2020

- The **International Hockey Federation (FIH)** unveiled a new world ranking system for **2020** in **Lausanne, Switzerland**.
- The new ranking will be **match-based instead of tournament-based** calculation, for a better reflection of current performances.

6th Qatar International Cup

- Saikhom Mirabai Chanu's performance was way below her personal best of 201kg which she lifted during this year's **World Championships in Thailand**.
- She has won the gold medal at the Commonwealth Games 2018 by **lifting a total of 196 kg, 86 kg in Snatch and 110 kg** in Clean and Jerk.

SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES

36th International Geological Congress

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- International Geological Congress (IGC) is described as the **Olympics of Geosciences**, which is a global geoscientific event held **once in four years**.
- The **event is being funded by** the **Ministry of Mines** and **Ministry of Earth Sciences** with the support of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and the national Science Academies of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Steeling India 2019

- The event was organised by the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** with the **theme 'Driving Metal Intensity in key Sectors'**.
- The Minister said that there is a huge potential for **increasing steel intensity** in key user sectors like housing, infrastructure, automobiles, railways and defence etc. Govt. schemes like Har Ghar Jal Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana etc. will drive the **consumption of steel in rural areas**.

38th GST Council Meeting

- The GST Council had earlier asked the state governments about their **views on reviewing rates and 21 states voted in favour of a uniform rate** during the Voting.
- The GST council for the **first time** after the launch of GST has taken a decision through the **voting route instead of consensus-based decision making**.

