PM Modi addresses ASSOCHAM Annual Conference

SUMMIT/CONFERENCE

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- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses Assocham Annual Conference in Delhi, PM Says, India's progress towards becoming a USD 5 trillion economy will be strengthened by investment of Rupees 100 lakh crore in infrastructure, also helped by an investment of Rupees 25 lakh crore in rural economy.
- The theme of the event was **'New India Aspiring for a USD 5 trillion economy'**. The event was organised on the completion of 100 years of ASSOCHAM.
- He further said measures such as increase in digital transactions to GST and from Aadhar linked payments to DBT has provided a positive move towards a disciplined economy.

Army Technology Seminar ARTECH 2019 on December 23

- The 5th edition of the Army Technology Seminar 'ARTECH' is scheduled to be held on December 23 at Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantonment.
- The theme for 2019 is **'Technologies for Non-Contact Warfare'**. ARTECH seminar is the flagship event of the Indian Army which sets the agenda for focus areas of harvesting indigenous capabilities in the Defence production.
- ARTECH Seminar was launched in 2016 as part of the overall vision of 'Make in India' of by PM Modi and is conducted every year as part of events leading to Army Day celebrations.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

ICC Extends Partnership with UNICEF for Women's World T20

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced that it has extended its partnership with UNICEF through to the Women's T20 World Cup 2020 with the focus on empowering women and girls through cricket.
- During the Men's 50-over World Cup held in England and Wales earlier this summer, UNICEF raised $180,000 as part of 'One Day 4 Children' and this money will go directly to fund a girls' cricket project in Afghanistan.

Eight West African nations rename common currency to Eco

- Eight West African countries have agreed to change the name of their common currency to Eco and severed their earlier currency CFA Franc's links to former colonial ruler France.
- The CFA Franc was initially pegged to the French franc and has been linked to the euro for about two decades.
- Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo currently use the currency. All the countries are former French colonies with the exception of Guinea-Bissau.

- The announcement was made Saturday during a visit by French President Emmanuel Macron to Ivory Coast, the world's top cocoa producer and France's former main colony in West Africa. Macron hailed it as a "historic reform", adding the Eco will see the light of day in 2020.
- The deal took six months in the making. The CFA franc, created in 1945, was seen by many as a sign of French interference in its former African colonies even after the countries became independent.

ECONOMIC

RBI to buy and sell bonds worth Rs 10,000 cr via open market on Dec 23

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will simultaneously buy and sell government bonds worth Rs 10,000 crore each on December 23, through Open Market Operations (OMOs), signalling its intent to lower yields on long-term bonds.
- On a review of the current liquidity and market situation and an assessment of the evolving financial conditions, the RBI has decided to buy government bonds maturing in 2029 and sell four securities aggregating Rs 10,000 crore which will mature in 2020.

RELATED TO PERSON

Indian-American computer scientist to lead National Science Foundation in USA

- US President Donald Trump has picked Indian-American computer scientist **Sethuraman Panchamirtham** to lead the **prestigious National Science Foundation (NSF) in USA.**
- The NSF is a US government agency that supports fundamental research and education in all the non-medical fields of science and engineering.
- Panchanathan would succeed France Cordova when her six-year term as the NSF Director ends in 2020.
- Panchanathan is currently the Executive Vice President and the Chief Research and Innovation Officer at Arizona State University.
- He is also the Founding Director of the Centre for Cognitive Ubiquitous Computing at the ASU.

Cuba names Manuel Marrero Cruz as first PM since 1976

- Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel on December 21 named Tourism Minister Manuel Marrero Cruz as the country's first prime minister since 1976.
- Marrero, 56, has been tourism minister for 16 years, presiding over a rise in visitors and a hotel construction boom that has made tourism one of the most important sectors of the Cuban economy.

SCIENCE AND TECHOLOGY

Google searches for 'Operation Twist' surge in India

- Google searches for “Operation Twist” surged in India after the central bank announced its version of the U.S. Federal Reserve’s unconventional monetary policy.
- Most searches for the term came from Maharashtra, the state that’s home to the financial hub Mumbai, and could climb through the day.
- The benchmark 10-year yield plunged by the most in more than two months following the central bank’s announcement Thursday evening.
- The Reserve Bank of India will buy longer-tenor bonds while selling shorter debt. The concept

is similar to Operation Twist used by the Fed in 2011-2012 in an effort to cheapen long-term borrowing and spur bank lending.

OBITUARY

Veteran Kannada writer Prof LS Sheshagiri Rao passes away at 94

- Popularly known as Professor LSS, he became famous for cataloguing the English-Kannada dictionary. He has also written several books in both Kannada and English.
- According to Deccan Herald, Prof LSS was the first chairman of the Kannada Book Authority.
- He was also the honorary secretary of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat between 1947 and 1950 and was serving as the President of BM Sri Smaraka Prathistana until he died.

SPORTS

Belgium crowned FIFA Team of the Year again

- Belgium has been crowned FIFA's Team of the Year for finishing top of the world rankings for the second December in a row.
- Roberto Martinez's side will end 2019 at the top of the standings after winning all 10 of their international 'A' matches this year to secure qualification for Euro 2020.
- World champions France conclude the year in second place, with Brazil third, England fourth and Uruguay fifth.

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