

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – November 2020

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Important Days

Date	Day	Theme/Others
November - Lung Cancer Awareness Month		
November 1	World Vegan Day	Founding day of The Vegan Society in the United Kingdom
November 1	Army Aviation Corps	
November 2	International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists	Corps was raised as a separate formation on November 1 in 1986
First Wednesday in November	National Stress Awareness Day	Established by the International Stress Management Association
First week of November (Nov 2 to 6)	International Stress Awareness Week	Establishment of Stress Awareness Day was in 1998
November 5	World Tsunami Awareness Day	The day has been observed ever since its inception in December 2015
November 6	International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict	Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".
November 8	World Urbanism Day (World Town Planning Day)	
November 9	National Legal Services Day	First observed in the country in the year 1995
November 10	World Science Day for Peace and Development	Science for and with Society in dealing with COVID-19
November 11	National Education Day or Rashtriya Shiksha Diwas	Birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
November 12	Public Service Broadcasting Day	
November 12	World Pneumonia Day	Every Breath Counts (Established in 2009)
November 13	World Kindness Day	Kindness: The World We Make – Inspire Kindness (Introduced in 1998)
November 14	World Diabetes Day (Created in 1991)	The Nurse and Diabetes
November 14	National Children's Day	Tribute to India's First Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru
November 15	World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims	First Responders
November 16	National Press Day	Press Council of India started functioning on

		this day
November 16	International Day for Tolerance	United Nations marked the year of Tolerance in 1995
2 nd Monday of November	National Epilepsy Day	
November 17	International Students' Day	
November 18	National Naturopathy Day	Declared by the Ministry of AYUSH
November 19	World Toilet Day	Sustainable sanitation and climate change
November 19	International Men's Day	Better health for men and boys
November 19	National Integration Day (Quami Ekta Divas in India)	2020 marks the 103rd birth anniversary of Indira Gandhi
November 19	Women's Entrepreneurship Day	
November 20	World Children's Day (established in 1954)	Investing in our future means investing in our children
3 rd Thursday of November	World Philosophy Day	It was first introduced by UNESCO in 2002.
November 20	Africa Industrialization Day	Inclusive and sustainable industrialisation in the AfCFTA and COVID-19 era
November 21	World Television Day	
November 21	World Fisheries Day	
November 18 to 24	World Antimicrobial Awareness Week	United to preserve antimicrobials
November 24	Martyrdom Day of Guru Tegh Bahadur	Remembered as Shaheedi Divas every year
November 25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women	Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!
November 16 to 22	59th National Pharmacy Week	Pharmacists: Frontline Health Professionals
November 23 to 27	Aviation Safety Awareness Week 2020	Observed by Airports Authority of India
November 26	Constitution Day (National Laaw Day)	
November 26	National Milk Day	Birth anniversary of Verghese Kurien
November 27	National Organ Donation Day (11 th edition)	Tamil Nadu has been adjudged the best in organ donation in the country for the sixth consecutive year.
November 29	International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	

November 30	Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare	
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Indian Army celebrates 240th Corps of Engineers Day

- Indian Army celebrated the **240th Corps of Engineers Day**. In a solemn ceremony organized at 'National War Memorial', Lt Gen SK Shrivastava, Engineer-in-Chief along with other serving officers, laid wreaths and paid homage to the brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the country.
- The Corps of Engineers provides combat engineering support, develops infrastructure for armed forces and other defence organisations and maintains connectivity along country's vast borders besides providing succour to populace during natural disasters. These tasks are executed through four pillars of the Corps - Combat Engineers, Military Engineer Service, Border Road Organisation and Military Survey.

National Cadet Corps to celebrate its 72nd Raising Day

- **National Cadet Corps (NCC)**, the largest uniformed youth organisation in the world, will celebrate its **72nd Raising Day**.
- The raising day function was marked by paying homage at the National War Memorial to the fallen heroes who made the supreme sacrifice of their lives. Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar and DG NCC Lt. Gen Rajeev Chopra laid wreaths on behalf of the entire NCC fraternity.

Important Banking News

RBI

RBI imposes monetary penalty on DCB Bank, Jio Payments Bank for rule violations

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed monetary penalty on **DCB Bank** and **Jio Payments Bank** for various **rule violations**.
- The central bank has imposed a penalty of **Rs 22 lakh** on DCB Bank for non-compliance with certain provisions on marketing/distribution of mutual fund/insurance etc.
- "The penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested in RBI under the provisions of Section 47A(1)(c) read with Section 46(4)(i) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949," the RBI stated.
- In the case of Jio Payments Bank, the RBI imposed a penalty of **Rs 1 crore** for non-compliance with RBI directions on timely submission of application in the case of reappointment of Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer under Section 35B of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (the Act), the RBI stated.

RBI to extend trading hours to 3:30 pm from 2 pm starting November 9

- The **Reserve Bank** announced **phased restoration of trading hours** for various debt as well as currency market from Nov. 9.
- The market opening time was revised to 10 a.m. instead of 9 a.m. for all segments. Closing timing too was revised to 2 p.m.
- From Nov. 9, 2020, the trading hours have been extended by 90 minutes till 3:30 p.m. for most of the segments. In case of 'market repo in government securities' the timing from next week will be **10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**, and 'tri-party repo in government securities' **10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**
- **Trading hours** for 'Commercial paper and Certificates of Deposit', 'Repo in Corporate Bonds', 'Government Securities', 'Foreign Currency/Indian Rupee Trades including Forex Derivatives', 'Rupee Interest Rate Derivatives',

and 'Call/notice/term money' will be 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. However, **the market** will continue to open at 10 a.m. instead of 9 a.m.

RBI temporarily postpones circular on current account till December 15

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) allowed banks time **till 15 December** to comply with its guidelines on **opening of current accounts**. The earlier deadline was **5 November**.
- As part of its monetary policy on August 6, the central bank said no bank can open current account for a customer who has availed cash credit or overdraft facility from others in the banking system, and from now on, all transactions will now have to be routed through the cash credit, or overdraft account.
- The RBI said banks should not route withdrawal from term loans through current accounts. Instead, the funds should be remitted directly to the supplier of goods and services. Expenses incurred by the borrower for day to day operations should be routed through cash credit or overdraft account, if the borrower has one, otherwise current account can be opened.

Reserve Bank to evaluate impact of 'RBI Kehta Hai' campaign

- The **Reserve Bank** will evaluate the impact of **multi-media public awareness campaign 'RBI Kehta Hai'**, which was launched in **14 languages** to educate the public about safe banking and financial practices.
- 'RBI Kehta Hai' was the first even 360 degree campaign initiated by the central bank using all mass media, including media such as television, radio, newspapers, hoardings, web banners, gifs, social media and SMS.
- In order to evaluate the impact of the public awareness campaign, the RBI has invited Expression of Interest (EoI) from eligible companies and other entities which have successfully completed at least **five similar projects**.
- The RBI had launched the multi-media campaign with a view to create awareness among common man about good practices, regulations and initiatives in banking and financial sector.
- As part of the campaign, messages have been launched on basic savings bank deposit accounts, customer liability in unauthorised electronic banking transactions, safe digital banking practices, banking facilities for senior citizens, banking ombudsman scheme, and cyber security, among others.

RBI announces co-lending scheme for banks, NBFCs

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued guidelines under the **co-origination model** so that **non-banking finance companies (NBFCs)** and banks can jointly **lend**. The model envisages a joint lending process such that risks and rewards are shared. As per the guidelines, NBFCs need to retain a minimum of **20% share of the loans** on their books.
- The regulator has also prohibited banks from entering into a co-lending arrangement with an NBFC belonging to their promoter group. RBI had earlier permitted housing finance companies (HFCs), along with other NBFCs to adopt co-lending model with banks. Lenders believe that co-lending will bring down interest rates for HFCs.
- "It has been decided to provide greater operational flexibility to the lending institutions, while requiring them to conform to the regulatory guidelines on outsourcing, KYC (know your customer), etc," RBI stated. The primary focus of the revised scheme, rechristened as **the Co-lending Model (CLM)**, is to improve the flow of credit to the unserved and underserved sector of the economy. It also aims to make available funds to the ultimate beneficiary at an affordable cost, considering the lower cost of funds from banks and greater reach of the NBFCs, RBI further stated.

RBI cancels Certificate of Authorisation of five PSOs

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has cancelled the **Certificate of Authorisation (CoA)** of **five Payment System Operators (PSOs)**, including **Aircel Smart Money Ltd** and **Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System Ltd**.

- The five PSOs, which also includes **Pyro Networks Pvt Ltd**, **Card Pro Solutions Pvt Ltd**, and **InCashMe Mobile Wallet Services Pvt Ltd**, were issued COA for issuance and operation of prepaid payment instruments.
- The central bank, in a statement, stated it cancelled the COA of Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System Ltd and Pyro Networks Pvt Ltd due to voluntary surrender.
- The COA of Card Pro Solutions Pvt Ltd and InCashMe Mobile Wallet Services Pvt Ltd have been cancelled due to non-compliance with regulatory requirements, it added.
- The RBI cancelled the COA of Aircel Smart Money due to non-renewal.

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RBI imposes Rs 1 crore penalty on Punjab National Bank

- State-run **Punjab National Bank** stated the **RBI** has imposed a penalty of **Rs 1 crore** on it for contravention of the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act**.
- "RBI has observed that the Bank was operating a bilateral ATM sharing arrangement with Druk PNB Bank Ltd, Bhutan, (international subsidiary of the Bank), since April, 2010 without the prior approval / authorisation from RBI," it stated.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed the Rs 1 crore penalty for "contravention of the nature referred to in Section 26 (6) of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 (PSS Act)", it added. PNB's shares closed at Rs 29.50 a piece on BSE, up 1.37 percent.

RBI Imposes Over Rs 5.78 Crore Fine on Six Entities Including PNB, Sodexo and PhonePe

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has imposed a total fine of over *Rs 5.78 crore* on six entities, including **PNB**, **Sodexo** and **PhonePe**, for violating regulatory guidelines. In exercise of powers vested under Section 30 of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, the RBI has imposed monetary penalty on these entities for non-compliance of regulatory guidelines, it stated.
- Except Punjab National Bank (PNB), the remaining five entities are non-bank prepaid payment instrument (PPI) issuers. RBI imposes the penalty on **Sodexo SVC India Pvt Ltd**, **Muthoot Vehicle & Asset Finance Ltd**, **QwikCilver Solutions Pvt Ltd**, **Phonepe Pvt Ltd**, **Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd**, and **Punjab National Bank**, stated the release.
- Sodexo is slapped with the highest fine of Rs 2 crore; PNB and QwikCilver Solutions Rs 1 crore each; PhonePe Rs 1.39 crore; Muthoot Vehicle & Asset Finance Rs 34.55 lakh; and Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Rs 5 lakh.

RBI panel proposes to raise promoters cap to 26% in private banks

- An internal working group set up by the **RBI** has proposed to raise the cap on promoters' stake in private banks from the current **15 per cent to 26 per cent** in **15 years**.

- The group has also recommended that large corporate or industrial houses may be allowed as promoters of banks only after amendments to the Banking Regulation Act and strengthening of the supervisory mechanism for conglomerates, including consolidated supervision.
- The Reserve Bank of India had constituted the internal working group (IWG) on June 12, 2020, to review extant ownership guidelines and corporate structure for Indian private sector banks. The central bank released the groups' report.
- The terms of reference of the IWG inter alia included a review of the eligibility criteria for individuals/entities to apply for banking license; examination of preferred corporate structure for banks and harmonisation of norms in this regard; and review of norms for long-term shareholding in banks by the promoters and other shareholders.
- On eligibility of promoters, it stated large corporate/industrial houses may be allowed as promoters of banks only after necessary amendments to the **Banking Regulations Act, 1949** to deal with connected lending and exposures between the banks and other financial and non-financial group entities.

RBI imposes penalty on Muthoot Finance, Manappuram Finance for non-compliance with gold loan norms

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of **Rs.10 lakh** on **Muthoot Finance Ltd, Ernakulam**, and **Rs.5 lakh** on **Manappuram Finance Ltd, Thrissur**, for non-compliance with its directions.
- In the case of Muthoot Finance, RBI stated the penalty is for non-compliance with directions on maintenance of **Loan to Value (LTV) ratio** in gold loans and on obtaining copy of PAN (Permanent Account Number) card of the borrower while granting loans in excess of Rs.5 lakh.
- RBI stated it issued a notice to the company to show cause as to why penalty should not be imposed for failure to comply with RBI directions.
- "After considering the company's reply to the notice, oral submissions made during the personal hearings and examination of additional submissions made by it, RBI concluded that the aforesaid charges of non-compliance with RBI directions were substantiated and warranted imposition of monetary penalty," the statement stated

RBI restricts withdrawals from Jalna-based Mantha Urban Coop Bank for 6 months

- **Reserve Bank of India** imposed **restrictions on withdrawals** from **Maharashtra-based Mantha Urban Cooperative Bank** for **six months**.
- As per the directions, the bank will not, without prior approval of RBI in writing, grant or renew any loans and advances, make any investment, incur any liability including borrowal of funds and acceptance of fresh deposits, disburse or agree to disburse any payment, among others.
- **RBI** has imposed **monetary penalty** of **Rs 20 lakh** on **Bengaluru-based Shushruati Souharda Sahakara Bank Niyamita** for deficiencies in regulatory compliance.
- It also imposed a **penalty of Rs 1 lakh** on **The Deccan Urban Co-operative Bank, Vijayapura, Karnataka**, for contravention of the directions issued by it on prohibition of loans and advances to directors.
- it has imposed a penalty of **Rs 10 lakh** on **Muthoot Finance , Ernakulam**, for non-compliance with directions on maintaining loan to value ratio in gold loans and on obtaining copy of PAN card of the borrower while granting gold loans of over Rs 5 lakh.
- The central bank has also imposed a penalty of **Rs 5 lakh** on **Manappuram Finance**, Thrissur for non-compliance with directions on verification of ownership of gold jewellery

RBI places LVB under moratorium until Dec 16

- With **Lakshmi Vilas Bank's** efforts to raise capital reaching a dead-end, the Reserve Bank of India superseded the board of the loss-making lender, placed the bank under moratorium and announced a draft scheme for its amalgamation with **DBS Bank India Ltd (DBIL)**.
- According to the RBI, the LVB board has been superseded for **30 days** owing to serious deterioration in its financial position.
- According to the 'order of moratorium' issued by the Finance Ministry on an application by the RBI, deposit withdrawals have been capped at **Rs.25,000** per depositor during the moratorium period (up to December 16).
- Per the RBI's "draft scheme of amalgamation", DBIL is a wholly-owned subsidiary of DBS Bank Ltd, Singapore, which in turn is a subsidiary of Asia's leading financial services group, DBS Group Holdings Ltd, and has the advantage of a strong parentage. Although DBIL is well capitalised, it will bring in additional capital of Rs.2,500-crore upfront to support credit growth of the merged entity, stated the RBI.

RBI names 2 startups as a part of its regulatory sandbox programme

- **Reserve Bank of India** has announced the **names of two startups** that have been selected as a part of its regulatory **sandbox programme**. RBI stated, it has shortlisted six companies out of 32 entities that had applied for the 'Test Phase' of the first cohort.
- The two companies are **Jaipur based Natural Support Consultancy Services Private Limited** and **New Delhi based Nucleus Software Exports Limited**. While the former has named its product '**eRupaya**', which will facilitate offline Person-to-Merchant transactions and offline digital payments in remote locations; the second company's product '**PaySe**', proposes to help in digitisation of payments in rural areas, starting with Self Help Groups, through an offline payment solution and a digitised SHG-centered ecosystem.
- The regulatory sandbox is a protected environment within which the selected companies will operate. They will have to show their system's preparedness while dealing with dummy data. Once they achieve success within the protected environment, the systems will be allowed to be tested in the live environment with actual banks and consumer data.

Policy Rates

Parameter	Percentage
Repo Rate	4%
Reverse Repo Rate	3.35%
Marginal Standing Facility Rate	4.25%
Bank Rate	4.25%
Cash Reserve Ratio	3%
Statutory Liquidity Ratio	18%

SBI

IFFCO Bazar partners with SBI YONO Krishi App to boost accessibility of quality agri-products

- **IFFCO Bazar**, the e-commerce wing of IFFCO, announced its integration with the **State Bank of India (SBI) YONO Krishi**, a dedicated portal catering to **farmer's needs**, a company statement stated.

- The portal, ifcobazar.in offers a wide variety of products speciality fertilisers, organic agri-inputs, seeds, agrochemicals, agri-machinery amongst others.
- "IFFCO has been at the service of farmers for the past 50 years. ifcobazar.in is a platform which will connect and serve the farmers digitally. It is aimed at realizing the dream of our PM of doubling income of farmers through a digital first and farmer centric approach. Through the portal, farmers can not only order best quality non-subsidised fertilisers and other agriculture inputs but can also get answers to their queries through a farmers' forum and a dedicated helpline.

SBI Signs Pact with Luxembourg Stock Exchange

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** has signed a **memorandum of understanding (MoU)** with the **Luxembourg Stock Exchange (LuxSe)**. The MoU will help SBI and LuxSE set up a long-term cooperation mechanism, and promote ESG (Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance) and green finance.
- Through this MoU, the Luxembourg Stock Exchange would work towards creating a sustainable environment for issuers, asset managers, and investors in terms of ESG focused funds and bonds, according to an official release.
- State Bank of India has raised **\$800 Mio** in the **Green Bond Market** to date. The MoU with the Luxembourg Stock Exchange will open up new avenues for market development and fundraising in the green bond market," Mr Khara added.

Mercedes-Benz joins hands with SBI to target HNI customers

- **Mercedes-Benz** has joined hands with **State Bank of India (SBI)** to offer financial benefits to the lender's **High Net Worth Individual (HNI) customers**.
- This collaboration will give the luxury automobile manufacturer access to State Bank of India's High Net Worth Individual (HNI) customer base, while the bank's customers will enjoy exclusive benefits at the time of booking a Mercedes-Benz car.
- The collaboration with SBI gives an exciting opportunity to expand our customer base and reach out to the potential HNI customers of the bank with products and services.

ADB

ADB approves USD132.8 million loan to improve power distribution network in Meghalaya

- The **Asian Development Bank** has approved **USD 132.8 million loan** to improve and upgrade the power distribution network in **Meghalaya**, Power Minister James PK Sangma stated. The project fully supports Meghalaya's initiative in improving the distribution system & financial sustainability of the Department," the power minister stated.
- The Meghalaya cabinet had in August this year approved a proposal from the Meghalaya Energy Corporation Limited (MeECL) to avail a Rs 1,345.72 crore loan for clearing the power outstanding dues, on conditions that it has to bring down the aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses and reduce the gap of average cost of supply (ACS) and average revenue realized (ARR).
- The **Meghalaya Power Distribution Corporation Limited (MePDCL)** has a huge outstanding against the power purchased from central power generating stations and to the **Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL)**, the minister had stated.

ADB allocates \$20 mn to help developing members access Covid-19 vaccine

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** stated it has allocated **\$20.3 million aid** to its **developing member countries** to access coronavirus vaccine and establish systems to enable equitable and efficient vaccine distribution.

- The funds will be available for ADB developing members to support vaccine-related health system assessments and the development of country readiness plans to strengthen the capacity to access, introduce, deploy, deliver, and monitor vaccines safely and effectively.
- The technical assistance will also support the identification and promotion of innovative cold chain and vaccine tracking technologies.
- ADB expects to implement the technical assistance with its partners **UNICEF** and the **World Health Organization**, in coordination with **COVAX**, **Gavi**, **the World Bank**, and bilateral agencies, among others.
- The funds comprise \$20 million from **ADB's Technical Assistance Special Fund (TASF)** and \$300,000 from the High-Level Technology Fund financed by the government of Japan.
- In April, ADB had approved a \$20-billion expanded assistance package to support its developing members' Covid-19 response.

ADB approves \$50 mn loan to improve resource planning in West Bengal

- The **Asian Development Bank** stated it has approved a **USD 50 million loan** to improve **operational efficiencies and resource planning and management** in **West Bengal**.
- The loan will support the integration of financial and information system and the expansion of automation reforms in the operations of the state government, which are expected to strengthen the delivery of public services and create fiscal savings, stated the Manila-based multilateral lending agency in a release.
- The loan will be supplemented by a USD 350,000 technical assistance grant for capacity building, monitoring of IFMS (Integrated Financial Management System) reforms, and strengthening the integration of social and gender aspects in reform areas.
- These programmes, according to the ADB, helped develop and implement an IFMS, established successful e-Governance systems for improved revenue administration, undertook measures for expenditure rationalisation, and promoted the private sector's involvement in service delivery.

World Bank

World Bank approves 120-mn to improve transport sector of Meghalaya

- The **Government of India**, **Meghalaya government** and the **World Bank** signed a **120 million dollar** project to improve and modernise the **transport sector** of Meghalaya.
- This will help the state to harness its vast growth potential for high-value agriculture and tourism. The project will improve **about 300 kilometres** of strategic road segments and stand-alone bridges by using innovative, climate resilient, and nature-based solutions. It will also support innovative solutions such as precast bridges to reduce both time and cost of construction.

DIPAM inks agreement with World Bank

- **Department of Investment and Public Asset Management**, DIPAM signed an agreement with **World Bank**.
- Under the agreement, World Bank is to provide advisory services to DIPAM for asset monetization.
- DIPAM is mandated with facilitating monetization of non-core assets of government CPSEs under strategic disinvestment or closure and enemy property of value of **Rs. 100 crore** and above. DIPAM has a framework for monetizing non-core assets.

- The World Bank advisory project, approved by the Finance Minister, is aimed at analyzing public asset monetization in India and benchmarking its institutional and business models against international best practices as well as supporting development of operational guidelines and capacity building for their implementation

Other Banking News

LIC launches digital application tool for agents

- **Life Insurance Corporation of India** has launched a digital application for agents for onboarding to get a life insurance policy.
- The Digital Application is called **"ANANDA"**, which is an acronym for **Atma Nirbhar Agents NewBusiness Digital Application**. It's called 'ANANDA', which is an acronym for Atma Nirbhar Agents NewBusiness Digital Application.
- The Digital application is a tool for the onboarding process to get the life insurance policy through a paperless module with the help of the agent or intermediary," LIC stated, adding that it is built on paperless KYC process using Aadhaar-based e-authentication of the life proposed.

RXIL, Tata AIG initiate trade credit insurance in sandbox environment

- **Receivables Exchange of India Ltd (RXIL)** initiated a **Trade Credit Insurance (TCI)** backed transaction with **Tata AIG** as the insurer and **ICICI Bank and Yes Bank** as the **financiers** in a **sandbox environment**.
- "This is the first time a TReDS platform has tested the efficacy of TCI backed transaction, improving the ability of financiers in assigning credit limits to corporates. TCI, once implemented post regulatory approvals, will enable financiers to discount the invoices drawn on lower-rated corporate buyers, by their MSME sellers and will improve the liquidity from lenders," RXIL stated.
- The adoption of Trade Credit Insurance on TReDS will pave the way for a completely digital bite-sized credit insurance model, it further stated.

Kotak Mahindra MF launches ESG Opportunities Fund

- **Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company** has launched **ESG Opportunities Fund**, which will focus on **environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors** and the principles for responsible investing.
- The Kotak ESG Opportunities Fund will invest in companies based on financial parameters and non-financial factors such as environmental, social and governance as a part of its research process to identify material risks and growth opportunities.
- To assess the ESG performance of an investee company, broadly, Kotak ESG Opportunities Fund will look at policies, practices and disclosures of each ESG pillar such as energy-efficiency measures, waste management including e-waste management, carbon and greenhouse gas emission footprint, and renewable energy use besides employee working conditions, welfare and training, and health and safety standards.
- It will also assess governance performance, in addition to corporate governance practices and disclosures as required under the **Companies Act, 2013** and **SEBI's (LODR) 2015**, whistle-blower and anti-corruption policy, no child labour policy, anti-sexual harassment policy, diversity and inclusivity policies and practices etc.

Yes Bank launches co-branded prepaid card with Neokred for cashless payments

- **Yes Bank** stated it has launched a **co-branded prepaid card** in partnership with **Neokred Technologies** to **facilitate cashless payments**. The card offerings can be personalised to suit the requirements of corporates seeking salary cards or expense cards for their employees.

- Yes Bank in partnership with Neokred Technologies has launched '**Yes Bank Neokred Card**', a co-branded prepaid card, encouraging cashless payments, the lender stated.
- The prepaid card will be offered to Neokred's corporate partners across various sectors, including healthcare, financial institutions, NBFCs, oil companies, educational institutions, FMCG and infrastructure. The prepaid card can be loaded with balance and used for spends such as purchases, payment for utility bills, online shopping, ticket bookings and cash withdrawal at ATMs alongwith various benefits

Equitas Small Finance Bank Launches 'EVA' - a Unique Savings Account aimed at Women

- **Equitas Small Finance Bank** has launched a new product aimed at women, '**Eva**', a **unique savings account** tries to address the well-being of **Indian women** in every aspect such as Health, Wealth and Prosperity.
- Along with **7% interest** in savings account, it also offers **Free Health Check-up** and unlimited **teleconsultation** with women doctors, gynecologists and mental health experts.
- It offers PF waiver and discounted Gold Loan rates for women customers, along-with 25-50% discounts on lockers.
- Eva is available for all women - salaried / homemakers / businesswomen / senior citizens / transwomen as well as Non-resident women.
- The Product is based on the concept of Relationship Value, and customers will not be charged any non maintenance fees.
- Meanwhile Equitas Small Finance Bank announced **Smriti Mandhana - Indian Woman cricketer as the new Brand Ambassador**.

SBM Bank India set to launch a neo banking platform

- **SBM Bank India**, which is the wholly-owned subsidiary of State Bank of Mauritius, is **focussing on technology** to reach out to customers and is set to launch a **neo banking platform**.
- They have **tied up** with a fintech **PayNearby** and launched a service called **Nivesh** which is a recurring deposit platform.
- SBM Bank India was the first foreign bank in India to obtain a banking licence from the Reserve Bank of India to operate as a Wholly Owned Subsidiary in January 2019.

RBL Bank selects Amazon Web Services to drive digital transformation

- **RBL Bank** has selected **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** as its **preferred cloud service** to drive **digital transformation**.
- At present, around **40 per cent** of the bank's mission-critical applications are on the **cloud**.
- The bank first migrated its corporate website to AWS cloud and with the experience gained initiated a **10-in-10 project** (a complete migration of 10 applications in 10 days).

HDFC Bank Launches 'Mooh Band Rakho' Campaign To Create Awareness On Cyber Frauds

- **HDFC Bank Ltd**, announced the launch of "**Mooh Band Rakho**," a campaign to increase awareness on cyber frauds and preventing them.
- The Bank will be conducting 1,000 workshops in the next 4 months across the country. Following simple steps such as not sharing card details, CVV, Expiry Date, OTP NetBanking/ MobileBanking Login ID & Password over Phone, SMS, email and social media can help general public keep their money safe. This campaign will talk about this and more. It supports the International Fraud Awareness Week 2020, the global movement to minimise the impact of fraud which is being held from **November 15 – 21**. This is the 2nd year HDFC Bank is participating in this.
- The "**Mooh Band Rakho**" campaign was initially launched by the Bank to fight COVID 19 and it has now been extended to fighting cyber fraud.

Karnataka Bank launches CASA campaign

- **Karnataka Bank launched CASA (current account, savings account) mobilisation campaign** which will run from November 17 to March 4, 2021.
- The bank stated that it intends to mobilise **over 4.10 lakh current** and savings accounts with an accretion of Rs.650 crore of business.
- Quoting Mahabaleshwara MS, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the bank, the release stated that the campaign has **twin objectives of enabling basic banking services** to unbanked sections of society and also popularising digitally-powered CASA products of the bank for the next level of customers based on their requirements.
- He stated that the bank has been focussing more on cost-effective CASA funds.

HDFC ERGO implements AI enabled solution to automate motor claim settlements

- **HDFC ERGO General Insurance**, India's third-largest non-life insurance company in the private sector, announced the launch of the **AI tool IDEAS (Intelligent Damage detection Estimation and Assessment Solution)** for motor claim settlements.
- The IDEAS module uses Neural Network image processing and Analytics, Machine Learning and Natural Language that supports instant damage detection as well as calculation of the claims estimate for the surveyors to help in motor claims settlement in real-time.
- This launch along with the digital inspection for the Company comes as an advantage for the surveyors, partner workshops as well as the customers amidst the ongoing pandemic.
- **e2e**, HDFC ERGO's Surveyor mobile application, was the first-of-its-kind mobile application launched for surveyors in 2017 which enabled surveyors to process entire motor own damage claims through mobile phones on a complete paperless basis.

ICICI Lombard, FreePaycard offer bite-sized, convenient health insurance solutions

- **ICICI Lombard** in partnership with **Freepaycard**, an online pre-paid card trading platform, has launched **Group Safeguard Insurance**. The plan will be offered to the members of Freepaycard, allowing them to receive an assured amount in case of any injury or hospitalization for treatment.
- ICICI Lombard says as convenience, affordability, and reach are important factors to increase insurance adoption and penetration, this strategic partnership will make the bite-sized health insurance solutions, designed specifically for Freepaycard members, available at its multi-category partner retail outlets. Freepaycard members can add these health solutions on the go while shopping for other essential goods or services.
- The insurance offering is a customized hospitalization product that comes in three variants – Hospital Daily Cash Benefit, Death Benefit, and Special Vector-borne Disease-related Hospitalization Benefit.

Centre extends Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme till Nov 30

- Union Government has extended the **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)** by one month till **30th of November** or till an amount of **Rs. three lakh crore** is sanctioned under the scheme, whichever is earlier.
- This has been done in view of the opening up of various sectors in the economy and the expected increase in demand during the ongoing festive season.
- This extension will provide a further opportunity to such borrowers who have not availed of the scheme so far, to obtain credit under the scheme.

- The ECLGS was announced as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Package to provide fully guaranteed and collateral free additional credit to MSMEs, business enterprises, individual loans for business purposes and MUDRA borrowers.
- Borrowers with credit outstanding up to Rs. 50 crore as on 29th of February 2020 and with an annual turnover of up to Rs. 250 crore are eligible under the scheme.
- Interest rates under the scheme are capped at **9.25 per cent** for Banks and FIs and 14 per cent for NBFCs.
- Tenure of loans provided under the scheme is **four years**, including a moratorium of one year on principal repayment.

AU Bank enters into agreement with Care Health

- **AU Small Finance Bank** entered into agreement with **Care Health Insurance Company** for health insurance products as Corporate Agent.
- The Bank has been issued certificate of registration CA0515 under Registration of Corporate Agents - Regulations, 2015 by Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) and Bank has entered into agreement with **Care Health Insurance Company (formerly known as Religare Health Insurance Company)** for health insurance products.
- This tie up shall be mutually beneficial for Care Health Insurance Company and AU Small Finance Bank in terms of **business, market penetration and reach**.

Visa Partners with DigitSecure, HDFC Bank For Global-First Live Deployment Of PCI Certified Tap To Phone Card

Acceptance Solution

- **Visa** has announced the **first successful live deployment of a PCI certified Tap to Phone card** acceptance solution, in partnership with **DigitSecure and HDFC Bank**.
- DeliveryPlus is the first merchant to go live with HDFC Bank as the acquirer.
- It will enable merchants to securely accept contactless card payments through an app on their NFC-enabled Android smartphones, and without having dedicated card acceptance devices.
- The **Tap to Phone technology** will not only lower the operational costs for financial institutions but will also aid banks and fintechs to enable more merchants for card acceptance.
- As per a recent Visa study, **about 55 per cent** of consumers surveyed in India during the pandemic mentioned that they would use the **Tap to Phone payment method** due to its ease of use, saving of time and eliminating the need to carry cash.

Bank of Baroda launches employee-assistance programme

- **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** has introduced a new employee-centric initiative, called the **Employee Assistance Programme**, aimed at helping employees deal with personal and professional issues through **psychological counselling and consulting**.
- BoB has introduced this as a pilot project in the Mumbai Zone and its corporate office.
- The initiative uses technology extensively and uses multiple channels of assistance in addition to personal counselling in association with EAP India.
- The counselling service is offered in collaboration with specialists. This 24×7 service is “safe, non-judgmental, and highly confidential” and can be availed not only by the employees but their family members too.

Paytm ties up with SBI Card to launch co-branded credit cards

- Financial services platform **Paytm** has partnered with credit card company **SBI Card** to launch **Paytm-SBI Card co-branded credit cards**.

- This is the **second credit card product from Paytm**; the first one was launched in partnership with **Citibank**.
- Available in two variants, **Paytm SBI Card and Paytm SBI Card SELECT**, the product has been launched on the **Visa platform**.
- The partnership aims to bring 'new to credit' users into the formal economy and empowering them to control their finances.
- The card which can be used across Paytm ecosystem, third-party platform and offline retail stores, will also enable digital process for the card application, issuance and managing the expenses.

ICICI Bank launches banking stack for millennial customers

- **ICICI Bank** has launched a **banking stack for millennial customers** which offers an **instant savings account**, a feature driven **iMobile application** that offers investment guidance, curated credit and debit card, instant personal loans and overdrafts, and an experiential branch with social engagement space.
- **Called ICICI Bank Mine**, any millennial aged up to 35 years can apply digitally for the account from November 6 through the bank's website or through the app. "It also offers investment guidance to customers through a completely user experience focused iMobile application," ICICI Bank stated, adding that it has integrated the investment platform of Sqrrl, a leading fintech in the investment space, with its mobile application iMobile, to guide customers to invest easily and in a tech-savvy way.

WhatsApp's payments service gets NPCI nod

- The **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** finally allowed Facebook-owned messaging platform **WhatsApp** to roll out its payments service in the country in a "graded" manner.
- The announcement by NPCI came just minutes after the organisation made a crucial change to its regulations concerning the use of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). The change puts a limit on single third parties such as WhatsApp or its rivals Google Pay and Walmart's PhonePe where they can only handle 30 per cent of overall UPI transaction volumes.
- The NPCI runs the **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** used for real-time payments between peers or at merchants' end while making purchases. The UPI channel has rapidly grown to become India's most favoured mode of digital transactions since its launch in terms of volumes.
- Placing a cap on how much transaction volumes such companies can use will help in de-risking the entire set-up, according to the NPCI. The payments agency added that such a measure was an essential one since UPI, which surpassed two billion transactions a month in October, continues to grow.

Whatsapp Partners with 5 Banks for UPI Payment

- **WhatsApp** had partnered with five Indian banks, **ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, the State Bank of India, and Jio Payments Bank**, for the **payments service**.
- Recently, WhatsApp received **NPCI approval** to 'Go Live' on **UPI** in a graded manner.
- WhatsApp, which counts India as its biggest market with more than 400 million users, had been running a **peer-to-peer payments service** with limited users for over two years, awaiting regulatory approvals.
- Payments is available now in 10 Indian regional language versions of WhatsApp.

SEBI increases overseas investment limits for mutual funds

- The market regulator, **Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has **increased the limits** of overseas investment per fund house. This limit was enhanced **from the existing USD 300 million to USD 600 million**.
- Whereas, the **overall limit of the mutual fund industry** would stand at **USD 7 billion**.

- Further, limits for making investments in the **overseas exchange-traded funds (ETFs)** have **raised to USD 200 million per fund house** from the **earlier limit of USD 50 million per fund house**, while the limit set for the overall industry would be **USD 1 billion**.
- If mutual funds launch new schemes, which propose to invest in securities or ETFs overseas, it needs to ensure that they disclose the intended amount of investment in scheme documents.
- Also, such disclosure of the limits shall remain valid for a period of six months from the date of closure of the new fund offerings.
- SEBI has made clear that if in case there is any unutilised limit, the same shall not be available for mutual funds for investment in overseas securities or ETFs. Rather, the same would be available towards the unutilised industry wide limits.
- For all the ongoing schemes that are allowed to invest in overseas securities or ETFs, a room of 20 per cent of average asset under management (AAUM) of the previous three calendar months would be available to mutual funds. Nevertheless, asset management companies (AMC) need to report the utilisation of overseas investment limits on a monthly basis.

Karnataka Bank launches National Common Mobility Debit card

- **Karnataka Bank Ltd** has launched **National Common Mobility Debit Card**. This Rupay card is a **contactless debit-cum-prepaid** and interoperable transport card.
- It stated that the users can make payments without inserting the card at PoS terminals. Payments can be made at toll plazas, metro transits, parking lots, retail outlets and smart cities with the help of this card. The card's wallet supports small-ticket size offline payments through the value stored in the card, it stated.

Airtel Payments Bank ties up with Bharti AXA General for car insurance

- **Airtel Payments Bank** has partnered with **Bharti AXA General Insurance** to offer comprehensive **car insurance** to the payments bank's customers.
- The **Smart Drive Private Car Insurance** offers financial protection against damage to the vehicle due to accident, theft, and natural and man-made disasters.
- Airtel Payments Bank's customers can purchase the Bharti AXA's car insurance policy within five minutes using a paperless, secure, and quick process through the Airtel Thanks app.
- The car insurance offered through Airtel Payments Bank also compensates for injury or damages to another person or property caused due to a car accident.

Indian Overseas Bank seeks about Rs 1,000 crore capital support from govt

- **Indian Overseas Bank (IOB)** has sought a capital support of about **Rs.1,000 crore** from the government in order to create **buffer for any exigency**, a top official of the bank stated.
- The state-owned lender, which has posted profit for the last three consecutive quarters, expects to continue the trend in the remaining part of the current fiscal year with increased focus on recovery and business pick up.
- For September quarter, the bank posted a profit of Rs.148 crore as compared to a net loss of Rs.2,254 crore in the same period a year ago. Net profit in the quarter grew 22.3 per cent from Rs.121 crore in April-June.
- The Chennai-based lender expects to reduce the NPA by Rs.2,000 crore during the second half of this fiscal year.

SEBI introduces Flexi-Cap Fund category for MFs

- Capital market regulator **Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi)** introduced **Flexi- Cap Fund** category, **providing relief to mutual funds** after issuing new rules for Multi-Cap funds in September.

- Under the new category, the scheme should have a **minimum investment of 65 percent** of total assets in equity and equity-related instruments, while it is an open-ended dynamic equity scheme investing across large-cap, mid-cap, small-cap stocks.
- **The AMC** shall ensure that a suitable benchmark is adopted for the Flexi-Cap Fund.
- According to the new rule, multi cap funds will now have to invest at least 25% of their corpus in large-, mid- and small-cap stocks. Many fund houses raised concerns about the risk in investing 25% in mid and small cap stocks and had demanded the formation of a flexi cap category.
- Mutual Funds have the option to convert an existing scheme into a Flexi Cap Fund subject to compliance with the requirement for change in fundamental attributes of the scheme in terms of **Regulation 18(15A) of SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996**.

KfW lends EUR 545 million to MMRDA for infra projects

- The German state-owned development bank **KfW** has **extended two loans** totaling over **EUR 545 million** or **Rs 4,767 crore** to the **Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA)** for infrastructure projects.
- The funds to be disbursed through an agreement with the **Union Ministry of Finance** will be utilised to support two key mass transit projects in Mumbai.
- These projects are Metro Line 4 from Wadala in central Mumbai to Kasarvadavli in Thane, and Metro Line 4A that extends to the connectivity from Kasarvadavli to Gaimukh in Thane.
- The fully elevated lines will have a total length of 34.82 km with 32 stations easing distress of millions of commuters each day and help provide a cleaner, less congested city.
- The credit package consists of a development loan of **EUR 345 million** and a promotional loan of **EUR 200 million**. The loans will have tenure ranging from **15 years to 20 years** with a grace option of five years.
- MMRDA is also working for mitigation of climate change by executing Metro projects across Mumbai Metropolitan Region. Once Metro Line 4 and 4A have begun operations, it will help save up to 1,21,000 tonne greenhouse gases every year, besides ensuring reduction in air pollution.
- Of the EUR 345 million loan money approved, around EUR 255 million will be used on purchasing rolling stock and integrated ticketing systems, while EUR 90 million will be utilised on multimodal integration systems.
- The rate of interest for **EUR 345 million** is **0.29 percent** and **0.07 percent**, while for **EUR 200 million** debt the rate of interest is **0.82 percent**.

Bharti AXA General Insurance launches cancer awareness drive on social media

- **Bharti AXA General Insurance** has launched **#CancerSendsNoNotifications** campaign – a special initiative to increase **awareness and spread knowledge** on detecting the disease early among people in India.
- This campaign was held on **November 7th National Cancer Awareness Day**
- Through this cancer awareness drive, Bharti AXA aims to engage with close to a million Indians on **Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn**.
- Cancer remains the leading cause of death in both men and women in our country. As per the recent WHO report, one in every 10 Indians will develop cancer and one in every 15 will succumb to the disease.
- Reducing the number of fatalities due to cancer can only be achieved in a country with a population of 1.35 billion, by spreading awareness about timely detection.

- Cervical cancer does not cause any noticeable symptoms until it reaches stage 3. The good news is that there is a vaccine available for women between 9-26 years. So, defend yourself against cervical cancer by getting a vaccine or a Pap test.

Paytm introduces Payout Links for businesses

- **Paytm** has launched **Payout Links** for businesses, enabling them to instantly process payouts to customers, employees and vendors, without collecting their bank details.
- As businesses struggle with the ever-growing numbers of manual financial processes, Payout Links offers seamless payment integration for businesses to quickly send incentives and refunds to customers through the easy and inexpensive method of a simple payout link.
- The receiver needs to simply open the link and is automatically provided a list of saved accounts such as **Paytm Wallet**, **Paytm UPI** and connected bank accounts, which can be chosen to receive money instantly. Since no other information is needed, the receiver is free from having to remember his bank details, and the risk of human errors is effectively removed.
- Payout Links also enables the receiver to exercise greater control in choosing exactly which account to receive the funds in, as well as maintain the privacy of his bank details.

Flipkart offers customised group health insurance cover issued by Bajaj Allianz

- **Flipkart**, announced that it now offers **group health insurance** cover ranging from **Rs.3 lakh to Rs.20 lakh** issued by **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance** and **Care Health Insurance** to its large and growing pan-Indian customer base.
- Customers opting for policies of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance and Care Health Insurance on the Flipkart platform are not required to undergo any pre-emptive medical tests; the policy is issued against a declaration of good health; making it convenient to cover for their health scares.
- The policies further safeguard individuals against medical expenses and hospitalisation expenses, while also covering alternate treatment methods such as Ayurvedic and Homeopathic for up to a certain percentage of the sum insured.

Edelweiss Tokio Life launches Covid Shield+

- **Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance** has announced the launch of **Covid Shield+** to secure people's dreams and aspirations from the financial impact of a Covid-19 diagnosis. Edelweiss Tokio Life COVID Shield+ is a newly launched plan offering **insurance coverage** for coronavirus disease or COVID-19.
- COVID Shield+ has been specifically designed to cater to the financial expenses caused due to COVID-19. The treatment for COVID-19 can require lakhs of rupees and lack of proper medical care could also lead to fatalities. In a situation like this, it is best to be prepared financially to secure your family's future.

IRDAI sets up panel to revisit retail business of engineering tariff

- **Insurance sector regulator IRDAI** has set up a working group to **revisit product structures of engineering tariffs** relevant for the retail category in the wake of continuous advancement in technology.
- The **nine-member panel** has been asked to revisit the product structures of the erstwhile engineering tariffs relevant for the retail category and make suitable recommendations for revising them.
- The panel has been asked to recommend new suitable and appropriate standard products in line with advancements in technology for the retail segment.
- The group, **headed by R Chandrasekaran**, former secretary general of GI Council, has to submit report within three months.

IFSCA approves draft Banking regulations for banking operations at IFSCs

- **International Financial Services Centres Authority**, IFSCA has approved **draft Banking regulations for banking operations at IFSCs**. The IFSC Authority approved the **International Financial Services Centres Authority (Banking) Regulations, 2020**. This will pave the way for putting in place the rules for the various aspects of banking operations that would be permissible at the IFSC.
- The Finance Ministry stated, Banking constitutes one of the major focus areas of IFSC and is expected to drive and facilitate the other constituent operations in the IFSC in due course.
- A self-contained regulation laying down the major principles of banking operations at IFSCs is thus an important step in the IFSC reaching its desired potential, it added.

Muthoot Finance to be added to MSCI India domestic index

- As part of MSCI's (Morgan Stanley Capital Index) semi-annual review of indices, **Muthoot Finance** will be added to the **MSCI India Domestic Index** from the close of November 30.
- MSCI is at the forefront of constructing global benchmarking indices, and the MSCI India Index is designed to measure the **performance of the large- and mid-cap segments** of the Indian market. This index covers approximately 85 per cent of the Indian equity universe, and companies are selected after comprehensive evaluation on several factors that are considered vital for global investors.
- MSCI announces changes to its portfolio every quarter based on market capitalisation, FII limit, Free Float and Foreign Room factors (FDI limits). It is estimated that MSCI's India portfolio attracts **around \$ 30-32 billion** of passive fund investments.

HDFC Bank Launches SmartHub Merchant Solutions 3.0

- **HDFC Bank** announced the launch of India's first comprehensive banking and payment solution for merchants – **SmartHub Merchant Solutions 3.0**.
- This first-of-its-kind solution allows merchants and self-employed professionals to instantly open a current account and start accepting payments in-store, online, and on-the-go.
- SmartHub 3.0 offers the ideal platform for small merchants and self-employed professionals to join the digital ecosystem through an easy, convenient and secure solution.
- It allows users to accept payments in multiple forms, including QR and our newly launched tap to phone solution, allowing millions of merchants to offer a superior customer experience and grow the business.
- For the merchants, SmartHub 3.0 will be available in multiple forms – app based, web based and also a range of PoS devices. The comprehensive solution will enable efficiencies in the business for them.
- People can join SmartHub 3.0 by clicking on "<https://hdfcbank.com/smarthub>".
- HDFC Bank is the leading player in the merchant acquiring space in the country.
- It processes 48 per cent of the overall card transactions at the merchant level in terms of volumes and about a fourth through a unified payments interface.

Sebi forms expert group to review norms related to share-based staff benefit, issue of sweat equity

- Markets regulator **Sebi** has set up an **expert group** to review the **framework of share-based employee benefit and issue of sweat equity**.
- The **seven-member expert group** would be chaired by **Sandip Bhagat** Partner at S&R Associates.
- The expert group would revisit the framework of share-based employee benefit and suggest policy changes.

- Further, the panel has been mandated to revisit the framework of sweat equity regulations vis-a-vis the Companies Act, and recommend any policy changes.
- They have to suggest whether it is advisable to combine both the regulations. In case, these norms can be combined, the panel would provide draft rules in this regard.
- Sweat equity shares, generally, issued by a company to its employees at a discount or for consideration other than cash.
- Other members of the panel are Santosh Haldankar, company secretary of HDFC Bank; Vikram Shroff of Nishith Desai Associates and Narayan Shankar, company secretary of Mahindra & Mahindra.
- Further, Pavan Vijay, founder of Corporate Professionals; M Sanaula Khan, company secretary of Wipro; and Sebi's Chief General Manager Jeevan Sonparote are also members of the panel.

SBM Bank India set to launch a neo banking platform

- **SBM Bank India**, which is the **wholly-owned subsidiary** of **State Bank of Mauritius**, is focussing on technology to reach out to customers and is **set to launch a neobanking platform**.
- SBM Bank has tied up with a fintech, the bank is looking at collaborative banking in a lot of other segments as well where companies may have access to large number of customers but do not have a banking license.
- SBM are piloting with fintech PayNearby. SBM have launched a service called Nivesh which is a recurring deposit platform.
- It was the first foreign bank in India to obtain a banking licence from RBI in January 2019

Mastercard, USTATED join hands for Project Kirana to empower women through financial inclusion

- Global payments technology major **Mastercard** has joined hands with the **United States Agency for International Development (USTATED)** for **Project Kirana** that will help increase revenue streams, expand financial inclusion and digital payments adoption of kirana shops that are owned or operated by women.
- To begin with, as many as 3,000 such women are targeted to be enrolled under this project in certain places in Uttar Pradesh. Mastercard stated that around the world, gender inequality limited women-owned businesses' ability to launch, grow and thrive.
- The initiatives will also drive inclusive growth by enabling small merchants and kirana stores with access to credit and empower women entrepreneurs by increasing their business acumen.
- Project Kirana will work to increase revenue streams, expand financial inclusion and digital payments adoption of kirana shops that are owned or operated by women, Mastercard stated.

South Indian Bank, Canara, Axis, Indian Bank purchase stake in IBBIC

- **Canara Bank, Axis Bank, Indian Bank and South Indian Bank** have acquired **6.67% stake** each in financial technology firm, **IBBIC**, at Rs 10 per equity share for a cash consideration of Rs 5 lakh each.
- Canara Bank (down 0.27%), Axis Bank (down 1.54%), Indian Bank (up 0.40%) and South Indian Bank (up 4.56%) advanced.
- Post investment, all the partners will hold 6.67% shareholding in IBBIC on fully diluted basis through acquisition the of 50,000 equity shares. The transaction is expected to be completed by the end of December 2020.
- IBBIC is proposed to be incorporated as a financial technology company with an objective of providing a platform for exploring, building and implementing Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) solutions for the Indian financial services sector.

- Additionally, the lenders stated the company registration application of IBBIC will be submitted to the Registrar of Companies, Mumbai by the end of this month.

StashFin Partners with Visa to Launch Co-branded Prepaid Cards With Credit Lines

- Singapore-based **neobanking startup StashFin** announced to have partnered with **Visa** with an aim to launch **co-branded prepaid cards** with credit lines and expand its digital banking footprint in existing and new geographies.
- Founded in 2016, the StashFin Credit Line prepaid card powered by Visa claims to be a defined resolution for salaried and self-employed professionals.
- With the festive season already in full swing, the partnership is stated to promise good news for customers who are on the lookout for festive shopping discounts, helping them to convert their purchases into easy equated monthly installments (EMIs) using their Credit Line card. The neobanking startup will be extending Visa's commercial offers available on the cards in order to enhance the product offerings to its users.

Infibeam Avenues collaborates with Bank Muscat for digital payment services

- E-commerce and online payments services provider **Infibeam Avenues Limited** announced its collaboration with **Bank Muscat, Oman's biggest bank**, to offer **high-end payment gateway** services to merchants in Oman.
- Under the agreement, Infibeam Avenues, through its digital payment solution, **CCAvenue Payment Gateway Service (CPGS)**, will process online card transactions of various payment networks for Bank Muscat and help the bank to authorise online payment for its merchants which intends to boost fast growing e-commerce sector in the region, a company statement stated.
- The move further strengthens Infibeam's footprint in West Asia after CCAvenue's existing digital payment solution services in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Earlier, Infibeam Avenues had announced its tie-up with **Bank Dhofar** in Oman.

Muthoot Finance, Bajaj Allianz in tie-up for gold jewellery insurance

- **Muthoot Finance** has tied up with **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance** to provide insurance on **gold jewellery** as part of their new initiative, **Muthoot Gold Shield**, which is backed and powered by Group Affinity All Risk policy of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance.
- The policy provides insurance coverage of gold jewellery for individuals. This is designed to provide insurance coverage of gold jewellery articles for customers of the company at the time of closure of gold loans and release of gold ornaments. It will provide insurance coverage to the customers of Muthoot Finance as a loyalty product.
- The policy covers burglary, robbery, theft from insured person's home, loss-in-transit and 13 other disasters (natural calamities). Muthoot Gold Shield is provided at a nominal premium, which is lower than industry average. Zero documentation is required and it takes **less than 2 minutes** to generate a policy, a release stated

NSDL Payments Bank, HDFC ERGO Join Hands To Offer Customised Insurance Solutions to Customers

- **HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company** has tied up with **NSDL Payments Bank Limited** to offer a range of **general insurance products** to the bank's customers, a company statement stated. NSDL Payments Bank Limited is a subsidiary of **National Securities Depository Ltd.**
- The partnership aims to bring together the deep distribution network of NSDL Payments Bank and the strong innovation pipeline of HDFC ERGO to contribute towards financial inclusion in the country, the statement stated.
- Insurance penetration continues to be low in India, but the current pandemic has accelerated its need, especially of health insurance.

- Also, customers will reap the benefits of sophisticated digital capabilities offered by NSDL Payments Bank and HDFC ERGO through self-service and assisted channels, thereby creating a one-stop-shop for all banking and financial services.

Home Ministry relaxes FCRA account norms for NGOs

- The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs** has relaxed the norms for the **NGOs** mandated to maintain **FCRA account** under the **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA)** with the State Bank of India.
- The MHA stated in its 5-page order that the FCRA account holder shall have complete freedom to transfer the foreign contribution received in their **SBI FCRA Account** to **another FCRA Account**.
- The order further stated that the main SBI branch in New Delhi will not levy any charge or fees for such transfers. The bank will also be required to inform the FCRA account holder immediately about each such transfer through an email and SMS.

Key Highlights

- The Home Ministry has set **March 31, 2021** as the deadline for the NGOs registered to open an account at the specified branch of SBI.
- The MHA order also stated that no inward remittance will be allowed in any account other than the FCRA account opened in SBI main branch in New Delhi from the date of opening the FCRA account or from March 31, 2021 whichever is earlier.
- The Ministry has, however, allowed the NGOs to maintain their existing FCRA Accounts for keeping or utilization purposes.

IPPB ties-up with PNB MetLife to extend PMJJBY Insurance

- **India Post Payments bank (IPPB)** has tied-up with **PNB MetLife India Insurance**, for its customers availing the **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)**. The government backed low cost life insurance scheme, available since 2015, provides protection and financial security to the poor and underprivileged.
- The PPMJJBY, which seeks to bring sections of the both the underserved and unserved population into the financial mainstream, is available for all individuals holding a savings account with IPPB. The renewable coverage of one year, will have an entry age of **18 years** and a maximum of **50 years**, whilst maximum maturity age for the scheme would be 55 years. The scheme ensures a maximum coverage of **Rs 2 lakh per life**, at a premium of Rs 330 payable on an annual basis.

HDFC Life, HDFC Ergo partner for complete cover against Covid -19

- **HDFC Life Insurance** and **HDFC Ergo Health Insurance** have partnered to launch a combi product that aims to provide a complete financial protection package in the current Covid-19 pandemic.
- Called **Click 2 Protect Corona Kavach**, the policy will provide all the benefits and features of Click 2 Protect 3D Plus and Corona Kavach.
- “An individual can choose from the available options provided by HDFC Life's Click 2 Protect 3D Plus, including premium waiver for accidental total permanent disability or on diagnosis of critical illness and can also avail of a Covid-19 health cover that includes ambulance charges, home care treatment charges, pre and post hospitalisation charges if diagnosed with Covid-19,” HDFC Life Insurance stated.

Sebi launches SMARTs program to strengthen investor education framework

- Markets regulator **Sebi** launched the **Securities Market Trainers (SMARTs) program**, an initiative aimed at enhancing investor education and awareness. The launch of SMARTs program comes amid **World Investor Week** being celebrated across the country.
- The first batch of SMARTs empanelled by Sebi includes **40 individuals** across 16 states and union territories, covering 31 districts on a pan-India basis. They have also undergone four days of training at the National Institute of Securities Market (NISM).
- The regulator stated it would be empanelling more trainers at a pan-India level under the SMARTs program. SMARTs will conduct investor education programs in their respective geographical areas.
- Under the SMARTs program, the trainers are empanelled for the district they belong to, subject to fulfilling the required eligibility criteria.
- In addition to individuals, organisations engaged in similar activity can get enrolled as SMARTs. They would undergo training at NISM and then they would be eligible to conduct programs. The programs are conducted under the aegis of Sebi and are monitored directly by it.

Revision Points

Name of the Organization	Headquarters	Head of the Organization
Reserve Bank of India	Mumbai	Shaktikanta Das
Bajaj Allianz General Insurance	Pune	Tapan Singhel
Karnataka Bank	Mangalore	Mahabaleshwara MS
Securities and Exchange Board of India	Mumbai	Ajay Tyagi
National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development	Mumbai	Govinda Rajulu Chintala
Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India	Hyderabad	Subash Chandra Khuntia
DCB Bank	Mumbai	Murali M Natrajan
Jio Payments Bank	Mumbai	Vivek Bhandari
HDFC Bank	Mumbai	Sashidhar Jagdishan
Indian Bank	Chennai	Padmaja Chunduru
Axis Bank	Mumbai	Rakesh Makhija
State Bank of India	Mumbai	Dinesh Khara
India Post Payments Bank	New Delhi	J Venkatramu
ICICI Bank	Mumbai	Sandeep Bakshi
South Indian Bank	Thrissur	Murali Ramakrishnan
Indian Overseas Bank	Chennai	Partha Pratim Sengupta
SBM Bank	Port Louis	Parvataneni Venkateswara Rao

AU Small Finance Bank	Jaipur	Sanjay Agarwal
Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance	Mumbai	Sumit Rai
National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)	Mumbai	Dilip Asbe
Lakshmi Vilas Bank	Chennai	Parthasarathi Mukherjee
Punjab National Bank	New Delhi	S.S Mallikarjuna Rao
Bank of Baroda	Vadodara	Hasmukh Adhia
YES Bank	Mumbai	Prashant Kumar
Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company	Mumbai	Nilesh Shah
Tata AIG General Insurance	Mumbai	Neelesh Garg
Muthoot Finance	Kochi	George Muthoot
Manappuram Finance	Thrissur	VP Nandakumar
Visa	San Fransico	Alfred F Kelly Jr
Bank of India	Mumbai	Atanu kumar Das
Freepaycard	Guragaon	Richard Andrew
Equitas Small Finance Bank	Chennai	Vasudevan PN
Paytm	Noida	Vijay Shekhar Sharma
Small Industries Development Bank of India	Lucknow	Mohammad Mustafa
RBL Bank	Mumbai	Vishwavir Ahuja
HDFC ERGO General Insurance	Mumbai	Ritesh Kumar
ICICI Lombard	Mumbai	Bhargav Dasgupta
Mastercard	New York	Ajaypal Singh Banga
Airtel Payments Bank	New Delhi	Anubrata Biswas
Canara Bank	Bengaluru	LV Prabhakar
NSDL Payments Bank	Mumbai	G.V.Nageswara Rao
Life Insurance Corporation of India	Mumbai	Mukesh Kumar Gupta

Important Financial & Economy Affairs

FDI surges to 30 billion dollars in Apr-Oct this year

- Union Minister Prakash Javadekar stated Foreign Direct Investment into India surged by a healthy **15 percent** to **30 billion** dollars in April - October this year.
- Total Foreign Direct Investments inflows into India during the second quarter of financial year 2020-21 is 28,102 million dollars, out of which FDI equity inflows is 23,441 million dollars.
- This takes the FDI equity inflows during the financial year 2020-21 upto September this year to 30,004 million dollars which is 15 percent more than the corresponding period of 2019-20. In rupee terms, the FDI Equity inflows of 2 lakh

24 thousand 613 crore rupees are 23 percent more than the last year. August this year has been the significant month when 17,487 million dollars FDI equity inflows were reported in the country.

Q2 GDP to shrink 8.6%; India to enter recession for 1st time: RBI official

- The GDP is likely to contract by **8.6 per cent** for the **July-September** period, which means India will enter into a **recession for the first time** in history in the first half of this fiscal with two successive quarters of negative growth due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as per an RBI official.
- Researchers have used the '**nowcasting**' method to arrive at the estimates ahead of the official release of data and their views in an article in RBI's monthly bulletin released do not constitute the central bank's views.
- The pandemic-induced lockdowns had led to a steep contraction of **23.9 per cent** in the GDP for the April-June quarter as compared to the same period a year ago.
- The RBI has estimated that the economy **will contract** by **9.5 per cent** for the full fiscal year.
- "India has entered a technical **recession** in the **first half of 2020-21** for the first time in its history with Q2 2020-21 likely to record the second successive quarter of GDP contraction," as per the article titled '**Economic Activity Index**', authored by Pankaj Kumar of the Monetary Policy Department.

NSE to launch first agricultural commodity futures contract in December

- Leading stock exchange **NSE** stated it will launch its **first agricultural commodity futures contract** for **crude degummed soybean oil** on December 1.
- The contract will facilitate the soybean oils processing and allied industries in India and overseas, a perfect hedging tool for managing their price, the National Stock Exchange stated. The contract is a monthly expiry cash settled futures contract with a trading lot size of 10 metric ton (MT) and price basis as Kandla.
- Vikram Limaye, MD and CEO of NSE, stated the exchange is dedicated to deepen the Indian commodity markets by providing convenient and cost-effective onshore hedging products.

Fitch Solutions Revises India's Fiscal Deficit Forecast To 7.8% From 8.2% Earlier For FY21

- **Fitch Solutions** revised its forecast for central government's fiscal deficit for the financial year (FY) 2020-21 to **7.8 per cent** from its earlier projection of **8.2 per cent**.
- According to the report, this revised forecast was driven by a strong recovery in tax revenues during the second quarter of FY 2020-21.
- The fiscal revenue forecast in FY21 for the central government has been revised to **18.2 per cent** decline, from the earlier forecast of **18.4 per cent**, as per the report.
- The expenses of the Centre are also expected to rise by only **12.1 per cent** in FY21, versus **12.7 per cent** previously.

Important Business News

Microsoft launches programme for health-tech start-ups, collaborates with Social Alpha

- The '**Microsoft for Healthtech Startups**' programme has been launched to provide necessary resources to **health-tech start-ups** along with go-to-market support.
- The tech giant is also collaborating with start-up incubator **Social Alpha** "to accelerate the growth of participating start-ups."
- The programme will provide technical support as well as resources for co-selling and co-building tech tools to entrepreneurs in the sector.

- It will provide various Azure benefits including free credits along with support for Azure Marketplace onboarding to qualified seed-to-Series C start-ups.
- “Start-ups with enterprise-ready solutions can scale quickly with joint go-to-market strategies, technical support and new sales opportunities with Microsoft’s partner ecosystem,” Microsoft stated.

Poonawalla Finance, ICSI tie up to offer collateral-free loan for company secretaries

- **Poonawalla Finance Pvt Ltd**, a non-deposit taking NBFC, has entered into a tie-up with the **Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI)** to offer collateral-free special term loan product to over 65,000 Company Secretaries.
- The agreement will help ICSI members fulfil the financial requirements for their professional practice and personal emergencies, the company stated.
- The special term loan scheme carries zero processing fees for loans up to **36 months**, attractive interest rate, zero prepayment charges, zero collateral and **100 per cent digital processing** with minimum documentation. It also comes with an option to take-over existing loans with higher interest rates.
- The loan amount ranges from Rs.2-30 lakh with flexible repayment tenure between 12-60 months. The loans can be availed with four easy steps: online application, document upload, approval in 24 hours and online loan disbursal.

Tech giant IBM, Indian Oil Corporation collaborate for digital services

- **Tech giant IBM** stated it has collaborated with **Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL)** to transform the latter's customer experience using **digital tools**.
- Around 12,400 IOCL distributors covering about 130 million consumers can now use the IndianOil One mobile app and portal, developed by IBM Services, a statement stated.
- The **IndianOil One mobile app** and portal are part of Indian Oil's Project **ePIC**, an integrated platform for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Distribution Management System (DMS).
- This platform ensures real-time updates to inventory, orders, and invoices, thereby reducing the time to order fulfillment.
- Indian Oil can respond more quickly to customer service requests, including grievances using the platform. The platform also presents a unified customer experience across various access devices such as mobile phones, tablets, and desktops, the statement stated.

Walmart Vriddhi starts digitally enhanced learning process to train MSMEs

- With **Walmart Vriddhi** Supplier Development Program, India's **micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** now have an opportunity to embark on interactive online training experiences and personalised mentoring, with access to resources and experts to support growth, a company statement stated.
- The Walmart Vriddhi Program was launched by **Walmart Inc.** in December 2019 with the aim to empower 50,000 Indian MSMEs to "**Make in India**" for domestic and global supply chains.
- Following the COVID-19 outbreak, the company stated that the program was reshaped to emphasise digital experiences, and this allowed it to be rolled out to more MSMEs.
- In the future, it will offer a mix of digital and in-person training, mentoring and network experiences via physical Vriddhi Institutes when conditions are favorable," the company added.

Software Technology Parks of India to launch a VC fund to support start-ups

- **Software Technology Parks of India (STPI)**, an Autonomous Society **set up by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, will float a **venture capital fund** to support **startups & entrepreneurs** from the tier II and III cities to launch **new technology products**.

- STPI has taken various initiatives including launching of six centers of excellence (CoEs) in emerging technologies and 10-15 more CoEs are in pipeline.
- These centers will focus on new age technologies including artificial intelligence, machine learning, data analytics, autonomous connected electric shared (ACES) mobility, block chain, VR/AR, fintech, medtech, agritech among others.
- Through these centers, STPI shall act as single-window facilitation centres to extend requisite lab support, funding and mentoring to startups.
- This scheme will support around 300 start-ups for the next three years by offering Rs 25 lakh risk capital and **Rs 10,000 internship per startup**.

L&T bags construction order of bullet train project

- **L&T** has bagged another construction package of **the bullet train project** for an estimated value of **Rs.7,000 crore**.
- According to industry sources, L&T has emerged as the lowest bidder for the C6 package for the **Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Project (MAHSR)**, popularly referred to as the Bullet Train project from the **National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL)**.
- Recently, the EPC major emerged as the lowest bidder at Rs.24,985 crore for constructing the 237.1 km under Package C4 of the 508.17 km MAHSR corridor.

AAI hands over Lucknow airport to Adani group on lease for 50 years

- The **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** handed over **the Lucknow airport to the Adani group on lease** for a period of **50 years**.
- The AAI had handed over the **Mangaluru airport** to the group on October 30.
- The central government in February 2019 **privatised six major airports** of the country -- **Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram, and Guwahati**. After a competitive bidding process, the Adani group won the rights to run all of them for 50 years.

Twitter launches ArtHouse to support brands to create engaging Twitter-first content

- **Twitter India** has introduced **ArtHouse**, a creative suite of services to assist brands in creating and optimising **Twitter-first content**.
- ArtHouse is a fully integrated service that connects brands with the creative capital of influencers, artists and editors. It is a team of experts who understand the platform and its possibilities, know Twitter's audience and what works best for them – whether it's a video ad or a larger campaign.
- ArtHouse is all about the power of creatives in marketing communications, connecting brands to influencers, artists and producers to create content that moves people.

Amazon India launches first all-women virtual customer service in Bengaluru

- Building on its diversity, equity and inclusivity efforts, **Amazon India** announced the launch of its **first all-women Virtual Customer Service (VCS)** site in **Bengaluru** with **60 women**.
- VCS was introduced in 2017 to address customer requests remotely long before working from home was the new normal, and is an extension of **Amazon's Customer Service (CS) network**. Through this all-women VCS site, the company has extended flexible career opportunities for women across the city, empowering them to pursue their careers from their homes.

- This site will enable Amazon India to reach out to a broader talent pool of women who prefer to work from home, as it seeks to bring greater diversity across its teams. This could include women who are resuming their career after a break or women who require flexibility in their work schedule to attend to personal commitments during the day.

PIF invests Rs.9,555 crore in RIL's retail arm

- **Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF)** will invest **Rs.9,555 crore** for **2.04%** in **Reliance Industries Ltd's (RIL) retail unit**, taking **total investments** into India's largest retailer to about **Rs.47,265 crore**.
- This will be the **second such investment** by the Saudi sovereign wealth fund in an RIL unit this year. **PIF** had earlier **acquired a 2.32% stake in Jio Platforms Ltd.**
- Since September, a bevy of global funds from Middle East to the US including Silver Lake, KKR, General Atlantic, Mubadala, Singapore's GIC and TPG have already announced investing billions of dollars into Reliance Retail.

NPCI imposes 30% cap on transaction volumes of UPI payment apps

- The **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** announced a cap of **30 percent** of total volume of transactions processed in **UPI** by a **Third Party App Provider (TPAP)**.
- The cap will be calculated on the basis of total volume of UPI transactions during the preceding **three months (on a rolling basis)**.
- This will help **address the risks and protect the UPI ecosystem** as it further scales up.
- The existing TPAPs exceeding the specified cap will have a period of **two years from January 2021** to comply with the same in a phased manner.
- The move could impact payment apps like apps like Google Pay, PhonePe, and Paytm that are leading the race as UPI is still primarily used for person-to-person fund transfers.

MobiKwik partners Amex for 'MobiKwik Blue American Express Card'

- **MobiKwik**, a leading fintech platform, has entered into a strategic partnership with **American Express** to launch "**MobiKwik Blue American Express Card**", a digital prepaid Card.
- This launch makes MobiKwik the first non-bank issuer of **Amex Cards** in India. For Amex, which is an investor in MobiKwik, this marks its entry into the pre-paid Cards space through its network business. As a non-bank, MobiKwik cannot issue Credit Cards.
- **MobiKwik Blue American Express Card** is a digital-only pre-paid Card that can be generated out of **MobiKwik App** and the Card increases **MobikWik's** ubiquity by allowing users to pay at all Amex merchants, including top e-commerce stores like Amazon, Flipkart, Swiggy, BigBasket, etc. This pre-paid Card is issued free of charge, with no activation fee attached to it. Its This pre-paid Card's issuance is just one click and takes just a few seconds.

TCS to buy Postbank Systems from Deutsche Bank

- **Tata Consultancy Services** will acquire **100 per cent stake** in **Postbank Systems AG (PBS)** from **Deutsche Bank AG**.
- PBS is the full-range captive IT service provider that provides project management, application management and infrastructure support services to Postbank and other subsidiaries of Deutsche Bank. PBS and its around 1,500 employees will become part of TCS.
- The transaction is subject to customary regulatory and governmental approvals.
- **Postbank Systems** is the full-range captive IT service provider that provides project management, application management, and infrastructure support services to Postbank and other subsidiaries of Deutsche Bank. The captive has close to 1,500 employees and post the acquisition they will become a part of TCS.

Tata Steel, Hindustan Zinc ink pact

- **Tata Steel** has decided to procure **zinc** required for its plant from the domestic market rather than importing it. The company has signed a Memorandum of Understanding to secure zinc from Anil Agarwal-owned Hindustan Zinc.
- As per the tie-up, **Hindustan Zinc** would supply about **45,000 tonnes of zinc** and other value-added metals to Tata Steel. It will cater to both Tata Steel and Tata Steel BSL, a subsidiary of Tata Steel.
- Hindustan Zinc has implemented a vendor management inventory solution for Tata Steel. As a first VMI customer, Tata Steel's inventory and stock will be closely monitored.
- Upon sensing a shortage on a real-time basis, the material shall be delivered on an impromptu basis from Hindustan Zinc warehouses with no risk to the operation. Besides, Hindustan Zinc will also keep safety stock at all their depots for Tata Group companies, he added.

NGI-TBI inks pact with KPIT Technologies for 'KPIT Sparkle 2021'

- The **Nehru Group of Institutions Technology Business Incubator (NGI-TBI)** has joined hands with **KPIT, Pune**, to motivate young innovators to design and develop indigenous solutions for **KPIT Sparkle 2021** in the **mobility and energy space**. (KPIT Sparkle is KPIT's innovation platform)
- An agreement to explore incubation support to the top 100 teams of KPIT Sparkle 2021 across India was inked by NGI-TBI and KPIT Technologies, at a virtual ceremony recently.
- The objective of the MoU is to provide infrastructure and business support services such as mentoring, training, IPR services, technical and networking support to the selected teams.
- Student teams would get opportunities to build alternate career paths and get funding and incubation opportunities from NGI-TBI, apart from mentoring by industry leaders and academicians.
- KPIT Sparkle organises innovation contest, **"I Innovate"**, for connecting budding entrepreneurs to the incubation ecosystem.
- The finalists of KPIT Sparkle would be conferred Platinum Award (which comprises Rs.10 lakh for the winner and Rs.25,000 for mentor), Gold Award (Rs.5 lakh, and Rs.15,000 for mentor), Silver Award (Rs.2.5 lakh each to two teams and Rs.10,000 for each mentor) and Most Popular Award of Rs.1 lakh.

Marg ERP and Paytm partners to resolve MSMEs payment issue digitally

- One of the biggest enterprise solutions providers in India, **Marg ERP**, with over 50% market share in Pharma and FMCG sector nationally, has come together with **Paytm** to facilitate **seamless transactions for MSMEs**.
- Under this joint venture, the duo empowers MSME using this new integrated payments solution called **MargPay** developed by MARG ERP Limited.
- This technological advancement will reconcile payments efficiently in a cost effective manner by enabling MSMEs to keep track of all their receipts and payments made through multiple payment methods.
- **MARGPAY** is an easy to use platform with **user friendly interface**.
- It will also be very easy for merchants to connect it with their billing and accounting system with minimum effort.
- Furthermore, **this partnership** of two digital giants of the country will also extend to **Paytm Payments Bank Limited** powering Marg Pay's nodal bank account.
- Notably, MARG ERP is a CMMI Level 3 certified company with **850 sales and support** system countrywide.
- Paytm Payment Gateway is a leader in India with over 50% market share in processing transactions through Wallet, UPI, cards and net-banking. It offers several innovative services, such as Payouts & Recurring payments, OTP less

card payments, instant refunds, and pre-authorization flow that addresses the needs of both B2B and B2C companies.

Abu Dhabi's SWF is first notified fund to get 100% income-tax exemption

- Finance Ministry announced **Abu Dhabi's Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) - MIC Redwood 1 RSC Limited** - has become the **first foreign SWF** that has been notified and granted **100% income-tax exemption** for the **long-term investments** to be made in the specified priority sectors in India.
- This 100% income-tax exemption facility was well received by the SWFs and Pension Funds across the globe and a large number of SWFs and Pension Funds have shown interest in making investment in India's infrastructure sector
- The Government of India had issued a notification on 6th July 2020 to broaden the scope of this exemption and made all sub-sectors of Harmonised Master List of the infrastructure eligible for this income-tax exemption.

Retail inflation jumps to 7.61% in October, highest in six years

- According to **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** data released by the **Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation**, inflation stood **at 7.61% in October** — the **highest** since May 2014.
- Retail inflation recorded at **7.27% in September**. The **Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI)** jumped to **11.07%** in October, up **from 10.68%** in September.
- The main factor leading to higher inflation was elevated food inflation. In October, inflation in meat and fish rose to 18.7% while vegetable prices increased to 22.51%.

Larsen & Toubro is lowest bidder for road bridge over river Brahmaputra

- Engineering and construction giant **Larsen & Toubro** has emerged as the **lowest bidder** for a **Rs 3,200 crore** project to build a **road bridge** over the **Brahmaputra river**.
- It will be one of the **longest road bridges** over a river in the country and on completion will connect two eastern states - **Assam and Meghalaya**.
- The project is being financed by **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**.
- The proposed around **18 km bridge**, which is considered as strategic, will connect Assam and Meghalaya, reducing the detouring **road distance by about 203 km** from **Dhubri to Phulabari** on **NH 127 B**.

CBDT will validate UDIN generated from ICAI portal at the time of upload of Tax Audit Reports: Finance Ministry

- Finance Ministry has stated, **CBDT** will validate **Unique Document Identification Number (UDIN)** generated from **ICAI portal** at the time of upload of **Tax Audit Reports**.
- Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, in its gazette notification dated 2nd August, 2019, had made generation of UDIN from ICAI website www.icaai.org mandatory for every kind of certificate/tax audit report and other attests made by their members as required by various regulators. This was introduced to curb fake certifications by non-CAs misrepresenting themselves as Chartered Accountants.
- In line with the ongoing initiatives of the Income Tax Department for integrating with other Government agencies and bodies, Income-tax e-filing portal has completed its integration with ICAI portal for validation of UDIN generated from ICAI portal by **the Chartered Accountants** for documents certified or attested by them.
- Income-tax e-filing portal had already factored mandatory quoting of UDIN with effect from 27th April this year for documents certified and attested by a Chartered Accountant. With this system level integration, UDIN provided for the audit reports and certificates submitted by the Chartered Accountants in the e-filing portal shall be validated online with the ICAI.

Indian Oil successfully tests 'zero-emission e-mobility'

- **Indian Oil Corporation** Ltd has successfully conducted a '**Proof of Concept**' feasibility study on '**zero-emission electric mobility**' at one of its fuel stations in Bengaluru.
- A company stated that **Zero-Emission Electric Mobility** is a concept that allows the **electric vehicle (EV)** to charge using solar power and ensuring zero emissions.
- The EV charging system has been designed by **Hygge Energy**, a start-up incubated by Tech Mahindra, and has three main features - EVs are charged using solar power, no upgrades are required in grid infrastructure, and grid resilience is improved by the system's architecture, especially in remote areas," the statement stated.
- The technology enables intelligent electric-vehicle charging using "**hybrid microgrids**". Hybrid microgrids are created by integrating existing grid infrastructure with solar PV batteries, the statement added.

SpiceJet launches dedicated freighter services to Leh in Ladakh

- Airline major **SpiceJet** launched **dedicated freighter services** connecting **Leh** with the rest of the country.
- Accordingly, the airline operated its first freighter flight from Delhi to Leh carrying **13 tonnes of cargo** supplies. The flight was operated by SpiceXpress, the dedicated cargo arm of SpiceJet.
- In addition, the airline stated that the dedicated cargo flights will help transport fresh fruits, vegetables, flowers, perishables, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, and other general cargo. At present, SpiceJet operates a fleet of 17 cargo aircraft including three wide-body planes and is the only Indian carrier to operate long-haul non-stop cargo flights to Europe, Africa and CIS countries.

Honey FPOs will help in achieving the goal of increasing income of small farmers: Narendra Singh Tomar

- The **Honey FPO Programme** of **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India** Ltd was inaugurated by **Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar**. The inauguration programme was hosted online and attended by the new Honey FPOs, farmers and FPOs from various parts of the country.
- He assured that NAFED will address these issues by acting as an intermediary and filling up the gaps between the elements of the beekeeping supply chain and also ensure price remuneration to the beekeeping farmers.
- Through these Honey FPOs, NAFED will also work for promotion of beekeeping as an occupation for unemployed women and tribal populations and uplift their livelihood. Mr Tomar also stated that honey beekeeping will change the lifestyle of small and marginal farmers and help in achieving the goal of increasing farmer's income.

Flipkart, GivelIndia Foundation provide 50,000 PPE kits to UP

- E-Commerce Company **Flipkart** in collaboration with **GivelIndia Foundation** provided **50,000 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** kits to the state government.
- As many as **50,000 PPE kits** have been provided to the **UP government** in collaboration with GivelIndia Foundation which will help in protecting the health workers, patients, and other frontline warriors from coronavirus infection.
- Earlier, Flipkart had donated more than 50,000 PPE protective gear and N95 masks to the Uttar Pradesh administration to fight the epidemic, he stated.
- Till now, Flipkart has distributed over **1 million medical gowns** and 6 lakh N-95 masks across the nation, he added

Important State Wise News

List of Festivals

Festivals	Place	Inaugurated by /Others
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India International Cherry Blossom Festival	Shillong	Cancelled
Hornbill Festival	Nagaland	
International Bird Festival	Gorakhpur	

Andhra Pradesh

AP plans to set up 400 EV charging stations

- **Andhra Pradesh Government** plans to set up **electric vehicle infrastructure** by setting up **400 charging stations** across the State in the first phase.
- The **New and Renewable Energy Development Corporation of Andhra Pradesh Ltd (NREDCAP)** has been coordinating with **International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT), Manesar, Haryana**, and obtained **LoI** for setting up testing facility for auto components and vehicles and intelligence testing tracks for vehicles with an investment of **Rs.250 crore**.
- Webinar on **'Go Electric'** campaign, organised by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency and AP State Energy Conservation Mission (APSECM).
- Installing charging stations will boost the confidence of users of electric vehicles and will also encourage companies to launch new electric vehicles.
- It is also proposed to set up 460 chargers across 83 locations across the State under FAME II Scheme.

CM launches Jagananna Thodu scheme

- Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday launched the Jagananna Thodu scheme under which an amount of ₹905 crore was deposited into the bank accounts of 9.05 lakh small traders towards provision of interest-free loan
- Stating that he had witnessed the plight of small vendors and artisans during his padayatra in the run-up to the 2019 elections, Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy said that banks were not providing loans to the vendors as they belonged to the unorganised sector. Hence, the vendors were forced to approach private parties, take loan at high interest to run their businesses, and often fall into debts, he said.

YS Jagan launches Abhayam Project for Women's safety in the state

- The Andhra Pradesh government has taken another step for the protection of women and children in the state.
- Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy inaugurated the Abhayam project jointly run by the Central and State Governments.
- The project, which will be implemented under the supervision of the Department of Transport, was virtually launched.

Arunachal Pradesh

India's first solar-based water supply project launched in Arunachal Pradesh

- **India's first solar-based Integrated Multi-Village Water Supply Project (IMVWSP)** was dedicated to the people of **Arunachal Pradesh** by Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.
- The solar-based lift water supply project for 39 villages in Lower Dibang Valley district in northeastern Arunachal Pradesh was commissioned at a cost of **Rs 28.50 crore**.

- The project is first of the kind in the state using green energy-solar grid, SCADA automation system, pre-fabricated zinc alum storage tank and HDPE conduit for mains, sub-mains and distribution networking system, and also amusement park including swimming pool, amphi-theatre, fountains, and sit-outs.
- The **Chief Minister** during the event launched the "**Arunachal Jal Sankalp**", a state government dedicated flagship programme to supplement the Jal Jeevan Mission and to sustain the drinking water systems.

Green Soldiers to get insurance cover on Pakke Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh

- **Pakke Tiger Reserve (PTR)** in **Arunachal Pradesh** has become the first in the Northeast to provide **insurance cover** against **COVID-19** for its '**Green Soldiers**'.
- 57 frontline staff of the park have been insured for **nine months against health issues** due to infection by the **Novel Coronavirus**.
- The '**Wildlife Trust of India**' (WTI), an NGO, paid the insurance amount with support from '**Foundation Serge**'.
- WTI runs the Bear Rehabilitation and Conservation centre.
- The insurance coverage is of **Rs 1 lakh each**, but a few who would be **retiring soon** have been insured for **Rs 50,000**.

Assam

Assam CM lays foundation stone of Indo-Israeli Centre of Excellence for Vegetables Protected Cultivation near Guwahati

- In **Assam**, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation stone of **Indo-Israeli Centre of Excellence** for Vegetables Protected Cultivation near Guwahati in presence of Israeli Ambassador Dr. Ron Malka.
- The **Rs. 10.33-crore project** is expected to bolster the agricultural activities in the state by **providing exposure to latest Israeli technologies**.
- Expressing hope that the Centre of Excellence would provide a major boost to agricultural and horticultural production in Assam, the Chief Minister stated that it would be a value addition to the government's efforts to double farmers' income.

Assam Education Dept launches toll free tele-education helpline number for govt school students

- In **Assam**, the **Education department** has launched a **toll free tele education helpline number** for government school students.
- Principal Secretary of the department B Kalyan Chakravarthy stated the helpline number is to guide **6th to 10th standard students** on subject matters and psycho-social aspects.
- He stated the facility would be extended to other students too. The tollfree no is - 18003453578. Mr. Chakravarthy stated that it would work on all 6 days in week except Sunday from 10 am to 3 pm.
- Subject experts would clear academic doubts as well as provide guidance and counselling on mental health and psycho-social aspects.

Assam: Rupsi Airport at Kokrajhar all set to start commercial operation by January 2021

- In Assam, **Rupsi Airport** at **Kokrajhar district** is all set to start commercial operation under **Regional Connectivity Scheme** by January next year. Sources stated that the airport has been re-developed at an estimated cost of **69 crore rupees** and has also received its license by Directorate General of Civil Aviation.
- Spread across 337 acres of land, the newly developed airport has a terminal building with an area of 3,500 sqm. Equipped with 10 check-in counters, the terminal is designed to process 200 passengers during peak hours.

Assam's Tezpur Litchi gets GI tag

- **Tezpur Litchi of Assam** has been granted the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.

- Now Tezpur Litchi has been protected from the production of the fruit in other places.
- The news has been confirmed by the **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)**, an apex body under the **Union ministry of commerce and industry**, which is responsible for the export promotion of agricultural products.

Kaji Nemu and Chokuwa Rice of Assam got GI tags recently.

Bongaigaon District Administration initiates Mission Sampoorna to improve health of malnourished children

- In **Assam**, **Bongaigaon District Administration** has initiated **Mission Sampoorna** in a bid to improve the health condition of the malnourished children. Deputy Commissioner Dr. Lakshmi Priya stated that the programme was started during the Poshan Maah in the district.
- The Mission Sampoorna initiative is not only to improve the health of the malnourished child but also to relish the dream of **women empowerment**. She informed that there are 2,500 malnourished children in the district and within a month of launching this project, the health condition of 10 per cent of these children has already improved.
- Dr. Lakshmi Priya stated that mothers are being involved in Self- Help Groups so that they could manage their livelihood so that the family does not lose their income. The mission aims to achieve the target in three months in this district.

First cow hospital of Northeast inaugurated in Assam's Dibrugarh

- A cow shelter in **Assam's Dibrugarh** inaugurated **Northeast's first-ever cow hospital**, on the occasion of Gopashtami.
- The hospital, **Surbhi Aarogyashala**, is set up by Shree Gopal Gaushala at a cost of **Rs 17 lakh**. The hospital will provide services in 30 km radius. There are 368 cows in the shelter.

Assam proposes 6th national park in militancy ravaged forest

- **The Assam government** has proposed setting up **a national park** in a militancy **ravaged reserve forest**, which, if approved, would make it the **state's sixth national park**.
- Forest minister Parimal Suklabaidya informed that the process for approving **Raimona National Park** has been initiated. He unveiled the map of the new park at **Manas National Park**.
- According to the forest department, the proposal has been submitted to the governor of Assam for upgrading an area of 422 sq km of notified Ripu reserve forest under Manas National Park and Tiger Reserve as the proposed **Raimona National Park**.
- The existing national parks in Assam are Kaziranga, Manas, Dibru-Saikhowa, Manas and Orang. Ripu reserve forest is part of the buffer zone of Manas national park bordering Bhutan. The forest along with Chirang reserve forest has the largest known population of endangered Golden Langur.
- Since 1989, nearly 30% of the reserve forest has been felled and encroached upon due to the insurgency related issues.

Bihar

NTPC shuts four units in Bihar plant after ash-mixed water reaches farmland

- State-run power **NTPC** shut down four of the seven units of its plant in **Bihar's Kahalgaon** as a preventive measure, after some problem in the system caused **water mixed with ash** to spread in nearby farmland.
- As a result, electricity generation at the super thermal power station reduced to around 400 MW from the current 1400-1500 MW.

- The incident, which occurred on the **company's 46th 'Raising Day'**, triggered protests from local villagers who put up a road blockade for some time, claiming that an embankment of an ash pond has breached and water mixed with ash that came out of it damaged standing Rabi crops on around 200 acre of land.
- 'Ash ponds' are used in coal-based power plants for disposal of ash produced during the burning of the fuel. Ash is mixed with water there to prevent its release in the atmosphere. The mixture flows to ash ponds from the plant through spillways.
- Two 500 MW units and two 210 MW units of the plant were shut down to prevent the possibility of any damage to machinery

Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh celebrates its foundation day

- **Chhattisgarh** is celebrating its foundation day on **1st November**. On this occasion a '**Rajyotsav programme**' was organized at the Chief Minister's official Residence.
- The Rajyotsav Programme organized on the occasion of Chhattisgarh foundation day, various schemes, including Swami Atmanand English Medium School Scheme aimed at providing education in the English language to students across the State was launched.
- This was the **21st foundation day** of Chhattisgarh. The State came into existence on November 1, 2000 after being carved out of **Madhya Pradesh**.

Chhattisgarh CM launches scheme for distribution of fortified rice

- **Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel** launched a **scheme for distribution of fortified rice** through **Public distribution System (PDS)** and other welfare initiatives for the people of **Kondagaon district** of the state on a pilot basis.
- The fortified rice is a mixture of iron, vitamin B-12 and folic acid enriched fortified rice kernel (FRK), which meet the nutritional requirements in the diet and thereby help in controlling malnutrition and anemia. It will be distributed through fair price shops.
- Two rice mills have been allotted the work of rice blending for fortification.
- The function to celebrate the **statehood of Chhattisgarh**, which came into existence on **November 1, 2000** after being carved out of Madhya Pradesh.
- Baghel felicitated 30 individuals and three organisations with "**Rajya Alankaran Samman**" (**state awards**) for their exemplary contribution in 24 different disciplines in the virtual presence of the governor.
- The CM later launched the fortified rice distribution scheme and virtually dedicated five newly-built tourist resorts as part of the **Tribal Tourism Circuit** in different districts.
- He performed e-bhoomi puja (ground breaking ceremony) of development and beautification works at Rajim and Shivrinarayan under Ram Van Gaman Path tourism circuit project.
- Meanwhile, he also dedicated 132/33 KV Power Sub Station in Bijapur district and 87.5-km long 132 KV Barsur-Bijapur electricity line on the occasion, which will ensure electricity supply to 23 remote villages in the naxal-affected district.

Chhattisgarh govt constitutes State Task Force Committee for COVID-19 vaccination

- In **Chhattisgarh**, primary preparations for COVID-19 vaccination have started. The **State Task Force Committee** has been constituted for better interdepartmental coordination for **COVID-19 vaccination**.

- A database of health workers working in all government and private health institutions of Chhattisgarh is being prepared as per the guidelines of the Government of India. This database will be helpful to decide the priority for COVID-19 vaccination.
- State Health Minister T.S. Singhdeo stated that Chhattisgarh has made adequate arrangements for the storage and maintenance of vaccines. At present, 530 cold-chain points are operational and 80 new cold-chain points are being started for safekeeping of the vaccines. The total retention capacity of vaccines in the state is one lakh five thousand liters, which is 60 thousand liters more than the requirement. A state-level steering committee is also being formed under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary.
- Besides, the District Task Force Committee will be constituted in all districts of the state. The mission director of the National Health Mission will be the State Nodal Officer for COVID-19 vaccination. At district level, Collectors will be the Nodal Officer.

Delhi

Delhi Govt Launches Jeevan Seva App For Safe And Timely Transportation Of Corona Patients

- Aiming at **safe and timely transportation** of the **COVID-19 patients** to **hospitals and healthcare facilities**, **Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain** launched **Jeevan Seva app**.
- From health check-ups, ambulance requirements to admission in hospitals, health amenities are now just a click away. With this app, you will get access to an e-vehicle, which will provide free pick-up and drop services. Each vehicle will be properly sanitised after every ride.
- The app was launched in collaboration with **EVERA cab services**. Electric Vehicles will be used as ambulances to transfer non-critical patients to healthcare facilities within Delhi.

Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS to get \$500 million from New Development Bank

- A loan agreement for **\$500 million** (approximately Rs.3,700 crore) was signed between the **Centre** and **New Development Bank** for funding the **Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS** (regional rapid transit system) corridor.
- The **82 km Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS** corridor with a project cost of **Rs.30,274 crore** will be co-financed under an parallel financing arrangement with **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** and **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**. In September this year, a loan agreement of \$500 million was signed with ADB for funding the RRTS corridor, according to a statement.
- Civil construction work is in progress on more than 50 km of the 82 km long corridor. The RRTS corridor will have a total of 24 stations and will be elevated for around 70.5 km; 11.5 km of its stretch will be underground.
- A 17 km long priority section between Sahibabad and Duhai of the corridor is scheduled to commence operations in 2023; the entire corridor will be opened to the public by 2025, the statement added.

Gujarat

PM to flag off Ro-Pax ferry service between Hazira-Ghogha in Gujarat

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will virtually inaugurate the **Ghogha-Hazira Ro-Pax ferry service** in **Gujarat**. This will be the second such ferry service to be launched by the PM after the Ghogha-Dahej route three years ago, which is now dysfunctional.

- Both the services were launched to bridge the Gulf of Khambhat by providing a sea route to large number of passengers travelling to and fro between Bhavnagar located on the western side of the Gulf and South Gujarat on the east. The sea route would be shorter compared to the road.
- The ferry between Ghogha — a fishing hamlet and an old port — and Hazira — a commercial greenfield port — which will be virtually inaugurated by PM Modi, is about 60 km-long and provides easier access to the city of Surat. Via land, the route is about 400 km. In comparison, the first ferry route inaugurated by PM Modi in October 2017, connects **Ghogha to Dahej** which lies near the mouth of Narmada river, north to Hazira. This route is about 32 kilometers and connects the Dahej PCPIR and Bharuch town.

Goa

Goa CM Pramod Sawant launches WhatsApp helpline for women in distress

- Goa Chief Minister **Pramod Sawant** launched a **Whatsapp helpline for women in distress** in the state here at Police Headquarters, Panaji.
- He also insisted to circulate the helpline number to women at a larger scale through media, social media, railways stations, airport and other concerned government institutions so that helpline facility reaches women who are looking for help. Women helpline aims to provide all-time security and comfort for the womenfolk and achieve zero crime against women in the state.
- As an additional measure of safety for women in distress, an exclusive **Whatsapp helpline number 7875756177** is launched. This dedicated WhatsApp number will be functional round the clock at the State Police Control Room, Panaji to redress grievances of women in distress.

Trifed of m/o tribal affairs and state of Goa to implement 'Goatribal plan'

- **TRIFED** under Ministry of Tribal Affairs held a virtual meeting with Goa Administration to finalize the **Goa Tribal Development Plan**. The main agenda of the meeting was to finalise the **Tribal Development Plan** for the state of Goa for the establishment of **25 Van DhanVikas Kendras**, 1 Tribal food park, 2 showrooms in North and South Goa.
- The proposed activities included in the development plan includes the setting up of 25 VDVks in Goa; setting up of 25 procurement centres-cum-godowns; of 2 tertiary processing units (mega food parks/ tribal enterprises) and two flagship retail outlets across the state.
- The target is to identify 20 minor forest produces per VDVk. With this planned enterprise initiative, TRIFED will offer an end-to-end comprehensive development package for tribals promoting employment and incomes and entrepreneurship. TRIFED continues to work for the complete transformation of the tribal ecosystem across the country through the large-scale tribal entrepreneurship model.

Haryana

Haryana CM launches Project Air Care in Gurugram to fight pollution

- **HaryanaCM** Manohar Lal Khattar has **unveiledProjectAirCare** in Gurugramdue to **risinglevels** of **airpollution**.
- Under the **project**, **65WindAugmentationPurifyingUnits** (WAYU) will be **installed** at **around8-10locations** with **highAQIlevels** through public-private partnership.
- **WAYU** can **reducePM10by60-70%** and **PM2.5** by **30-40%** at **trafficjunctions**.

Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh CM flags off Medical Mobile Unit Jeevan Dhara

- In order to provide complete range of health care services for people living in remote and inaccessible areas of **Himachal Pradesh**, the state government flagged off **Medical Mobile Unit Jeevan Dhara**, from the Ridge in Shimla.
- The van would function as a **Mobile Primary Health Centre**. He stated free medical consultancy and screening would be provided to the patients through Jeevan Dhara Mobile Health and Wellness Centre. Jai Ram Thakur also flagged off TB Detection Vans on the occasion.
- The mobile Health and Wellness Van would have basic facilities such as diagnostic, testing facilities for various ailments. Jeevan Dhara would also have requisite drugs and supplies as prescribed for a Primary Health Centre.

HP govt launches 'Him Suraksha Abhiyan' to sensitize people about Covid-19 pandemic

- In **Himachal Pradesh**, the state government launched 'i' to sensitize the people regarding **Covid-19 pandemic** and also to collect information regarding symptoms of diseases like TB, Leprosy, sugar and blood pressure by door to door campaign throughout the State. This campaign is being launched and will continue till coming 27th December, across the State.
- While launching the program in Shimla, Chief Minister Jairam Thakur stated that not only symptomatic patients with probable Covid-19 would be detected under this campaign but patients with other ailments would also be listed through the campaign. He urged the people of the State to provide wholehearted support to the health workers by providing them accurate information about their diseases and health parameters.
- Under this Abhiyan about **8000 teams comprising of Health, Ayurveda, Women and Child Development**, Panchayati Raj Departments, District Administration and NGOs would be involved in this campaign. It would ensure door to door data collection of health parameters of the people.

Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh

Ladakh gets largest solar project at Leh IAF station

- The Union Territory of **Ladakh** has got the **largest solar power project setup** under the Centre's '**Make In India**' initiative at Leh IAF station to provide sustainable energy alternative to fossil fuel and traditional methods of energy generation.
- The project namely '**Provision of Solar Photo Voltaic Powerplant 1.5 MW**' has been completed within 12 months well before the completion deadline of March 31, 2021, a defence spokesman stated.
- "The largest solar project at a high altitude in the entire Leh in the Union Territory of Ladakh has been established at IAF Station Leh," he stated.
- It is the largest installed solar project till date out of the target of **300 MW** in three phases for defence sectors and 14 MW for Leh region as set by the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

LG Manoj Sinha releases Panchayat Newsletter "Parivartan" first ever publication in five official languages of J&K

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, the Lieutenant Governor, **Manoj Sinha** has released **Panchayat Newsletter "Parivartan"** - a first ever publication in five official languages of J&K at Raj Bhavan, Jammu.
- The LG appreciated the initiative of the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj for coming out with a publication in all the five official languages of J&K, viz **Dogri, Urdu, Kashmiri, Hindi and English**, highlighting the progress being made under **Back to Village-3** and **21 day long Jan Abhiyan programmes**. The publication in multiple languages will serve as a great tool to inform the larger population of J&K about the latest Government activities besides, a glimpse into the working of the government, stated the LG.

Karnataka

Karnataka to sign MoUs with global innovation alliance countries

- **Karnataka** has created a dedicated track for **global innovation alliance (GIA)** sessions for its flagship tech event, **Bengaluru Tech Summit**, which will be held virtually for the first time this year from November 19 to 21.
- Countries will host technology sessions for ecosystem connects, exchange of ideas and people, and deliberations on policy environment. Minister-level delegations from key GIA partner countries are expected throughout the summit.
- The track will also see government-to-government meetings and MoUs to activate projects for skilling, R&D and start-ups. **Australia, France, Germany, Israel, Netherlands, Switzerland and UK** are among the 25 countries expected to participate.

Mysuru Palace may soon have India's first sandalwood museum

- The **country's very first, sandalwood museum** is likely to come up later this month in **Mysuru in Karnataka**.
- Mysuru is already famous for its sandalwood soaps, sandalwood oil, incense sticks, etc.
- The museum has been conceptualised in a way that it will help in spreading awareness about the history and the cultivation of sandalwood products. Additionally, it will also give visitors the chance to witness the beauty and variety of the many pieces on display.
- The museum has been established by the **Mysuru Forest Division**, within its premises.

Vijayanagara to become Karnataka's 31st district

- The **Karnataka cabinet** gave in principle approval for the creation of **Vijayanagara** as the **state's 31st district**, carving it out from the mine-rich **Ballari**.
- It is named after the **Vijayanagara empire** that ruled from this region.
- A Cabinet meeting presided over by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa has decided to bifurcate Ballari and fulfil the demand of Forest and Environment Minister Anand Singh.

Karnataka aims to become a \$50-bn bio-economy by 2025

- **Karnataka** aims to become a **\$50-billion bio-economy** by doubling the **\$22.6-billion** sector in five years, stated the state government at the Bengaluru Tech Summit.
- Bio-economy, which uses renewable biological resources sustainably to produce food, energy and industrial goods, has grown by at least 14 per cent in two years in Karnataka. It contributes 10.3 per cent to the Gross State Domestic Product of \$221.82 billion.
- "Our target is to raise Karnataka's bio-economy share to 50 per cent of the national bioeconomy revenue target of \$100 billion by the year 2025," stated CN Ashwath Narayan, Karnataka's deputy chief minister and minister for electronics, IT, BT & S&T, while releasing the state's '**Bioeconomy Report 2020**'. Karnataka expects bio-economy to touch **\$42 billion** by 2025.

Bengaluru's Bowring Medical College Named After Atal Bihari Vajpayee

- The **Bowring and Lady Curzon Medical College and Research Institute** in **Bengaluru** has been named after former **Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee**.
- The institute was set up in 2018-19 on the campus of Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital in Shivajinagar in the heart of Bengaluru.
- Born on December 25, 1924, in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior, Vajpayee was the first leader from the Bharatiya Janata Party to become the Prime Minister. He served as Prime Minister thrice -- briefly in 1996, from 1998 to 1999, and

then for a full five-year term between 1999 and 2004. Among his several portfolios, Vajpayee had also served as External Affairs Minister during PM Morarji Desai's tenure during 1977 and 1979.

Haveri railway station renamed Mahadevappa Mailara Railway station

- The **Karnataka government** has issued a notification, renaming **Haveri Railway station** as **Mahadevappa Mailara Railway Station**. It has been a long-standing demand of the public and representatives from Haveri District to name the Haveri station after Mahadevappa Mailara, a freedom fighter from the district, South Western Railway stated.
- It stated, at the age of 18, he accompanied Mahatma Gandhi on the Dandi March. He sacrificed his life for the service of society and liberation of the country and his courage had inspired a large number of people, it stated. The **Ministry of Home Affairs** had given no objection to changing the name of Haveri railway station as Mahadevappa Mailara Railway Station.

Kerala

India's first solar-powered miniature train launched at Veli Tourist Village in Kerala

- A **solar energy-driven miniature train**, billed as the **country's first of its kind**, was inaugurated at the **Veli Tourist Village** by Kerala Chief Minister **Pinarayi Vijayan**.
- Vijayan also dedicated an **"Urban Park" and a swimming pool** at the eco-friendly tourist village, located on the outskirts of the state capital where the Veli Lake meets the Arabian Sea.
- The miniature rail has all the features of a fully- equipped rail system, including a tunnel, station and a ticket office. The train has three bogies that can accommodate around 45 people at a time.
- The government had allotted around Rs 120 crore for tourism sector. Of these, administrative sanction has been given to Rs 60 crore worth projects at Veli itself.

Kerala launches "Parivarthanam" scheme for better livelihood of fisherfolk

- A pioneering eco-sustainable programme **Parivarthanam**, to help the fishing community was launched, aiming to improve the **livelihood skills of youngsters along the coastline** and also enable socio-economic uplift of the fishermen community.
- Conceived to manage the states aquatic and agricultural products through intelligent use of human resources, the scheme will promote processing and marketing of clean fish and its fresh products.
- Finance Minister Dr T M Thomas Isaac also released a book on the project.
- **Parivarthanam, which means change**, will be spearheaded by **Kerala State Coastal Area Development Corporation (KSCADC)**.
- It is to provide jobs to college dropouts and migrant workforce returning home due to Covid-19, the scheme envisages a rapid improvement in the standard of living of the states fisher communities by encouraging entrepreneurship.
- Parivarthanam will also guarantee a fixed price to fish-catchers as a fair compensation.
- Besides the state-run KSCADC, the Union governments **Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT)** will monitor procurement and processing of fish besides ensuring its quality.
- Fishworkers will also be trained to handle facilities for frozen fish. Tie-ups with local aqua farms will guarantee supply of fish without break.

Kottor Elephant Rehabilitation Centre Set To Become Largest Care Centre In The World

- The **Elephant Rehabilitation Centre** at **Kottoor** in **Thiruvananthapuram** is set to become the **largest care and cure centre for elephants** in the world.
- The first phase of the Elephant Rehabilitation Centre will be commissioned in February 2021. The project is being implemented at a cost of **Rs 108 crore** with funding from **Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB)**. The centre has facilities to accommodate 50 elephants including the existing 16 elephants.
- The project will also include the construction of **various reservoirs and check dams** at the **Neyyar Dam** and also special facilities for the care of elephant calves. The aim of the centre is to give elephants a natural ecosystem just like in the forest.
- The centre will also have an elephant museum, a veterinary hospital with super speciality facilities, a study and research centre for nature lovers and students, a training centre for mahouts, an entrance plaza, an administrative office, parking for visitors, a cafeteria, cottages, a toilet block and a special elephant viewing facility.
- The project is also expected to generate job opportunities for the locals and adivasis living in the nearby forest areas will be given priority in the employment at the centre. Kottur is expected to become a major site for tourists after the completion of this project.

Madhya Pradesh

CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan to release roadmap-2023 of Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh

- In Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will release a roadmap-**2023 of Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh** in Bhopal. Chief Executive Officer of NITI Aayog Amitabh Kant will also participate in the programme.
- **Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country**, which has prepared a roadmap for Atmanirbhar State in consultation with various subject experts in accordance with the strategy of Atmanirbhar Bharat as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The roadmap for Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh has been focused on four core areas - infrastructure, good governance, health and education and economy and employment.

Madhya Pradesh launches unique initiative- local4Diwali hashtag

- In **Madhya Pradesh**, the **Handicrafts Development Corporation** has launched a unique **initiative- local4Diwali hashtag** under the **'Vocal for Local'** campaign in the festive season. The objective of this campaign is to encourage the products of local artisans to make them self-reliant.
- The sale of locally produced earthen lamps, cotton and silk handloom textiles is being promoted by the Handicrafts Development Corporation under the Local4Diwali hashtag.
- Managing Director of Madhya Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation Rajiv Sharma has stated that the Local4Diwali has been shared by the Madhya Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation in all social media platforms to increase sales of local products on social media.
- The corporation is also organizing Deepotsav Melas, a fair on Diwali in Bhopal, Gwalior, Jabalpur, Indore and Sagar. Following the COVID-19 protocol, handicrafts and weavers of the state are selling their products in these fairs

Survey of vulture habitats starts in Madhya Pradesh

- **Vultures** have always been considered an important part of the Ecosystem. However, their number has decreased considerably in the last few years. At present, survey of vulture habitats has started in **Madhya Pradesh** for how many vultures are left and what measures should be taken for their protection.

- Survey of vulture habitats, considered an important part of Ecosystem, has started in **Madhya Pradesh**. According to Wildlife Headquarters, after this survey, the vultures will be counted in the state. For this work, Van Vihar National Park of Bhopal has been made the nodal agency.
- Van Vihar officials stated that the vultures are counted every **four years**. After the year 2018, now their count will start from the **first week of February** next year. After counting the vultures, a review will be made about their conservation and improvement in habitat.

Tribal Welfare Dept to be changed to Tribal Affairs Dept: Madhya Pradesh CM

- In **Madhya Pradesh**, the name of **the Tribal Welfare Department** will be changed to **Tribal Affairs Department**. This was announced by the Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan at a program organized on the birth anniversary of martyr **Birsa Munda** at the **Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum** in the capital **Bhopal**.
- In the programme, Ranbankure, a short film based on self-esteem of tribal genitals and released a folder. Significantly, Birsamunda fought with the British for the protection of the rights of the tribes. The work area of Birsa Munda is now Chotanagpur plateau, Jharkhand and Madhya Bharat is now Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Birsa Munda's birthday is celebrated every year on **15 November** in **Madhya Pradesh** to commemorate his contribution in the freedom struggle.

MP govt forms 'cow cabinet' for protection and promotion of cattle

- **Madhya Pradesh** government has announced the **first of its kind cow cabinet** for the protection of cows.
- The state government stated that Animal Husbandry, Forest, Panchayat and Rural Development, Revenue, Home and Farmers Welfare Department will be part of the cabinet.
- The amended law brought changes to the previous **cow slaughter Act 2004** passed by the BJP government.
- The amendment had been made in order to curb the growing instances of violence in the name of protecting the cow, as per media reports.

RPF starts awareness drive 'Meri Saheli' to provide better safety & security to women passengers in Madhya Pradesh

- **Railway Protection Force (RPF)** has started an intensive awareness drive called '**Meri Saheli**' aiming to provide better safety and security to women passengers in **Madhya Pradesh** also. 'Meri Saheli' initiative was launched in order to boost the security of female passengers during their journey.
- To provide proactive security to female passengers, a team of Lady Constables led by an Inspector has been formed in most of the stations including Bhopal, Jabalpur and Itarsi.
- The passengers are also being informed about **RPF Helpline No-182** for emergency and for instant help from RPF. The Mobile number of the Security Control of Bhopal division is too shared with the female passengers.
- Moreover, all the ladies including the other traveling passengers have been requested to wear masks properly to avoid spreading of COVID-19. The drive is part of an ongoing initiative to facilitate female passengers in an environment in which they feel safe, secure and comfortable during their journey.

Martyr Birsa Munda's birth anniversary will be celebrated as "Tribal Pride Day"

- **Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan** has taken the decision to celebrate the **birth anniversary of Martyr Birsa Munda** as "**Tribal Pride Day**" in the state.
- "**Tribal Pride Day**" will be celebrated on **November 15th** at all district headquarters including Bhopal.
- The programme to be organized on the birth anniversary of Martyr Birsa Munda in the **Tribal Museum of Bhopal**.
- The event which is to be organized under the joint aegis of the Department of Culture and the Tribal Welfare Department, will have special programmes to pay tribute to the tribal heroes and remember their contribution.

- Besides, special programmes should also be organized in the honour of the tribal freedom struggle fighters.

Madhya Pradesh: Digital museum opens at Maharaj Bada in Gwalior

- In **Madhya Pradesh**, a **digital museum** has been opened at **Maharaj Bada in Gwalior** for the public. The museum is developed by Gwalior Smart City and entry for the public is being made free for a few days.
- It is the first center of its kind in Gwalior and Bundelkhand area and will play a role in educating school students. In the Digital Museum, the architectural styles, objects, costumes, lifestyle, musical instruments, jewelry, handicrafts, cultural tradition, painting and many genres of paintings have been digitally displayed in a modern way.
- Divided into 16 galleries, Digital Museum has been built in around 3500 square feet area and will play an important role in showcasing heritage in modern and Digital way. Tourists will be able to see the history, instruments, jewelry, handicrafts and other things of Gwalior adorned in various galleries using state-of-the-art IT equipment.

Madhya Pradesh conducts 'Poshit Parivar-Suposhit Madhya Pradesh' campaign in all districts

- In **Madhya Pradesh**, a community-based nutrition management programme of very severely malnourished children is being conducted in all districts under the nurtured families - well nurtured Madhya Pradesh i.e. **'Poshit Parivar-Suposhit Madhya Pradesh'** campaign.
- Under this campaign, very serious malnourished children are identified and after **12 weeks or 3 months** of continuous effort after their registration, they are brought to normal nutrition level.
- Under this, the first installment will be given to such families whose children have fallen from very severe malnourished category to moderate malnutrition category.
- Similarly, the second installment will be given only when the children improve their nutritional level from the category of moderate malnutrition to normal nutrition level.
- Apart from this, other health services related to the child such as getting vaccinated according to the age, beginning of solid food after 6 months as per standard guidelines, family health and level of nutritional education will also be assessed.

"Tigress on the Trail": Madhya Pradesh CM to flag off team of women bikers from Bhopal

- In **Madhya Pradesh**, with the objective of promoting adventure and safe tourism for women, the first and unique adventurous motorcycle trip is starting in the state.
- 15 eminent women bikers from all over the country will visit various tourist spots of the state under this journey named **"Tigress on the trail"**.
- In this journey of 1500 km, these bikers will travel to Madhi, Pench, Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Panna and Khajuraho and finally return to Bhopal on 25 November.
- Principal Secretary of tourism department Shiv Shekhar Shukla informed that the purpose of this event is to convince all tourists that Madhya Pradesh is completely safe for tourists and especially for single women tourists.
- Meanwhile, for the first time the tourism cabinet has been formed to promote tourism in the state. The Chief Minister is the chairman of this cabinet while four ministers have been inducted as members.

Maharashtra

Maharashtra Schools to celebrate November 8 to 14 as Children's week

- Ahead of **Children's Day on November 14**, the **Maharashtra state education department** has asked schools in the state to celebrate **Children's week between November 8 and 14**.
- As part of the initiative, schools have to conduct activities and upload photographs of celebrations conducted online.

- During the week, various competitions such as essay writing, elocution and video making will be organised for students by the schools. The education department has also announced prizes in each category for students between Classes 1 and 12.

CJI inaugurates e-resource centre, virtual court in Nagpur

- **Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde**, along with **Justice D.Y. Chandrachud** of the Supreme Court, inaugurated the **first ever e-resource centre and virtual court for traffic and transport** to enable speedy justice for litigants, called '**Nyay Kaushal**', at Nagpur.
- The centre will provide the easiest way of filing court matters by utilising technology. It will provide benefits in saving time, avoidance of exertion, travelling long distances, and a saving in costs.
- The virtual court can deal with all traffic challan cases from every corner of Maharashtra online. It will be possible for the litigants to pay the fine and get the traffic challan case disposed of with the click of a button on a smartphone or a computer. The virtual court will be working from Katol in Nagpur district. Judges across the country have to attend the programme online.
- **Delhi was the first to start virtual traffic courts across India**, with almost 27,00,000 challans received by the virtual courts, and Rs.19.8 crore collected by the government online.

Maha govt inks Rs 35,000-crore MoUs with 15 companies

- The **Maharashtra government** inked MoUs worth around **Rs 35,000 crore** with **15 companies** even as Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray called for attracting over Rs 1 lakh crore investments this year to the state.
- Thackeray made the remarks during the Magnetic Maharashtra 2.0 event, which seeks to mobilise investments in the state.
- The MoUs worth Rs 34,850 crore were signed between the state-run **Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC)** and the 15 companies and they are expected to create 23,182 jobs, a statement stated.
- Thackeray stated the government had signed MoUs with other companies in June this year and added it has been fulfilling most requirements pertaining to those.
- Sixty per cent of the companies have got land allotted and the rest are in the process of final allocation, he added.

Maharashtra to observe National Unity Week from Nov 19 to 25

- **Maharashtra** will observe the **National Unity Week** from **19th to 25th of November**. Minister for Skill Development and Minority Development Nawab Malik appealed that in order to increase social harmony in the state, everyone should participate in this programme.
- He stated, instructions have been given to all the government agencies including all the Divisional Commissioners, Collectors, Chief Executive Officers of Zilla Parishads to conduct various programs with due care to prevent spread of corona infection.
- Mr Malik stated, emphasis should be laid on the **15-point programme** for the welfare of minorities, as well as on the backdrop of COVID-19 and as per the guidelines of the Central and State Governments processions should not be held this year.

Lonar Lake in Maharashtra's Buldhana district chosen as 'Ramsar site'

- The **Lonar Lake** in **Maharashtra's Buldhana district** has been chosen as a **wetland site** of international importance under the **Ramsar conservation treaty**.
- Lonar Lake was formed by the impact of a meteorite on basalt bedrock several thousand years ago.

- Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention (held for the first time in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971), which aims to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands.
- In January, **Maharashtra** got its **first Ramsar site** at **Nandur Madhmeshwar, in Nashik**.
- The lake was first proposed as a Ramsar site in 2017 by the state forest department.

Maharashtra: First solar power-enabled Textile Mill in Asia to come up in Parbhani district

- In **Maharashtra**, the first solar power-enabled **Textile Mill** in **Asia** is coming up in **Parbhani district**. The project, once functional, will provide jobs to many women in the district.
- The **Jai Bhawani women's cooperative textile mill** will be the first in Asia that will operate on solar power. Spread across thirty acres of land the mill will process cotton to cloth.
- Ginning, pressing, weaving and spinning of cotton will be done in the mill. Dr. Patil stated, the cost of the project is 100 crore rupees and with the operationalization of the mill it will certainly give momentum to the industrial sector in the district.

Maharashtra Government To Pay Stipend To ST Candidates Preparing For UPSC Exams

- **Maharashtra government** has decided to **pay stipend** to **scheduled tribe (ST) candidates** who are **preparing for UPSC exams**.
- Under this financial assistance scheme stipend will be given to candidates who will appear for the Civil Services main exam and interview.
- Under this scheme, **each candidate** will be provided **Rs. 12,000 per month**. Additionally, **Rs. 26,000** will also be provided to the candidate **for purchasing books**.
- The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) conducts the Civil Services exam every year for selection to Indian Administrative Services (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) among other civil services.

Manipur

Manipur introduces award for civil servants to promote good governance

- **Manipur** introduced "**Scheme for Chief Minister's Award for Good Governance**" to recognise and reward innovative and extraordinary work done by government officials that promotes **good governance**.
- Under the scheme, **government servants** will be rewarded for outstanding and exemplary performance and projects whose qualitative and quantitative outcomes are of a very high order and which have benefitted a large number of citizens and stakeholders.
- The award will be given every year to an individual or a team to the administrative secretaries, deputy commissioners, heads of department, heads of engineering departments (CEs or equivalent) and to any official or department. The award will include a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh for the individual category and Rs 2 lakh for group category.

Meghalaya

India International Cherry Blossom Festival in Shillong cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic

- **India International Cherry Blossom Festival**, the calendar event of **Meghalaya** which attracts record number of tourists annually in **Shillong**, has been cancelled this year in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. The capital, Shillong hosts the only Cherry Blossoms festival in India.
- These beautiful flowers can be spotted across Meghalaya during this time of the year.

- It is expected that the flowers will continue to bloom till the end of November. But people of Meghalaya celebrate festivals through virtual mode. The beautiful hill station Shillong in Meghalaya has turned pink with blooming cherry blossoms.
- Every year, the Cherry Blossom Festival in Shillong hosts a plethora of events like fitness art, fashion show, rock concerts and much more. This time, the pomp and fervour of the festival will be missed. Due to the COVID -19 pandemic, the Cherry Blossom Festival held annually in Shillong has been cancelled this year.

Nagaland

Nagaland's Hornbill Festival to be celebrated virtually amid pandemic

- The **Nagaland government** has decided to celebrate the popular **Hornbill festival** virtually this year, amid the surge in COVID-19 cases in the country.
- The department of tourism stated the annual festival would be observed over audiovisual media channels and social media platforms this time, and people can enjoy the tribal dance performances sitting at home.
- The content for the online programme will be sourced from government archives, it stated.
- Hornbill Festival, held every year from December 1 to 10, showcases the culture, heritage, food and customs of Naga tribes at Kisama village.
- Sixteen tribes come together to celebrate their traditions with colourful dance performances. Tourists from across the globe attend the 10-day gala.

North Police Station in Kohima receives an ISO certification

- **North Police Station Kohima** in Nagaland has been awarded an **ISO certification**. The Police station is located in the heart of Kohima Town which was the **first established police station** under Naga Hills district by the British Regime in the year 1933. Presently, the North Police station is headed by an Inspector rank officer-in-charge and 88 other ranks.
- It has been awarded **ISO 9001:2015 certification** on meeting the specified parameters of Quality Management System on policing and related scope of activities which includes maintenance of public peace, law and order, prevention, detection and investigation of crime and criminal activities, emergency response, VIP Security and prevention of human trafficking.

Odisha

Odisha government adds fish nutrition to anganwadi diet chart

- **Odisha government** introduced **fish and fish-based products** in **Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP)** on a pilot basis in order to **reduce malnutrition** among the vulnerable people in the hard to reach areas of the State.
- Initially, the fish based products will be added in the SNP diet chart for children, aged between three and six years, pregnant and nursing women and adolescent girls in 50 Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) of **Mayurbhanj district**.
- The **Department of Women and Child Development** and **Mission Shakti (WCD&MS)** inked a pact with **WorldFish** for a **five-year technical collaboration** to pilot and scale it up as part of the SNP. The **US Agency for International Development (USAID)** is supporting the pilot project.
- As per the initiative, dried fish products will be provided in the Take Home Ration (THR) to adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women for six months. It will be scaled up on the basis of the outcome.
- WorldFish will provide technical support for the initiative and improve the livelihoods of women and local communities through fish and aquatic foods.

Odisha Assembly passes 'Odisha Essential Services (Maintenance) Amendment Bill-2020'

- **Odisha Essential Services (Maintenance) Amendment Bill-2020** was passed by the state assembly. The bill seeks to amend the existing Act of **1988** to prohibit strikes by employees of essential services in the state.
- Expanding the ambit of essential services, the bill includes services like fire service, excise, forest, prison reforms, electronics and Information and Communication departments.
- According to the provisions of the amended bill, persons resorting to or found instigating or funding illegal strikes may face imprisonment upto **one year or a fine upto Rs. five thousand** or both.
- While the opposition alleged the amendment was an attempt to suppress the voice of workers, the government defended it as a move so that citizens are not deprived of essential services.
- Trade unions too have opposed it as a ploy to divest the workers of their democratic right to protest.

Punjab

Punjab to launch special scheme for physically challenged

- The Punjab state cabinet cleared a new scheme, the **Punjab Divyangjan Shaktikaran Yojna (PDSY)**, to be implemented in a phased manner with the first phase of the scheme aimed at strengthening the existing programmes to ensure their benefits reach people with disabilities.
- This was decided at a virtual cabinet meeting chaired by **chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh in Chandigarh**.
- In Phase-I, the scheme will focus on providing PwDs the benefits of existing schemes being run by government departments, covering services, benefits and rights in respect of healthcare, education, employment, safety and dignity in all spheres of life.
- Phase-II of the PDSY shall have new initiatives and programmes to cover those aspects and needs which have not been covered under any existing centrally/state sponsored scheme or PwD-oriented schemes by different departments.
- The scheme focuses on convergence and integration of existing schemes and programmes to maximise their benefit for PwDs.
- In Phase-II, the 13 interventions include the treatment on suffering disability, mobility aids and assistive devices, five days of special leave in a calendar year, free education, empowerment of disabled girl students, recreational activities, home schooling for children with special needs, and state award for outstanding work done by teachers with disability.

Rajasthan

8000MW renewable park to light up India-Pak border areas in Rajasthan

- India's border areas with Pakistan in **Rajasthan** would soon be illuminated with renewable energy as the state government will soon ink an MoU with **National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC)** and **Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI)** to establish **Ultra Mega Renewal Energy Power Park**, government officials stated.
- The park to be set up near borders areas will be of **8,000 megawatts (MW) capacity**, which will comprise 4,310 MW of wind energy; 3,760 MW of solar energy and 120 MW of power from biomass. Currently, Rajasthan's solar generation capacity is 4,883 MW.

- The Rajasthan Renewable Energy Corporation Limited (RRECL) would be signing a separate MoU with the NTPC and the SECI to materialise the Gol Mega Power Park project. Rajasthan has over 1000 kilometre-long international border which is currently supplied power through traditional methods.
- The **Rajasthan government** had also approved a proposal for setting up solar power parks to generate 10,000 MW green energy with an investment of **Rs 50,000 crore**.
- The state has given nod to the proposal of **Adani Green Energy Limited** to set up solar power parks at five locations and a solar panel manufacturing unit which will generate around 7,500 direct and indirect jobs, the officials stated.

Rajasthan govt to give Rs 6,000 to women becoming mothers for second time

- Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot stated **Rs 6,000** will be given to women becoming mothers for the second time under a new government scheme. He stated the beneficiary women will get the amount directly in their bank accounts in **five phases**.
- The scheme will not only help fight malnutrition, but will also increase awareness among the people about the importance of a mother's health and her nutrition level for proper development of children, he stated in a statement.
- Presently, the scheme has been started in four most backward TSP districts of the state i.e. Udaipur, Banswara, Dungarpur and Pratapgarh, based on the rankings of Mother & Child Nutrition indicators.
- There will be an annual expenditure of **Rs 43 crore** for the scheme, according to the statement.
- Woman and Child Development Minister Mamta Bhupesh stated the objective of the **Indira Gandhi Matritva Poshan Yojana** is to improve the nutrition level of pregnant women and children up to the age of three years

Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu fisherman starts India's first radio channel exclusively for fisherfolk

- A fisherman from the Ramanathapuram district's Pamban town has started '**Kadal Osai FM 90.4**', India's first and only radio channel for fisherfolk.
- It offers infotainment to listeners - from information on marine and COVID-19 to folk songs sung by fishermen/women and film songs.
- **Armstrong Fernando**, a fisherman from Pamban used to listen to the radio since his childhood. Fernando has studied till 8th standard, he grew up in the industry and travelled to various places to listen to the community radio for farmers. Later, he planned to start a radio for his fishing community.

Tamil Nadu, HCL to set up disaster management analytics centre

- **Tamil Nadu government** and **HCL** will set up a **Disaster Management – Data Analytics Centre** to strengthen the **State's disaster management efforts** in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, stated Industry Minister MC Sampath.
- Technology has brought about ease of living, and the State government's efforts are to ensure that the advantages of technology are available to all sections of the society, he stated at a CII conference on 'Intelligent Industries' on the theme Transformation through Digitalisation.
- The State government's intent to focus on digitisation is evident from various initiatives, including the recent MoUs signed to set up data centre parks in Chennai. Six companies have committed to invest over **.Rs.12,000 crore** in setting data centre hubs in Chennai, he stated.
- Data centres are crucial to cater to the increasing demand for cloud services and digital content consumption across the country, and it serves as an important pillar in our overall digital infrastructure, he added.

- The State government implemented an end-to-end online single window system for large Industries in 2017 and MSMEs in 2018, covering 39 services required by the industries, he stated.

Puducherry govt rolls out free breakfast scheme for school students named after Karunanidhi

- **The Congress-ruled Puducherry** rolled out a **free breakfast scheme for school students named after the late DMK President M Karunanidhi**.
- Karunanidhi, a former Chief Minister of neighbouring Tamil Nadu, was keenly interested in development of Puducherry and more particularly the downtrodden and marginalised section.
- Senior DMK leader and Rajya Sabha member from Tamil Nadu, RS Bharathi, formally inaugurated the **“Dr Kalaingar Mu Karunanidhi Kaalai Sitrundi Thittam” (Dr Kalaingar M Karunanidhi breakfast scheme)** that will benefit about 80,000 students in 419 government and aided institutions.

Telangana

COVID-19 testing laboratory inaugurated at Rajiv Gandhi Intl Airport in Hyderabad

- **In Telangana**, a **COVID-19 testing laboratory** has been set up at the **Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad**. State Health Minister E. Rajender inaugurated the lab.
- The airport has partnered with an **ICMR-certified laboratory** called, **Mapmygenome**, for setting up the laboratory, which will operate 24/7 for passengers and airport personnel.
- The authorities informed on the occasion, that passengers can avail the testing facility at the immigration level of the forecourt of the Interim International Departures Terminal.
- The tests will be **RT-PCR based**, with the help of swabs and result will be available in four to six hours via e-mail and WhatsApp or a hard copy of the report will also be provided.
- A lounge has been created at Arrivals for the passengers who can wait to collect their report. COVID Testing Centre at the airport is expected to play a key role in enabling resumption of air travel and instill confidence among people about safe travel.

KTR launches TS-bPASS, simplifies building clearance

- **Telangana Municipal Administration** Minister KT Rama Rao has launched the **TS-bPASS initiative**.
- **TS-bPASS** provides an instant approval for buildings in plots of **above 75 sq yards** and upto 600 sq yards, based on self certification.
- After the formal launch, he handed over the building permission copies to the citizens who availed the services of TS-bPASS initiative. The TS-bPASS exclusively for building approvals is similar to **TS-iPASS**, a single window approval system for **industries**.
- He stated that about 43 per cent population in Telangana lives in towns and cities and the urban population will increase over the years. This initiative will be useful for people. He appealed to people not to break the trust by registering illegal or encroached constructions under self certification initiative.

India's first IoT enabled Smart Trolleys at GMR Hyderabad International Airport

- **GMR Hyderabad International Airport** has gone **digital** by envisioning an airport platform using the **Internet of Things (IoT)**. Walking on the steps of the Government of India's flagship **Digital India Programme**, it has modified its services and operations making Hyderabad a harbinger of Smart Airport City.
- The GMR Hyderabad has deployed '**IoT enabled smart baggage trolleys**', for the comfort of passengers. It will make it easier for the passengers to track and maintain the baggage trolleys in real-time across the airport.

- The GHIAL has installed **LoRa (Long Range) IoT platform** for the project of **Airport Baggage Trolley**. The IoT technology adapted for a total of 3000 baggage trolleys will reduce the passenger waiting time substantially.
- Trolley management and replenishment will be done on the basis of the requirement at various areas across the airport, thus increasing efficiency and making the whole process smoother enhancing the experience of the passenger.

Uttar Pradesh

UP govt passes ordinance to ban unlawful religious conversions for marriage

- **Uttar Pradesh government** has passed an ordinance to ban **unlawful religious conversions** for marriage. Unlawful conversion for the sake of getting married through force, deceit, undue pressure or by way of alluring into marriage will come into category of non-bailable offence and can lead to imprisonment of a maximum of 10 years and penalty of 50 thousand rupees.
- The **Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance, 2020**, recommends 1-5 years imprisonment if an accused fails to prove that the conversion of the woman was not for marriage or by use of force, deceit and allurement. The jail sentence for the offence would be 3-10 years if the woman is from the Scheduled cast, Scheduled Tribe community or is seen as part of mass conversion.

Ayodhya Airport to be renamed as Maryada Purushottam Sri Ram Airport, Yogi Adityanath govt decides

- **Uttar Pradesh** Cabinet led by Chief Minister **Yogi Adityanath** has cleared the proposal to rename the **Ayodhya airport** as **Maryada Purushottam Sri Ram Airport, Ayodhya**. The **Uttar Pradesh Government** stated that the state cabinet had cleared the proposal to name the airport in Ayodhya as Maryada Purushottam Shriram Airport, Ayodhya.
- This decision was taken to bring this proposal for passage in the UP Legislative Assembly, and send it to the Union Civil Aviation Ministry.

Keetham lake in Uttar Pradesh added to list of recognised sites under Ramsar Convention

- **India has 41 wetlands**, the **highest in South Asia**, with **two more added** to the list of recognised sites of international importance under the treaty of Ramsar Convention.
- The **Lonar lake in Maharashtra** and **Sur Sarovar**, also known as **Keetham lake**, in Agra, have been added to the list of recognised Ramsar sites.
- The **Asan Conservation Reserve** in Dehradun, the first wetland from Uttarakhand to be recognised by Ramsar convention, was added to the list in October this year.
- The other 38 Ramsar sites in India include Chilika Lake in Odisha, Keoladeo National Park in Rajasthan, Harike Lake in Punjab, Loktak Lake in Manipur and Wular Lake in Jammu and Kashmir.

Uttar Pradesh government imposes ESMA for six months

- **Uttar Pradesh government** has imposed **Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA)** in the state. The order released in this regard says that the act will be imposed for 6 months.
- As per the U.P ESMA, the state government now has the power to prohibit strikes in workplaces for the next six months, after which it may be extended for another six months.
- Last time the act was imposed in the state on 22nd May this year and the time period of six months has expired.

UP Government Okays Ambitious Ganga Expressway Project Worth Rs. 36,402 Crore

- The **Uttar Pradesh government** has approved an **ambitious 594-km Ganga Expressway** project worth **Rs. 36,402 crore** running along the river from **Haridwar to Allahabad**.

- The decision to build the expressway between the two cities on the riverbank while running through Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao and Rae Bareilly was taken in a UP Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.
- The Cabinet also approved a district-wise alignment of the Expressway. The government also decided to monetise the **Agra-Lucknow Expressway** for funding the ambitious Ganga Expressway project and decided to set up a high-power committee to take procedural and operational decisions to monetise the Agra-Lucknow Expressway.
- For the implementation of the road project along the Ganga, it was decided that funds will be withdrawn from the treasury after the money raised from the monetisation of the Agra-Lucknow Expressway has been deposited.

International bird festival to be organized in Gorakhpur

- **Gorakhpur** is all set to host the **International Bird Festival** in the month of **February**. The main focus of the government is eco-tourism, as there is a lot of potential for **eco-tourism in Gorakhpur** and the surrounding Terai region. It will be attracting many international tourists at Ramagarhatal Lake for bird watching.
- The International Bird Festival was first launched in a bid to promote the state as an international bird-watching destination.
- The first zoological park of **Purvanchal** in Gorakhpur with a focus on keeping it so beautiful that any tourist, who would visit Kushinagar will definitely choose to visit the zoo of Gorakhpur as well.
- The Bird Festival that is going to be organized by the government in the month of February will be certainly giving an uplift to eco-tourism in the area. It will be developing Gorakhpur as a hub of eco-tourism where tourists from international level will arrive

PM Modi launches 'Har Ghar Nal Yojna', 3,000 villages in Uttar Pradesh to benefit

- Prime minister **Narendra Modi** launched 'Har Ghar Nal Yojna' (tap water to every household), for **Sonbhadra** and **Mirzapur** in Vindhya region of **Uttar Pradesh** via video conference, while chief minister Yogi Adityanath was present in Sonbhadra.
- The scheme worth **Rs 5,555.38 crore** is aimed at providing water to over **41 lakh villagers** in two districts.
- Under 'Har Ghar Nal Yojna', Yogi Adityanath government will ensure water supply through pipelines to 2,995 villages in two districts in the region.
- The scheme will benefit 21,87,980 villagers in Mirzapur. In Sonbhadra, 19,53,458 families will be benefitted by the scheme. The water of lakes and river will be purified and supplied to the families in Sonbhadra.
- Rs 3212.18 crore and Rs 2343.20 crore will be spent under the scheme in Sonbhadra and Mirzapur respectively. The total cost of the scheme is Rs 5555.38 crore.

Uttarakhand

Dehradun Municipal Corporation launcheds Plastic Lao MASK LE JAO initiative

- In **Dehradun**, the Municipal Corporation has launched an initiative named **Plastic Lao MASK LE JAO** to fight against the menace of plastic waste and contain the spread of Covid-19. It has distributed **Five thousand face masks** in exchange for plastic waste.
- Municipal commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey, who was the first to bring plastic waste from his house and get a face mask, stated that it will create awareness in the public against plastic waste and also the importance of masks.

U'khand CM Inaugurates Dobra-Chanthi Suspension Bridge In Tehri-Garhwal

- **Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat** inaugurated the **725-metre** long **Dobra-Chanthi suspension bridge** in **Tehri-Garhwal district**.
- This project is the **longest motorable single lane suspension bridge in India**.
- The bridge, opened for the public, has been built in 14 years over the **Tehri lake** with a cost of **₹ 2.95 crore**. It would help connect **Pratap Nagar town with Tehri Garhwal district** headquarters.

Country's first moss garden comes up in Uttarakhand's Nainital district

- The **Uttarakhand forest department** dedicated the newly-built **Moss Garden** to the people, claiming that it is the country's **first such garden**, spread over 10 hectares in Kumaon's Nainital district.
- The moss garden, which took nearly a year to build, was inaugurated by **Water Man of India Rajendra Singh**.
- Last year, the state forest department had approved research projects to study moss species, considered the most significant indicator of ecosystem fluctuations as they are more sensitive towards habitat and climate changes.
- Of the 2,300 moss species found in India, 339 are found in Uttarakhand according to experts. Mosses are non-vascular plants that belong to Bryophyta division. They are small flowerless plants that typically grow in damp and shady locations. They play a very important role in maintaining and developing the ecosystem and biodiversity including soil formation, water retention, checking erosion and acting as nutrient sink.

Uttarakhand wildlife board clears proposal to de-notify elephant reserve

- The **Uttarakhand State Wildlife Advisory Board** approved the de-notification of **Shivalik Elephant Reserve** as an **elephant reserve** to pave way for the expansion of the **Dehradun airport project**, stated forest officials.
- Harak Singh Rawat, state forest minister, stated, "The state wildlife board, during its 16th meeting, approved the de-notification of Shivalik Elephant Reserve as there is no law to define an elephant reserve. In the late 90s and early 2000, the state government had sent a proposal to the Centre seeking a clarification regarding the stated area, after which it was notified as an elephant reserve in 2002. But as per the norms of the central government, there is no law or Act yet under which the legal status of an elephant reserve is defined."
- In September, the state government wrote to the union environment ministry for obtaining prior approval under **Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980** for non-forestry use of 87.0815 hectares of forest land for "expansion of the Jolly Grant Airport." This land is within the Shivalik Elephant Reserve. Officials estimate that about 10,000 trees will be cut for the expansion.

West Bengal

From Waste to Art: In Kolkata, a park decked up with used tyres

- **Kolkata** is set to get a **unique art installation** – a park decked up with used tyres at Esplanade area of the city. The "**Tyre Park**" has been conceived and developed by the West Bengal Transport Corporation.
- "The idea behind the park is that waste can be converted into art. Nothing is waste and can be art and that is a message with which a unique Tyre Park is coming up in Kolkata," an official with the transport corporation stated.
- Workers and artists are working round the clock in the park to give finishing touches to the installation. Disposal of used tyres poses a major challenge and tyres usually pile up at bus depots in the state.

World's First Tramcar For Young Readers in Kolkata

- The **world's first library for children** on a **tram** would be launched in **Kolkata** on Children's Day, which is celebrated to commemorate first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's birth anniversary.

- The **Kolkata Young Reader's Tramcar** has been jointly developed by the **West Bengal Transport Corporation (WBTC)** and **Apeejay Anand Children's Library** and will have around 1,000 books.
- The tram would run on **Shyambazar-Esplanade** and **Esplanade-Gariahat routes**, spanning across North and South Kolkata.
- The beautiful library on wheels decorated with attractive artworks of children reading, hand painted by local artists housing books across genres for young readers adorning its shelves rolled on its first trip to encourage and inspire children to read and experience the joy of reading.
- Yearlong activities for children on board the tramcar, such as story telling dramatised readings, poetry sessions, book launches, music and more are also on the cards, to captivate young minds.
- Entry is free for children. Only parents accompanying their children will have to pay normal tram fares to board it.
- Earlier in September India's first library on tram was launched in Kolkata with a wide range of books including those for competitive exams. A similar effort was earlier initiated at Brno in the Czech Republic.

West Bengal govt accepts expert panel's recommendation to reduce syllabus for classes 10th and 12th for 2020-21

- The **West Bengal government** has accepted the recommendations of **an expert panel** to reduce the curriculum at **secondary and higher secondary levels** due to the pandemic, Education Minister Partha Chatterjee stated.
- The syllabus reforms committee, the secondary board and higher secondary councils have suggested changes in **the Madhyamik (class 10)** and **Uchha Madhyamik (class 12)** curriculum for the 2020-21 academic year due to the COVID-19 situation.
- An official of the syllabus reforms committee stated, there will be a **30-35 per cent** cut in the course load at the secondary and higher secondary levels.

Revision Points

State	Capital	Chief Minister	Governor
Andhra Pradesh	Visakhapatnam (Executive) Amaravati (Legislative) Kurnool (Judicial)	Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy	BiswaBhusanHarichandan
Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar	Pema Khandu	Brigadier BD Mishra
Assam	Dispur	SarabanandaSonowal	Jagdish Mukhi
Bihar	Patna	Nitish Kumar	Phagu Chauhan
Chhattisgarh	Raipur	Bhupesh Baghel	AnusuiyaUikey
Goa	Panaji	Pramod Sawant	Bhagat Singh Koshyari (Additional Charge)
Gujarat	Gandhi Nagar	Vijaybhai R. Rupani	Acharya Dev Vrat
Haryana	Chandigarh	Manohar Lal Khattar	Satyadeo Narain Arya

Himachal Pradesh	Shimla	Jai Ram Thakur	Bandaru Dattatraya
Jharkhand	Ranchi	Hemant Soren	Droupadi Murmu
Karnataka	Bengaluru	B S Yediyurappa	Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala
Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram	Pinarayi Vijayan	Arif Mohammed Khan
Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	Shivraj Singh Chouhan	Anandiben Patel
Maharashtra	Mumbai	Uddhav Thackrey	Bhagat Singh Koshyari
Manipur	Imphal	N Biren Singh	Najma Heptulla
Meghalaya	Shillong	Conrad Sangma	Satya Pal Malik
Mizoram	Aizawl	Pu Zoramthanga	P S Sreedharan Pillai
Nagaland	Kohima	Neiphiu Rio	RN Ravi
Odisha	Bhubaneshwar	Naveen Patnaik	Ganeshi Lal
Punjab	Chandigarh	Amarinder Singh	V P Singh Badnore
Rajasthan	Jaipur	Ashok Gehlot	Kalraj Mishra
Sikkim	Gangtok	Prem Singh Tamang(PS Golay)	Ganga Prasad
Tamil Nadu	Chennai	Edappadi K. Palaniswami	Banwarilal Purohit
Telangana	Hyderabad	K. Chandrasekhar Rao	TamilisaiSoundararajan
Tripura	Agartala	Biplab Kumar Deb	Ramesh Bais
Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	Yogi Adityanath	Anandiben Patel
Uttarakhand	Dehradun (Winter) Gairsain (Summer)	Trivendra Singh Rawat	Baby Rani Maurya
West Bengal	Kolkata	Mamata Banerjee	Jagdeep Dhankhar

Important National News

List of Schemes

Schemes/Campaign/Initiative	Launched by
Scheme for distribution of fortified rice through Public distribution System	Chhattisgarh govt
Him Suraksha Abhiyan	Himachal Pradesh govt
Parivarthanam Scheme	Kerala govt
Vocal for Local campaign	Madhya Pradesh govt
Meri Saheli	Railway Protection Force
Poshit Parivar-Suposhit Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh
Tigress on the trail	Madhya Pradesh

Scheme for Chief Minister's Award for Good Governance	Manipur
Kadal Osai FM 90.4	Tamil Nadu
Punjab Divyangjan Shaktikaran Yojna	Punjab
TS-bPASS initiative	Telanagana
Har Ghar Nal Yojna	PM Modi
Plastic Lao MASK LE JAO	Dehradun Municipal Corporation
Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge	Hardeep Singh Puri
International 'Satavadhanam program	Vice President Venkaiah Naidu
Sarhad VistarVikasotsav 2020	Amit Shah
Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana	ESIC
Sarhad VistarVikasotsav	Amit Shah

AYUSH Ministry and Invest India to jointly set up "Strategic Policy & Facilitation Bureau" for planned and systematic growth of Ayush sector

- The **Ministry of AYUSH** and **M/s Invest India** will form a collaboration to set up a "**Strategic Policy & Facilitation Bureau**" to facilitate planned and systematic growth of the Ayush sector.
- This is among the various steps which the Ministry has initiated to chart future directions along which the stake-holding groups of the Ayush Sector can move. Setting up of the Bureau is a forward-looking step which will make the Ayush systems future-ready. This Bureau will support the Ministry in strategic and policy making initiatives that shall help pave the way to reach the full potential of the Sector and stimulate growth and investment.
- As a partner in the project, M/S Invest India would collaborate extensively with the Ministry to frame the work plan of the Bureau and define its short-and long-term targets. Invest India would deploy highly trained and expert resources to implement and execute the plans of the Ministry of AYUSH.

Govt set to divest 10% in GIC Re, New India Assurance

- **Government** is set to offer **10% shares** in the country's largest non-life insurance company **New India Assurance** through an offer for sale to the public. The Centre may also do a similar dilution in the **General Insurance Corporation (GIC Re)**. However, the timing is not decided.
- The government had divested close to **15% stakes** in both New India and GIC in 2017. The disinvestment of GIC Re resulted in a mop-up of Rs 11,370 crore and New India's IPO raised Rs 9,600 crore..
- GIC Re has a market cap of Rs 21,333 crore, while New India's share price values the company at Rs 17,000 crore. A 10% dilution would give the government close to Rs 4,000 crore.
- All listed companies are required to have at **least 25% of** their holding with the public. In May this year, Sebi had relaxed the **25% minimum public shareholding** norms for listed companies in the wake of the Covid outbreak. The regulator asked stock exchanges not to take any penal action against companies that were to comply with the minimum shareholding rule between March 1 and August 31.

NITI Aayog, QCI Launch National Program and Project Management Policy Framework Initiative to Transform Infrastructure Sector in India

- **NITI Aayog and Quality Council of India** launched the '**National Program and Project Management Policy Framework (NPMPPF)**', envisaged to bring radical reforms in the way infrastructure projects are executed in India.
- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Nitin Gadkari unveiled the **Indian Infrastructure Body of Knowledge (InBoK)**, a book on the practice of program and project management in India, and launched the framework, along with Union Minister Piyush Goyal, NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, and QCI Chairman Adil Zainulbhai.
- India will require an investment of around **\$4.5 trillion by 2040** to develop the infrastructure for sustaining its economic growth. However, the challenges in infrastructure development that often obstruct the smooth execution of projects can be a detriment. Therefore, along with numerous initiatives by the Government and guidelines advocated by NITI Aayog towards improving performance of infrastructure projects, a task force was also constituted to lay down a national program and project management policy framework.

This framework aims to formulate radical reforms in the way large and mega infrastructure projects are managed in India, with an action plan to:

- Adopt a program and project management approach to infra development
- Institutionalize and promote the profession of program and project management and build a workforce of such professionals,
- Enhance institutional capacity and capability of professionals

Mansar Lake Project in Jammu to attract 20 lakh tourists every year: Jitendra Singh

- **Union minister Jitendra Singh** inaugurated the **Mansar Lake Project in Jammu** which will attract 20 lakh tourists every year once completed.
- It is e-foundation stone laying ceremony of the **Comprehensive Mansar Lake Rejuvenation/Development Plan**.
- Mansar Rejuvenation Plan will lead to employment generation of about 1.15 crore man-days and will generate an income of more than **Rs 800 crore per year**.
- While Udhampur-Doda-Kathua is possibly the only Lok Sabha constituency in the country which has received three medical colleges in three years, Udhampur possibly the only district in the country which has on the lines of Namami Ganga and Ganga cleaning project received two similar rejuvenation and renovation projects for **River Devika and Mansar Lake** respectively.
- **World's highest railway bridge** is coming up in **Reasi**, the work on a new national highway project from Sudhmahadev via Marmat to Khileni has also started.
- North India's first biotech industrial park and the first ever seed processing plant are also coming up, which will generate job opportunities as well as sources of livelihood and research.

TransUnion CIBIL, MoSPI launch MSME Credit Health Index

- **TransUnion CIBIL** in partnership with **Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** has launched **MSME Credit Health Index**.
- The MSME Credit Health Index will provide government, policy makers, lenders and MSME market participants, a numeric indicator for benchmarking the health of the MSME sector.
- This measurement model will facilitate better MSME credit risk management, formulation of strategies and policies to support the revival and resurgence of the MSME sector and the economy.
- The MSME Credit Health Index is built using credit data submitted by lending institutions to TransUnion CIBIL. The index measures the credit health of India's MSME industry on two parameters: **growth and strength**. Growth is

measured by plotting increase in exposure value (outstanding balances) over time and strength is measured by decrease/increase in credit risk in terms of non-performing assets (NPA).

Centre releases Rs 2,200 cr as first installment to 15 states for improvement of air quality

- The Centre has released **2,200 crore rupees** as the first installment to **15 states** for the improvement of **air quality measures** in their million-plus cities. The amount has been released based on the recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission.
- The states which have been given the amount include Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.
- Of the total amount, **396.5 crore** rupees has been released to Maharashtra, 202.5 crore rupees to Gujarat, 357 crore rupees to Uttar Pradesh and 209.5 crore rupees to West Bengal.

Ganga Utsav-2020 begins virtually with COVID-19 precautions

- The much-awaited **Ganga Utsav-2020** began virtually amidst COVID-19 precautions. The festival will continue till **4th of November**.
- **Ministry of Jal Shakti** stated that several programmes were also held in districts as a part of Ganga Utsav celebrations. Ganga Task Force conducted afforestation drive with NCC cadets and educational tour for youth in project area.

FIP organises virtual version of Delhi Book Fair this year

- The **Federation of Indian Publishers (FIP)** has organised a **virtual version of Delhi Book Fair** this year in light of the Corona pandemic. The book fair organised in partnership with **PragatiE** is a two day online event. The organisers stated that arranging the book fair online was a challenging task but expressed satisfaction that the virtual module of the **Delhi book fair 2020** has opened up new and future avenues of marketing books.
- Publications Division of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has also put up three virtual stalls in this 26th and unique edition of the Delhi Book Fair. Nearly 120 publications covering 12 wide categories including Gandhian literature, Art and Culture, Children literature and Speeches of Prime Minister and President among others have been put up for sale and displayed by the Publications Division.

30 Indian cities to face increasing 'water risks' by 2050: WWF report

- About **30 Indian cities** will face increasing "**water risks**" in the next few decades according to a new report released by **World Wide Fund** for Nature (WWF).
- According to the scenarios in the WWF Water Risk Filter report, nearly 30 Indian cities, including Jaipur, Indore, Amritsar, Pune, Srinagar, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Kozhikode and Visakhapatnam will face acute "**water risks**."
- Globally, the report estimates that "hundreds of millions of people in cities across the globe could face dramatically increased water risks." 100 cities will witness a massive rise in water risks by **2050**. The list also includes cities such as Beijing, Jakarta, Johannesburg, Istanbul, Hong Kong, Mecca and Rio de Janeiro.
- Almost half of these cities are in China, with other hotspots in South Asia, Middle East, South America and Africa.
- These cities overall, are home to 350 million people. Globally, populations in areas of high-water risk could increase to 51 per cent by 2050.
- "India dominates both current and future lists of cities with the highest overall water risk," WWF stated.
- The report suggests that the Smart Cities initiative in India could aid an integrated urban water management framework. It further suggests that a multi-stakeholder engagement and ownership involving local communities will

play a key role in creating and conserving a sustainable water infrastructure and rejuvenating urban freshwater systems.

- Furthermore, cutting water consumption and nature-based solutions to conserve water will also help reduce water risks. Apart from this, private sector companies and financial institutions will also have a role to play working in tandem with cities.

India's Unemployment Rate Rises to 6.98%: CMIE

- **Unemployment rate for October rose to 6.98%** comparing to **6.67% in September**, according to latest data by **Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy CMIE**.
- Unemployment rate in urban areas decline even though there is a rise in joblessness rate on a national level.
- The rural areas saw a big rise in unemployment. The **rural unemployment rate rose from 6.9% in October from 5.86 percent in September** whereas the **urban unemployment in decline from 7.1% in October 8.45% in September**.
- If we compare the states, **Haryana has the highest unemployment rate of 27.3%** followed by Rajasthan 24.1 % and J&K 16.1 %.

FinMin releases Rs 6,000 Cr to states under special window for meeting GST compensation shortfall

- **The Ministry of Finance** is releasing **Rs 6,000 crore** as the second tranche to **16 States** and **3 Union Territories** under the special window to states for meeting the GST compensation cess shortfall. 21 States and 3 UTs have so far opted for the Special Window under Option I and the finance ministry has facilitated loans of Rs 12,000 crore to date under the special window, stated a statement by the Ministry of Finance.
- The government added that the amount was raised at a weighted average yield of **4.42 per cent** and it will be passed on to the states at the same interest rate, which is lower than the cost of borrowings for the states and will thus benefit them.
- The loans have been released to Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand. UT of Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and Puducherry also received the loans.
- During the **42nd Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council meeting**, it was decided to extend compensation cess beyond 2022. Levy of Compensation Cess to be extended beyond the transition period of five years i.e. beyond June 2022, for such period as may be required to meet the revenue gap, the ministry had stated in a statement. The government had also disbursed the compensation cess collected this year amounting to about Rs 20,000 crore.

Hardeep Singh Puri launches 'Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge'

- Housing and Urban Affairs Minister **Hardeep Singh Puri** launched **Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge** focusing on shaping cities for young children and their families. The challenge is conducted with the support of the **Bernard van Leer Foundation, Netherlands** with technical support from **WRI India**.
- Through the challenge, selected cities will receive technical assistance and capacity-building to reimagine parks and open spaces, improve access to early childhood facilities, adapt public spaces with early childhood-oriented amenities and create accessible, safe, walkable streets for young children and families. The challenge will be open to all Smart Cities, other cities with more than five lakh population, and capitals of States and Union Territories.

President Kovind promulgates Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020 Tweeted By@

- President **Ram Nath Kovind** promulgated the **Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020** to further amend **Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996**. The Ordinance aims to ensure that all the stakeholders get an

opportunity to seek unconditional stay of enforcement of arbitral awards where the underlying arbitration agreement or contract or making of the arbitral award are induced by fraud or corruption.

- Through the Ordinance, an addition has been made to **Section 36** whereby if the Court is satisfied that a prima facie case is made out that the arbitration agreement or contract which is the basis of the award was induced or effected by fraud or corruption, it will stay the award unconditionally pending disposal of the challenge made to the award under **Section 34**.

79% of Indians would adopt a 'robot nanny' to help care for children while WFH: Survey

- **IEEE**, a global technical professional organisation for advancing technology, unveiled its survey report titled '**Generation AI 2020: Health, Wellness, and Technology in a Post-COVID World**.'
- According to the survey, **over 79 per cent** of parents surveyed in India agreed that if they had the means, they would adopt a robot "nanny" to help take care of their children while working remotely from home, running errands or when otherwise occupied.
- The survey also found that **81 per cent** of surveyed parents in India agree that having a **robot nanny** to help their children do their homework would alleviate a significant amount of their Covid-19-related stress.
- While **76 per cent** of parents also agreed that they would trust a full-time nanny robot to help take care of their children even if they are not home.
- **Over two-thirds** parents in India (**64 per cent**) agreed they would be comfortable using a robot nanny to take care of their infant or toddler child (**under two-years-old**).

I&B Ministry sets up committee to review norms on TV ratings

- The **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting**, decided to set up a **committee** to review its existing guidelines for **Television Rating agencies** and look into various evolving dynamics concerning the television rating system.
- "The committee shall carry out an appraisal of the existing system, examine TRAI recommendations notified from time to time, overall industry scenario and addressing the needs of the stakeholders, and make recommendations for a robust, transparent and accountable rating system through changes," the Ministry stated.
- **Prasar Bharti CEO Shashi S Vempati** has been appointed as **the Chairman** of the committee. Other members include IIT Kanpur's **Dr Shalabh**; **DrRajkumar Upadhyay, ED, C-DOT**; and **Pulak Ghosh** of the Centre for Public Policy . The committee has been asked to submit its report to the I&B Ministry within two months.
- The government's decision to appoint a committee to review the TRP system in the country comes at a time when allegations of TRP manipulation have emerged, putting the spotlight on the accuracy and credibility of the existing TRP measurement systems.
- In its order, the I&B Ministry stated that the present guidelines on Television Rating Agencies in India were notified after detailed deliberations by the Parliamentary Committee, Committee on Television Rating Points (TRP) constituted by the MIB, and recommendations of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.
- The committee will also study the past recommendations made by various forums on TRPs, and also study recent recommendations of TRAI on this issue. It has also been tasked to recommend steps to enhance competition in the sector.

Prahlad Singh Patel virtually inaugurates "Tourist Facilitation Centre" facility at Guruvayur, Kerala under PRASHAD Scheme

- Union Minister of State (IC) for Tourism & Culture **Shri Prahlad Singh Patel** inaugurated the "Tourist Facilitation Centre" facility constructed under the project "**Development of Guruvayur, Kerala**" under PRASHAD Scheme of the Ministry of Tourism through Virtual Platform.

- The '**National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive**' (PRASHAD) launched by the **Ministry of Tourism** in the year **2014-15** with the objective of integrated development of identified pilgrimage and heritage destinations.
- The scheme aimed at infrastructure development such as entry points (Road, Rail and Water Transport), last mile connectivity, basic tourism facilities like Information/ Interpretation Centers, ATM/ Money exchange, eco-friendly modes of transport, area Lighting and illumination with renewable sources of energy, parking, drinking water, toilets, cloak room, waiting rooms, first aid centers, craft bazars /haats/ souvenir shops/ cafeteria, rain shelters, Telecom facilities, internet connectivity etc.
- The project for "Development of Guruvayur" under the scheme was approved by the Ministry of Tourism with the cost of Rs. 45.36 crores in March 2017. The component viz. 'Tourist Facilitation Centre' has been successfully completed with the cost of **Rs. 11.57 Crores**.

CCEA approves Rs.1,810-crore investment for 210 MW Luhri Stage-I hydel project

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** has approved the investment of **Rs.1,810.56 crore** for the **210 MW Luhri Stage-I Hydro Electric Project** located on the **Sutlej river**. The project will be situated in Shimla and Kullu districts of Himachal
- This project will generate 758.20 million units of electricity annually. The construction will result in direct and indirect employment to around 2,000 persons and will contribute to overall socio-economic development of the State. The Project Affected Families will be provided with 100 units of free electricity per month for ten years," Union Minister Prakash Javadekar told journalists after the Cabinet meeting.
- "The project would also lead to reduction of 6.1 lakh tonnes of carbon dioxide from the environment annually, thus contributing to improvement in air quality," he added.
- An official statement stated that Himachal Pradesh will benefit with free power worth around Rs.1,140 crore from the Luhri Stage-I Hydro Electric Project, during the Project Life Cycle of 40 years.
- This project is being implemented by **Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited (SJVN)** on Build-Own-Operate-Maintain (BOOM) basis with support from the centre and state governments.

Cabinet Approves Signing Of MoU Between India, Spain For Scientific And Technical Collaborations In Astronomy

- The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was apprised of signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru** and the **Instituto de Astrofisica de Canarias (IAC)** and the **GRANTECAN, S.A. (GTC), Spain** to develop scientific and technical collaborations in astronomy field.
- The activities to be carried out under this MoU will lead to new scientific results, new technologies, capacity building through increased scientific interaction and training and joint scientific projects etc.
- "The joint research projects, training programmes, conferences, seminars etc under the MoU will be open to all qualified scientists, students and technologists and will be supported solely on the basis of scientific merit and experience," the press statement read.
- The development of segmented telescope technologies as well as the development of robotic telescopes and other future potential specific collaborations will be done.

Cabinet approves signing of MoU between India, UK for co-operation in telecom, ICT

- The Union Cabinet approved signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between **India** and **United Kingdom** for **co-operation in telecommunications and ICT**.
- The MoU will contribute towards strengthening bilateral cooperation and mutual understanding between the two sides, in the field of Telecommunications, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), an official release stated.
- The Union Cabinet has "given its approval for signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Communications of the Republic of India and the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) of United Kingdom Government on cooperation in the field of Telecommunications/Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)," the release stated.
- Areas for cooperation include technological development in **Telecom/ICT including 5G, Internet of Things, Machine to Machine, Cloud Computing, Big Data**; ICT policy and regulation; spectrum management; connectivity including mobile roaming; standardisations, testing and certification; and wireless communications.
- Other areas are security of telecommunication infrastructure, security in the provision and use of telecom services; building capacity in hi-tech areas and exchange of expertise; and collaboration and sharing of information on Research and Development in emerging technologies and innovation among others.

Cabinet Approves MoU Between India, Israel On Cooperation In Field Of Health And Medicine

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between **India** and **Israel** on cooperation in the **field of health and medicine**.
- According to a press statement from the cabinet, the MoU covers areas of cooperation in "Exchange and training of medical doctors and other health professionals".
- It covers areas of cooperation in "Assistance in development of human resources and setting up of health care facilities; exchange of information regarding regulation of pharmaceutical, medical devices and cosmetics; sharing expertise for vulnerability assessment for health of citizens against climate risk and public health actions targeted towards mitigation and adaptation."
- As per the statement, the MoU covers areas of cooperation in "Sharing of expertise for facilitating climate resilient infrastructure as well as providing support for development of 'Green Healthcare' (climate-resilient hospitals); promote mutual research in various relevant areas; and any other area of cooperation as may be mutually decided upon."

Airports Authority Of India Signs MoU With NTPC To Set Up Solar Power Plants At Airports

- The **Airports Authority of India** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with an **NTPC Ltd.**, subsidiary to promote usage of electric vehicles and set up **solar power plants** at its **airports**.
- **NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam**, a subsidiary of NTPC, will be provided adequate land and rooftop space free of cost at identified AAI airports to set up solar power plants.
- The AAI owns and manages more than 100 airports across India. The airports in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mangaluru and Lucknow are managed by private companies and not by the AAI.
- In the initial phase, NVVN will be taking up the projects at airports in Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan. The solar capacity required at airports in **Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan** is around **55 MW and 8 MW**, respectively to become **100% solar powered airports**.
- AAI airports in Tamil Nadu have solar power plants with 3.5 MWp (Mega watt peak) capacity currently. It stated 12 MW solar energy is being purchased through open access for the Chennai airport.

- The AAI and NVVN will also jointly work towards supporting the government of India's initiatives for adoption of electric vehicles by creation of public charging infrastructure and promoting usage of electric vehicles at airports.

PM announces change of name of Shipping Ministry to Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

- The Prime Minister stated, Government is changing the name of the **Ministry of Shipping** and it will be known as the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**. Mr.Modi has stated that to reduce the expenditure on logistics, India is fast developing multimodal connectivity.
- He stated that we are trying to interconnect the infrastructure related to road, rail, air and shipping and removing the silos in this process. He stated that we are still spending more money on transportation in comparison to the other nation. We can reduce the cost of logistics through water transport.

FASTags to be mandatory for all four wheelers from 1st January, 2021

- **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** has issued a notification making **FASTags** mandatory for all four wheel vehicles from **1st January 2021**. This will apply to old vehicles as well as M and N category of motor vehicles sold before 1st December, 2017.
- As per Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, the FASTag had been made mandatory for all registration of new four wheeled Vehicles since 1st December 2017 and is being supplied by the Vehicle Manufacturer or their dealers. It had further been mandated that the renewal of fitness certificate will be done only after the fitment of FASTag for the Transport Vehicles. For National Permit Vehicles the fitment of FASTag has been mandated since 1st of October, 2019.
- The Ministry stated that a valid FASTag is also mandatory while getting a new third Party Insurance through an amendment in certificate of Insurance, wherein the details of FASTag ID will be captured. This will be applicable with effect from 1st of April 2021.
- The Ministry stated, this notification would be a major step for ensuring that the payment of fees be 100 per cent at Toll Plazas through the Electronic Means only and that the vehicles pass seamlessly through the Fee Plazas.

Railways to implement artificial intelligence, data analytics for better operational efficiency

- The railways is set to go big with **artificial intelligence** and **data analytics** to improve its operational efficiency and has tied up with **the Indian School of Business in Hyderabad** to analyse the data generated by the national transporter, Railway Board Chairman V K Yadav stated.
- He stated the railways will set up a **Centre for Excellence** in this regard in the next three months.
- The Railway Board has taken a decision to appoint a **Chief Technology Officer (CTO)** in every zonal railways whose mandate will be to keep track of emerging technologies in analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) and use it in the rail system, Yadav stated.
- The Indian School of Business in Hyderabad has been assigned to plan an introductory capacity building program and formulate a report on the industrial practices of AI on rail transport and benchmarking. It will also develop a report on establishing the centre for excellence and an advanced capacity building program.
- Six to ten officers in divisions and about 20 in zonal headquarters will be identified for training in data analytics and AI. They will be formally trained in institutes like IITs, ISB, IIMs, IIIT in the two subjects (of data analytics and AI).

Vice President launches 'International Satavadhanam' event, a unique literary feat

- The '**International 'Satavadhanam"** program, launched virtually by the Vice President, was organized by Dr. **Medasani Mohan** under the auspices of Sri Krishnadevaraya Satsang in Tirupati.

- The Vice President **Shri M Venkaiah** Naidu has observed that '**avadhanam**' as a literary feat has greatly contributed to the Telugu language's glorious tradition. '**Avadhanam**' is like a test of the poet's literary prowess and scholarship, he added. This extraordinary feat, a historical and unique feature of only a few languages, should be further promoted, the Vice President advised.

PM Modi virtually inaugurates several developmental projects in Varanasi

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of various development projects in **Varanasi** via video conferencing. The total cost implication of these projects is **Rs. 614 crores**.
- The projects inaugurated include **Sarnath Light and Sound show**, upgradation of Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital Ramnagar, sewerage related works, infrastructure facilities for protection and conservation of cows, multipurpose seed storehouse, agriculture produce warehouse of 100 MT, IPDS phase 2, a housing complex for players in Sampurnanand Stadium, Varanasi city smart lighting work, along with 105 Anganwadi Kendras and 102 Gau Ashray Kendras.
- During the event, Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for projects including the redevelopment of **Dashashwamedh Ghat** and **Khidkiya Ghat**, barracks for PAC police force, redevelopment of certain wards of Kashi, parking facility along with redevelopment of park in Beniya Bagh, upgradation of the multi-purpose hall in Girija Devi Sanskritik Sankul, repair work of roads in the city and development of tourist places.

Working On Aviation Fuel From Gadchiroli Bamboo Plan: Nitin Gadkar

- Union minister **Nitin Gadkari** was working on an idea to set up a refinery for the production of **aviation fuel from bamboo** grown in **Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district**.
- Gadkari was speaking at the inauguration of an "Atmanirbhar Bharat" assistance office in **Maharashtra**.
- Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was aimed at making India a happy, progressive, prosperous nation.
- Gadkari asked public representatives to initiate small programs in Nagpur district to create self-employment chances for at least 10,000 people over the next two years.

Govt approves 21 projects under Scheme for Integrated Cold Chain & Value Addition

- **Government** has approved **21 projects**, leveraging investment worth **443 crore rupees** supported with a grant of **189 crore rupees** under the Scheme for **Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition**. The approval in this regard was given during the inter-Ministerial Approval Committee meeting chaired by Minister for Food Processing Industries **Narendra Singh Tomar**.
- Mr Tomar stated that these projects will benefit farmers and consumers and urged the officers to expedite the implementation of approved projects. He stated, 21 projects are likely to generate employment for nearly 12 thousand 600 people and benefit over two lakh farmers.
- These projects are spread across Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Nagaland, Punjab, Telangana, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh. The Scheme for Integrated Cold Chain and Value addition infrastructure aims at arresting post-harvest losses of horticulture and non-horticulture produce & providing remunerative price to farmers.
- The objective of the scheme is to provide effective and seamless backward and forward integration for the processed food industry by plugging the gaps in the supply chain in terms of availability of raw material and linkages with the market.

MNRE scales up PM-KUSUM scheme goal to 30.8 GW of solar capacity by 2022

- The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** has issued an order for the scale-up and expansion of the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) Scheme**. The target now is to achieve enhanced solar capacity of **30.8 gigawatt (GW)** by **2022** with revised Central financial support of Rs.34,035 crore.
- In February 2019, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs had approved the launch of the PM-KUSUM scheme. The scheme aims providing financial and water security to farmers. The scheme had aimed to add a solar capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022. The total Central financial support then supposed to be provided under the scheme was Rs.34,422 crore.
- The scheme now consists of three components. The first is 10,000 MW of decentralised ground mounted grid connected renewable power plants up to 2 MW. The second is installation of 20 lakh (up from 17.50 lakh) stand-alone solar powered agriculture pumps. The third component is solarisation of 15 lakh (up from 10 lakh) grid-connected solar powered agriculture pumps.

Govt sets up Inter-Ministerial Committee to strengthen capital goods sector: Prakash Javadekar

- **Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises Minister Prakash Javadekar** informed that the government has set up an **Inter-Ministerial Committee** to strengthen the capital goods sector.
- He stated, these interventions will help the capital goods sector in contributing more actively towards the national goal of achieving a one trillion dollar manufacturing sector.
- The Minister stated, the **21-member Inter-Ministerial Committee** will be headed by **Secretary of Department of Heavy Industries**.
- He stated, the committee will work out ways and means to make the capital goods sector globally competitive and to become the manufacturing hub for the world.

Rajnath Singh unveils model of Anti-Satellite Missile at DRDO Bhawan

- A model of **Anti-Satellite Missile** installed inside the **DRDO Bhawan** premises was unveiled by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. '**Mission Shakti**' was the country's **first ever Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) Missile Test** successfully conducted on 27th March 2019 from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha, where a fast-moving Indian orbiting target satellite in Low Earth Orbit was neutralised with pinpoint accuracy.
- This was a highly complex mission, conducted at extremely high speed with remarkable precision.
- The successful conduct of Mission Shakti made India the **fourth nation** in the world with the capability to defend its assets in outer space.

Digital news, OTT added under I&B Ministry

- The government has brought **films, audio-visuals, news** and current affairs content on online platforms-- under the domain of the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.
- According to a notification issued by the Cabinet Secretariat, content made available by online providers such as Netflix will also come under the ministry.
- The notification, signed by President Ram Nath Kovind, stated the decision has been taken in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (3) of **article 77 of the Constitution**, by amending the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 and it will come into effect immediately.
- With this, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has the power to regulate policies related to news, audio, visual contents and films available on online platforms.

- These rules may be called the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Three Hundred and Fifty Seventh Amendment Rules, 2020. They shall come into force at once.
- In the Government of India (Allocation of Business, 1961, in THE SECOND SCHEDULE, under the heading '**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SOOCHANA AUR PRASARAN MANTRALAYA)**' after entry 22, the following sub-heading and entries shall be inserted, namely:- VA. DIGITAL/ONLINE MEDIA. 22A. Films and Audio-Visual programmes made available by online content providers. 22B. News and current affairs content on online platforms, it stated.

15th Finance Commission submits its Report for 2021-22 to 2025-26 to President Ram Nath Kovind

- The **Fifteenth Finance Commission (XVFC)** led by **Chairman N K Singh**, submitted its Report for the period **2021-22 to 2025-26** to President of India Ram Nath Kovind. Members of the Commission, **Ajay Narayan Jha, Prof. Anoop Singh, Dr. Ashok Lahiri and Dr. Ramesh Chand** along with Secretary to the Commission Arvind Mehta accompanied the Chairman.
- As per the terms of reference (ToR), the Commission was mandated to give its recommendations for five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26 by 30 October, 2020. Last year, the Commission had submitted its report containing recommendations for the year 2020-21 which was accepted by the Union Government and tabled in the Parliament on 30 January 2020.
- This Report has been organised in four volumes. Volume I and II, as in the past, contain the main report and the accompanying annexes. Volume III is devoted to the Union Government and examines key departments in greater depth, with the medium-term challenges and the roadmap ahead. Volume IV is entirely devoted to the States. The Commission has analysed the finances of each State in great depth and has come up with State-specific considerations to address the key challenges that individual States face.
- The cover and title of the Report are also unique in this Report- "**Finance Commission in Covid Times**" and the use of Scales on the cover to indicate the balance between the States and the Union.

After Jammu And Kashmir, Saffron Cultivation Likely To Be Expanded To Northeast India

- The **North East Centre For Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR)** has undertaken a **pilot project** to explore the feasibility of **growing saffron in North East region** of the country.
- Saffron production has long been restricted to a limited geographical area in the Union territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
- Pampore region, commonly known as Saffron bowl of Kashmir, is the main contributor to saffron production, followed by Budgam, Srinagar, and Kishtwar districts.
- Saffron has traditionally been associated with the famous Kashmiri cuisine. It's medicinal values were considered as part of the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir. As saffron growing was confined to very specific areas in Kashmir, its production remained limited. Though the National Mission on Saffron focused on several measures to improve its farming, the measures were still limited to the specified areas of Kashmir.

Home Minister Amit Shah to inaugurate "Sarhad Vistar Vikasotsav 2020 "in Gujarat@

- **Home Minister Amit Shah** will inaugurate "**Sarhad VistarVikasotsav 2020** "at Dhordo village situated in the forward border area in Kutch district of Gujarat.
- Over 1500 Sanpanch and Gram Panchayat members from 158 border villages from Kutch, Banaskantha and Patan districts are invited to participate in this first of its kind event being organized under Border Area Development Programme (BADP).

- Union Minister for Panchayati Raj Narendra Singh Tomar and Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani will be present on the occasion. Home Ministers' Special Operation Medals will also be presented to the PRI functionaries selected for this decoration.
- "Sarhad Vistar Vikasotsav 2020" is aimed to address the problems relating to health, education and road connectivity in remote and border villages, so that standard of living in such areas can be improved considerably.

Survey sights good signs: High biodiversity in 49% of Ganga main river

- With celebrations of the Ganga Utsav — to mark the **12th anniversary** of declaring the **Ganga as a national river** — having come to an end, the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** in the second phase of its survey of the entire main stem of the Ganga river (the main river without its tributaries), has found that **49 per cent** of the river has high biodiversity and that biodiversity sightings, including of the Gangetic Dolphin and otters, have increased in the river. Scientists at the institute say that this indicates reducing pollution levels and a healthier state of the river.
- The WII will kick off the second part of the Ganga survey and in the coming months collate data and information of these increased sightings to ascertain how much the river habitat has improved and how this has affected the species living in the Ganga.
- The study was initiated by WII on behalf of the **National Mission for Clean Ganga**, one of the flagship projects undertaken by the Ministry of Jalshakti, and the first phase of the survey was carried out between 2017-2019.

Cabinet approves Production-Linked Incentive Scheme for key sectors to boost manufacturing & exports

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, CCEA**, has approved continuation and revamping of the Scheme for **Financial Support to Public Private Partnerships** in Infrastructure Viability Gap Funding Scheme till 2024-25 with a total outlay of eight thousand 100 crore rupees.
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated, the aim of this Scheme is to promote Public Private Partnerships in social and economic infrastructure, leading to efficient creation of assets and ensuring their proper operation and maintenance and make the economically and socially essential projects commercially viable.
- The Union Cabinet has also approved the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for 10 key sectors for enhancing India's manufacturing capabilities and exports. These sectors include Telecom and Networking Products, Pharmaceutical and Drug, Automobile and Auto components, Textile products and Food products.
- Industry body FICCI has stated that the announcement of PLI scheme for **ten sectors** by the Government is a major boost for the **manufacturing sector**.

PM Narendra Modi unveils Swami Vivekananda's statue on JNU campus

- Prime Minister Shri **Narendra Modi** unveiled a **statue of Swami Vivekananda** in **JNU Campus, New Delhi** through video conferencing.
- The event was also attended by Union Minister for Education Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and JNU vice-chancellor Jagadesh Kumar.
- It took renowned **sculptor Naresh Kumawat** seven months to complete this statue of Swami Vivekananda on the JNU campus. Located about 300 metres from a statue of India's first prime minister, the statue of Swami Vivekananda is about three feet taller than that of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Prime Minister to dedicate Two Ayurveda Institutions to the nation at the 5th Ayurveda Day on 13th November

- The **Prime Minister will dedicate two** future-ready **Ayurveda institutions** to the nation at the **5th Ayurveda Day** on **13th November, 2020**.

- These are the **Institute of Teaching & Research in Ayurveda (ITRA)**, Jamnagar and the **National Institute of Ayurveda (NIA)**, Jaipur.
- Both the institutes are premier institutions of Ayurveda in the country. The former has been conferred the status of an Institution of National Importance (INI) by an Act of Parliament and the latter that of an Institution Deemed to be University (De novo Category) by the University Grants Commission (UGC)
- Ministry of AYUSH, **since 2016**, has been observing '**Ayurveda Day**' every year on the **occasion of Dhanwantari Jayanti (Dhanteras)**. This year, it falls on **13th of November**.

India Post Payments Bank launches doorstep service to submit digital life certificate

- **India Post Payments Bank, IPPB** have **successfully launched** the initiative of **doorstep service** for **submission of Digital Life Certificate through Postman**.
- The facility to **submit life certificate online through Jeevan Pramaan Portal** was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November, 2014 with the objective to provide a convenient and transparent facility to pensioners for submission of Life Certificate.
- In order to make this facility available across the country, **Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare roped in the India Post Payments Bank to utilise its huge network of Postmen and Gramin Dak Sevaks** in providing doorstep facility to pensioners for submission of life certificate digitally.

Atmanirbhar Bharat 3.0: Key Takeaways From Finance Minister's Stimulus Package

- **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** announced **new stimulus measures** under **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan 3.0** to boost the Indian economy amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- The total stimulus announced by the Government and Reserve Bank of India till date, to help the nation tide over the COVID-19 pandemic, works out to **Rs. 29.87 lakh crore**, which is **15% of national GDP**. Out of this, stimulus worth 9% of GDP has been provided by the government.

12 Key announcements as part of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat 3.0

Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana:

- Ms Sitharaman announced the new **Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana** which will incentivise the **creation of new jobs**. The new employees hired by the EPFO-registered organisations will receive benefits during COVID-19. If the EPFO registered establishments take in new employees or those who lost jobs earlier will get benefits from government.
- Beneficiaries under this new scheme will include: new employees joining employment in EPFO-registered establishments on monthly wages less than Rs 15,000, and EPF members drawing monthly wage of less than Rs 15,000 who exited employment during March-September, and employed on or after October 1.
- Central government to give subsidy on new employment
- Employee and employer contribution of **12% each** to be borne **by government**, for next two years; aimed at easing financial burden on companies for creating jobs
- 95% of all (organised sector) establishments estimated to be covered under this scheme will have employees up to 1,000

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme:

- The **emergency credit line guarantee scheme (ECLGS)** for MSMEs, businesses, MUDRA borrowers and individuals (loans for business purposes), has been extended till **March 31, 2021**.

- A credit guarantee support scheme for health care sector and 26 sectors stressed due to COVID-19 pandemic was also launched. The entities of the **26 stressed sectors** are **identified by Kamath Committee**.

Production-Linked Incentive:

- The PLI scheme worth **Rs. 1.46 lakh crore** is being offered to **10 champion sectors** which will help boost the efficiency and competitiveness of domestic manufacturing.
- A **total amount of Rs. 1.5 lakh crore** has been earmarked across sectors, for the next five years.

Pradhan Mantri Awaaz Yojana Urban:

- An **additional outlay of Rs. 18,000 crore** over budget estimate towards **PM Awaaz Yojana Urban** has been announced which will help ground 12 lakh houses and complete 18 lakh houses. This will create additional 78 lakh jobs and improve the production and sale of cement and steel.

Relaxation of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD):

- The performance security on government contracts in the construction/infrastructure sector will be **reduced to 3 per cent from 5-10 per cent**. EMD will not be required for bid tenders and will be replaced by Bid Security Declaration. The **relaxations** will be applicable till **December 31, 2021**.

Income Tax Relief for Developers and Home Buyers:

- The finance ministry announced **tax relief for developers and home buyers for houses up to Rs. 2 crore**. The differential between circle rate and agreement value in real estate income tax is being increased **from 10 per cent to 20 per cent** from November 12, 2020 till June 30, 2021, for primary sale of residential units up to Rs. 2 crore the income tax relief provides an incentive to the middle class to buy homes.

Equity Investment in Debt Platform by NIIF:

- The government will make **Rs. 6,000 crore** equity investment in debt platform of **National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)**, which will help NIIF raise **Rs. 1.1 lakh crore by 2025** for financing infrastructure projects.

Support for Agriculture: Rs. 65,000 Crore for subsidized fertilizers

- **As fertilizer consumption** is going up significantly, increased supply of fertilizers will ensure that forthcoming crop seasons will not be affected for want of adequate fertilizers.

Boost for Rural Employment:

- Additional outlay of **Rs. 10,000 Crore** is being provided for **PM Garib Kalyan Rozgar Yojana**. Funds can be used for MGNREGA or for Gram Sadak Yojana, this will help accelerate rural economy .

Boost for Project Exports

- **Rs. 3,000 Crore** boost to be given for project exports through assistance given by India to developing countries **under Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS Scheme)**. This will help **EXIM Bank** facilitate these Line of Credit development assistance activities and promote exports from India.

Capital and Industrial Stimulus

- **Rs. 10,200 Crore additional budget stimulus** will be provided for capital and industrial expenditure on **defence equipment, industrial infrastructure and green energy**.

R&D grant for COVID Vaccine

- **Rs. 900 Crore** is being provided to **Department of Biotechnology** for research activities related to **COVID-19 vaccine development**. This does not include cost of vaccine or logistics for vaccine distribution (whatever is required for that will be provided)

Sports Ministry announces incentive structure to fund 500 private academies

- **Ministry of Youth Affairs And Sports** Kiren Rijiju has introduced an **incentivisation structure** to extend monetary support to 500 private academies, through the **Khelo India Scheme** over the next four years starting FY 2020-21.
- In this model, private academies shall be graded into different categories based on quality achievement of players trained by the academy, level of coaches available at the academy, quality of the field of play and allied infrastructure, availability of sports science facilities, and staff.
- The 14 priority disciplines identified for excellence in the **2028 Olympics** will be eligible for receiving support in the first phase.
- Under the scheme, **SAI and NSFs** will be working together. SAI will also hold discussions with NSFs and implement categorisation and gradation of the academies.
- There will be a special focus on developing sports science facilities at all the academies to improve the overall quality of training.

PM Modi to unveil 'Statue of Peace' to mark 151st Birth Anniversary of Jainacharya Shree Vijay Vallabh Surishwer Ji Maharaj

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will unveil '**Statue of Peace**' to mark the **151st Birth Anniversary** celebrations of **Jainacharya Shree Vijay Vallabh Surishwer Ji Maharaj** through video conferencing. The 151 inch tall statue has been made from **Ashtadhatu- 8 metals**, with Copper being the major constituent, and is being installed at Vijay Vallabh Sadhana Kendra, Jetpura, in Pali, **Rajasthan**.
- Shree Vijay Vallabh Surishwer Ji Maharaj who lived during 1870-1954, led an austere life as a Jain Saint working selflessly and dedicatedly to spread the message of Lord Mahavira. He also worked relentlessly for the welfare of masses, spread of education, eradication of social evils, wrote inspiring literature and gave active support to the freedom movement and the cause of Swadeshi.
- With his inspiration, more than 50 educational institutions of eminence, including colleges, schools and study centres, are operational across several States. The Statue to be unveiled in his honour has been named as 'Statue of Peace'.

Finance Ministry moves to set up database of migrant workers

- The **Finance Ministry** has given its **first ever national database of migrant labour** to provide a platform for workers and employers, and for the government to implement specific programmes for such labourers.
- The **Ministry of Labour & Employment** has envisaged development of a '**National Database of Unorganised Workers**' (NDUW) seeded with **Aadhaar**.
- The project will enrol all unorganised workers, including migrant workers.
- Total cost is expected around **₹ 650 crore**.
- Besides job opportunities, such a database will help migrant labour get the benefit of government schemes. It will help workers to share information about his/her skill which, in turn, will make it easy for employers to find suitable person
- Such a database can be used in many ways, apart from being a platform for employer and potential employee. It can be helpful in providing welfare schemes or implementing social security initiatives.
- Also, the movement of labour can be tracked in a situation like a Covid-induced lockdown so they can be assisted when in desperation.

Health Minister Harsh Vardhan addresses Boston Center of Excellence for Health & Human Development

- Health Minister **Harsh Vardhan** addressed the **Boston Center of Excellence for Health and Human Development** through Video Conference.

- Saluting millions of front-line health workers who bravely carried on with their duty in spite of risk and adversity, including professionals other than doctors and nurses, Dr. Vardhan elaborated India's strategy to contain COVID-19.
- Detailing that India has already mastered all components of **Modern medicine** from antibiotics to emergency care, surgery, immunization, and vaccine, Dr Vardhan noted that the focus is now on the cost, quality, and affordability.
- He elaborated that India has already made strides in remote diagnostics and treatment using latest telemedicine technology to treat people.

Ministry of Tourism organizes a webinar on "India's Hidden Gems" under Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series

- The **Ministry of Tourism's Dekho Apna Desh Webinar** series titled "**India's Hidden Gems**" on 21st November 2020 focused on hidden gems of India. India is truly like a kaleidoscope, where every twist and turn will present you with a different pattern of landscape, colour, cuisine and culture. This also inspires the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat. The best way to experience this is by traveling to destinations that are not popular on the internet, and as much as you can, by road.
- The webinar was presented by **Ms. Bindu Menon**, an expat relocation manager, an intercultural trainer and a brand communications specialist by profession, a linguaphile, an India enthusiast, an avid traveler and writer by passion. Bindu has delighted in presenting India to the world at every given opportunity.
- The travel journey started from **Amarambalam, Nilambur**, which lies in the North of Kerala. Nilambur is a small town on the banks of the Chaliyar river in Mallappuram district, Kerala. This place is renowned for '**Conally's Plot**' or the oldest teak plantation in the world. The first railway line in Kerala was introduced to transport teak. This place also has a hanging bridge at the Chaliyar river. New Amarambalam forest was declared as reserved forest in the Western Ghats and it is home of the indigenous Cholanaiikkan tribes. Environment enthusiast can also enjoy Amara wildlife Sanctuary which is the 18th wildlife sanctuary of India.

Govt Extends Period For Submission Of Life Certificate By Central Govt Pensioners Till 28th Feb 2021

- Government has extended the period for submission of **Life Certificate** by **Central Government pensioners** till **28th February** next year.
- Earlier, the government had extended the timeline for submission of Life Certificate from **1st of November to 31st of December, 2020**.
- According to the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension, the Department has been in receipt of numerous petitions from various Pensioners' Associations as well as individuals requesting a further extension in the date for submitting Life Certificate in view of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and vulnerability of elderly population to corona virus.
- The Ministry stated, after consultation with the office of Controller General of Accounts, it has now been decided to further extended the existing timeline for submission of Life Certificate.

Education Minister inaugurates 46 online ATAL Faculty Development Programmes@

- **Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** inaugurated **46 online AICTE Training and Learning (ATAL) Academy Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs)** to train teachers of higher education institutions. The FDPs will be conducted in **22 Indian states**. On the occasion, Mr Pokhriyal stated, in the year 2020-21, new thrust areas in the field of Engineering, Management, Life Skills, Design and Media have been incorporated.
- The online Faculty Development Programmes will be conducted according to the new **National Education Policy - 2020**. The Education Minister also informed that the London-based organization has recognized the FDPs as a world

record, under which 1,000 online FDPs in over 100 emerging areas will benefit one lakh faculty members across premier institutions like IITs, NITs, and IIITs. This year the online FDP programme will cost 10 crore rupees.

India, EU hold 6th round of consultations on disarmament & non-proliferation matters

- India and the **European Union** held the **sixth round of consultations** on disarmament and non-proliferation matters in a virtual format.
- The consultations involved exchanges on developments in the area of nuclear, chemical, biological disarmament and non-proliferation, conventional weapons, outer space security issues, export control regimes, strategic stability environment and other developments of mutual interest.
- The consultations aim at enhancing mutual understanding and appreciation between India and the EU on international security issues. These are part of the broad dialogue architecture with the EU as a key strategic partner of India.

Ravi Shankar Prasad launches international version of UMANG App@

- To mark the occasion of 3 years of UMANG and 2000 plus services milestone, an online conference was organized under the chairmanship of **Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, Ravi Shankar Prasad**.
- On this occasion, Mr Prasad launched the UMANG's international version in coordination with Ministry of External Affairs for select countries that include USA, UK, Canada, Australia, UAE, Netherlands, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. It will help Indian international students, NRIs and Indian tourists abroad, to avail Government of India services, anytime. It will also help in taking India to the world through 'Indian Culture' services available on UMANG and create interest amongst foreign tourists to visit India.
- The **UMANG mobile app -Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance** is a Government of India all-in-one single, unified, secure, multi-channel, multi-lingual, multi-service Mobile App. providing access to high impact services of various Government of India Departments and State Governments

HM Amit Shah inaugurates mobile COVID-19 RT-PCR Lab at ICMR in New Delhi

- Home Minister **Amit Shah** inaugurated a mobile **COVID-19 RT-PCR Lab** at the Indian Council of **Medical Research (ICMR)** in New Delhi. It has been jointly developed by Spice Health and the ICMR.
- This testing lab and more such labs which are planned to be set up will help in adding more capacity to COVID-19 testing. The lab is accredited by NABL and approved by the ICMR.
- These tests will be free of cost for the people. This initiative is a step in making COVID-19 testing affordable and more accessible to the common person.
- The test report would be available within 6 to 8 hours from the time of sample collection compared to the average 24 to 48 hours taken by similar test reports.
- To begin with, the first testing facility has been set up in Delhi and more such testing facilities will come up in different parts of the National Capital over the coming days. It is planned to set up 10 labs in the first phase.
- At the outset, each lab would be able to test up to 1,000 samples per day and testing would slowly be ramped up to 3,000 samples per day per lab.

Govt. aims to replace safeguard duty with custom duty to protect local manufacturers of solar equipment, says Power Minister R K Singh

- **Minister of State for Power and New and Renewable Energy R K Singh** has stated, India is going to replace the **safeguard duty** with the **custom duty** to protect the local manufacturers of solar equipment. He stated, some countries are dumping solar equipment at very low prices in our country to destroy local manufacturers.

- Mr. Singh stated, India wants to expand its export base in the solar energy sector like wind energy wherein the country is not only self sufficient but also an exporter. He stated, India has the maximum growth and demand of renewable energy as per capita energy consumption is very low in the country.
- Terming the PM-KUSUM scheme a second green revolution, Mr. Singh stated, this scheme will benefit the farmers by providing subsidy for setting up solar pumps and solar power generation capacity on their barren lands.

Agriculture Minister unveils 'Sahakar Pragya' to impart training to primary cooperative societies in rural areas

- **Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar** unveiled **Sahakar Pragya**. The 45 new training modules of Sahakar Pragya of the **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)** will impart training to primary cooperative societies in rural areas of the country along with **Lakshmanrao Inamdar National Cooperative Research and Development Academy**.
- On this occasion, Mr. Tomar called upon the cooperative sector to play a role in making the village-poor-farmers Atma Nirbhar. He stated, India boasts a huge network of over 8.50 lakh cooperative societies with about 290 million members and around 94 per cent of the farmers are member of at least one cooperative society.
- The Agriculture Minister stated, NCDC has emerged as a financial powerhouse of giving the client cooperatives a wide range of products and services. So far, it has advanced loans to the tunes of 1.58 lakh crore rupees to cooperative societies of various categories across the country. He stated, Sahakar Pragya is the latest in the series of farmer focused steps by NCDC.

Govt approves 7 proposals of Food Processing Projects worth over Rs 234 cr

- The government has approved **seven proposals** of **Food Processing** Projects worth over **234 crore rupees**. It also includes grants-in-aid of **60.87 crores rupees** in Meghalaya, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.
- Minister of Food Processing Industries **Narendra Singh Tomar** virtually chaired **Inter-Ministerial Approval Committee meeting**. Proposals received under the Scheme for Creation of Infrastructure for Agro-Processing Cluster of **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana** were considered. Ministry of Food Processing Industries in a statement stated that these projects will leverage private investment of 173.81 crores rupees and are expected to generate employment for 7750 persons.
- The scheme for Creation of Infrastructure for Agro-Processing Cluster was approved in 2017 under the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana** to incentivize the setting up of agro processing clusters in the country. This scheme aims at development of modern infrastructure to encourage entrepreneurs to set up food processing units based on cluster approach.

Tenth edition of National Science Film Festival kicks off in virtual mode

- **Tenth edition** of prestigious **science film festival** got off in a virtual mode. **VigyanPrasar**, an autonomous agency under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, has been organizing the four-day long festival as a part of its science popularization endeavour. It offers a unique platform to showcase the science films made by professionals, amateur and student filmmakers under various themes.
- A total of 115 shortlisted films selected by the ten-member jury will be screened during the festival. These include films in Hindi, English, Urdu, Malayalam, Kashmiri, Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi and Tamil languages.

Expert panel recommends 5 technologies for drinking water, sanitation

- A **high-level multi-disciplinary technical panel** in the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation has recommended **five technologies**, three for safe drinking water and two for sanitation, an official statement stated.

- According to the Jal Shakti Ministry, the committee focussed on application of science and technology for providing field-level solutions.
- The technologies include **Grundfos AQpure**, a solar energy based water treatment plant based on ultra-filtration, Janajal Water on Wheel, an Internet of Things (IoT) based electric vehicle to deliver safe water to households and Presto Online Chlorinator, a non-electric online chlorinator for disinfection of water for removal of bacterial contamination.
- The other two are Johkasou technology, an inbuilt packaged black (sewage) and grey water (kitchen and bath water) treatment system having advanced anaerobic-aerobic configuration that can be installed underground, while FBTec is a site assembled decentralised sewage treatment system using fixed filter media.
- The panel was headed by **K VijayRaghavan**, the principal scientific adviser to the government, members from NITI Aayog, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Bio-Technology, CSIR, DRDO, NEERI, IIT, National Institute of Ocean Technology, states.

ESIC extends ABVKY scheme up to June 2021

- **ESI Corporation (ESIC)** has announced the extension of the “**Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana**” (ABVKY) by **another one year** up to **June 30, 2021** and relaxed the eligibility conditions for the period between March 24, 2020 and **December 31, 2020**.
- The Corporation had earlier introduced (on a pilot basis) a new cash benefit under ABVKY – effective from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020, to provide cash compensation to insured persons rendered jobless. This has been extended up to end-June next year.
- The original eligibility conditions of the ABVKY scheme would, however, hold good for those rendered unemployed on or before March 23, 2020 and on or after January 1, 2021.

Cabinet approves infusion of 6000 crore rupees in NIIF; Lakshmi Vilas Bank to be merged with DBS Bank India Limited

- Union Cabinet has approved equity infusion by Government of **6000 crore rupees** in **NIIF Debt Platform** sponsored by **National Investment and Infrastructure Fund**, comprising Aseem Infrastructure Finance Limited and NIIF Infrastructure Finance Limited. This was one of the twelve key measures made by the Finance Minister as part of Government's stimulus to the economy, under **AatmaNirbhar Bharat 3.0** on 12th November.
- NIIF Infrastructure Debt Financing Platform is expected to contribute nearly one lakh crore rupees in debt to the infrastructure sector over the **next five years**. This will act as a catalyst in attracting more investments into the infrastructure sector as envisaged in the National Infrastructure Pipeline.
- Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar informed that Cabinet has approved Scheme of Amalgamation of **Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB)** with **DBS Bank India Limited**. He stated with this, there will be no further restrictions on the depositors regarding withdrawal of their deposits.
- Cabinet was apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the **field of Physical Culture and Sport** signed among **BRICS Countries**.
- Cooperation in the field of sports among the **five countries** will help in expanding knowledge and expertise in the area of sports science, sports medicine, and coaching techniques. This would result in improvement in performance of Indian sportspersons in international tournaments and strengthening of bilateral relations with BRICS member countries.

- Mr Javadekar also informed that CCEA has approved FDI of **2480 crore rupees** in M/s. ATC Telecom Infrastructure Private Limited by M/s. ATC Asia Pacific pvt Ltd. This would lead to foreign direct investment inflow of 2480.92 crore rupees. The inflow of foreign investment to India will spur economic growth; as well as foster innovation.

PM Narendra Modi chairs 33rd PRAGATI interaction

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** chaired the **PRAGATI meeting**. It marked Prime Minister's **thirty-third interaction through PRAGATI** - the ICT based multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation, involving Central and State governments.
- During the meeting, multiple projects, grievances and programmes were reviewed. The projects taken up were of the Ministry of Railways, MORTH, DPIIT and Power Ministry. These projects, with a total cost of **1.41 lakh crore rupees**, were related to ten states and union territories, including Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

All fixed to mobile calls to be dialed with prefix '0' from Jan 15

- **Communications Ministry** has stated all Fixed to Mobile calls will be dialed with **prefix '0' from 15th January next year**. There will be no change in dialing plan from fixed to fixed, mobile to fixed and mobile to mobile calls. Department of Telecommunications has taken the decision of implementing this with the consideration of TRAI Recommendation on **"Ensuring Adequate Numbering Resources for Fixed Line and Mobile Services"**.
- Suitable announcement will be made for the same. This announcement shall be played whenever a subscriber dials a fixed to mobile call without prefixing '0'. All fixed line subscribers will be provided with '0' dialing facility.
- A total of approximately 2539 million numbering series is expected to be generated from this. This will free up sufficient numbering resources for future use. With the freeing up of sufficient numbering resources, more number of connections can be added in future which will be beneficial to the mobile customers at large.

NITI Aayog Forms Panel To Study Feasibility Of Hyperloop Tech In India

- Government think-tank **NITI Aayog** has formed a **high-level panel** to explore the technological and commercial viability of the **Virgin Hyperloop technology** for ultrahigh speed travel in India, weeks after its first test was completed with humans on board.
- The Virgin Hyperloop test run was conducted on a **500-meter track** in Las Vegas in the USA with a pod, as the hyperloop vehicles are called, travelling with passengers, including an Indian, inside an enclosed tube at more than 100 mph or 161 kmph.
- The committee has NITI Aayog member **VK Saraswat** as its **Chairman and Adviser** (Infrastructure Connectivity, Niti Aayog) **Sudhendu Jyoti Sinha** as its convener.
- Its other members are Railway Board Chairman & CEO **VK Yadav**, the secretaries of the ministries of Housing and Urban Affairs, Road Transport and Highways, and the Maharashtra government's Transport Secretary.

Cabinet minister Narendra Singh Tomar virtually inaugurates Phagwara mega food park in Punjab

- **Union Food Processing Industries Minister Narendra Singh Tomar** virtually inaugurated the **Rs 107.83 crore mega food park** at **Phagwara** in **Kapurthala district** of **Punjab** which is likely to generate 5,000 jobs.
- The mega food park, spread over 55 acres of land and that will benefit 25,000 farmers, is equipped with warehouses in 3,944 square meter, silos with 20,000 tonne capacity, cold storage with 3,000 tonne capacity as well as individually quick-frozen and deep freezer units and other facilities.
- So far, **37 mega food parks** have been sanctioned across the country, of which 20 have started functioning.

- Highlighting measures taken to boost the farm sector, Tomar stated MSP has been increased and a new scheme has been started to establish 10,000 new farmer producers organizations (FPOs) across the country. Besides, a Rs 10,000 crore fund has been created for the promotion of the food processing sector.
- He further stated that research has a huge role to play in the agriculture sector and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has been doing great work.

Railway launches completely digitized online Human Resource Management System

- **Indian Railway** has launched a **completely digitized online Human Resource Management System (HRMS)**. HRMS is a high thrust project for Indian Railways to leverage improved productivity and employee satisfaction. It is a move to improve efficiency and productivity of the Railway system.
- Vinod Kumar Yadav, Chairman and CEO of Railway Board launched **HRMS modules** of Employee Self Service, PF Advance and Retirement Settlement. The modules will benefit over **27 lakh families** of both serving and retired Railway employees. Several other modules of HRMS are already operational in the Indian Railways.

Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot E-Launches 'National Portal for Transgender Persons' and E-Inaugurates Garima Greh: A Shelter Home for Transgender Persons in Gujarat

- **Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlote** launched a '**National Portal for Transgender Persons**' and e-inaugurated a '**Garima Greh: A Shelter Home for Transgender Persons**' in Vadodara, Gujarat .
- Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot stated that this National Portal for Transgender Persons has been developed within 2 months of **Notification of Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020** on 29 September, 2020. This highly useful Portal would help a transgender person in applying for a Certificate and Identity card digitally from anywhere in the country.
- The most important benefit is that it helps the transgender person to get the I-Card without any physical interface and without having to visit any office, the Minister stated. Through the Portal, they can monitor the status of their application that ensures transparency in the process. The issuing authorities are also under strict timelines to process the applications and issue certificates and identity cards without any necessary delays.

Nitin Gadkari inaugurates Highway projects worth over Rs 7400 Cr in Uttar Pradesh

- Union Minister **Nitin Gadkari** inaugurated and laid the **foundation stones** of **16 National Highway projects** worth **7477 crore rupees** in **Uttar Pradesh**.
- These highway projects includes a road length of 505 kilometers and will provide better connectivity, convenience to the public as well as lead to economic growth in the state.
- Mr Gadkari stated that National Highways works worth **two lakh crore rupees** are being undertaken in UP.

APEDA holds Virtual Buyer Seller Meet with Germany

- **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, APEDA**, continued its endeavour to promote export of agricultural products through the virtual medium. Several virtual buyer seller meets were organised with the importing countries in association with the Indian Missions abroad.
- A virtual networking meet with German importers was also organised to promote export of fresh fruits and vegetables from the country. The event was organised by **APEDA** in collaboration with **Embassy of India, Berlin and German Agribusiness Alliance**.
- The event comprised of presentations by the Indian side on the strength of Indian agricultural products in exports specifically grapes and fresh fruits and vegetables.

- From the German side, there were presentations on the requirements and expectations of the German market. The event provided a platform to showcase India's strength in export of fresh fruits and vegetables to further strengthen the confidence of the German buyers in Indian agri products and facilitate exports.

India has emerged as fourth largest producer of renewable energy in world: PM Modi

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** stated **India's renewable power capacity** is the **4th largest** in the world and it is growing at the fastest speed among all major countries. He stated, the renewable energy capacity in India is currently **136 Giga Watts**, which is about **36 percent** of the country's total capacity.
- Inaugurating the virtual **3rd Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo, RE-Invest 2020** Mr Modi stated, India is travelling on an unparalleled journey in the last 6 years. He stated, the country is expanding generation capacity and network to ensure every citizen has access to electricity to unlock their full potential.
- The Prime Minister stated, India's annual renewable energy capacity addition has been exceeding that of coal based thermal power since 2017. In the last 6 years, India has increased installed renewable energy capacity by two and half times. The Prime Minister stated, India is showing to the world that sound environmental policies can also be sound economics.

Railways Minister Piyush Goyal inaugurates newly electrified Dhigawara-Bandikui section of NW Railway

- Minister of Railways **Piyush Goyal** inaugurated the newly electrified **Dhigawara-Bandikui section** of **North Western Railway**. He also flagged off the first train on this newly electrified route at the function organized at **Dhigawara station**.
- Mr Goyal stated, after the electrification of this line, the route from Rewari to Ajmer has been electrified and now the electric trains from Delhi to Ajmer will start soon. He stated, after running of these trains, the diesel trains will be stopped, which will eliminate pollution as well as the dependence on the fuel imported from outside and significant revenue will be saved.
- He stated, apart from this, the average speed of trains will increase and there will be development of industries, agro-based businesses and progress of villagers and farmers. Mr Goyal stated, to avoid any inconvenience to the farmers, **Kisan Rail** is being operated by the railways to transport their agricultural products.

Govt. announces Rs 900 crore package for COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission

- The Centre has announced **the third stimulus package** of **Rs 900 crore** for the **Mission COVID Suraksha- The Indian COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission**. This grant will be provided to the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) for Research and Development of Indian COVID-19 vaccines with end-to-end focus from preclinical development through clinical development and manufacturing and regulatory facilitation for deployment. It would consolidate all available and funded resources towards an accelerated product development.
- **The Ministry of Science and Technology** stated that this will help accelerate development of approximately **5 to 6 vaccine candidates**. This will also ensure that these are brought closer to licensure and introduction in the market for consideration of regulatory authorities for introduction in public health systems, to combat further spread of COVID infection. Phase-I of the COVID Suraksha Mission has been allotted **900 Crore rupees** for a period of **12 months**.

PM Modi to inaugurate six-lane widening project of Varanasi-Prayagraj section of NH-19

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will visit Varanasi and dedicate to the nation the **six-lane widening project of the Handia (Prayagraj) - Rajatalab (Varanasi) section of National Highway 19**. During the tour, the Prime Minister will attend **Dev Deepawali**, undertake a site visit of **Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor** Project and also visit the Sarnath Archaeological Site.

- The **73 Kilometers stretch** of the newly widened and six laned NH-19, made with a total outlay of 2 thousand 4 hundred 47 crore rupees is expected to reduce the travel time between Prayagraj and Varanasi by one hour.
- Dev Deepawali, which has become a world famous festival of light and fervour in Varanasi, is celebrated on Kartik Poornima every year. The festival will be started by the Prime Minister by lighting a diya on the Raj Ghat of Varanasi, which will be followed by lighting of 11 lakh diyas on both sides of River Ganges.

EPFO extends deadline for submission of Jeevan Pramaan Patra to February 28, 2021

- Taking into consideration the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the vulnerability of the elderly population to the virus, the **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** has extended the date for submission of **Life Certificate (Jeevan Pramaan Patra-JPP)** to **February 28, 2021**.
- According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the decision is likely to have an impact on 35 lakh pensioners.
- "In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the vulnerability of the elderly population to the coronavirus, the EPFO has extended the time limit up to 28th February 2021 for submission of Life Certificate (Jeevan Pramaan Patra-JPP) in respect of the Pensioners drawing pension under EPS 1995 and whose Life certificate is due in any month till February 28, 2021," it stated.
- As of now, a pensioner can submit a JPP anytime during the year up to November 30. With the latest move, any pensioner can submit a Life Certificate till February 28, 2021.
- During this extended period, pension will not be stopped in respect of such **35 lakh pensioners** who could not submit JPP during **November 2020**.

Union IT and Communications Minister Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad releases "My Stamp on Chhath Puja"

- **Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad**, Union Minister of Communications, Electronics & Information Technology and Law and Justice released a **"My Stamp on Chhath Puja"**.
- My Stamp is an innovative concept initiated by **Department of Posts**. Any common person or corporate organisation can now book order and get a personalised photograph or an image of a Postage Stamp. My Stamp is one of the unique products being offered by India Post, which has gained its popularity in customised gifting category.
- **My Stamp on Chhath Puja** is available in **all Philatelic bureaux** and major post offices across the country. A special cover on the theme '**Chhath- A symbol of Simplicity and Cleanliness**' was also released.
- Chhath Puja is the only festival in which we worship not only the rising sun but also the sunset i.e. Usha and Pratyusha. The worship of Surya and ChhathiMaiya is unique to the traditions and propagates values of simplicity, purity and discipline.

PM Modi virtually inaugurates five state-of-the-art facilities to mark 8th convocation of PDPU at Gandhinagar

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has virtually inaugurated **five state-of-the-art facilities** to mark the eighth convocation of Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University - PDPU at Gandhinagar .
- These include 45 MW production of monocrystalline solar photo-voltaic panels set up by GEDA at the cost of Rs. 17 crore. Mr. Modi has also launched the PDPU - technology business incubator with the fund of Rs.22 crore.
- He has inaugurated the Sports complex set up by **Sports of Authority of Gujarat** at the cost of **Rs. 15 crore**. Prime Minister has also inaugurated the Indo-EU bilateral project under horizon 2020 "India-h2o" for industrial waste & desalination and PDPU's Translational Research Centre.

Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurates Seismic Survey Campaign by Oil India Ltd

- Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** inaugurated the **Seismic Survey Campaign** by **Oil India Limited**. The survey under the Open Acreage Licensing Policy, OALP, will be undertaken in 5 blocks of 8 districts of Odisha in the Mahanadi basin and nearby areas.
- Declaring the campaign open through virtual mode, Union Minister Mr Pradhan stated that the commercial production of oil and gas from the Mahanadi basin will be a game changer in the socio-economic development of Odisha. He stated, this will also thrust Odisha and the eastern India on the path of progress and prosperity in sync with the vision of Purvodaya.

Health Minister chairs an event to mark National Newborn Week 2020

- Health Minister **Dr. Harsh Vardhan** chaired an event to mark the **National Newborn Week 2020**, being observed from **15th to 21st November** to reinforce the importance of newborn health as a key priority area of the health sector and to reiterate the commitment at the highest level.
- This year, the theme of National Newborn Week is '**Quality, Equity, Dignity for every newborn at every health facility and everywhere**'. Dr Vardhan stated that the vision of the government is that every child should survive, thrive, and reach their full potential. He added that the Government is committed to work towards the health and development of all newborns.

RailTel bags e-office phase 3 project from Indian Railways

- **RailTel** has bagged **Indian Railway's e-office phase 3 project** from the Indian Railways. Under the project, RailTel will implement e-office for Zonal Railways (Phase 3) using cloud enabled e-office application developed by NICs (National Informatics Centre) on November 11, 2020 .
- As per the MoU executed, the NIC e-office platform project which is helping the Indian Railways digitize its manual records, is planned to be completed by Jan'2021 and cost approximately **Rs 47.05 crores** additionally.
- In the first two phases which were completed in March 2020 and May 2020, RailTel had implemented the NIC platform for 106 establishments of the Indian Railways.

Centre launches Safai Mitra Suraksha Challenge in 243 cities

- Union minister **Hardeep Singh Puri** launched the **Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge**, aimed to ensure that no person needs to enter a sewer or septic tank, unless absolutely unavoidable in the interest of greater public hygiene. The initiative, that promotes mechanized cleaning, also aims to ensure that no life of any sewer or septic tank cleaner is ever lost again owing to the issue of '**hazardous**' cleaning.
- The virtual event witnessed participation of representatives from **243 cities** across the country, coming together to take a pledge to mechanize all sewer and septic tank cleaning operations by **30th April 2021**. The initiative was launched on the occasion of World Toilet Day.
- The initiative is in line with PM Modi's vision, who has always placed the safety and dignity of sanitation workers at the core of the **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U)**, Puri stated.

Bengaluru PM Modi virtually inaugurates Tech Summit 2020

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **Bengaluru Tech Summit** virtually. He stated technology helps speed up delivery of Government programmes and encourages transparency.
- May it be the world's largest health insurance programme, Ayushman Bharat or reaching electricity and providing shelter to the poor, he stated that the policy of his Government is to find tech solutions for their quick implementation.

- The summit to be held for **three days** will see the participation of 4000 delegates, 270 speakers in 75 panel discussions. 25 tech nations are participating in the summit along with thought leaders, industry captains, technocrats, researchers, innovators, investors, policy makers and educators.
- During the event, **12 Memorandum of Understanding** will be signed with foreign countries paving the way for investments in Karnataka. Over 200 Indian companies are setting up virtual exhibitions. Some 50 Indian tech start ups will showcase their technology to European companies.

Food Processing Ministry launches GIS One District One Product digital map

- **The Ministry of Food Processing** launched the **GIS One District One Product (ODOP) digital map of India**. Minister for Food Processing Industries, Narendra Singh Tomar, also virtually inaugurated the capacity building component of the **Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PM-FME Scheme)**.
- Under the capacity building component of the PM-FME scheme, training of Master Trainers would be delivered through the online mode, classroom lectures and demonstrations, and self-paced online learning material. NIFTEM and IIFPT play a key role by providing training and research support to selected enterprises/ groups/ clusters in partnership with State Level Technical Institutions. The Master Trainers will train the District Level Trainers, who will train the beneficiaries.
- States have also identified the food products of districts, keeping in view the availability of existing clusters and raw materials, under the scheme. The **GIS ODOP digital map** of India provides details of ODOP products of all the states and facilitates the stakeholders, the official statement added.

Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates curtain raiser of IISF-2020 Virtual Event

- **Union Minister of Science & Technology, Dr. Harsh Vardhan** inaugurated the curtain raiser of **IISF-2020** for kick-starting different events of the **6th edition of India International Science Festival (IISF)**, in New Delhi.
- The Minister also released an e-brochure of this mega-event, on the occasion. IISF is an annual event organized jointly by **DST, DBT, MoEF, MoHWF** and **CSIR** from the Government of India and VijnanaBharati (VIBHA).
- The website of IISF-2020 was also launched during the event. All the activities and registration of the participants will be done through this website. Detailed information is available on IISF website- www.scienceindiafest.org
- Dr Harsh Vardhan announced that the theme for this year's festival is '**Science for Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Global Welfare**'. He informed that "This year, IISF begins on 22 December 2020, the birthday of Srinivas Ramanujan, the world-renowned Indian mathematician and culminates on 25 December 2020, the birthday of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee"

Govt disbursed over Rs 42,700 crore to 20.6 lakh ex-servicemen under OROP in 5 years

- The **central government** has **disbursed more than Rs 42,700 crore** to **20.6 lakh** retired defence personnel under the **One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme**, which was **notified five years ago**.
- Under the OROP scheme, uniform pension is paid to defence personnel who retire in the same rank with the same length of service, irrespective of their date of retirement.
- The yearly recurring expenditure on account of OROP is about Rs 7,123 crore and for about six years, starting from July 1, 2014, the total recurring expenditure worked out to approximately Rs 42,740 crore.
- The **OROP** was implemented to **bridge the gap between the pensions of current and past ex-servicemen** at periodic intervals.
- Before OROP, ex-servicemen used to get pensions as per the Pay Commission's recommendations of the time when they had retired.

- The armed forces personnel who retired by June 30, 2014, are covered under the OROP scheme.

MoHFW launches three-month campaign to check childhood pneumonia deaths

- The **Union Ministry of Family Welfare (MoHFW)** launched a **three-month campaign** to focus on awareness generation and early intervention with regard to **childhood pneumonia**, enabling caregivers across the country to identify critical symptoms at earlier stages and trigger prompt care-seeking with qualified providers.
- The initiative targets to reduce less than five pneumonia deaths, per a 1000 live births, to less than three deaths by 2025 through the accelerated **SAANS (Social Action and Awareness to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully)** initiative.
- **Launched last year**, the **SAANS campaign** complements the national childhood pneumonia management guidelines through a three-pronged approach to protect, prevent and treat pneumonia among children.
- Save the Children, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) have also partnered with the MoHFW in order to accentuate efforts to alleviate the burden of pneumonia on the country.

Govt expands scope of PM-KUSUM for harnessing solar energy by farmers

- The selected **renewable power generator (RPG)** shall commission the solar power plant **within twelve months** from date of issuance of Letter of Award (LoA), it added.
- Moreover, there shall be no penalty on RPG for shortfall in solar power generation from minimum prescribed Capacity Utilization Factor.
- As per the amendments, now MNRE will retain **33% of eligible service charges** for nationwide Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities.
- The order mentions that the Ministry may release 50% of eligible service charges for the sanctioned quantity after placement of LoA for preparatory activities.
- For solar pumps to be set up and used by water user associations/farmer producer organisations/primary agriculture credit societies or for cluster based irrigation system, the **central financial assistance (CFA)** will be allowed for solar pump capacity of higher than 7.5 HP considering up to 5 HP capacity for each individual in the group.
- During implementation it has been observed that these manufacturers lack workforce in the field and are dependent on local integrators for this purpose, which has caused delay in installation of solar pumps, the statement stated.
- The order further says that quantity equivalent to 10 per cent of total quantity under a particular category of pumps of a cluster will be allocated to the lowest bidder and balance will be kept on market mode for all selected bidders including the lowest bidder.

Revision Points

Portfolio	Union Minister	Constituency
Ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions	Narendra Modi	Varanasi
Ministry of Defence	Rajnath Singh	Lucknow
Ministry of Home Affairs	Amit Shah	Gandhinagar
Ministry of Road Transport and Highways & Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises	Nitin Gadkari	Nagpur
Ministry of Chemical and Fertilizers	DV Sadananda Gowda	Bangalore North

Ministry of Finance & Ministry of Corporate Affairs	Nirmala Sitharaman	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Consumer affairs, food and public distribution	Piyush Goyal (Additional charge)	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of agriculture and farmers welfare, Ministry of Rural Development & Ministry of Panchayati Raj	Narendra Singh Tomar	Morena
Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of communications & Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology	Ravi Shankar Prasad	Patna Sahib
Ministry of Food Processing Industries	Narendra Singh Tomar (Additional charge)	Morena
Ministry of Social justice and empowerment	Thaawar Chand Gehlot	RS
Ministry of External Affairs	Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar	RS (Gujarat)
Ministry of Human Resource Development	Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'	Haridwar
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	Arjun Munda	Khunti
Ministry of Women and child Development & Ministry of Textiles	Smriti Zubin Irani	Amethi
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Science and Technology & Ministry of Earth Sciences	Dr Harsh Vardhan	Chandni Chowk
Ministry of environment, forest and climate change & Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise	Prakash Javadekar	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Railways & Ministry of Commerce and Industry	Piyush Goyal	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Ministry of Steel	Dharmendra Pradhan	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Minority Affairs	Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of coal & Ministry of Mines		Dharwad
Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey	Chandauli
Ministry of Animal Husbandry, dairying	Giriraj Singh	Begusarai

and fisheries		
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Important International News

India, Mexico Hold Joint Commission Meeting, Review Bilateral Cooperation

- **India** and **Mexico** held their **eighth joint commission** meeting and reviewed cooperation in several areas including trade, investment, agriculture, health and education.
- External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** co-chaired the meeting with his Mexican counterpart **Marcelo Ebrard**.

206th Session of Governing Council of the IPU to be held from 1st to 4th November

- The **206th Session** of the **Governing Council** of the **Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU** will be held from **1st to 4th November** this year. It will be an Extraordinary Virtual Session, which is being organised in place of a full-fledged in-person Statutory Assembly of IPU due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.
- The agenda of the Virtual Session includes the election of the new President of IPU through remote electronic secret ballot since the outgoing President of IPU Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron (MP, Mexico) had completed her term on 19th of this month. The term of the new President of IPU will be from 2020 to 2023.
- An Indian Parliamentary Delegation led by Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla** and consisting of Lok Sabha MP Poonamben Maadam and Rajya Sabha MP Swapan Dasgupta will participate in the Virtual Session and cast their votes.
- There are four candidates in the fray for the post of IPU President. They are Duarte Pacheco from Portugal, Muhammad Sanjrani from Pakistan, Akmal Statedov from Uzbekistan and Salma Ataullahjan from Canada.

Super Typhoon Goni, world's most powerful storm in four years, smashes into the Philippines

- **Super Typhoon Goni**, the **world's most powerful storm in four years**, crashed through the **Philippines**, smashing buildings, toppling trees, and causing floods and mudslides.
- The storm largely spared Manila, the capital and most densely populated city, showering it with rain toward the West Philippine Sea.
- Goni arrived days after **Typhoon Molave** killed at least 22 people.

USTATED provides \$3 m to COVIDActionCollab to mitigate effects of Covid-19 in India

- The funds will be used to provide comprehensive support on health, livelihood, and social protection for vulnerable communities
- **Catalyst Management Services (CMS)**, a part of Catalysts Group, has ideated COVID Action Collaborative, partnered with **the United States Agency for International Development (USTATED)**, to support India's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- USTATED will provide **\$3 million** over two years to support **the COVIDActionCollab (CAC)** partnership, which was formally announced through a virtual conference.
- As per the CMS official release, the funds will be used to provide comprehensive support on health, livelihood, and social protection for vulnerable communities.
- More than 150 civil society organisations, development partners, and private sector organizations attended the virtual launch event. At the event, participants discussed the importance of leveraging collective expertise to build resilient communities.

India, GCC Troika hold annual Political Dialogue in virtual mode

- **India** and the **GCC Troika** held their annual Political Dialogue in virtual mode. External Affairs Minister **Dr. S. Jaishankar** led the Indian delegation.

- The GCC was represented at the Troika-level by Dr. Nayef Falah M. Al-Hajraf, Secretary General of GCC, Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bahrain and Dr. Anwar bin Mohammed Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, UAE.
- Senior representatives from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar also participated in the meeting. The leaders undertook detailed review of India-GCC ties and appreciated the upward trajectory in ties witnessed in the last few years.
- India had also taken special care to ensure the return of Indian health professionals to GCC countries and for supply of medicines and other essential items during the pandemic.
- The GCC welcomed India's inclusion in **the UNSC** as a **non-permanent member** from **January 2021**.
- Both sides affirmed their commitment to reform multilateral institutions to reflect the realities of the 21st century and to work together to address contemporary challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, sustainable development and terrorism.

UNGA adopts two India sponsored resolutions on Nuclear disarmament

- The first committee of the **United Nations General Assembly** has adopted **two India-sponsored resolutions on nuclear disarmament** which aim to reduce risk of nuclear accidents and call for a prohibition on the use of nuclear weapons.
- The UNGA first committee deals with the issue of disarmament and works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the **Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament**, the other two bodies to deal with the nuclear issue.
- The two resolutions adopted include Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons and Reducing Nuclear Danger under the Nuclear weapons cluster. The adoption of resolutions shows India's commitment towards the goal of nuclear disarmament.
- The resolution on Convention on **the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons** was backed by a majority of UN Members and was tabled by India since 1982.
- The aim is that a universal and legally binding agreement would generate the necessary global political will that can lead to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

World's Biggest Pink Diamond Mine in Australia Stops Production

- The **world's largest pink diamond mine** has **shut its doors** after exhausting its reserves of the expensive gems.
- **The Argyle mine**, in the remote Kimberley region of **Western Australia**, churned out more than 90 percent of the world's pink diamonds -- sought after for their incredible rarity.
- The **end of operations** at Argyle is likely to push the price of the diamonds even higher.

India and Italy sign 15 agreements in various sectors; Reaffirm commitment to strengthen cooperation against common global challenges

- **India and Italy** signed **15 agreements** in various sectors following a **Virtual Bilateral Summit** between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Italian counterpart Giuseppe Conte. The agreements signed will provide for cooperation in a diverse range of areas including energy, green energy, shipbuilding and media sector.
- The Summit provided an opportunity to the two leaders to comprehensively review the broad framework of the bilateral relationship. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen cooperation against common global challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic. The leaders discussed a wide range of issues including political, economic, scientific & technological, space and defence cooperation.
- The leaders discussed a wide range of issues including political, economic, scientific and technological, space and defence cooperation. On regional and international issues, both sides agreed to coordinate closely at multilateral fora

especially G-20. Italy will assume the Presidency of G-20 in December 2021 followed by India in 2022. Together, India and Italy will be part of the G20 Troika from December this year.

- India welcomed Italy's decision to join the International Solar Alliance as soon as the ratification process is completed. 15 MoUs and Agreements in various sectors such as energy, fisheries, ship building, design etc. were signed coinciding with the Summit.

Joe Biden announces 12 member task force to deal with COVID-19; Former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy to co-chair group

- **US President-elect Joe Biden** has announced a **12-member coronavirus task force** to mount an effective response to the pandemic that has infected millions and damaged the US economy.
- The task force will be co-chaired by former Surgeon **General Vivek Murthy**, former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner David Kessler and Marcella Nunez-Smith, a professor of public health at Yale University. It will also include Ezekiel Emanuel, a former Obama administration health adviser. Mr Biden has promised a much more muscular response to the pandemic than President Donald Trump has made.
- The virus has infected 9.8 million people in the US and killed more than 2 lakh 37 thousand people as daily case counts continue to rise.

Interpol creates cybercrime-related communication services

- The **Interpol** has created **two secure and flexible services** to facilitate cybercrime related communication among law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders to ensure more effective and coordinated action based on timely intelligence.
- One of them is **the Cybercrime Knowledge Exchange workspace** that handles general, non-police information and is open to all relevant users.
- It is open to law enforcement, governments, international organisations and cybersecurity industry experts to exchange non-police operational information on cybercrime.
- This unique workspace is a dynamic communication channel that enables users around the world to discuss the latest cybercrime trends, prevention strategies, detection technologies and investigation techniques with authorized colleagues globally
- The **Cybercrime Collaborative Platform-Operation**, assists in the law enforcement operations, with access restricted to the operational stakeholders only. The **CBI** is the nodal agency in the **Interpol** for India.
- "The international and private entities can request to join the CKE by contacting the Interpol Cybercrime Directorate.

Guadalajara named World Book Capital 2022

- **Guadalajara (Mexico)** was named **World Book Capital for the year 2022** by the Director-General of UNESCO, **Audrey Azoulay**, on the recommendation of the World Book Capital Advisory Committee.
- The city, already a UNESCO Creative City since 2017, was selected for its comprehensive plan for policies around the book to trigger social change, combat violence and build a culture of peace.
- Cities designated as UNESCO World Book Capital undertake to promote books and reading and to organize activities over the year. As the twenty-second city to bear the title since 2001, Guadalajara follows Tbilisi (2021) Kuala Lumpur (2020). Past winners include Madrid (2001), Alexandria (2002), New Delhi (2003), Anvers (2004), Montreal (2005), Turin (2006), Bogota (2007), Amsterdam(2008), Beirut (2009), Ljubljana (2010), Buenos Aires (2011), Erevan (2012), Bangkok (2013), Port Harcourt (2014), Incheon (2015), Wroclaw (2016), Conakry (2017), Athens (2018), Sharjah, (2019).

- The application of the city of Guadalajara was accepted by an Advisory Committee, comprising representatives of the International Publisher's Association (IPA), the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), the International Authors Forum (IAF) and UNESCO.

Nepal President Bidhya Devi Bhandari releases special anthology on Mahatma Gandhi

- Nepal President **Bidhya Devi Bhandari** has released a **special anthology** on **Mahatma Gandhi- 'My understanding about Gandhi'** - during a ceremony at Kathmandu in the presence of Indian Ambassador Vinay Mohan Kwatra.
- The book has been brought out by the Embassy of India along with the BP Koirala India-Nepal Foundation to cherish the values of the Mahatma's universal teachings with Nepali friends.
- Indian Embassy stated that the publication hopes to bring the youth of Nepal closer to Mahatma Gandhi, whose life and ideals remain timeless, universal and relevant for today's world.
- The pictorial anthology in Nepalese has been released to celebrate **151st Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi** and to mark the culmination of the two years long celebrations of '**150 years of Mahatma**'.

India, Maldives sign 4 pacts including \$100M grant for key connectivity project

- **India and the Maldives** signed **four agreements**, including one for a **\$100-million grant for a connectivity project**, as visiting foreign secretary **Harsh Shringla** and the Maldivian leadership discussed ways to boost economic recovery amid the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Shringla is on a two-day visit to the Indian Ocean archipelago as part of New Delhi's outreach to key countries in the neighbourhood and beyond.
- The Maldives is the **sixth country** he has visited in the aftermath of pandemic-related travel restrictions, the others being **Bangladesh, Myanmar, France, Germany and the UK**.
- One of four memorandums of understanding (MoUs) signed by the two sides was for the grant of **\$100 million by India** for the **\$500-million Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP)** that will link capital Male with three islands. **India will also provide a \$400-million line of credit for the project**, the largest such infrastructure venture undertaken in the Maldives.
- The other MoUs were for setting up soil and plant testing laboratories through a grant of **1.71 million Maldivian rufiyaas**, establishing a drug detox facility through a grant of **7.7 million Maldivian rufiyaas** and cooperation in sports and youth affairs.

Turkey bans smoking in public places to curb virus spread

- **Turkey's interior ministry** has **banned smoking** in **public places across the country** to **curb the spread** of **COVID-19**.
- **Smoking** would be **banned** in **bus streets, bus stops and public squares** when necessary.
- The nationwide mask mandate in public spaces, which has been in effect for several months, must be followed at all times and smokers were routinely violating the mask rule.

India provides 50 Metric Tons of food aid to people of Djibouti

- **India** has provided **50 Metric Tons of food aid** to the **people of Djibouti** as part of its assistance to friendly countries to overcome natural calamities and the COVID-19 pandemic. Ambassador of India to Djibouti Ashok Kumar handed over gift of food items to the Secretary-General of the country's Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity Mme Ifrah Ali Ahmed as part of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to Djibouti delivered by INS Airavat.
- In a statement, Ministry of External Affairs stated that the step was part of **SAGAR II** (Security and Growth for All in the Region) through which the Government of India is providing **270 Metric Tons** of Humanitarian assistance to friendly countries in the region.

Indian students contributed \$7.6 billion to US economy last year

- **Indian students** contributed **\$7.6 billion** to the **US economy** in the academic year 2019-20, even though there was a **4.4 per cent** drop in the total number of Indian students, according to a report.
- **China** remained the largest source of international students in the US, with the number of Chinese students in the country increasing for the **16th consecutive year**. There were over 372,000 Chinese students during 2019-20 year, stated the report "Opens Doors 2020."
- India remained the **second largest source** of international students, despite the 4.4 per cent decline to 193,124 students, it stated.
- According to the report, released by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Institute of International Education (IIE), for the fifth consecutive year the United States hosted more than 1 million international students (1,075,496) in an academic year.
- Despite a slight decline (1.8 per cent) in the number of international students during the academic year, this group still represents 5.5 per cent of all students in US higher education system.
- According to the US Department of Commerce, international students contributed \$44 billion to the US economy in 2019, including \$7,69 billion from Indian students.

UNICEF lays plans to deliver Covid-19 vaccine to 92 low-income countries

- **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** has started collaborating with airlines, shipping lines, and freight operators, among other logistics, to deliver **lifesaving coronavirus vaccine** as quickly as possible, stated an official cited in Xinhua report.
- The agency revealed that for the distribution, UNICEF is working with over **350 logistics partners** from around the world to effectively deliver Covid-19 vaccines in more than **92 countries**, as soon as doses are available.
- With such collaborations, UNICEF aims to manage the purchase and delivery of vaccines in **92 low- and lower-middle-income economies**.
- UNICEF mentioned that since January, it has delivered over 190 million U.S. dollars' worth of COVID-19 supplies such as masks, gowns, oxygen concentrators, and diagnostic test kits to support countries as they respond to the pandemic.

India announces launch of Phase-IV of High Impact Community Development Projects in Afghanistan

- India has announced the launch of **Phase-IV of the High Impact Community Development Projects** in **Afghanistan**. It envisages more than **100 projects** worth **80 million dollars** that India would undertake in Afghanistan. External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar stated this during the **2020 Afghanistan Conference organized** in Geneva through video-conference. The two day conference began and was co-hosted by the **United Nations**, the Government of Afghanistan, and the Government of Finland.
- Dr Jaishankar also announced that India had just concluded with Afghanistan an agreement for the construction of the **Shatoot dam**, which would provide safe drinking water to two million residents of Kabul city. He stated, India had earlier built the 202-kilometer Phul-e-Khumri transmission line that provided electricity to Kabul city.

UN release \$25 mn for women-led projects fighting gender-based violence

- The **United Nations humanitarian** chief has released **25 million US dollars** from its emergency fund to support **women-led organisations** that prevent and respond to gender-based violence.
- The funding has gone to the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** and UN Women that have been asked to channel at least **30 per cent** of it to organisations run by women that prevent violence against women and girls, and

help victims and survivors with access to medical care, family planning, legal advice, safe spaces, mental health services and counselling, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated .

- UNFPA will receive **17 million dollars** and 8 million dollars will go to UN Women. They will now decide where and how the money will be spent, stated.
- The funding comes from the **UN Central Emergency Response Fund**, an emergency fund that offers one of the fastest and most effective ways to help people affected by crises. Since it was established in 2005, the fund has provided close to 7 billion dollars for life-saving humanitarian action that has helped hundreds of millions of people across more than 100 countries and territories.

UNDP, Invest India launch SDGs Investor Map for India

- **United Nations Development Programme, UNDP and Invest India** have launched the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Investor Map for India**. It laid out **18 Investment Opportunities** Areas in six critical SDG enabling sectors, that can help the country push forward on the trajectory of Sustainable Development.
- Deepak Bagla, CEO of Invest India stated, India occupies a key role in determining the success of the SDGs, globally. Shoko Noda, Resident Representative of UNDP India stated, Investing in the SDGs is crucial to '**Building Back Better**' and making the economy and our societies more resilient and sustainable.

4th NSA-level meeting held between India, Sri Lanka and Maldives

- The **fourth National Security Advisor Level Meeting on Trilateral Maritime Security Cooperation** was held between **India, Sri Lanka and Maldives** in **Colombo**.
- The participants took stock of the current maritime security environment in the region. They have discussed mutual cooperation in an array of areas including Maritime Domain Awareness, Humanitarian Assistance, Disaster Relief, Joint Exercises and Maritime pollution.
- Exchanging views on common security threats, India, Sri Lanka, and Maldives have agreed to broad base cooperation on a host of maritime security related issues.

The UK plans to ban sales of diesel and petrol cars from 2030

- **The U.K.** will **stop selling** new diesel and petrol (gasoline) cars and vans from **2030** under plans announced by Prime Minister **Boris Johnson**.
- This is part of a £12 billion green agenda, including £1.3 billion to roll out charging points for electric vehicles in homes, streets and on motorways across England.
- The plan will focus on a range of areas including carbon capture and storage, low-carbon hydrogen generation, offshore wind and nuclear energy.
- The vehicle ban represents an acceleration of prior targets; **U.K. authorities** had **previously** said the sale of new petrol and diesel vans and cars would end in **2040**.
- Johnson announced £500 million for the hydrogen-related plan that includes trialling homes using hydrogen for heating and cooking, starting with a "Hydrogen Neighbourhood" in 2023, moving to a "Hydrogen Village" by 2025, with an aim for a "Hydrogen Town" before the end of the decade.

PM Modi & his Bhutanese counterpart to launch RuPay Card phase-2 in Bhutan

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and his Bhutanese counterpart **Lotay Tshering** will virtually launch **RuPay Card phase-2 in Bhutan**.
- The two Prime Ministers had jointly launched phase-1 of the project during Mr Modi's visit to Bhutan in August last year.

- External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava stated the implementation of phase-1 of RuPay cards in Bhutan has enabled Indian visitors in Bhutan to access ATMs and points of sale terminals across Bhutan.
- The phase-2 will now allow Bhutanese cardholders to access **RuPay network in India**.

Green Climate Fund approves USD 256 million for Bangladesh

- The **Green Climate Fund** has approved **dollar 256 million** for **Bangladesh** in grants and loans to meet its **Green House Gas (GHG) emission reduction** targets under the Paris agreement. The financing is provided as an integrated package for textile and Ready Made Garments (RMG) sectors of Bangladesh are the largest industrial contributors in carbon emission.
- The two sectors combined together contribute more than **27 percent** of the industrial carbon emission as they are working with old and outdated machines with poor energy management. By **2030**, Bangladesh is committed to reduce its GHG emission by 15 percent compared to business-as-usual scenario.
- In the current year, GCF has approved over **dollar 2 billion** in new climate finance, taking its total portfolio to over **dollar 7 billion**.
- GCF was set up under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2010 as the world's largest dedicated fund to help developing countries reduce their carbon emissions.

India, Australia sign pact on cyber tech to ensure free, secure Internet

- Around 25 countries, under a single group called the '**Global Innovation Alliance**' came online to attend the **Bengaluru Tech Summit**.
- He stated that Australia and India have unlimited possibilities of working together in space research, critical minerals, 5G, AI, quantum computing, and more.
- They have signed the landmark **Australia India Technology Framework Agreement on cyber and cyber-enabled technology**. That means Australia and India are working together for an open, free, safe, and secure Internet. That is the foundation for digital economies to work. They will be soon launching Australia-India Cyber and Critical Technologies Partnership grant programme.
- At the session, Finland announced that an institution-level collaboration has been initiated between **Business Finland and the Center of Excellence for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence**. Karnataka and Finland will now continue to work together to further strengthen and grow this association. Data Science and AI, skilling programmes and start-up collaboration will be some of the few focus areas.

UK Government first sponsors for 2021 UN Climate Change Conference

- The **UK government** announced **the first principal partners** for the **UN climate conference, COP26**, scheduled for November 1-12, 2021 in **Glasgow**.
- "The UK has revealed its first sponsors for COP26 as it drives climate action in the run up to the international climate change summit in Glasgow.
- SSE, Scottish Power, NatWest Group and National Grid are the first Principal Partners who will support the delivery of a successful and ambitious COP next November", the government stated.
- The statement, listed Scottish Power, SSE and National Grid as energy companies that are investing in low-carbon assets as the country is working to reach an **emission-free economy by 2050**, while NatWest Group is one of the largest investors in the UK renewable energy industry.
- UN climate conferences are held annually to bring together the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for discussion on pressing climate issues.

- It was originally scheduled for November this year but had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference is hosted by the **UK** in partnership with **Italy**.

Japan Inc to begin experiments issuing digital yen on 'mutually compatible platform'

- More than **30 major Japanese** firms will begin experiments next year towards issuing a common, private digital currency to promote digitalisation in one of the world's most cash-loving countries, the group's organising body stated.
- The move follows **the Bank of Japan's** recently announced plan to experiment with issuing a **digital yen**, underscoring a growing awareness of the need for Japan to catch up to rapid global advances in financial technology.
- The group, consisting of Japan's three biggest banks as well as brokerages, telecommunication firms, utilities and retailers, will conduct experiments for issuing a digital currency that will use a common settlement platform.
- Japan has among the **most cash-loving people** in the world, with cashless payments making up only 20 per cent of total settlement - well below the **United States**, with 45 per cent and **China** with 70 per cent.
- Japan's three megabanks - Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group Inc , Mizuho Financial Group Inc and Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group Inc - have each rolled out their own digital payment systems. But they lag efforts by tech firms such as SoftBank Group unit PayPay.

Revision Points

Country	Capital	Currency	Head
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Taka	Abdul Hamid
Myanmar	Naypyitaw	Burmese kyat	Win Myint
Argentina	Buenos Aires	Peso	Alberto Ángel Fernández
France	Paris	Euro	Emmanuel Macron
Germany	Berlin	Euro	Frank-Walter Steinmeier
Tanzania	Dodoma	Shilling	John Magufuli
Burkina faso	Ouagadougou	CFA Franc	Roch Marc Christian Kaboré
Maldives	Malé	Rufiyaa	Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
UK	London	Pound Sterling	Boris Johnson
UAE	Abu Dhabi	Dirham	Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan
USA	Washington D.C	Dollar	Joe Biden (Elected)
Nepal	Kathmandu	Rupee	K. P. Sharma Oli
China	Beijing	Renminbi	Xi Jinping
Japan	Tokyo	Yen	Yoshihide Suga
Israel	Jerusalem	Shekel	Reuven Rivlin
New Zealand	Wellington	Dollar	Jacinda Ardern
Afghanistan	Kabul	Afghani	Ashraf Ghani
Lebanon	Beirut	Pound	Michel Aoun
Turkey	Ankara	Lira	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
Sri Lanka	Colombo	Rupee	Gotabaya Rajapaksa
Philippines	Manila	Peso	Rodrigo Duterte
Australia	Canberra	Dollar	Scott Morrison

Mexico	Mexico City	Peso	Andrés Manuel López Obrador
Moldova	Chişinău	Leu	Igor Dodon
Ivory Coast	Yamoussoukro	CFA Franc	Alassane Ouattara
Kosovo	Pristina	Euro	Avdullah Hoti
Peru	Lima	Sol	Martín Vizcarra

Important Appointments

National Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation	Predecessor/Others
Harpreet A De Singh	Chief executive officer, Alliance Air	(First woman pilot of Air India)
Nivedita Bhasin	New ED (flight safety), Alliance Air	Harpreet A De Singh
Rajiv Jalota	Chairman, Mumbai Port Trust	Sanjay Bhatia
PVG Menon	Chief Executive Officer, Electronics Sector Skill Council of India	
Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha	India's next Chief Information Commissioner	
AK Gupta	Managing Director and CEO, ONGC Videsh Limited	
Dilip Rath	Board of International Dairy Federation	Chairman, National Dairy Development Board
Anand Selva	Global Head, Citigroup Inc	
Jagbir Singh	Chief Technology Officer, Vodafone Idea	Vishant Vora
Ramesh Lakshminarayanan	Group Head – Information Technology, HDFC Bank	
MM Kutty	Commission's first chairperson, Air Quality Management for the NCR	Rajiv Gauba has named Arvind Kumar Nautiyal, joint secretary, as the Commission's full-time member.
Gyanendro Ningombam	First President from the north east India to Hockey India	
Mohd Mushtaque Ahmad	Senior Vice President, Hockey India	
Aloke Singh	Chief Executive Officer, Air India Express	
Akshay Kumar	Managing director and Chief executive, Petronet LNG	

Singh	Ltd	
Nitish Kumar	Chief Minister of Bihar	7 th term Chief Minister
Sanjay Kumar Mishra	Enforcement Directorate Director	Extnded by 1 year
Senapathy (Kris) Gopalakrishnan	First Chairperson of the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub	
Sonu Sood	State icon of Punjab `	By the Election Commission of India
Naveen Munot	Managing Director and CEO, HDFC Mutual Fund	Milind Barve
Virat Kohli	Brand ambassador for Vize	
Jitan Ram Manjhi	Pro-tem speaker, Bihar Legislative Assembly	
SN Rajeswari	Whole-Time Member (Distribution), IRDAI	
Achyuta Samanta	President, Volleyball Federation of India	1 st person from Odisha to be elected
Sunil Mittal	Executive Chairman, Low Earth Orbit (LEO)	
Vijay Kumar Sinha	New speaker of Bihar Assembly	
Chandrasekaran	Chairman, Tata Chemicals	
Harpal Singh	New Engineer-in-Chief of the Indian Army	
Rajeev Chaudhary	Director-General of the Border Roads Organisation	
Rajnish K Jenaw	Chairman and Managing Director, National Schedule Castes Finance & Development Corporation	

International Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation	Predecessor/Others
Priyanca Radhakrishnan	Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, New Zealand	
Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha	India's Next Chief Information Commissioner	
Priyanca Radhakrishnan	Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, New Zealand	
Duarte Pacheco of Portugal	President, Inter Parliamentary Union	
Alassane Ouattara	President, Ivory Coast	
John Magufuli	President, Tanzania	
Joe Biden	46th president of the United States.	Donald Trump
Kamala Harris	Vice President, USA.	
Vidisha Maitra	UN Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary	

	Questions	
Vjosa Osmani	Acting President, Kosovo	Hashim Thaci
Kash Patel	Chief of Staff , Acting US Defence Secretary	
Aung San Suu Kyi	First and incumbent State Counsellor, Myanmar	
Maia Sandu	President, Moldova	She is a former World Bank economist
Francisco Sagasti	Interim President, Peru	Manuel Merino
Greg Barclay (New Zealand)	New independent chairman of the International Cricket Council	
Mala Adiga	Jill Biden's Policy Director	She will be the first lady of USA
Roch Marc Christian Kaboré	Burkina Faso's president	
SM Vaidya	Vice President, World LPG Association	

Resignation/Retirement

Name of the Person	Designation
Hashim Thaci	Kosovo President
M M Murugappan	Chairman, Tube and Chola mandalam Investments
Navneet Munot	Chief Investment Officer, SBI Funds Management

Former HDFC Bank CEO Aditya Puri to join private equity firm Carlyle as senior advisor

- **Aditya Puri** will be guiding global **Carlyle** on investment opportunities across Asia as a senior advisor, the global private equity major stated. The announcement has come within a week of Puri's retirement from HDFC Bank as the chief executive and managing director.
- Puri is widely credited for building **HDFC Bank** from scratch and making it the largest in the private sector space and the most valuable one.
- Puri will advise the Carlyle team on investment opportunities across Asia and provide guidance on the evolving market landscape and new investment opportunities, Carlyle stated in a statement.
- He will also be advising Carlyle's investment professionals and portfolio management teams on building differentiated high quality businesses, it stated.

CAG to be external auditor of IPU, Geneva for 3 years

- **Comptroller and Auditor General of India** has been elected as the **external auditor of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Geneva for a three-year term**. Girish Chandra Murmu, **the 14th Comptroller and Auditor General of India** will assume the charge from Supreme Audit Institution of Switzerland.
- The election took place at the virtual meeting of the **284th session** of the IPU which is a 179 countries Parliamentarians body, also having 13 associate members. The IPU has permanent observer status at the United Nations General Assembly.

- The CAG of India has been the external auditor of various international organisations, the statement stated. The CAG of India has earlier also been on the **UN Board of Auditors** from 1993 to 1999 and 2014 to 2020. Presently, he is the external auditor of the World Health Organisation, Geneva and Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome.

Important Awards and Honours

Winner	Prize	Awarded By/Theme/Purpose
Paul Zacharia	Ezhuthachan Puraskaram	Awarded by Kerala government
Hariharan	JC Daniel Award	Highest honour for lifetime contributions to Malayalam cinema
MM Naravane	Honorary rank of General of the Nepali Army	President Bidya Devi Bhandari
S Hareesh	JCB Prize for Literature 2020	Moustache (translated into English by Jayasree Kalathil and published by HarperCollins India)
Ruskin Bond	Tata Literature Live! Lifetime Achievement Award for 2020	Recognised by the Indian Council of Child Education for his contribution to the growth of children's literature in India
462-metre-high Lakhta Center in St Petersburg	Emporis Skyscraper Award	Designed by GORPROJECT and RMJM
Dr Satish Mishra	Dr.Tulsi Das Chugh Award 2020	Malaria parasite's life cycle
Sadat Rahman	International Children's Peace Prize	To educate young people about cyberbullying.
K S Subramanian	Fertiliser Association of India Golden Jubilee Award	Tamil Nadu Agricultural University's Director of Research and NABARD Chair
Bhubaneswar	ISO Certification for Faecal Sludge and Septage Management	
Douglas Stuart (Scottish Author)	Booker Prize for fiction	For his novel Shuggie Bain
Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'	Vatayan Lifetime Achievement Award	
Raah Foundation	Palghar CSR Award 2020	Under the category of Village Development
Kohima Smart City Development Limited, KSCDL	ET Government Global Smart Cities Forum 2020	Under the category Best Digital Initiative of the Year
Naseeruddin Shah	2020 Aditya Vikram Birla	Theatre – Central theme

	Kalashikhar Puraskar	
Delhi Crime	Best Drama Series award	At 48 th International Emmys
Pilibhit Tiger Reserve & Uttar Pradesh Forest department	First-ever international award, TX2	
K Sivan	Doctor of Science honorary doctorate	
Vinisha Umashankar (14-year old 9 th class student from Tamil Nadu)	Children's Climate Prize	For designing a mobile ironing cart

6 women led startups win COVID-19 Shri Shakti Challenge organized by MyGov in Collaboration with UN Women

- **Six women** led startups have won **COVID-19 Shri Shakti Challenge** organized by **MyGov** in collaboration with **UN Women**. With an objective to encourage and involve women led startups to come up with innovative solutions that can help in the fight against COVID19 or solve problems that impact a large number of women, MyGov in collaboration with UN Women, launched the COVID-19 Shri Shakti Challenge in April 2020.
- This was a unique challenge hosted on the Innovate platform of MyGov that called for applications from women led startups as well as startups who have solutions that address issues faced by a larger number of women.
- The Challenge was implemented in two stages: Ideation stage and Proof of Concept (PoC) Stage. The challenge received an overwhelming response with a total of 1265 entries, from across the nation.
- In addition to the earlier announced reward of Rs 5 lakhs for the top 3 winners, UN Women was generous enough to agree to reward Rs 2 lakhs each to the 3 startups chosen for their promising solutions.

Top 3 winners are as follows:

- **Dr P Gayatri Hela** is the founder of Bengaluru-based Resada Lifesciences Private Limited that designs and develops home and agricultural-based products using plant extracts instead of synthetic chemicals.
- **Romita Ghosh**, a cancer survivor, is the founder of Shimla-based iHeal HealthTech Private Limited which is a healthcare start-up that has been at the forefront of the fight against COVID and has been providing PPE kits to hospitals.
- **Dr Anjana Ramkumar** and **Dr Anushka Ashokan** are the product manager and co-founder of Kerala based Thanmatra Innovations Private Limited have come up with the innovative solution of an anti-microbial solution that could be sprayed into handkerchiefs or dupattas for making them safe to be used as Face Masks.

Stanford University study names five from LVPEI among top 2% scientists of the world

- **L V Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI)** has had **five** of its eminent senior scientists listed among **the top Indian researchers** in a database of 100,000 scientists worldwide.
- This database of top-cited scientists has been created by a team of scientists at **Stanford University, USA**, and is published in the journal PLOS Biology. It includes all scientists who are among top 100,000 across all fields and/or **top 2 per cent of their discipline**, based on the number of citations. The data was collected from the Scopus database for 6.8 million prolific authors out of which the top 100,000 were analysed.
- From L V Prasad Eye Institute, **Gullapalli N Rao**, Founder-Chair, **D Balasubramanian**, Distinguished Scientist and Director Emeritus, Brien Holden Eye Research Centre, **Savitri Sharma**, Director, Laboratory Services, **Jill Keefe**,

Visiting Professor, have featured in the database of top 2 per cent of scientists under the discipline of 'Ophthalmology', while S Shivaji, Distinguished Scientist and Former Director, Brien Holden Eye Research Centre, has featured in this list in the 'Microbiology' category.

- Gullapalli N Rao has been ranked as the top scientist in Eye Research from India. The L V Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI) was established in 1987 at Hyderabad as a not-for-profit, non-government, public-spirited, comprehensive eye care institution.

2nd National Water Awards 2019 Distribution Ceremony to be held on 11-12 Nov

- Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation is organising the **2nd National Water Awards (NWAs) 2019 Distribution Ceremony** on 11th & 12th November 2020 (11 am to 1 pm) through a virtual platform. The awards are given to motivate the individuals/organizations who are doing commendable work in the field of water resources conservation and management.
- The NWAs focuses on the good work and efforts made by individual and organisations across the country, and the government's vision for the path to a '**Jal Samridh Bharat**'. The event provides a good opportunity to start-ups as well as leading organisations to engage and deliberate with senior policymakers on how to further accelerate the '**Jal Shakti Abhiyan**' in India. The event also provides an occasion for all people and organisations to further cement a strong partnership and people engagement in water resources conservation and management activities.
- The **National Water Awards 2019** is awarding the participants **98 number of awards** in 16 different categories - Best State, Best District, Best Village Panchayat, Best Urban Local Body, Best Research/ Innovation/ New Technology, Best Education/ Mass Awareness effort, Best TV show, Best Newspaper, Best School, Best Institution/ RWA/ Religious Organisation, Best Industry, Best Water Regulatory Authority, Best Water Warrior, Best NGO, Best Water User Association, and Best Industry for CSR Activity. Each of the categories has sub-categories in different zones of the country.

Ministry of Water Resources to award Maharashtra villager

- The Union **Ministry of Water Resources** has declared an award for a villager of **Sangli Sampatrao Pawar** for his contribution to the revitalization of the **Agrani River**. Mr. Pawar was the first person to come up with the idea of **re-circulating the river** which had disappeared due to mud, soil and bushes.
- Agrani is a tributary of **Krishna river** originating from Tamkhadi village in Khanapur tehsil of Sangli district. In all, 107 villages in five tehsils of Sangli district fall under this river basin. It also has a tributary called **Mahakali**. The Agrani river disappeared due to mud, soil and bushes.
- However, in 2013, the work of reviving this river started with the Jalyukt Shivar Abhiyan. Under the guidance of Sampatrao Pawar, the villagers of Balwadi and Benapur built a dam and inaugurated a pioneering revival project.
- The work, which started with public participation, gained momentum and the long-lost river finally overflowed. The commendable work by Mr Sampatrao pawar, which has been acknowledged by the Ministry of Water Resources will indeed inspire more people to engage in the revitalization of rivers.

Dr. Dinesh Katre, Senior Director & HOD at C-DAC Wins 2020 Emmett Leahy Award

- **Dr. Dinesh Katre**, Senior Director & HOD at **C-DAC Wins 2020 Emmett Leahy Award** for his outstanding contributions Accomplishments that Have a Major Impact on the digital information and records management.
- The Emmett Leahy Award Committee recognized the sustained leadership by Dr. Dinesh Katre, Senior Director & HOD, C-DAC Pune, on issues of **digital stewardship** and preservation over several decades. In particular, through his efforts in creating **India's National Digital Preservation Program** and its flagship project, the Center of Excellence for

Digital Preservation, he has helped to advance the cause of providing robust and trustworthy platforms for the preservation of digital materials, including for electronic recordkeeping systems and tools for intelligent archiving.

- Among his many impressive achievements, he led the development of the **DIGITĀLAYA , e-Library** and Archiving System which played an important role in the ISO 16363 certification of world's first trustworthy digital repository.

Vidya Balan's Short Film Natkhat Becomes Eligible for Oscar Nomination

- **Natkhat**, starring and co-produced by **Vidya Balan**, has **won top prize** at the third edition of **Best Of India Short Film Festival 2020**, which makes it **eligible for Oscar nomination**.
- The film also won a prize money of \$2,500 (approximately Rs 1,85,497) and an opportunity for a television broadcast deal on ShortsTV.

2019 National water awards: Maharashtra adjudged second best in water management

- **Maharashtra** was adjudged **the second-best state** in **water conservation** effort by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, at the 2019 National Water Awards. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, who attended the event virtually, gave away the awards.
- **Tamil Nadu** was the top state in overall water conservation efforts, whereas **Rajasthan** settled for third position. In the same category, Mizoram received a special award.
- Aniket Lohiya of Manavlok, an NGO from Beed, won the 'Water Warrior' award. The organisation has been working for the development of forest, land and water in Marathwada district. Besides, it is also involved in works to improve the health and socio-economic situation of local residents.
- In another award for the state, **the Sangli district** administration bagged the top prize in the river revival category for contribution in reviving Agrani river. Being one of the drought-prone districts of the state, Agrani is a lifeline for farmers across five talukas. The administration not only revived the river but also improved the groundwater situation.
- For the second consecutive year, the **Maharashtra** Water Regulatory Authority (MWRA) won the first prize in the water regulatory authority category.

Queen Mother of Bhutan and HelpAge India receive 2020 UN Population Award

- Her Majesty **Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck**, **Queen Mother of Bhutan**, was announced as the **individual laureate** for the **2020 United Nations Population Award**. **HelpAge India** was announced as the **award's institutional laureate**.
- Her Majesty Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck is a longstanding champion of sexual and reproductive health and rights and the need to end violence against women, girls and children in Bhutan. Among her many achievements in recent decades, she has helped to create an enabling environment to openly discuss sexual reproductive health in the kingdom and founded a volunteer organization called "Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women" (RENEW) in 2004. She has also been a Goodwill Ambassador for UNFPA for more than 20 years.
- The world's ageing population has gained increasing attention in recent years, but **HelpAge India** has been working with and for disadvantaged elderly people in India for nearly four decades, serving their needs holistically and enabling them to live active, dignified and healthier lives.

Education Minister virtually launches AICTE's Lilavati Award-2020

- Education Minister **Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank"** virtually launched **Lilavati Award-2020: AICTE's Innovative education program to empower women**. With women empowerment as the theme, the objective of the award is to create awareness about issues like sanitation, hygiene, health, nutrition, literacy, and employment among women.

- The Minister emphasized on the necessity to impart quality education to girl child to make them self-reliant, confident and successful. He stated that the theme of the award -‘women empowerment’ has always been the top priority of the government.
- Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Government has launched several welfare schemes for the overall development of girl child and women such as Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and CBSE Udaan Scheme.
- The Minister added that with the **Lilavati Award-2020**, **AICTE** has once again championed the cause of women empowerment and paved a way towards equality in education and innovation.

NFDB confers four awards to Assam for success in fishery sector

- The **National Fisheries Development Board** has conferred **four awards** to **Assam** for the success in the fishery sector. Assam has got the **best state award** under the category of best hilly and North Eastern state. Assam Apex Cooperative **Fish Marketing and Processing Federation Limited (FISHFED)** has been selected under the category of best hilly and North eastern government organization.
- On the other hand, Nagaon district has been selected under best hilly and North Eastern district category while a Nalbari based farmer Amal Medhi is selected under hilly and North Eastern fish farmer category. The awards will be given on 21st of this month in New Delhi.

20 best performing districts get Swachhata Awards 2020

- **Jal Shakti Minister Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** and Minister of State, Jal Shakti, **Rattan Lal Kataria** conferred the **Swachhata Awards 2020** on the **20 best performing districts** for contributing towards ODF Sustainability and ODF Plus goals on World Toilet Day. These awards were given at a virtual ceremony organized by the **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation**.
- Mr Shekhawat stated that the Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin has transformed rural India by manifesting into a Jan Andolan for sanitation. He stated the Open Defecation Free rural India milestone was achieved in mission mode in a span of five years.
- Phase 2 of the **Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin** has been launched early this year. It focuses on ODF sustainability and Solid and Liquid Waste Management aiming at comprehensive cleanliness in villages.

Books by 3 Indian writers feature in 2020 ‘100 Notable Books’ selected by The New York Times

- Critically-acclaimed books by **three Indian writers** have featured among this year’s ‘**100 Notable Books**’ list of **The New York Times** that also includes former US president **Barack Obama’s** newly released memoir ‘**A Promised Land**’.
- Editors of The New York Times Book Review selected 100 “notable fiction, poetry and nonfiction” works from around the world. The prestigious list also includes the work of fiction ‘**A Burning**’ by India-born **Megha Majumdar**.
- **Djinn Patrol on the Purple Line**’ by Deepa Anappara, who grew up in Kerala, also features on the list.
- Samanth Subramanian’s ‘**A Dominant Character: The Radical Science and Restless Politics** of J. B. S. Haldane’ is a nonfiction work.
- **Red Pill**’ by British-Indian author Hari Kunzru also features in the list.

Israeli Prime Minister, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince nominated for Nobel Peace Prize 2021

- The Prime Minister of **Israel**, **Benjamin Netanyahu**, and **Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi**, **Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan** have been **nominated** for the **Nobel Peace Prize 2021** for their roles in establishing the strategic and diplomatic ties between the two nations.

- As per the statement of the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Lord David Trimble on November 25, 2020, submitted the candidacy of PM Benjamin Netanyahu and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince for Nobel Peace Prize 2021.
- The leaders of both nations have been nominated because of the recent peace agreement which has been signed between **Israel, UAE, and Bahrain**.

Oscars 2021: Keith Gomes' Shameless is India's official entry in short film category at 93rd Academy Awards

- **Keith Gomes' short film 'Shameless'** has been selected as **India's official entry** at the **93rd Academy Awards** in the **'Live Action Short Film'** category.
- The short film was chosen from a list of five short films that included Trapped, Safar, Aditya Kelgaonkar's 'Sound proof' and Shaan Vyas' 'Natkhah'. Shameless, written and directed by Keith Gomes, had released in April 2019.

Important MOU's

J&K Sports Council inks MOU with Cricketer Suresh Raina's Cricket Academy to develop budding Cricketers in UT

- The **Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council** enters into **MOU** with **Cricketer Suresh Raina's Cricket Academy** to develop **budding Cricketers** in the Union Territory.
- On the occasion, LG Manoj Sinha, Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam, Principal Secretary to LG Nitishwar Kumar, Secretary Sports, Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary J&K Sports Council Naseem Choudhary and Cricketer Suresh Raina were present.
- The LG observed that the MoU will provide an opportunity to budding cricketers to hone their skills & to showcase their talent in various levels of national & international competitive tournaments.

HDFC Bank, ICCI join hands to support SMEs, start-ups

- **ICCI** will evaluate and recommend potential start-ups /SMEs /MSMEs for investments. ICCI (Inventivepreneur Chamber of Commerce and Industries), in its endeavour to support SMEs (small and medium enterprises) and start-ups, has signed an **MoU** with **HDFC Bank**.
- According to the official release, through this association, ICCI will engage, enroll, and support various start-ups /SMEs /MSMEs to facilitate **inter-alia financial** and other facilities to/from HDFC Bank.
- HDFC Bank may offer bank accounts to start-ups that are supported and recommended by ICCI.
- In the joint statement, the organisations mentioned that ICCI will evaluate and recommend potential start-ups ,SMEs ,MSMEs for investments. ICCI will further support businesses to pitch their solutions to requisite stakeholders, and will work towards providing them an opportunity to showcase their solutions.

MoU signed between SAI and Arunachal Pradesh government

- In order to develop the sports infrastructure at the **National Centre of Excellence** in Itanagar, an MoU was signed between the **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** and **Arunachal Pradesh government**.
- An MOU was signed between SAI and Govt of Arunachal Pradesh to develop infrastructure at the National Centre of Excellence in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh

IISc, IOCL sign MoU for hydrogen-generation technology

- The Bengaluru based **Indian Institute of Science** and **R&D Centre of Indian Oil Corporation** have signed an MOU to develop and demonstrate **biomass gasification** based **hydrogen generation technology** for producing fuel cell-grade hydrogen at an affordable price.

- Both IISc and Indian Oil will demonstrate the technology in the Indian Oil R&D Centre in Faridabad. The technology is crucial for the fuel cell operated buses being conceived by Indian Oil towards ushering in the country's hydrogen economy.
- IISc has worked on biomass gasification and developed an innovative process for the production of hydrogen rich syngas and a small scale prototype is demonstrated in the IISc campus. The use of this technology will not only provide a cleaner energy option for India but also be a step towards addressing the challenge of biomass waste.

IREDA signs MoU with MNRE, setting key targets for year 2020-21

- **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA)** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**, for setting key targets for the year 2020-21. The MOU was signed by MNRE Secretary, Indu Shekhar Chaturvedi and IREDA CMD, Pradip Kumar Das.
- The government has set a revenue target of **2,406 crore rupees** under 'Excellent' rating along with various performance-related parameters such as Operating Profit as percentage of Revenue from Operation, PAT (profit after tax) as a percentage of Average Net worth, Loan disbursement, Overdue loan etc.
- IREDA as on today, has financed more than **2700 renewable energy** projects in India with cumulative loan disbursements to the tune of 57,000 crore rupees, and has supported green power capacity addition of 17,259 MW in the country.

Prasar Bharati signs MoU to launch 51 education TV channels

- India's public broadcaster **Prasar Bharati** entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, MoU with **Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-Informatics, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**. Under the MoU, **51 DTH education TV channels** will be available as DD co-branded channels to all DD FreeDish viewers.
- This move aims to bring quality **educational programmes** to every household, including those in rural and remote areas. The services will be available free of cost for all the viewers **24x7**, in line with Government's commitment towards skill development and providing quality education to the last person in the country. This initiative will go a long way in achieving Government's goal of providing education to all.

Bangladesh signs MoU with Indian Company for collecting 3 crore COVID 19 vaccine doses

- An MoU was signed between the government of **Bangladesh, Beximco Pharmaceutical Ltd** and the **Serum Institute of India (SII)** for priority delivery of **3 crore COVID 19 vaccine** doses. The process of development of the vaccine is in the final stages at University of Oxford and AstraZeneca.
- Health Minister of Bangladesh Zahid Maleque and High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Vikram Doraiswami were present on the occasion along with other senior officials of the Health Ministry of Bangladesh and the two companies.

Karnataka govt signs agreement with c to upgrade 150 Govt ITIs

- The **Government of Karnataka** has entered into an agreement with **Tata Technologies** to upgrade **150 Government ITIs** at a cost of **4,636.50 crore rupees**. The agreement was signed in the presence of Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa in Bengaluru.
- Along with Tata Technologies, about 20 other companies are contributing 4,080 crore rupees from their CSR funds for this programme. The remaining 657 crore rupees will be provided by the State Government. Each ITI will be upgraded at the cost of 30 crore rupees each.

- According to the agreement, the ITIs being upgraded will be able to provide Industry 4.0 based training that will fetch better employment opportunities to the ITI skilled students. It is expected that more than one lakh youth will benefit every year.

Atal Innovation Mission And Sirius (Russia) Launch 'AIM-Sirius Innovation Programme 3.0'

- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)** and **Sirius, Russia**, launched '**AIM-Sirius Innovation Programme 3.0**'- a **14-day virtual programme** for **Indian and Russian schoolchildren**.
- The first Indo-Russian bilateral youth innovation initiative, the **AIM-Sirius programme** seeks to develop technological solutions (both web- and mobile-based) for the two countries.
- Over a two-week programme, from **7-21 November 2020**, 48 students and 16 educators and mentors will create 8 virtual products and mobile applications addressing global challenges-- across a range of areas such as culture, distance education, applied cognitive science, health and well-being, sports, fitness, and games training, chemistry, artificial intelligence, and digital financial assets--in the wake of the covid-19 pandemic.
- Innovations developed by the student teams will leverage 21st-century technologies such as app development, artificial intelligence, blockchain, machine learning, data analytics and visualization, UI/UX, virtual reality, augmented reality, gamification, 3D design, and rapid prototyping, among others. AIM and Sirius' mentors from the industry and academia will work closely with the teams.

HIL signs MOU with Department of Chemicals & Petro Chemicals to achieve revenue target of 451 Crore rupees

- **HIL (India) Limited**, a PSU under the **Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers**, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals** recently to achieve the revenue target of **Rs 451 crore** in the current financial year (2020-21).
- The MoU was signed by the HIL (India) Limited's Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) Shri SP Mohanty and the Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals' Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Chaturvedi in presence of other Senior officers.
- In addition to this, the company has also registered the highest ever sale for the product in the first two quarters and supplied the entire quantity to various institutions like the Ministry of Agriculture's Locust Control Programme and municipal corporations across the country for the vector control.

Dell, AIF and NSDC Collaborate to Launch 'Project Future Ready'

- Sharing the vision to develop future workforce in India, **Dell Technologies** in partnership with **American India Foundation (AIF)**, **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** and **University of Mumbai** has launched '**Project Future Ready**' to equip the workforce with career skills.
- With AIF as an implementation partner and NSDC as the skilling partner, the project is set to impact over 100,000 students in Mumbai and Delhi NCR, of which 60% are female.
- This is in line with Dell Technologies' goal that each year through 2030, 50% of the people empowered by our social and education initiatives will be girls, women or underrepresented groups.
- The project aims to **provide skills development** for these **students through career mentoring**, leveraging **online skilling platforms** and providing market aligned **skills training for employability** and inculcating **entrepreneurial mind-set**. On completion of the program, the students will receive a certification from NSDC and University of Mumbai.
- These students will also be trained by NSDC through its eskillindia.org platform, a digital skilling initiative, to develop employability skills through customized courses for interview preparedness, communication, soft skills, etc.

- NSDC's wide repository of courses on eskill India platform will help young students acquire professional skills to enhance their employability.

Embassy Group inks pact for developing govt schools

- **Embassy Group** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with the **Government of Karnataka, Department of Education** for the all-around improvement of Government Schools in **Bangalore**. The scope of the MoU is to provide educational resources, infrastructural support and holistic health programs for 20 Government Schools at a budget of Rs 15 crores.
- The MoU will be signed for a period of two years, starting from October 2020 to September 2022, renewing the previous MoU, which was signed on November 2018.
- Under the MoU, Embassy will implement educational programs including annual distribution of starter kits, Maths, Life Skills, Sports, E-classrooms, scholarships, educational tours, after-school academic support, an alumni program and Art & Crafts. The Group will also provide new school buildings, repairs & renovations and daily maintenance to these adopted Government Schools.

India-Nepal Jointly Launch 3rd Integrated Check Post, Aim To Boost Trade & Connectivity

- **India and Nepal** launched the construction of a **Rs 147.12 crore** integrated check post (ICP) at **Nepalgunj**.
- Indian Commerce and Industry Minister **Piyush Goyal** and Nepali Minister for Urban Development **Krishna Gopal Shrestha** witnessed the ground-breaking ceremony to mark the beginning of the construction of an **Integrated Check Post**.
- Government of India is building Integrated Check Posts on either side of the Indo-Nepal border to systematize the movement of cross-border cargo trucks between the two countries by bringing customs and immigration facilities under one roof. ICPs at Birgunj and Biratnagar were jointly inaugurated and operationalized in April 2018 and January 2020 respectively by Prime Ministers of India and Nepal.
- Meanwhile, a similar facility is being built on the Indian side in Rupaidiha by the Lands Ports Authority of India and the work on the facility started in May this year and over 10 per cent of construction work has been completed.

FICCI FLO inks pact with IESC, IIM Shillong to mentor women entrepreneurs

- **FLO**, the women wing of the **Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)**, stated it has signed an agreement with **Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Shillong** and Incubation and Enterprise Support Centre (IESC) to mentor entrepreneurs.
- Under this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), FICCI FLO, IESC and IIM Shillong will jointly provide guidance and mentor entrepreneurs by facilitating a nurturing, instructive and supportive environment during the initial and critical stages of starting a business, thus enabling them to reduce the initial start-up costs and establish themselves in a shorter timeframe, according to a statement.

Indian Oil signed MoU with MoPNG for upcoming CBG Plants

- **Indian Oil** signed MoU with **MoPNG** for upcoming **CBG Plants** – An MoU has been signed with the Ministry of Petroleum and gas by the Indian Oil R&D Centre has developed robust technology on **Bio-methanation**, Government of India as a technology provider for the upcoming CBG Plants.
- This would help to reduce import dependence, create employment & reduce pollution as Production of CBG would increase the green energy mix and also will help in realizing Hon'ble PM's vision of boosting farmers' income mentioned Chairman of IOCL **Shri Shrikant Madhav Vaidya** while the signing of MOU with Petroleum Ministry for CBG projects.

- Indian Oil is that the **first company** to plug **Compressed Bio-Gas** from 10 shops spread across Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat, under the name Indi Green.

NCRTC, BEL join hands to develop indigenous platform screen doors

- The **National Capital Region Transport Corporation** and the **Bharat Electronics Limited** inked a memorandum of understanding to develop **indigenous platform screen doors**, which act as a safety barrier between the passengers and tracks, under the self-reliant India scheme.
- According to an official in the NCRTC, which is tasked to implement the country's first regional rapid transit system (RRTS), platform screen doors (PSD) are currently imported and that the new move will give an impetus to "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India).
- The official stated the NCRTC and the BEL would indigenously develop the PSD system for the upcoming bus rapid transit system (BRTS), mass rapid transit system (MRTS), RRTS and high-speed rail projects in India, as well as abroad.

India, Finland sign MoU in the field of Environment protection and biodiversity conservation

- India and **Finland** signed an MoU for **developing cooperation between two countries** in the field of **Environment protection** and **biodiversity conservation**.
- The MoU is a platform to further advance Indian and Finnish partnership and support, exchange best practices in areas like prevention of air and water pollution, waste management, and promotion of circular economy.
- The MoU was signed virtually by Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar from the Indian side and his Finnish counterpart Krista Mikkonen.

Cabinet approves MoU between BRICS nations on sports and physical culture

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between **BRICS countries** on cooperation in the **field of physical culture and sports**.
- "Cooperation in the field of sports among the five countries will help in expanding knowledge and expertise in the area of sports science, sports medicine, coaching techniques etc, which would result in improvement in the performance of our sportspersons in international tournaments and strengthening of bilateral relations with BRICS member countries," the government stated .
- "Benefits arising from cooperation in the field of sports among the five countries would be equally applicable to all sportspersons irrespective of their caste, creed, region, religion and gender," it added.
- BRICS is the group consisting of five major emerging countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, which together represent about **42 per cent** of the population, **23 per cent of GDP**, 30 per cent of the territory and 18 per cent of the global trade.

Women empowerment: IESC, FLO sign MoU under the aegis of IIM Shillong

- The MoU is signed for the purpose of a mentorship programme for women entrepreneurs.
- Under this MoU contract, **FLO** will create an **independent Entrepreneurial Ecosystem** which will help to empower women and transform them to become job creators.
- The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem of FLO will identify potential based startups and will provide them with the necessary support and guidance.
- This support and guidance will help to build initial startup cost and will thus help to establish a business in a short time span.

Eight MoUs announced during ongoing Bengaluru Tech Summit 2020

- During the **Bengaluru Tech Summit**, eight MoUs were announced with **Finland, UK, Sweden, USA and Netherlands**. Karnataka and Finland have decided to come together to work in the areas of Artificial Intelligence for public service in Agriculture, transport, health, safety, governance and service delivery.
- Karnataka and Sweden have agreed to facilitate innovative applications across different sectors, including smart city, health, manufacturing, product testing and validation.
- Karnataka and USA have come together to incubate early stage start ups and generate employment in the Electronics System Design and Manufacturing sector. With the UK the state has come to an understanding for creating citizen centric Artificial Intelligence solutions in public service, education, water, energy and last mile delivery.
- Karnataka and Netherlands will forge their potentials to build best practices in cyber security and privacy domains. It will also work towards creating India's first sector agnostic international market and assist at least 10 Karnataka start ups to enter the international market.
- The Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister Dr. C N Ashwath Narayan has stated that the MoUs announced today will be a key to improve the ecosystem and explore possibilities to initiate innovation, science and research focused cooperation.

BFIL ties up with Maha govt to provide livestock care

- **IndusInd Bank** subsidiary firm **Bharat Financial Inclusion Ltd (BFIL)** has signed a pact with **Maharashtra government** to enhance **doorstep delivery of livestock care to farmers** in the state.
- The joint initiative "**Maha Pashudhan Sanjeevani**"-- to be implemented under the Mukhyamantri **Pashu Swasthya Yojana** -- will also ensure all **veterinary services available for farmers** at just a phone call and the toll-free number **1962** will be operational **from January 2021**.
- The first phase of the initiative will serve farmers in 81 talukas located in 31 districts of Maharashtra, which has a total cattle population of 1.96 crore.
- The field veterinary services of the state government will be deployed through an integrated telemedicine and service management platform developed by BFIL.
- The doorstep veterinary services will have curative treatment, vaccination, artificial insemination, preventive care and all animal husbandry related information.

Andhra Pradesh Skill Development Corporation signs MoUs with IBM India, three other firms

- The **Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC)** signed **MoUs** with the four industry/academic partners — **IBM India, Singapore Polytechnic International (SPI), India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) and LV Prasad Film & TV Academy (LVPA)**.
- **IBM India** partnered with the AP government to set up a **Centre of Excellence (CoE) in IT**. IBM India will assist in developing course & curriculum, training of the trainers programmes, industrial exposure, guest lectures and provide training in emerging technologies including coding, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, Blockchain.
- **Singapore Polytechnic International (SPI)** partnered with the APSSDC for enabling **industry-led courses** in advanced manufacturing, food innovation and processing and entrepreneurship to be offered in skill colleges.
- **LVPA** has partnered with APSSDC to set up and operate a **centre of excellence in the media and entertainment sector in Visakhapatnam**. They will design and develop courses and curriculum, design and deliver the training of

trainers programme, offer courses in basics of 2D animation, digital photography, basics of editing, basics of VFX and digital restoration, industrial exposure, guest lectures.

- **ITDC** has partnered with the state government to set up and operate a centre of excellence in the hospitality sector, design courses and curriculum and offer courses in hospitality, event management, front office operations, housekeeping, food and beverage operations and entrepreneurship programmes.

Tripartite Agreement Signed between USOF, BSNL and A & N Administration for Operation and Management of CANI-SMC Project

- The Government of India approved the **Chennai-Andaman and Nicobar Islands (CANI) Submarine Optical Fiber Cable project** with an objective to connect Chennai Cable Landing Station (CLS) with Port Blair CLS and seven Islands viz. Swaraj Dweep, Little Andaman, Car Nicobar, Kamorta, Campbell Bay, Long Island and Rangat in **September, 2016**.
- **BSNL** was nominated as the **Implementing Agency** and **M/s NEC Infrastructures India (P) Ltd** was engaged as the Executing Agency for implementing the project at a total project cost of **Rs 1212 Crore**. The capital cost of the project is funded by USOF, DOT Government of India and the Operation and Maintenance Cost to the tune of **Rs 46.8 Cr per year** will be borne by A & N Administration.
- The Foundation stone of the project was laid by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi on 30.12.2018. The project was completed as per schedule despite difficult times of COVID-19 and **Segment-1 (Chennai-Port Blair), Segment-2 (Port-Blair-Little Andaman) and Segment-6 (Port Blair-Swaraj Dweep)** of the project was inaugurated.
- The **A & N Administration** signed **tripartite agreement** on 13.11.2020 with **USOF and BSNL** for ensuring **uninterrupted quality of service** with Service Levels upto **99.99%**.
- The agreement has back to back arrangement for continued warrantee support by M/s NEC Infrastructures Pvt. Ltd for equipment and SEAICOMA for Wet Plant (Submarine Part) for five years, which will be signed by BSNL (Implementing Agency).
- The tripartite agreement was signed by **Mr. Vijay Kumar**, IAS Principal Secretary (Fin & Plg), A & N Administration in simple function held at O/o Administrator USOF, Sanchar Bhavan, New Delhi.

EESL Signs MoU with DNRE Goa to implement the country's first Convergence Project

- **Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)**, a joint venture of PSUs under the **Ministry of Power and Department of New & Renewable Energy (DNRE)**, Goa, have signed a memorandum of understanding to discuss rolling out of **India's first Convergence Project in the State**.
- Under the MoU, EESL and DNRE will carry-out the feasibility studies and subsequent implementation of decentralized solar energy projects. EESL shall implement the solar energy projects, establishment of 100 MW of decentralized ground mounted Solar Power projects on government lands to be used for agricultural pumping, replace approximately **6,300 agricultural** pumps with BEE star rated energy efficient pumps and distribute approximately **16 Lakh LED bulbs** for rural domestic households.

ISB inks MoU with Indian Council of World Affairs

- The **Indian School of Business (ISB)** and **Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)** have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- As per the MoU, both will work together in the areas of diplomacy, culture, economy and trade, education, international relations, sciences, social sciences, communications, and media.

- The MoU is to promote and support activities that contribute to better understanding and relations between India and global partners; support exchange of visits by eminent persons; co-sponsoring of bilateral seminars, among other areas of cooperation.
- ICWA is a non-partisan organisation and is fully involved in research and dialogue on foreign policy and external relations. ICWA is an academic institution with strong policy focus. By an Act of Parliament in 2001, the Indian Council of World Affairs was declared an institution of national importance.

TASK to train 30,000 students in AI, ML

- The **Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK)** has joined hands with **Microsoft** and **NASSCOM FutureSkills** to roll out the '**March to Million**' initiative in the State.
- The Nasscom initiative is aimed at skilling 10 lakh youth nationally in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and Data Science by 2021.
- The Telangana State Council of Higher Education (TSCHE) will work with the TASK to reach out to at least 30,000 students in the State.
- Through the AI Classroom Series, the TASK will introduce students to the concepts of AI, ML and Data Science. "It helps students enhance their employability by acquiring the skills that the industry requires. The sessions will commence from November 23," Shrikant Sinha, Chief Executive Officer of TASK, stated

Revision Points

Organizations	Purpose
Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council & Suresh Raina's Cricket Academy	To develop budding Cricketers in UT
HDFC Bank & ICCI	To support SMEs, start-ups
Sports Authority of India & Arunachal Pradesh	To develop the sports infrastructure at the National Centre of Excellence
Indian Institute of Science & R&D Centre of Indian Oil Corporation	To develop and demonstrate biomass gasification based hydrogen generation technology
IREDA & Ministry of New and Renewable Energy	Setting key targets for the year 2020-21
Prasar Bharati & Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications	To launch 51 education TV channels
Beximco Pharmaceutical Ltd & Serum Institute of India	For collecting 3 crore COVID 19 vaccine doses
Tata Technologies & Karnataka	To upgrade 150 Government ITIs
Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Sirius, Russia	AIM-Sirius Innovation Programme 3.0
HIL (India) Limited & Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals	To achieve revenue target of 451 Crore rupees

Dell Technologies, American India Foundation, University of Mumbai & National Skill Development Corporation	Project Future Ready
Embassy Group & Government of Karnataka	For developing govt schools
FLO & Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Shillong	To mentor women entrepreneurs
Indian Oil & MoPNG	For upcoming CBG Plants
National Capital Region Transport Corporation & Bharat Electronics Limited	To develop indigenous platform screen doors
India & Finland	For developing cooperation between two countries in the field of Environment protection
BRICS countries	Cooperation in the field of physical culture and sports
IESC, FLO	Women empowerment
Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge & Microsoft	To roll out the 'March to Million' initiative
Energy Efficiency Services Limited & DNRE, Goa	To implement the country's first Convergence Project
USOF, BSNL and A & N Administration	For Operation and Management of CANI-SMC Project
Bharat Financial Inclusion Ltd & Maharashtra government	To provide livestock care

Important Summit & Conference

8th meeting of India-UAE High Level Joint Task Force on Investments held in virtual format

- The **eighth meeting** of the **India-UAE High Level Joint Task Force** on Investments was hosted by **India** in virtual format due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- The meeting was co-chaired by Commerce and Industry **Minister Piyush Goyal** and **Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**, Member of the Executive Council of Abu Dhabi.
- The **Joint Task Force** was created in **2012** as a crucial forum for further deepening the already strong economic ties between the UAE and India.
- The mechanism has assumed greater importance as the two countries entrench the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in January 2017.

PM Modi to chair Virtual Global Investor Roundtable

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will chair the **Virtual Global Investor Roundtable** on 5th November.
- The Roundtable is being organized by the **Finance Ministry** and **National Investment and Infrastructure Fund**.
- It is an exclusive dialogue between leading global institutional investors, Indian business leaders and the highest decision makers from the Government and Financial Market Regulators.

- The Roundtable will witness participation from **twenty** of the **world's largest pension and sovereign wealth funds** with a total Assets Under Management of about 6 trillion dollars.
- These global institutional investors represent key regions including the US, Europe, Canada, Korea, Japan, West Asia, Australia, and Singapore.
- The event will witness participation of key decision makers of these funds. Some of these investors would also be engaging for the first time with the Government.
- Apart from global investors, the Roundtable will also see participation of several top Indian Business Leaders.

PM Modi will lead Indian delegation to 20th Summit of SCO Council of Heads of States on Nov 10

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will lead the Indian delegation to the **20th Summit of SCO Council of Heads of States**, which will be held virtually.
- The meeting will be chaired by **President of Russia Vladimir Putin**. Briefing media, MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava stated, this will be the first SCO Summit to be held in virtual format and this is the third meeting that India will be participating as a full member.
- India was granted observer status of SCO in 2005 and it became a full member in 2017. In the last three years, India has maintained extensive engagement in all fields under the SCO framework.

India hosts 5th Joint Working Group on Coal between India and Indonesia through video conference

- **India** successfully hosted **5th Joint Working Group (JWG)** on Coal between **India** and **Indonesia** through video conference due to travel restrictions on account of Covid-19 pandemic. The JWG was co-chaired from the Indian side by **Vinod Kumar Tiwari**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Coal, Government of India and by Jonson Pakpahan, Director for Mineral and Coal, Non Tax State Revenue of Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Republic of Indonesia, from the Indonesian side.
- Mr. Tiwari provided an overview of the coal sector in India and presented emerging scenarios for the future. He highlighted India's initiatives for self-sufficiency in coal under Atmanirbhar Bharat and imperatives for businesses in the coal sector in both the countries.
- The Ministry of Coal made presentations on Indian Coal Policy reforms, Coking Coal Exploration and Commercial Mining, followed by presentations by the Indonesian side on Coal Policy and Current Coal Business s, Deep Seated Coal Potential in Indonesia.

OPEC holds 4th High-Level Meeting of the OPEC-India Dialogue

- The **OPEC** Secretariat hosted the **4th High-Level Meeting** of the **OPEC-India Dialogue** via videoconference.
- The Meeting was co-chaired by HE **Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo**, Secretary General of OPEC and the Honourable **Dharmendra Pradhan**, India's **Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Minister of Steel**.
- The meeting **focused on the implications of COVID-19**, discussing the repercussions of the pandemic and its significant impact on both the world economy and energy markets, including oil. Participants also deliberated on medium-term energy and oil prospects and challenges.
- The first such dialogue was held in **2015**.
- The **next High-Level Meeting of the OPEC-India Dialogue** will be held in **2021**, if possible in person, in **New Delhi**.

PM Narendra Modi chaired Virtual Global Investor Roundtable 2020

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** chaired the **Virtual Global Investor Roundtable (VGIR)2020** which will be attended by heads of 20 top institutional investors from the US, Europe, Canada, Korea, Japan, Middle East, Australia and Singapore.

- **VGIR 2020 will focus on discussions around India's economic and investment outlook, structural reforms and the government's vision for making the country a USD 5 trillion economy.**
- The VGIR is being organized by the **Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and National Investment and Infrastructure Fund.**
- Some of the prominent funds that would be participating in the event are Australian Super, British Columbia Investment Management Corporation, Future Fund, GIC, Japan Post Bank, Japan Bank for International Cooperation, Korean Investment Corporation, Mubadala, Nippon Life, Pension Denmark, Qatar Investment Authority and US International Development Finance Corporation.
- The Indian side included business leaders, financial market regulators, finance minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** and **RBI governor Shaktikanta Das.**

Union Minister Prakash Javadekar chairs 'India CEO Forum on Climate Change'

- Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, **Prakash Javadekar** virtually chaired **"India CEO Forum on Climate Change"**.
- A **'Declaration of the Private Sector on Climate Change'** is slated to be signed and released during the high-level virtual event.
- Key industry leaders from the steel, cement, power, pharmaceuticals etc. sectors will deliver statements to reinforce their commitment to the cause of climate change and share their vision for climate action in the post-2020 period.
- India is a signatory to the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. As part of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), India has three quantitative climate change goals viz. reduction in the emissions intensity of **Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 33 to 35 percent by 2030 from 2005 level**, achieving about **40 percent** cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources **by 2030** and creating an additional carbon sink of **2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide** equivalent through additional forest and tree cover **by 2030.**
- A coordinated response by the Government and private sector on climate change will help protect the country's interests and ensure that India is on track towards meeting its climate change obligations under the Paris Agreement.

FM Nirmala Sitharaman attends 1st BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting

- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** participated in the **1st BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting** under the **Russian Chairmanship** to discuss the BRICS Economic and Financial Cooperation agenda for 2020.
- Finance Ministry stated, Ms. Sitharaman talked about outcomes and initiatives of **G-20 Saudi Arabia** in 2020 on the Finance Track and highlighted role of BRICS members in reflecting Emerging Market Economies concerns in these initiatives.
- During the meeting, the Finance Minister also presented India's views on discussions related to infrastructure investments and New Development Bank membership expansion.

Hardeep Singh Puri inaugurates UMI 2020 Conference

- **Hardeep S. Puri**, MoS (I/C), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs inaugurated the **13th Urban Mobility India Conference** on **"Emerging Trends in Urban Mobility"**.
- He has stated that Future mobility is about striving towards environment-friendly, integrated, automated and personalized travel on-demand.

- New advancements like intelligent transportation systems, and traffic management applications are in the pipeline for enhanced mobility in major cities.
- The conference focused on innovative measures taken at national and international level to address the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic to provide accessible and convenient transport to the people.
- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, had issued the **National Urban Transport Policy, 2006 (NUTP)** to ensure safe, affordable, quick, comfortable, reliable and sustainable access for the growing number of city residents to jobs, education, recreation and such other needs within our cities.
- As part of the NUTP, the Ministry has been organizing the annual international Conference-cum-Exhibition on Urban Mobility India popularly known as UMI.
- The primary objective of the conference is to disseminate information to the cities, whose officials attend the conference to help them keep up-to-date with latest and best urban transport practices globally.

PM Modi to co-chair 17th ASEAN-India Summit File Pic

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** along with Prime Minister of **Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc** will co-chair the **17th ASEAN-India Summit**. The leaders of all ten ASEAN Member States will virtually participate in the Summit.
- The Summit will review the status of ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership and take stock of progress made in key areas such as connectivity, maritime cooperation, trade and commerce, education and capacity building.
- The Leaders will discuss ways to further strengthen ASEAN-India engagement and in this context will note the adoption of **ASEAN-India Plan of Action (2021-2025)**.
- ASEAN-India Summits provide the opportunity for India and ASEAN to engage at the highest level.
- India's Act East Policy, underlining ASEAN-centrality, reflects the importance, India attaches to engagement with ASEAN.

ISB to organise 3rd edition of Deccan Dialogue on Nov 16

- **The Indian School of Business (ISB)**, in partnership with the **Ministry of External Affairs** will be organising the **third edition of Deccan Dialogue** on November 16, on a virtual platform.
- The theme of the Dialogue is '**Crisis and Cooperation — Imperative in times of the pandemic**'. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will deliver the keynote address while Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs (I/C), will deliver the valedictory keynote address. The third edition of Deccan Dialogue will focus on healthcare diplomacy and atmanirbhar Bharat.
- With two successful previous editions in 2018 and 2019, Deccan Dialogue has become an annual flagship event of ISB, aimed at promoting multi-stakeholder conversations on various aspects of diplomacy and India's external engagement. Deccan Dialogue brings together policy makers, representatives from business, diplomatic and strategic communities, media, and academia on a common platform, to engage and deliberate on emerging aspects of diplomacy and development.
- The objective is to explore ways and means to address the crisis through various diplomatic efforts of cooperation and talk in detail on the pertinent issues faced by the world order. The dialogue will see participation from various business leaders, CXOs, professionals, students, government officials, among others, according to a release

8th BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation Ministerial meeting unanimously adopts BRICS STI Declaration 2020

- The **8th BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation Ministerial** meeting unanimously has adopted **BRICS STI Declaration 2020**. The meeting was held through a virtual platform.

- The Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russia organized the meeting, **Russian Federation** being the **Chair for 12th BRICS Summit**.
- Science and Technology cooperation among the member countries Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa was discussed in the meeting.
- During the meeting, Science and Technology Minister **Dr Harsh Vardhan** highlighted that the COVID 19 pandemic has been a test, demonstrating that multilateral cooperation is the key to overcoming such global challenges. He informed that India has initiated an integrated response to overcome this pandemic.
- From the development of indigenous vaccines, novel point-of-care diagnostics and therapeutic formulations based on traditional knowledge, Indian Research and Development are working relentlessly to develop effective interventions for combating the pandemic.
- India have recently launched a scheme '**SERB-POWER**' (**Promoting Opportunities For Women in Exploratory Research**) to encourage and support emerging as well as eminent women researchers to undertake R&D activities in frontier areas of science and engineering.

Jaishankar to represent India at East Asia Summit

- **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar** will represent India at the **15th East Asia Summit (EAS)**, which provides a platform for discussion on important strategic issues in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Last year, PM Narendra Modi** had **represented India** at the **EAS in Bangkok, Thailand**.
- The virtual summit meeting will be chaired by the **Prime Minister of Vietnam, Nguyen Xuan Phuc**, and see participation from all the 18 EAS countries —10 ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam), Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Russia and the United States.
- The leaders will also exchange views on issues of international and regional interest, including the pandemic and cooperation among EAS participating countries to achieve an expeditious and sustainable economic recovery.
- The East Asia Summit is a premier leaders-led forum for discussions on important strategic issues in the Indo-Pacific, and a leading confidence-building mechanism in the region.

2nd World Health Expo held in Wuhan, China

- The **Second World Health Expo** is held in Hubei's capital city **Wuhan** from **November 11 to 14**. It features 12 different venues for audiences to experience the most frontier health technology, the latest in fitness sports and the most realistically restored anti-epidemic scenes.
- This year's Expo will focus on displaying the most cutting-edge science and technology in the global health industry, and help Wuhan build "**city of global health industry**".
- The exhibition area covers an area of 150,000 square meters, with 12 special venues set for anti-epidemic materials, medical equipment, and Chinese medicine, relating to the entire industry chain of health.
- During the Expo, more than a hundred high-end forums including a summit forum, academicians forum and the roundtable dialogue on epidemic prevention and normalized control, and the Global University Leaders Forum, will be organized.

RCEP: Asia-Pacific countries form world's largest trading bloc

- **Fifteen countries** have formed the **world's largest trading bloc**, covering nearly a third of the global economy.
- The **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** is made up of 10 Southeast Asian countries, as well as South Korea, China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

- The deal excludes the US, which withdrew from a rival Asia-Pacific trade pact in 2017.
- **Nguyen Xuan Phuc, prime minister of Vietnam**, which hosted the ceremony as **ASEAN chair**.
- The deal was signed on the sidelines of an online ASEAN summit held as Asian leaders address tensions in the South China Sea and tackle plans for a post-pandemic economic recovery in a region where U.S.-China rivalry has been rising.
- RCEP will account for 30% of the global economy, 30% of the global population and reach 2.2 billion consumers.
- India pulled out of RCEP talks in November last year.

44th Annual Meeting Of Ministers For Foreign Affairs Of G77 & China

- **India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador T S Tirumurti** represented at the **44th Annual Meeting of the G-77 Foreign Ministers**.
- Tirumurti reiterated India's steadfast commitment to work with its partners from the global South in the G-77 "towards a resilient and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and to build back better and stronger.
- India has pledged 15 million dollars for GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and operationalised the COVID-19 Emergency Fund for India's neighbours with an initial contribution of 10 million dollars.
- India's concessional Lines of Credit of over 30 billion dollars, its grants-in-aid projects and flagship training and capacity building project under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) have made a huge contribution to fellow developing countries.
- Further, the 150 million dollar India-UN Development Partnership Fund continues to support transformational sustainable development projects with a focus on LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.
- Tirumurti underlined that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and Financing for Development framework should lay the foundations for global efforts.

PM Modi to attend 12th BRICS Summit; to also address Third Annual Bloomberg New Economy Forum

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the **12th BRICS Summit hosted by Russia**, under the theme **Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth**. The meeting will be held in a virtual format.
- India will be taking over the **Chairship of the BRICS**, which would be the **third BRICS Presidency for India** since its inception after 2012 and 2016. India will host the **13th BRICS Summit** next year.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver an address at the **Third Annual Bloomberg New Economy Forum**. The Bloomberg New Economy Forum was established in 2018 by Michael Bloomberg. It seeks to build a community of leaders to engage in real conversations leading to actionable solutions about the critical challenges facing a world economy in the throes of a historic transition.
- The inaugural Forum was held in Singapore and the Second Annual Forum was hosted in **Beijing**. These covered a range of topics, including global economic management, trade and investment, technology, urbanization, capital markets, climate change and inclusion.

80th All India Presiding Officers' Conference to be organized at Kevadia on Nov 25

- A two day **80th All India Presiding Officers' Conference** will be organized at **Kevadia, Gujarat** on 25th of this month. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla stated that the theme of this year's conference is **Harmonious Coordination of Legislative, Executive and Judiciary- Key to a Vibrant Democracy**. He stated, President Ram Nath Kovind will inaugurate the two day conference.
- He stated, it is our collective efforts to maintain the constitutional sanctity which is very important for mutual co-existence between the three organs of governance and the sustenance of democracy in the country. Mr Birla stated,

various sessions will be organised in which presiding officers will exchange their views and shared best practices. He stated, discussions will also be held on ways to make the proceedings of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies more productive.

India to host G20 Summit in 2023

- India is set to host the **G-20 summit** in **2023**, instead of **2022** — the **75th year of Independence**. Indonesia will assume G-20 presidency in 2022 after a swap with India, Indonesian foreign minister Retno Marsudi stated, adding that the change of plan was agreed considering that Indonesia would also chair the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**) in **2023**.
- **G20** leaders announced that India will host the summit of the **high-profile grouping** in **2023** – a year later than what was decided earlier.
- India was earlier slated to host the summit in **2022** with the **Osaka declaration** of the G20 stating last year that “we look forward to meeting again in Saudi Arabia in 2020, in **Italy** in **2021**, and in **India** in **2022**”.

Malaysia hosted 2020 APEC Summit

- The **2020 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting** was held under the Chairmanship of Malaysian Prime Minister **Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin**. This was the first time that all 21 APEC Economic Leaders met virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The APEC 2020 ended with the adoption of the APEC **Putrajaya Vision 2040** and the **2020 Kuala Lumpur Declaration**. The APEC Summit 2021 will be hosted by New Zealand. This is the second time Malaysia hosted an APEC meeting, having hosted one in 1998.
- The theme of the APEC Malaysia 2020 was “**Optimising Human Potential Towards a Resilient Future of Shared Prosperity: Pivot. Prioritise. Progress**”.
- The APEC leaders' meeting was the first since 2018 after last year's host, Chile, canceled the annual summit due to violent domestic protests. APEC brings together Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States. New Zealand will also host next year's APEC meetings virtually due to the pandemic.

PM Modi to inaugurate RE-INVEST 2020 on Nov 26

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the virtual **third Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo (RE-Invest 2020)**. The three days summit is organised by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy**.
- The theme for RE-Invest 2020 is **Innovations for Sustainable Energy Transition**. It will feature a 3-day conference on renewables and future energy choices, and an exhibition of manufacturers, developers, investors and innovators.
- It is expected to be attended by over 75 international Ministerial delegations, over 1000 global industry leaders, and 50,000 delegates.
- It aims to accelerate the worldwide effort to scale up development and deployment of renewable energy and connect the global investment community with Indian energy stakeholders.

India to host SCO Council of Heads of Government Meeting

- India will host **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** Council of Heads of Government Meeting in virtual format. Vice President **M Venkaiah Naidu** will chair the meeting.
- This Summit is held annually at the level of Prime Ministers of SCO and deals primarily with the trade and economic agenda of the organization. **India** assumed the Chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of Government on 2nd

November last year as per rotation from the previous Chair - Uzbekistan and will complete its year-long tenure on 30th of this month.

- Prime Ministers from the SCO Member States of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will attend the SCO meeting. Pakistan will be represented by the Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs.
- Apart from the SCO Member States, the four Observer States of SCO will also participate- including the President of Afghanistan, the First Vice President of Iran, the Prime Minister of Belarus and the Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia. Turkmenistan has been invited as a Special Guest of the Host and will be represented by the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers.

PM Modi to attend 5th G-20 Leaders Summit at the invitation of King of Saudi Arabia

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will be attending the **15th G-20 Leaders Summit** at the invitation of the King of Saudi Arabia. The summit is being chaired by Saudi Arabia on November 21st and 22nd in a virtual format under the theme - **Realising the Opportunities** of the 21st Century for All.
- External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava stated this will be the second G20 leaders meeting in 2020. The focus of the upcoming G20 Summit will be on an inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery from COVID 19.

Dr Harsh Vardhan addresses 33rd Stop TB Partnership Board meet in New Delhi through Video Conference

- **Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan** has stressed on the need to create a mass movement for elimination of TB with strategized advocacy, thought leadership, disruptive social entrepreneurship, powerful, societal and political commitment. He was addressing the **33rd Stop TB Partnership Board meet** in **New Delhi** through Video Conference.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan highlighted India's "TB Harega, Desh Jeetega" campaign that targets to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal target related to TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global target of 2030. He stated, India had nearly trebled efforts on increasing TB notifications and had managed to close the gap in 'Missing million TB cases'.

Revision Points

Conference/Summits	Venue/Host Country	Chaired By/Theme/Addressed By/Others
8th meeting of the India-UAE High Level Joint Task Force	India	Co-chaired by Piyush Goyal and Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Virtual Global Investor Roundtable	Organized by the Finance Ministry and National Investment and Infrastructure Fund	Narendra Modi
20th Summit of SCO Council of Heads of States	Virtual	President of Russia Vladimir Putin
5th Joint Working Group (JWG) on Coal between India and Indonesia	India	Co-chaired from the Indian side by Vinod Kumar Tiwari
4th High-Level Meeting of the OPEC-India Dialogue	OPEC Secretariat	Co-chaired by HE Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo

Virtual Global Investor Roundtable (VGIR) 2020	Organized by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and National Investment and Infrastructure Fund	Narendra Modi
Declaration of the Private Sector on Climate Change	Virtual	Prakash Javadekar
1st BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting		Participated by Nirmala Sitharaman
13th Urban Mobility India Conference on "Emerging Trends in Urban Mobility"		Inaugurated by Hardeep S. Puri
17th ASEAN-India Summit	Virtual	Narendra Modi along with Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc
Third edition of Deccan Dialogue	Virtual	Organized by Indian School of Business & Ministry of External Affairs
15th East Asia Summit		S Jaishankar
Second World Health Expo	Wuhan	
12th BRICS Summit hosted by Russia	Russia	Theme - Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth
80th All India Presiding Officers' Conference	Kevadia, Gujarat	Theme - Harmonious Coordination of Legislative, Executive and Judiciary- Key to a Vibrant Democracy
G-20 summit in 2023	India	
2020 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting	Malaysia	Theme - Optimising Human Potential Towards a Resilient Future of Shared Prosperity: Pivot. Prioritise. Progress
Third Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo		Organised by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government Meeting	India	Chaired by M Venkaiah Naidu
15th G-20 Leaders Summit		Narendra Modi (Theme - Realising the Opportunities)
33rd Stop TB Partnership Board	New Delhi	

meet		
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Important Defence News

Exercises	Countries
Malabar	India, US, Japan
CARAT Bangladesh 2020	Bangladesh & USA
SITMEX-20	India, Singapore and Thailand
SIMBEX-20	India & Singapore
CORPAT	India & Thailand

Indian Army launches cycling expedition in Gujarat & Rajasthan to commemorate 1971 Indo-Pak War victory

- **Konark Corps of Indian Army** has launched a **1971 kilometers cycling expedition** in Gujarat and Rajasthan to commemorate the commencement of the **Golden Jubilee Victory Celebrations of Indian Armed Forces in the Indo-Pak War of 1971**.
- December 3 will mark the commencement of the 50th year of the decisive victory of Indian Armed Forces in war. The cycle expedition was flagged off from an outpost near Lakhpat in Kutch by Honorary Captain Gumansinh Jhala, an 87 year old War Veteran who had participated in both Indo-Pak wars of 1965 & 1971 then serving with 7 Grenadiers.
- 1971 Kilometers 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh Cyclothon' across Gujarat & Rajasthan has been joined by the relay teams of 20 participants each of the various Army Formations across the two states.

Indian Navy inducts two American Predator drones on lease

- The **Indian Navy** has **leased two Predator drones** from an American firm for carrying out surveillance in the **Indian Ocean Region**, a person familiar with the matter stated– in a sign of closer defence and security cooperation between India and the US.
- The drones that can stay airborne for about 36 hours and can cruise upto a height of 40,000 feet could also be used for surveillance along India's land borders including in Ladakh where Indian and Chinese troops have been engaged in an eyeball to eyeball confrontation since May. The drones would be on lease to India for a year, the person cited above stated.

India test-fires land-attack version of BrahMos missile

- India test-fired a land-attack version of the **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands,. "The target of the missile was on another island there. "The supersonic cruise missile was testfired at 10 AM and it successfully hit its target. The test was conducted by **the Indian Army** which has many regiments of the DRDO-developed Missile system. The strike range of BrahMos missile has now been enhanced to over 400 km," it added quoting sources.
- The BrahMos is a medium-range supersonic cruise missile which can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft or land. It is the world's fastest supersonic cruise missile, as well as the fastest anti-ship cruise missile in operation. BrahMos-II, a hypersonic version of the missile, is also currently under development.
- BrahMos Aerospace is a joint venture between DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya and was established on February 12, 1998. Its name is a combination of India's Brahmaputra and Russia's Moskva rivers.

First phase of four-nation Malabar naval exercise kicks off from Nov 3 to 6

- The **24th edition** of the **Malabar naval exercise** is scheduled to be held in two phases in November 2020.
- **Phase 1 of the exercise Malabar 20** involving participation by **Indian Navy (IN), United States Navy (USN), Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF), and Royal Australian Navy (RAN)** is set to commence off Visakhapatnam in **Bay of Bengal** from **3-6 November, 2020**
- Phase-1 of Malabar 20 will witness participation of Indian Navy units with United States Ship (USS) John S McCain (Guided-missile destroyer), Her Majesty's Australian Ship (HMAS) Ballarat (long range frigates) with integral MH-60 helicopter, and Japan Maritime Self Defence Ship (JMSDF) Onami (Destroyer) with integral SH-60 helicopter.
- The Indian Navy participation in Phase 1 will be led by **Rear Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan**, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet.
- **Phase 2 of Malabar 20** is scheduled to be conducted in **the Arabian Sea** in **mid-November 2020**.

Indian Naval Ship Airavat reaches Port Sudan as part of 'Mission Sagar-II'

- **Indian Naval Ship, Airavat** reached **Port Sudan** as a part of **Mission Sagar-II**.
- Indian government is providing assistance to Friendly Foreign Countries to overcome natural calamities and COVID-19 pandemic, and towards the same INS Airavat is carrying a consignment of **100 Tonnes of food aid for the people of Sudan**.
- Mission Sagar-II, follows the first 'Mission Sagar' undertaken in May-June 2020, wherein India provided food and medicines to Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros.
- As part of Mission Sagar-II, **INS Airavat will deliver food aid to Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea**.
- Mission Sagar-II, is in line with the Prime Minister's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region 'SAGAR' and highlights the importance accorded by India to relations with her maritime neighbours and further strengthens the existing bond.

Indian Coast Guard Ship C-452 To Be Commissioned

- **Rajan Bargotra**, Additional Director General (Western Seaboard), will commission **Indian Coast Guard's (ICG) ship C-452** through video conference in **Ratnagiri, Maharashtra**.
- The ship was indigenously **designed and built by Larsen & Toubro, Surat** complying with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Make in India" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat".
- Earlier in May, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had commissioned Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Sachet and two interceptor boats (IBs) **C-450 and C-451 in Goa**.
- The ICGS Sachet, the first in the series of five offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) has been designed and built indigenously by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) and is fitted with state-of-the-art navigation and communication equipment.

Australia to join Malabar naval exercise involving India, US, Japan

- **Australia** will join Malabar naval exercise involving India, US and Japan.
- The Annual Naval Exercise Malabar-2020 is expected to be held in the **Bay of Bengal** and the Arabian Sea later this year. This year, the exercise has been planned on a '**non-contact-at sea**' format.
- The exercise will strengthen the coordination between the Navies of the participating countries.
- The participants of **Exercise Malabar-2020** are engaging to enhance safety and security in the maritime domain. The Malabar series of Naval exercises started in 1992 as a bilateral Indian Navy-US Navy exercise and Japan joined the Naval exercise in 2015.

Advanced version of Pinaka Rocket System successfully test-fired; 6 rockets launched

- **Pinaka missile** was successfully flight test-fired from Integrated Test Range at Chandipur off the coast of Odisha. The indigenous Pinaka missile has been developed by **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- A total of **6 rockets were launched** in quick succession and the tests met complete mission objectives.
- An enhanced version of Pinaka rocket **would replace** the **existing Pinaka Mk-I rockets** which are currently under production.
- Pinaka MBRS comprises of a free-flight artillery rocket having a maximum range of 38 km with different types of warhead and fuses, a multi-tube launcher vehicle, a replenishment-cum-loader vehicle, a replenishment vehicle and a command post vehicle. There are two pods containing 6 rockets each, capable of firing in salvo mode within 48 seconds.
- In light of the requirement of the Army for a free flight rocket with enhanced range, ARDE has successfully developed **Pinaka Mk-II rocket** with 60 km range.
- The design and development has been carried out by **Pune based DRDO laboratories**, namely Armament Research and Development Establishment, ARDE and High Energy Materials Research Laboratory, HEMRL.
- **Rockets tested** have been manufactured by **M/s Economic Explosives Limited, Nagpur**, to whom the technology has been transferred.
- All the flight articles were tracked by Range instruments such as telemetry, radar and Electro Optical Tracking Systems which confirmed the flight performance.

Bangladesh, US launch joint naval exercise 'CARAT Bangladesh 2020' AIR

- The **Bangladesh and US Navies** launched the '**Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Bangladesh-2020**' to expand relationships and broaden maritime awareness between the two countries.
- The exercise demonstrates US's continuing commitment to work with the Bangladesh military to address shared maritime security concerns in the region and strengthen partnership to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region.
- Historically, the CARAT exercises involve people to people interactions and a variety of professional exchanges. These will take place online this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The sea-phase of the exercise will take place in the Bay of Bengal with ships from both countries. The events are designed to enhance interoperability between the two navies.
- US and Bangladesh will work through coordinated deployment of surface ships, to include tactical maneuvers among other activities.

India's special forces carry out a 'Bull Strike' in Andaman Nicobar Islands

- A **Military exercise** involving **special forces** was carried out in the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** between November 3 and 5 as the **Army, Navy and Air Force** got together for the war games amid the India-China standoff to test synergy in joint operations.
- **Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC)** conducted a joint services exercise code-named '**Bull Strike**', involving the three Services components of Andaman and Nicobar Command.
- Elements of Indian Army's Parachute Brigade, marine commandos or MARCOS and Special Forces carried on the exercise at the remotely located **Teressa Island**, in the strategically important Nicobar Group of Islands.
- The major training activities comprised **combat free fall and para drop** from strategic lift aircraft **C-130** by a company of Para Commandos from the mainland, action by **MARCOS of Indian Navy** and **Special Heli Borne Operations (SHBO)** by Indian Army Ghatak Platoons.

Two-day joint coastal security exercise 'Sagar Kavach' begins at Odisha

- A two-day joint coastal security exercise, "**Sagar Kavach**" was launched at **Paradip Coast**.
- The exercise is being carried out by a joint effort of the state of Odisha and West Bengal governments. More than 10 such departments, including the Indian Navy, the Indian Coast Guard, the Odisha Police, the local fishermen, the forest department, and the port marine department, have joined the joint exercise.
- The exercise will be held for two days on November 5 and 6. The main purpose of the exercise is to carry out the exercise on the coast of Paradip this year, just like every year after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.
- The exercise is being carried out to prevent a repeat of the Mumbai attacks by sea.
- It will run for two days, with red and green forces being formed to infiltrate and prevent attacks. This year for coastal security the exercise was named "**Sagar Kavach**".

DRDO develops fire detection and suppression system for passenger buses

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has developed for **passenger buses** a technology called "**Fire Detection and Suppression System (FDSS)**".
- Union Road Transport Minister **Nitin Gadkari** and Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** witnessed at the DRDO Bhawan the demonstration of FDSS -- a technology which can detect fire in buses in less than 30 seconds and extinguish it in 60 seconds.
- DRDO's **Centre for Fire Explosive and Environment Safety (CFEES), Delhi** has developed the technology.
- The FDSS for passenger compartment comprises a water tank of 80 litre capacity, a 6.8 kg nitrogen cylinder pressurised to 200 bar installed at appropriate location in the bus and a network of tubing with 16 number of atomizers inside the passenger compartment.

Indian Navy's fifth Scorpene-class submarine Vagir launched

- **Indian Navy's fifth Kalvari-class Diesel Electric attack submarine INS Vagir** was launched at **Mazgaon Dock in Mumbai**.
- A modern and stealthy class of submarines having been built **under Project 75** and whose design is based on the Scorpene class of the submarines.
- The other vessels in the class are **INS Kalvari, INS Khanderi, INS Karanj, INS Vela and INS Vagsheer**. Of these Kalvari and Khanderi have been commissioned in 2017 and 2019, Vela and Karanj are undergoing sea trials, Vagir has now been launched and Vagsheer is under construction.
- Like Kalvari – which means Tiger Shark, **Vagir has been named after a Sand Fish**, a predatory marine species. Khanderi has been named after an Island Fort built by Chhatrapati Shivaji, which played a key role in his Navy. Karanj has also been named after an Island located South of Mumbai.

DRDO successfully test-fires Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile system

- India has successfully test-fired the **Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) system** off the coast of **Balasore in Odisha**.
- The missile is propelled by a single-stage solid-propellant rocket motor and uses all indigenous subsystems.
- The QRSAM system has been developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** **in association with Bharat Electronics Limited and Bharat Dynamics Limited** for the Indian Army.
- All QRSAM weapon system elements like Battery Multifunction Radar, Battery Surveillance Radar, Battery Command Post Vehicle and Mobile Launcher were deployed in the flight test.
- The system is designed to give air defence coverage against strike columns of the Indian Army.

- In the last two months, India has test-fired a number of missiles including a new version of the surface-to-surface supersonic cruise missile **BrahMos** and an anti-radiation missile named **Rudram-1**.

2nd edition of SITMEX-20 underway in Andaman Sea

- **Indian Navy Ships** including indigenously built **ASW corvette Kamorta** and missile corvette Karmuk are participating in the 2nd edition of **India, Singapore and Thailand Trilateral Maritime Exercise SITMEX-20** in Andaman Sea. The two day exercise got underway.
- First edition of SITMEX, hosted by Indian Navy, was conducted off **Port Blair** in **September** last year.
- The SITMEX series of exercises are conducted to enhance mutual inter-operability and imbibing best practices between Indian Navy, Republic of Singapore Navy and Royal Thai Navy.
- The 2020 edition of the exercise is being hosted by Republic of Singapore Navy which is being represented by the 'Formidable' Class frigate 'Intrepid' and 'Endurance' Class Landing Ship Tank 'Endeavour'.
- Royal Thai Navy is being represented by the 'Chao Phraya' Class frigate 'Kraburi' in the exercise.

India - Singapore Bilateral Maritime Exercise SIMBEX-20 to begin in Andaman Sea

- **Indian Navy** is scheduled to host the **27th edition of India - Singapore Bilateral Maritime Exercise SIMBEX-20** from in Andaman Sea.
- The SIMBEX series of exercises between Indian Navy and Republic of Singapore Navy being conducted annually since 1994, are aimed at enhancing mutual inter-operability and imbibing best practices from each other.
- The 2020 edition of SIMBEX will witness participation by Indian Navy ships including destroyer Rana with integral Chetak helicopter and indigenously built corvettes Kamorta and Karmuk.
- SIMBEX-20 will witness the two friendly navies participate in advanced surface, anti-air warfare and anti-submarine warfare exercises including weapon firings, over three days of intensive joint operations at sea.

Indian Navy gets 9th P-8I anti-submarine warfare aircraft

- **Indian Navy** has got its **ninth Boeing P-8I long-range maritime reconnaissance** and anti-submarine warfare aircraft, part of the nearly **\$1 billion deal** with the US for four additional planes signed in 2016. India, which had first signed a contract for eight such aircraft in 2009, is also negotiating a deal for six more P-8Is with the US under the government-to-government route.
- While the ninth aircraft was scheduled to be handed over to the Indian Navy in July this year, the Covid pandemic delayed plans. The remaining three are scheduled to be handed over to India in 2021. Incidentally, the aircraft, the latest of which landed at **INS Hansa** in Goa.
- The Indian fleet of **P-8I aircraft**, a variant of the P-8A Poseidon aircraft that Boeing developed as a replacement for the US Navy's ageing P-3 fleet, has surpassed 25,000 flight hours since it was inducted in 2013. India had become the first international customer for the P-8 aircraft with the conclusion of the nearly **\$2.1 billion** contracts on 1 January 2009 for a total of eight aircraft. India is also the **second-biggest** operator of the **aircraft** in the world.

Indo-Thai Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT)

- The **30th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT)** between the **Indian Navy** and the **Royal Thai Navy** conducted from **18 – 20 November 2020**. Indian Naval Ship (INS) Karmuk, an indigenously built **Missile Corvette** and His Majesty's Thailand Ship (HTMS) Kraburi, a Chao Phraya Class Frigate along with Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both the navies are participating in the CORPAT.

- As part of Government of India's vision of **SAGAR** (Security And Growth for All in the Region), the Indian Navy has been involved in assisting countries in the Indian Ocean Region with EEZ Surveillance, **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**, and other capacity building and capability-enhancement activities, on their request.

DRDO flags off first Varunastra, a heavy weight torpedo

- **G. Satheesh Reddy**, Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, **DRDO flagged off the first Varunastra, the heavy weight torpedo** that was delivered to **the Indian Navy** at a ceremony held at BDL, Visakhapatnam Unit.
- He later laid the foundation stone for setting up of a state-of-the-art central stores at BDL, Visakhapatnam Unit.
- Varunastra, the heavy weight torpedo, has been designed and developed by NSTL, Visakhapatnam. BDL, being the production agency, is manufacturing Varunastra at its Visakhapatnam Unit for the Indian Navy. This product is also being offered for export, according to a BDL statement.
- BDL is associated with DRDO for its various missile programmes and it is the production agency for **Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM)**, for which, trials were conducted successfully recently. BDL is also the production agency for Astra Air-to-Air Missile System and has commenced manufacturing of these missiles. These missile systems are developed indigenously by the DRDO for the Indian Air Force.

Indian Navy receives ninth Boeing P-8I surveillance aircraft

- **Indian Navy** received the **first of the four new P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft**.
- In a major boost to its **anti-submarine warfare capabilities**, the Navy received its **ninth P-8I** surveillance plane at the **naval airbase in Goa**.
- The aircraft is the first of four additional planes ordered by India after the initial order for eight such planes was completed.
- The **Indian government** had signed a **1.1 billion contract** with the **US in July 2016** to buy four P-8I aircraft.
- Boeing's P-8I aircraft, which is considered one of the world's most advanced surveillance and anti-submarine aircraft, is designed for long-range anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions.
- The eight P-8I aircraft, which were inducted into the Indian Navy after the government signed a \$2.1 billion deal inked in January 2009, are armed with Harpoon Block-II missiles and MK-54 lightweight torpedoes.
- The Indian Air Force (IAF) has deployed all its frontline fighter jets like Sukhoi 30 MKI, Jaguar and Mirage 2000 aircraft in the airbases in eastern Ladakh and nearby areas.

30th India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol Took Place Between Nov 18-20

- The **30th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT)** between the **Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy** took place from **November 18-20**.
- **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Karmuk**, an indigenously built Missile Corvette and His Majesty's **Thailand Ship (HTMS) Kraburi**, a Chao Phraya Class Frigate along with Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both the navies are participating in the CORPAT.
- To reinforce maritime links, the navies of both nations have been carrying out CORPAT along their International Maritime Boundary Line **twice a year since 2005**, with the aim of keeping this vital part of the Indian Ocean safe and secure for commercial shipping and international trade.
- CORPAT builds up the understanding and interoperability between navies and facilitates the institution of measures to prevent and suppress Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking, maritime terrorism, armed robbery and piracy.

Malabar Exercise 2020: Second phase begins

- The **second phase of Malabar Exercise 2020** is scheduled to start November 17 in the **Northern Arabian Sea**.
- The exercise will conclude on November 20. The exercise will involve coordinated operations between the navies of **India, the US, Australia and Japan**.
- The second phase of Malabar Exercise 2020 will take forward the synergy achieved between the navies of the four countries in the recently concluded **Phase 1 of Malabar Exercise**. It may be recalled that first phase of the crucial exercise was conducted in the **Bay of Bengal from November 3-6**.
- Phase 2 of Malabar Exercise 2020 will witness joint operations, centred around the **Vikramaditya Carrier Battle Group** of the **Indian Navy** and **Nimitz** Carrier Strike Group of the **US Navy**.
- The **Royal Australian Navy** will be represented by **frigate Ballarat** along with its integral helicopter. **JMSDF** will also participate in the exercise.
- The Malabar series of exercises started as an annual bilateral naval exercise between India and the US in 1992.

Second flight test of QRSAM conducted successfully

- The **second flight test of Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile System (QRSAM)** was successfully conducted from **the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur**, off the coast of Odisha. The first in the series test of QRSAM took place on 13th of this month. The flight test was carried out against the high performance Jet Unmanned Aerial Target called **Banshee**, which simulates an aircraft.
- The Radars acquired the target from a long range and tracked it till the mission computer automatically launched the missile. Continuous guidance was provided through Radar data link. Missile entered the terminal active homing guidance and reached the target close enough for proximity operation of warhead activation.

Important Science and Technology News

IIT Guwahati launches Australia-India Water Centre along with University of Western Sydney

- **Australia-India Water Centre** was inaugurated virtually through a **Webinar**, in view of the pandemic situation.
- The Water Centre is led by **University of Western Sydney from Australia** and **IIT Guwahati from India** along with **21 other partners** from India and Australia.
- **Dan Tehan**, Minister for Education - Government of Australia, **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, minister for Jal Shakti - Government of India were present.
- The water issues and challenges of India and Australia share many common elements, including natural extremes of floods and droughts, increasing competition for water between urban, peri-urban and rural sectors and increased threats to water security from climate change. There are also pressures due to the over-exploitation and water quality degradation of surface and ground water resources.
- The MoU signed during this occasion attempts to establish an understanding of cooperation for the Australia India Water Centre (AIWC) between the parties.
- The Australia India Water Centre will enable Australian and Indian partners to explore opportunities and create synergy for a longer-term collaboration in research and education between the two countries.

L&T delivers India's 1st launch hardware for Gaganyaan despite Covid-19 restrictions

- **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)**, India's leading engineering, procurement and construction projects, manufacturing, defence and services conglomerate, has delivered the **first hardware**, a booster segment, for **Gaganyaan Launch Vehicle** to

ISRO ahead of schedule in a virtual flag-off ceremony presided over by Dr. K Sivan, Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

- Notwithstanding the limitations imposed by COVID-19, the middle segment of the **world's third-largest solid propellant rocket booster – 'S-200,'** has been delivered ahead of schedule with zero-defects.
- The segment was produced at L&T's Powai Aerospace Manufacturing Facility meeting the enhanced quality and timeline requirements for India's maiden manned mission.
- L&T is playing a vital role in powering ISRO's Human Space Flight Program (HSFP). A trusted partner of ISRO for almost five decades, L&T has been involved in the production of a range of hardware for every mission of ISRO, including the acclaimed **Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan missions**.
- The **GSLV Mk III** launcher which is ISRO's heavy-lift launcher has been identified for Gaganyaan mission given its requisite payload carrying capacity for launching an Orbiter module in a desired elliptical orbit.

SpaceX and NASA successfully launch four astronauts to Space

- **SpaceX** successfully launched its **first operational space taxi flight** for **NASA**, **Falcon 9 rocket** took to the skies above **Kennedy Space Center** in **Florida**.
- The rocket carrying **four astronauts** in a **Crew Dragon capsule to orbit**, and then **returned to Earth** for a drone-ship landing in the **Atlantic Ocean**.
- **SpaceX's Crew-1 Dragon**, called **Resilience**, is bound for the International Space Station (ISS), but instead of the traditional crew supplies and research experiments its cargo variant normally carries, this spacecraft carried a different type of cargo into space: **three NASA astronauts, Mike Hopkins, Victor Glover, Shannon Walker** and **Japanese astronaut Soichi Noguchi**.

First ever vaccine listed under WHO emergency use

- **WHO** listed the **nOPV2 vaccine (Bio Farma, Indonesia)** for emergency use to address the rising cases of a vaccine-derived polio strain in a number of African and East Mediterranean countries. Countries in **WHO's Western Pacific** and **South-East Asia** regions are also affected by these outbreaks. The emergency use listing, or EUL, is the first of its kind for a vaccine and paves the way for potential listing of COVID-19 vaccines.
- The world has made incredible progress toward polio eradication, reducing polio cases by **99.9%** in the last 30 years. But the last steps to ending this disease are proving the most difficult, particularly with continuing outbreaks of circulating vaccine-derived polio viruses (cVDPVs).
- cVDPVs are rare and occur if the weakened strain of the poliovirus contained in the oral polio vaccine (OPV) circulates among under-immunized populations for a long time. If not enough children are immunized against polio, the weakened virus can pass between individuals and over time genetically revert to a form that can cause paralysis. Type 2 cVDPVs are currently the most prevalent form of the vaccine-derived virus.

IIT Kharagpur researchers develop eco-friendly food packaging material from cucumber peel

- **Cellulose nanocrystals** derived from **peel** can be used for **making biodegradable** food packaging material with low oxygen permeability
- According to the team of researchers, cucumber peels have greater cellulose content than other vegetable peel. Cellulose nanocrystals derived from these peels can be used for making food packaging material which is biodegradable and has low oxygen permeability.
- The study revealed that cucumber peels possessed greater cellulose content (**18.22 pc**) **than** other peel waste. It also provided better insights into their crystalline, thermal and colloidal properties of cucumber cellulose.

- Apart from the food packaging and beverage industries, the researchers are optimistic about its scope in various fields like thermo-reversible and tenable hydrogels making, paper making, coating additives, bio-composites, optically transparent films, and as stabilisers in oil-water emulsion.

ISRO to launch Indian earth observation satellite EOS-01, nine international customer spacecraft on November 7

- India would launch its latest earth observation satellite **EOS-01** and **nine international customer spacecraft** onboard its Polar rocket **PSLV-C49** from the spaceport of **Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh** on November 7, ISRO stated.
- This is the first launch by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) since the COVID-19 induced lockdown came into force in March.
- EOS-01 is intended for applications in agriculture, forestry and disaster management support, the city-headquartered ISRO stated.
- The customer satellites are being launched under commercial agreement with NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), Department of Space, the space agency stated, without giving further details.
- This will be the **51st mission of ISRO's workhorse** Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle.

IIT Madras students' create online game to spread Coronavirus awareness

- **Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M)** researchers have developed a digital game '**IITM Covid Game**' to create **awareness about Covid-19 virus** among the general public, particularly children.
- This game is browser-based and can be played on any device including Personal Computers, laptops, tablets and mobile phones, among others.
- Based on initial prototyping and feedback from different audiences, the students' team translated the game to several Indian regional languages to improve its reach.
- Apart from English, the game is already available in 12 languages -- Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu.
- The game takes inspiration from the famous 'Super Mario' game and consists of a character who encounters various right things -- like masks, washing hands and also encounters things to be avoided -- like hugs, handshakes.
- It is available free of cost and can be played from the home page of **www.letsplaytolearn.com**. It is also available on the website of IIT Madras.

First indigenous Petcoke-based high energy supercapacitor developed by ARCI would benefit EV industry

- The first **indigenous Petcoke-based 1200 F supercapacitor device** has been developed with the help of high performance porous activated carbon electrodes, a move that would be commercially attractive for **Electric Vehicles (EVs) industry**.
- In EVs, supercapacitors are useful in regenerative braking to recover the energy quickly during the application of brake, while in case of hybrid electric vehicles, they are used to improve the life and performance of Li-ion and lead-acid batteries. They are lithium free and safe and can deliver high power in minutes to enable fast charging of EV batteries, a critical requirement in fast-charging EV stations.
- The indigenous supercapacitor device developed by a team of scientists and engineers at International **Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI)**, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Govt of India with petroleum coke (petcoke) from Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) is at par with a world-class commercial supercapacitors in performance.
- The ARCI team plans to scale-up the new technology with higher capacitance (<3000 F) to make modules from these supercapacitor devices for EV applications.

Rare metallic asteroid Psyche may be worth \$10,000 quadrillion

- **Hundreds and thousands of asteroids** are floating in space, but there's one unique metal **asteroid**, rich enough to fetch up to ten thousand times the global economy in 2019. It's worth a whopping **\$10,000 quadrillion** (\$10,000,000,000,000,000,000), reports stated.
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (Nasa) Hubble Space Telescope has discovered a metal-rich asteroid '**16 Psyche**' which is orbiting the Sun, in the main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter.
- It is located roughly **370 million kilometres** (230 million miles) from the Earth and measures 226 kilometres across (140 miles) -- roughly about the size of West Virginia.
- Authors of the study stated that Psyche's surface could be pure iron. They also suggested that the asteroid may be mostly made of iron and nickel. However, the exact composition of Psyche is still unclear.
- It has been hypothesized that a piece of iron of its size could be worth about \$10,000 quadrillion -- more than the entire economy on our planet stated. "Psyche's composition may be consistent with mostly iron-nickel by mass," the study stated.

IIT Bombay to launch website for students' emotional needs

- **IIT Bombay** announced its plans to release a **self-help website** for students to elevate their emotional well-being. Titled '**Bandhu**', the website will allow for self-exploration through quizzes, stories, and other elements, stated director Dr Shubhasis Chaudhuri. It will be inaugurated on November 1.
- "The website has various options, quizzes, stories of people, self-discovery tools to help [and ascertain] whether you can recover or you need to come back for more help," he added.

IIT Roorkee develops biosensor to detect harmful detergent pollutant

- A **five-member team** from the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee** have developed the **world's first specific reliable bacterial biosensor** that **can detect** the presence of common environmental pollutant: **Sodium Dodecyl Sulphate (SDS)**.
- These are extensively used in soaps, toothpaste, creams, shampoos, laundry detergents, agricultural operations, laboratories and industries.
- However, its disposal in waterways has negatively impacted aquatic organisms and microcosms, besides deteriorating the quality of drinking water. Until now, there were no specific biosensors to detect SDS with high precision.
- Researchers from IIT Roorkee developed a **whole-cell biosensor** using **Pseudomonas aeruginosa PAO1 strain as a framework (chassis)**.
- The biosensor showed a satisfactory and reproducible recovery rate for the detection of SDS in real samples of sewage water, river water, and pond water. Overall, this is a selective and reliable biosensor for monitoring SDS in the environment.

IIT-Kharagpur to set up Centre of Excellence for Indian knowledge system, says education minister

- The **Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur**, will set up a **Centre of Excellence for the Indian knowledge system**, the Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank announced while inaugurating the international webinar called '**Bharata Tirtha**' organised by the institute.
- "IIT-Kharagpur has attempted to introspect on the spirit of India, her challenges in the present times, and taken the right measures through an initiative like Bharata Tirtha and research," the minister stated.

ISRO successfully launches EOS01, 9 customer satellites from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota

- **India's PSLV-C49** carrying its latest **earth observation satellite EOS-01** and **nine customer satellites** lifted off from the spaceport in **Sriharikota**.
- The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C49/EOS-01) blasted off from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre**.
- This is the **first mission** by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** this year.
- EOS-01 is intended for applications in agriculture, forestry and disaster management support.
- The **customer satellites** are from **Lithuania (1), Luxembourg (4) and USA (4)**.
- This launch was the 51st launch of PSLV, while it was the 77th launch mission from the Sriharikota spaceport.
- With this launch, ISRO has altogether sent 328 foreign satellites (from 33 nations) into space.

Astronomers detect first fast radio burst in our Milky Way galaxy

- **Astronomers** have **detected a bright fast radio burst**, which lasted for a **millisecond**, from our galaxy for the first time ever.
- **Fast radio bursts (FRB)** are **bright bursts of radio waves** from astronomical objects across galaxies, and their sources have been a mystery for over a decade.
- This signal, called **FRB 200428**, was found in **April** inside the Milky Way galaxy for the first time and was also the first to be traced to a magnetar, which are dead stars that have the most powerful magnetic fields in the universe. The findings confirm that magnetars could be sources for FRBs.
- Magnetars are known to produce jets of gamma rays and X-rays, which also last for mere milliseconds and carry a huge burst of energy.
- The next day, the same region of sky was visible to two telescopes on land, the **Canadian Hydrogen Intensity Mapping Experiment (CHIME)** and the **Survey for Transient Astronomical Radio Emission 2 (STARE2)** array of three radio antennas, in the US, both of which detected an FRB in the region.
- Other space telescopes like the European Space Agency's INTEGRAL space telescope, Russia's Konus detector on NASA's Wind spacecraft, and China's Insight space observatory, also detected an X-ray burst coming from the same location at the same time.

China successfully sends world's first 6G communications test satellite into orbit from Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center

- **China** has reportedly become the **world's first country** to have successfully sent the **6G communications test satellite** into the **orbit** from the **Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center** in the Shanxi Province.
- The technology is expected to be over 100 times faster than 5G.
- The **6G communications test satellite** was launched into the orbit **along with 12 other satellites**.
- The **13 satellites** also included **10 from Argentina** and it is said to be the **351st launch** by the **Long March 6 rocket**.
- **Satellogic** signed a contract with **China Great Wall Industry Corporation**, an arm of China's main space contractor, in January 2019 for launches to deploy **90 satellites**. Satellogic has previously received funding from Chinese tech giant Tencent.
- The mission also carried and launched three additional satellites. One was the **UESTC (also known as Tianyan-05)** remote sensing satellite jointly developed by new Chinese commercial satellite companies ADASpace and MinoSpace.
- Another payload, Beihang SAT-1 was developed by Spacety, a commercial satellite maker based in Changsha, central China, in collaboration with Beihang University, an aerospace university in Beijing.
- **Beihang SAT-1** also carries a NPT30-I2 electric propulsion system developed by French startup ThrustMe.

- The final satellite, named **Bayi-03**, involved students from the Jinshan Middle School in Taiyuan. Carrying an ultraviolet telescope developed by Origin Space, a Chinese asteroid mining company.

Pfizer's Early Data Shows Vaccine Is More Than 90% Effective

- The drug maker **Pfizer** announced that an early analysis of its **coronavirus vaccine trial** suggested the vaccine was robustly effective in preventing Covid-19, a promising development as the world has waited anxiously for any positive news about a pandemic that has killed more than 1.2 million people.
- Pfizer, which developed the vaccine with the **German drugmaker BioNTech**, released only sparse details from its clinical trial, based on the first formal review of the data by an outside panel of experts.
- The company stated that the analysis found that the vaccine was more than **90 percent effective** in preventing the disease among trial volunteers who had no evidence of prior coronavirus infection. If the results hold up, that level of protection would put it on par with highly effective childhood vaccines for diseases such as measles. No serious safety concerns have been observed, the company stated.
- Pfizer plans to ask the Food and Drug Administration for emergency authorization of the two-dose vaccine later this month, after it has collected the recommended two months of safety data. By the end of the year it will have manufactured enough doses to immunize 15 million to 20 million people, company executives have stated.

Virgin Hyperloop completes first-ever human trial in hyperloop pod in US

- **Virgin Hyperloop** stated it has "successfully" completed the **first-ever human trial** in the **hyperloop pod** at the DevLoop test facility in the US.
- Two passengers, both company staff, travelled 500 metres in 15 seconds, reaching 107 mph (172 km per hour), marking the completion of the first-ever trial, the company stated.
- The testing campaign will continue with **Pune native** and **Virgin Hyperloop Power Electronics Specialist**, Tanay Manjrekar, riding next, the company stated.
- Hyperloop is a next-generation travel system that uses pods or capsules travelling at high speeds through low-pressure tubes erected on columns or tunnelled underground using magnetic levitation. The system is fully autonomous and sealed, so no driver-related error is anticipated.
- The **Maharashtra government** has deemed **hyperloop a public infrastructure project** and approved the Virgin Hyperloop-DP World Consortium as the original project proponent (OPP) for the Mumbai-Pune hyperloop project.

Indian astronomers collaborated with Nobel laureate on Thirty Meter Telescope Project

- **2020 Physics Nobel Laureate Prof. Andrea Ghez** had worked closely with **Indian astronomers** on the design of back-end instruments and possible science prospects of the **Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) project** being **installed at Maunakea in Hawaii**, which can revolutionized the understanding of the universe and the enigmas in it.
- The Thirty-meter telescope (TMT) project is an international partnership between CalTech, Universities of California, Canada, Japan, China, and India; through the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).
- Some of the Indian astronomers **like Dr. Annapurni Subramaniam**, Director of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) and **Dr. Shashi Bhushan Pandey**, a scientist at Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES) along with many others collaborated with Prof. Ghez in the ongoing research and developmental activities of the TMT project.

- In October 2013, India along with the US, China and Japan have all committed funds towards this the-**\$1.2 billion TMT project**. And, though the share of India's funding is not available but it was said that it was close to USD \$250 million.

IIT Guwahati formulates efficient “pincer” catalytic systems that transform biomass wastes into valuable chemicals

- A research team of **IIT Guwahati** has formulated efficient “**pincer**” **catalytic systems** that transform **biomass wastes** into **valuable chemicals**. Tiny amounts of these “pincer catalysts” repeatedly convert large amounts of industrial waste such as glycerol into lactic acid and hydrogen.
 - Official sources stated that such catalysts also efficiently convert bioethanol, a low-energy density fuel, into high-energy density butanol. The conversion of valuable intermediates such as glycerol and ethanol, produced during the processing of biomass, into industrially useful chemicals has elicited much interest worldwide.
- China to launch moon probe, seeking first lunar rock retrieval since 1970s
- **China plans** to launch an **unmanned spacecraft** to the moon to bring back lunar rocks in the first attempt by any nation to retrieve samples from **Earth's natural satellite** since the 1970s.
 - The **Chang'e-5 probe**, named after the **ancient Chinese goddess of the moon**, will seek to collect material that can help scientists understand more about the moon's origins and formation. The mission will test China's ability to remotely acquire samples from space, ahead of more complex missions.
 - If successful, the mission will make China only the **third country** to have retrieved lunar samples, following the United States and the Soviet Union decades ago.
 - Since the **Soviet Union** crash-landed the **Luna 2** on the moon in 1959, the first human-made object to reach another celestial body, a handful of other countries including Japan and India have launched moon missions.

NASA, US and European Partners Launch Mission to Monitor Global Ocean

- A joint **U.S.-European satellite** built to monitor global sea levels lifted off on a **SpaceX Falcon 9** rocket from Space Launch Complex 4E at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California
- About the size of a small pickup truck, **Sentinel-6 Michael Freilich** will extend a nearly 30-year continuous dataset on sea level collected by an ongoing collaboration of U.S. and European satellites while enhancing weather forecasts and providing detailed information on large-scale ocean currents to support ship navigation near coastlines.
- After arriving in orbit, the spacecraft separated from the rocket's second stage and unfolded its twin sets of solar arrays. Ground controllers successfully acquired the satellite's signal, and initial telemetry reports showed the spacecraft in good health. **Sentinel-6 Michael Freilich** will now undergo a series of exhaustive checks and calibrations before it starts collecting science data in a few months' time.

IIT-Madras develops solar-powered unmanned survey craft for Indian ports

- In a boost to the indigenization of Indian maritime sector, researchers at **IIT-Madras** have developed a **solar-powered Unmanned Autonomous Survey Craft for Indian ports** and inland waterways to undertake autonomous hydrographic and oceanographic surveys and provide real-time data transmission over long distances.
- This system could be equipped with an echo sounder, **GPS System**, and broadband communication technology, capable of delivering precise depth measurements. In addition to the echo sounder and GPS system, it is possible to add additional oceanographic payloads (current and velocity measurements) and 360-degree camera, **LiDAR**, for seamless topography and bathymetry measurements.

IIT Guwahati Develops Space Optical Communication Using Light Beams

- A research team led by the **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IIT Guwahati)** has developed a **free-space optical communication system** for information transfer. In free-space communication, an IIT Guwahati statement says, data in the form of voice, text or image is transmitted using light wirelessly rather than through optical fibres and it represents the next generation of communications technology.
- The research team has demonstrated the distortion-free transmission of text messages and images over a distance of one kilometre even in the presence of turbulence during stormy weather. The communication system can be used for high speed and secured communication between two individuals located either inside a building or outside.

'Quarantine' named Cambridge Dictionary's Word of the Year 2020

- Cambridge Dictionary has named **'quarantine'** as **Word of the Year 2020**. The word has been named the word of the year based on data that showed that it was one of the most highly searched words on the Cambridge Dictionary this year.
- "Quarantine was the only word to rank in the **top five** for both search spikes and overall views (more than 183,000 by early November), with the largest spike in searches (28,545) seen in the week of March 18-24, when many countries around the world went into lockdown as a result of Covid-19," as per an official release.
- Cambridge editors have noticed that people are using the word in a new way this year describing a "general period of time in which people are not allowed to leave their homes or travel freely, so that they do not catch or spread a disease."
- "Research shows the word is being used synonymously with lockdown, particularly in the United States, to refer to a situation in which people stay home to avoid catching the disease," it stated. This new sense of quarantine has now been added to the Cambridge Dictionary.

IISc researchers develop wastewater treatment, recycling system

- The Bengaluru based Indian Institute of Science researchers have developed an **efficient decentralised wastewater treatment and recycling system for rural areas**. A study on decentralised wastewater treatment systems developed by the premier institute was published in the Journal of water Process Engineering. The model is demonstrated in Berambadi Primary school in a remote village in Karnataka.
- The 667 litres of grey water can be treated daily, thereby saving around 180,000 litres of water annually.
- The water that drains out of the wash basin and kitchen is treated and recycled after removing the oil and grease and used again for non potable purposes such as toilet flushing and gardening.

India to launch deep-sea exploration exercise, Earth Sciences dept to ally with ISRO, DRDO on mining project

- The **Earth Sciences ministry** plans to launch the exploration **mission in 3-4 months' time** to look for **poly-metallic sulphides (PMS)**. Poly-Metallic Sulphides contain iron, copper, zinc, silver, gold, platinum in variable constitutions. The International Seabed Authority earlier approved 10,000 sq. km for India with a 15-year PMS exploration plan along the Central Indian Ridge (CIR) and Southwest Indian Ridge (SWIR) region of the Indian Ocean.
- With many a feather in its space research cap, India now plans to launch an ambitious **'Deep Ocean Mission'** to explore the minerals, energy and marine diversity of the underwater world under the aegis of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES). While there have been numerous endeavours by mankind to explore the great oceans, a vast part of them still remains unexplored.

Revision Points

Institutions/Persons	Things to be Discovered/Developed
IIT Guwahati	Australia-India Water Centre along with University of Western Sydney
Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru	Decentralised wastewater treatment and recycling system for rural areas
Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati	A free-space optical communication system
IIT-Madras	Solar-powered unmanned survey craft for Indian ports
IIT Guwahati	“Pincer” catalytic systems
Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur	Centre of Excellence for the Indian knowledge system
IIT Roorkee	Biosensor to detect harmful detergent pollutant
IIT Bombay	Bandhu website
IIT Madras	Online game to spread Coronavirus awareness
IIT Kharagpur	Eco-friendly food packaging material from cucumber peel
IIT Guwahati	Australia-India Water Centre along with University of Western Sydney

Important Environment News

Longest migrating small bird Willow Warbler spotted in Kerala’s Punchakkari

- The bird was spotted by **Nirmal George**, NSS Programme officer of Sree Gokulam Medical College and Research Foundation, in the capital district.
- **Willow warbler** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), one of **longest migrating small bird** which breeds throughout northern and temperate Europe and the Palearctic, sighted for the first time in the country at Punchakkari in the capital.
- Weighing around 10 g, the long wing feathers used to migrate long distances make it special. It is commonly seen in European and Palearctic regions and they migrate to sub-Saharan Africa in early winter. Warblers are generally difficult to identify due to their small size and the change in plumage twice a year.

IISc researchers discover 5 new species of vine snakes

- Researchers from the **Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES)**, IISc, have discovered **five new species of vine snakes**, four from the Western Ghats alone.
- The researchers carried out studies across the country collecting morphological data, tissue samples and specimens to understand the patterns of distribution and diversification of the species.
- The researchers found four distinct small-bodied and short-nosed species: the Northern Western Ghats vine snake (***Ahaetulla borealis***), Farnsworth’s vine snake (***Ahaetulla farnsworthi***), Malabar vine snake (***Ahaetulla malabarica***) and Wall’s vine snake (***Ahaetulla isabellina***) in the Western Ghats’ forests.
- They also found the long-nosed vine snake (***Ahaetulla oxyrhyncha***) in the lowlands and drier parts of peninsular India. This snake is much larger and is morphologically distinct.

- The research was conducted by Ashok Kumar Mallik, Achyuthan N Srikanthan, Saunak P Pal, Princia Margaret D'Souza, Kartik Shanker and Sumaithangi Rajagopalan Ganesh.
- While each species has been named by researchers based on the regions from where they have been found, in the case of *Ahaetulla farnsworthi*, it has been **named after famous scientist Dr Hubert Farnsworth**.

Deep Depression over South West Bay of Bengal intensifies into cyclonic storm 'Nivar'

- The **Deep Depression** over the **South West Bay of Bengal** has intensified into the Cyclonic Storm "**Nivar**," on 24 November 2020. The cyclone is currently located **410 km east-southeast of Puducherry** and 450 km southeast of Chennai.
- As per the India Meteorological Department, **Cyclone Nivar** is very likely to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm in the next 24-hours. The storm shall cross Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts between Karaikal and Mamallapuram around Puducherry on November 25 evening.
- The impact of the Cyclone shall be faced by the governments of Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka.
- Maximum hazard will be caused to Tamil Nadu, which has been placed under '**red**' (**take action**) **alert**. The NDRF has formed 30 teams to launch rescue and relief operations in these states in view of the cyclone 'Nivar.'

23 Medicinal Plants of Karnataka On IUCN's Endangered List

- Around **23 rare medicinal plants** in various **forests of Karnataka** are on the verge of extinction and listed as '**endangered**' on the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** list.
- The Karnataka Biodiversity Board and National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) conducted study has revealed that medicinal plants like sandalwood, wild clove, red sanders, **wild Jamun**, wild cinnamon and other species endemic to the Western Ghats have turned endangered on the IUCN list.
- The study spanning for five years by forest officials, botanists and field experts helped document more than 4,800 flowering plant species in various circles of the forests. Out of these, 60 rare species are medicinally prominent, including the 23 endangered species.
- Highlighting the importance of these species, a detailed report was released by the State Biodiversity Board in Bengaluru. The board with the help of the state forest department is chalking out plans to safeguard the endangered species based on the findings of the report.

Important Rankings and Indexes

India Ranks 77 in Global Bribery Risk Matrix

- **India** is at **77th position** with a **score of 45** in a global list that measures business **bribery risks of 2020**.
- The list by **TRACE**, an anti-bribery standard setting organisation, measures business bribery risk in 194 countries, territories, and autonomous and semi-autonomous regions.
- According to this year's data, North Korea, Turkmenistan, South Sudan, Venezuela and Eritrea present the highest commercial bribery risk, while Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden and New Zealand present the lowest.
- **In 2019, India's rank** stood **78 position** with a score of 48.
- The score is based on four factors: business interactions with government, anti-bribery deterrence and enforcement, government and civil service transparency, and capacity for civil society oversight, including the role of the media.

Delhi Airport achieves new height in Asia Pacific for Carbon Accreditation

- The **Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport** has become Asia Pacific's **first Level 4+ (Transition) accredited airport** under ACI's Airport **Carbon Accreditation programme**.
- The Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) is the global standard for carbon management in the airport industry. It aims to encourage and enable airports and its stakeholders to implement best practices in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) management to achieve emission reductions. The programme was launched in 2009.
- The Delhi airport achieved 'Level 3+, Neutrality' in 2016, as the first Carbon Neutral Airport in the Asia Pacific region.
- This year, ACI had revised the programme's levels and added two new levels — **Level 4 (Transformation) and Level 4+ (Transition)**.

IIT Delhi Tops Among Indian Institutes In Employability: Survey

- The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi** has been ranked as the **best institute in India** and **27th** globally, in terms of employability of its students, in the Global Employability Ranking and Survey (GEURS) 2020 results.
- Globally, India has been ranked among the 15 best-performing countries in employability, improving from its 23rd rank in 2010.
- IIT Delhi climbed 27 ranks from 54 in 2019 to 27. Indian Institute of Science (IISc), however, has dropped to 71 from 43 in 2019. The other Indian institutes that made it to the list are IIT Bombay (128), Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad (184), IIT Kharagpur (195), and Amity University (236).
- GEURS 2020, released by the Times Higher Education and French HR Consultancy group 'Emerging', is based on 1,08,225 votes from 9,000 operational and international managers in 22 countries. They voted to rate the employability performance of 6,000 international institutions.

London tops list of World's Best Cities 2021, Delhi ranked 62- Resonance Consultancy

- **London has topped** a new list of **best cities around the world** by **Vancouver-based Resonance Consultancy**.
- The top 10 cities for 2021 in the world are — 1. London, 2. New York, 3. Paris, 4. Moscow, 5. Tokyo, 6. Dubai, 7. Singapore, 8. Barcelona, 9. Los Angeles, and 10. Madrid.
- **India has only one representative** on the list, with **Delhi ranked 62**.
- The ranking was based on the 25 factors including the number of social media hashtags and check-ins, weather, diversity, and the number of tourist attractions and parks.
- However, this year the rate of Covid-19 infections, unemployment, and income disparity was also considered. The study took into account a total of 100 cities around the world with a population of more than a million.

Arunachal Pradesh records best sex ratio with birth of over 1,000 girls, Manipur ends up at worst

- The **state of Arunachal Pradesh** recorded the **best sex ratio** in the country this year with the birth of **1,084 females per thousand males**. Arunachal Pradesh was followed by **Nagaland and Mizoram** that recorded over **900 female births**.
- The data was released in the 2018 report named '**Vital statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System (CRS)**'.
- The report is prepared by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. The state with the **worst sex ratio** was **Manipur**.
- The report revealed that 963 females were born in Kerala while the lowest SRB was reported by Manipur with the birth of 757 females per thousand males.

- Lakshadweep saw 839 female births and Daman and Diu saw 877 female births. Punjab was the next name in the list with the birth of 896 females per thousand males.

India's AI supercomputer Param Siddhi 63rd among top 500 most powerful non-distributed computer systems in world

- **India's Artificial Intelligence supercomputer Param Siddhi** has achieved **63rd rank** among **top 500 most powerful non-distributed computer systems** in the world. Ministry of Science and Technology stated that the AI system will strengthen application development of packages in areas such as advanced materials, computational chemistry and astrophysics.
- It stated several packages are being developed under the National Supercomputing Mission for drug design and preventive health care system, flood forecasting package for flood prone metro cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Patna and Guwahati.
- This will accelerate Research and Development in war against COVID-19 through faster simulations, medical imaging, genome sequencing and forecasting and will be a boon for Indian masses and for start-Ups and MSMEs in particular.

Global Terrorism Index 2020

- **The Global Terrorism Index [GTI] 2020** ranks India as **8th** in the world on a list of countries most affected by terrorism in 2019, with 558 incidents that killed 277 and injured 439. Further, the report marks South Asia as region worst affected by terrorism for the second year in a row.
- India ranks 8th in the world on the basis of its score on the GTI - 7.353. It ranks better than **Pakistan** (ranked 7) but lower than the **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **the Philippines**, which rank 9th and 10 respectively. A higher score, and thus a higher rank (1 being the worst) shows a country more severely affected by terrorism. But, since 2002, India's rank has improved substantially Afghanistan ranked 1st, Iraq 2nd, Nigeria 3rd. In 2002, India was the second worst country in the world affected by terrorism and was in the top 5 until 2012.

India tops bribery rate in Asia region; 46% people used personal connection to access public services

- India has got the dubious distinction of having **the highest bribery rate** in the **Asia region**, with a survey showing the bribery rate of the country at **39 percent**. Nearly half of the people, who paid bribes, stated they were asked to do so, it revealed.
- The survey, conducted by **international anti-graft rights group Transparency International**, also showed that India has the highest rate of people – 46 percent -- who used the personal connection to access public services,
- In the survey, titled '**Global Corruption Barometer – Asia**', the agency surveyed 20,000 people across 17 Asian countries in between June and September. As per the report, **42 percent** of people had paid bribes to police, while **39 percent people** stated they used personal connections in dealings with the police.
- India was followed by **Cambodia** at **37 percent** and Indonesia stood at **third position** with bribery rate of 30 percent. India's neighbouring nation Nepal was much lower on the list at 12 percent.

PAC Report Finds Kerala, Goa Best Governed States, UP Ranks Lowest

- A report by Public Affairs Centre (PAC) released named **Kerala** as the **best governed state** in the country and placed **Uttar Pradesh** at the bottom of the list.
- Headed by former ISRO chairman **K Kasturirangan**, the PAC report called **Public Affairs Index-2020**, ranked states and Union Territories on governance performance based on a composite index in the context of sustainable development.
- The top four ranks in the large state category in terms of governance were bagged by states in Southern India. Kerala topped the list with 1.388 PAI Index points, **Tamil Nadu** (0.912), Andhra Pradesh (0.531) and Karnataka (0.468).

- The states that scored the lowest in the same category included, Uttar Pradesh (-1.461), Odisha (-1.201) and Bihar (-1.158). The three states scored negative points.
- **Goa** topped the list among small states with 1.745 points, followed by Meghalaya (0.797) and Himachal Pradesh (0.725). The states that ranked the lowest in the category included, Manipur (-0.363), Delhi (-0.289) and Uttarakhand (-0.277).
- Among Union Territories, **Chandigarh** emerged the best governed union territory in the category of UTs with 1.05 PAI points, followed by Puducherry (0.52) and Lakshadweep (0.003). Dadar and Nagar Haveli (-0.69), Andaman, Jammu and Kashmir (-0.50) and Nicobar (-0.30) ranked the lowest.

Tamil Nadu tops Indian states in new investments in H1FY21: CARE Ratings

- **Tamil Nadu** leads Indian states in **attracting investments** during the **first half of FY21**, having managed to **grab 16 per cent** of the funds that came into India during the period, according to **CARE Ratings**.
- **Andhra Pradesh** garnered **11 per cent**, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Karnataka have garnered seven per cent each, while the balance went to the other states.
- **Last year** during the same period, **Tamil Nadu** took **third spot**.
- In H1FY20, Andhra Pradesh had the highest share of 23 per cent in capex projects announced, totalling Rs 1.1 trillion, while in H1FY21, Tamil Nadu had the highest share of 16 per cent, amounting to **Rs 20,000 crore**.

Uttar Pradesh among Top 5 in MSME employment generators amid Covid-19

- **Uttar Pradesh** has found place **among top five states** of the country for providing employment under the **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** during Corona pandemic.
- Top 4 states are **Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra**.
- In a recent report of **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, **Uttar Pradesh** has secured a place ahead of **Karnataka, Rajasthan, Delhi, Haryana and Telangana** in the list of top 10 states.

Telangana top performing state with maximum functional drinking water tap connections

- Over 2.5 crore rural households have been provided tap connections under the **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** since it started in **2019**, with **Telangana and Bihar** emerging as **leading states**, shows data available with the **Jal Shakti Ministry**.
- The JMM aims at providing a functional household tap connection to **every rural household by 2024**. **Goa** has become the **first state in the country** to provide a **tap connection to all rural households**.
- The data available on the mission dashboard shows that Telangana is the top performing state in terms of providing tap connections to a maximum proportion (69.56 per cent) of rural households, providing about 38 lakh tap connections.
- Bihar, which is at second place, has covered 54.38 per cent of rural households, followed by Goa (24.3 per cent), Mizoram (23.19 per cent), Haryana (21.12 per cent), Manipur (20.78 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (19.99 per cent), Maharashtra (15.4 per cent), Uttarakhand (14.97 per cent), and J&K (14.94 per cent).

Body mass index of Indian 19-year-olds among lowest in 200 countries

- **India** ranks **third** and **fifth** from the bottom respectively among countries where 19-year-old girls and boys have a **low body mass index**, according to a study in The Lancet to be published. The study provides new estimates for height and **BMI trends in 2019** across 200 countries after analysing data from 2,181 studies.
- BMI is measured as the weight in kg divided by the square of the height in metres. **World Health Organization** guidelines define a normal BMI range as 18.5 to 24.9, overweight as 25 or higher, and obesity as 30 or higher.

- The mean BMI of 19-year-old boys is 20.1 in India, compared to a high of 29.6 in the Cook Islands and a low of 19.2 in Ethiopia. For Indian girls, the mean BMI is again 20.1, compared to a high of 29.0 in Tonga and a low of 19.6 in Timor-Leste. The mean height of Indian 19-year-olds is 166.5 cm for boys and 155.2 cm for girls, well below the high of Netherlands boys (183.8 cm) and girls (170 cm).

Azim Premji tops the list, Mukesh Ambani ranks third on the EdelGiveHurun India Philanthropy List 2020

- **Azim Premji**, the founder and chairman of Wipro, has topped the list of India's philanthropists 2020 with a total donation of **Rs 7,904 crore**.
- According to the seventh edition of **EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2020**, Azim Premji has been the most generous philanthropist in India for 2020. He has donated Rs 22 crore per day.
- **HCL'S Shiv Nadar**, 75, ranked second with **Rs 795 crore donation**. As of 2019, Nadar has invested over \$800 million through the Foundation, impacting over 30,000 students directly.
- With a donation of **Rs 458 crore** by richest India **Mukesh Ambani**, who is the **Chairman of Reliance Industries**, came third.
- **Kumar Mangalam Birla**, who donated Rs 276 crore, ranked fourth.
- The **fifth position** is occupied by the founder and chairman of **Vedanta**, **Anil Agarwal** who donated Rs 215 crore.

Kerala On Top, Delhi Near Bottom in New Migrant Policy Index

- The states of **Kerala, Goa, Rajasthan** and **Andhra Pradesh** have been most successful in integrating **migrant workers**, while crucial migrant receiving states, including **Delhi**, have done poorly, shows the **Interstate Migrant Policy Index (IMPEX)** that seeks to measure integration of interstate migrants.
- India's average IMPEX 2019 score for 28 states and the Union Territory of NCT Delhi is 37 out of 100, reflecting the limited attention paid to integration efforts in destination states.
- The index has been developed by Mumbai-based research non-profit India Migration Now (IMN), and it assesses states' performance on eight policy areas spanning more than 60 policy indicators.
- The index could help bureaucrats and stakeholders in evolving policy for **India's 455 million internal migrants** who remain one of the most excluded groups in the country. This figure is from Census 2011, and may have changed between 2011-20.
- The COVID-19 pandemic, while making these migrant workers visible, exacerbated the challenges they had to surmount. This is particularly true of migrants who cross state borders for work, as more than 54 million did as per Census 2011.

Launch Of Ukibc's 6th Annual Report On Doing Business In India

- **UK Minister for Investment, Lord Gerry Grimstone**, has released **UK India business council's 'doing business in India report 2020'** at a roundtable with Indian industry captains during his virtual visit to India.
- Findings from the UK India Business Council's "Doing Business in India Report 2020" show that UK businesses believe that India's business environment is improving, and they see an opportunity for greater UK-India collaboration notwithstanding Brexit,
- The report is the **UKIBC's sixth of an annual series** dating back to 2015. This year's report is based on an in-depth survey of 106 UK organisations operating in India spanning manufacturing, services, and higher education sectors.
- **66 percent** of the surveyed businesses stated that they believe it is getting easier to do business in India, thanks to progressive reforms and improvements in components of India's business environment such as the availability of support and service providers, skilled labour, and supply chain.

- For the third year running, **Maharashtra** came out as the state with maximum incremental improvement, followed by **Karnataka, Delhi, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu**, in that order. Next in sequence were **Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh** and **Haryana** to complete the top ten.

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu virtually presents 2nd National Water Awards

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu virtually presented the **Second National Water Awards**.
- The NWAs focus on the good work and efforts made by individual and organisations across the country, and the government's vision for the path to '**Jal Samridh Bharat**'.
- The winners will be felicitated with trophies/citation. Except for three categories i.e. 'Best State', 'Best State' and 'Best Water Regulatory Authority', winners from the rest thirteen categories will be awarded cash prizes, too.
- **Tamil Nadu** which bagged the **Best State Award**.
- **Maharashtra** secured the **second** and **Rajasthan** got the **third prize**.
- The award ceremony has been organised by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation** through virtual platform.
- Water is a scarce natural resource which is fundamental to life, livelihood, food security and sustainable development.

UP best performer in inland fisheries, Odisha is best Marine state

- **Uttar Pradesh** was awarded as **best performing state** in **inland fisheries sector** while **Odisha** got the award of the **best Marine state** on the occasion of '**World Fisheries Day**' observed by the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India.
- During the event, for the first time in the Fisheries Sector, the Government of India awarded best performing States for 2019-20 namely, **Odisha (amongst Marine states), Uttar Pradesh (amongst Inland states)** and Assam (amongst Hilly and NE states).
- The Govt. also awarded best Organisations for 2019-20 (Tamil Nadu Fisheries Development Corporation Ltd. (for Marine); Telangana State Fishermen Cooperative Societies Federation Ltd (for Inland), and Assam Apex Cooperative Fish Marketing and Processing Federation Ltd. (for Hilly region); Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh as best Marine District; Kalahandi, Odisha as best Inland District; Nagaon, Assam as Best Hilly and NE District.

India becomes 4th nation to get IMO nod for navigation satellite system

- **India** has become the **fourth country** in the world to have its independent regional navigation satellite system recognised by the **International Maritime Organisation (IMO)** as a part of the **World Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS)**. The other three countries that have its navigation systems recognised by the IMO are the **US, Russia** and **China**.
- The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) was designed to provide accurate position information services to assist in the navigation of ships in Indian Ocean waters. The Director General of Shipping (DGS) had approached the IMO for granting recognition to the IRNSS as a component of the WWRNS, similar to the US-owned Global Position System (GPS) or Russia's Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS) – a process that took two years.

Worldwide Cost of Living 2020

- The new edition of the **Worldwide Cost of Living report** shows how the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the cost of living in **about 130 cities** around the world since the start of 2020.

- Just like last year, three cities share the top spot as the world's most expensive city to live in. Retaining its place at the top of the ranking, **Hong Kong** is now joined by **Paris** and **Zurich**. Both cities have overtaken Singapore and Osaka, which have dropped down to 4th and 5th ranks, respectively.
- **Damascus (Syria), Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Lusaka (Zambia)** ranked the last three spot as the most cheapest cities in the list, which comprises of **133 cities**. The report took into account the price of 138 items, used in every day for survival, and the falling or rising value of that country's currency due to Covid to rank the cities accordingly.

Elon Musk Overtakes Bill Gates to Grab World's Second-Richest Ranking

- Tesla co-founder **Elon Musk** is now **the world's second richest person** after he leapfrogged **Microsoft billionaire Bill Gates**, according to the **Bloomberg Billionaire Index**, which tracks the wealth of the world's 500 richest people.
- The 49-year-old entrepreneur, who is also the co-founder of space exploration firm SpaceX, saw his net worth rise by \$7.2 billion to \$128 billion as Tesla shares surged days after the news that the electric car company will be admitted to the S&P 500 index in December.
- Musk's net worth has risen by **\$100.3 billion** in **2020**, marking the largest increase among those on the Bloomberg Billionaire Index. In January, Musk ranked 35th.
- The only person ahead of Musk now is Amazon boss **Jeff Bezos**, who took the top spot from Gates in 2017 and has stayed there since.
- The move forces Gates down into third place, marking only the second time in the index's eight-year history that he hasn't been ranked in the top two. However, Gates's net worth of \$127.7 billion would be considerably higher if it weren't for his philanthropic endeavors. Since 2006, he has given over \$27 billion to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Important Books and Authors

Authors/ Released by	Books
Randeep Guleria (co-written by Chandrakant Lahariya & Gagandeep Kang)	Till We Win (Published by Penguin Random House India)
Tamal Bandyopadhyay (Published by Roli Books)	Pandemonium: The Great Indian Banking Tragedy
Chinmay Tumbe (Published by Harper Collins)	Age Of Pandemics (1817-1920): How they shaped India and the World
Rachna Bisht Rawat (Published by Penguin)	Insomnia: Army Stories
Anupam Kher	Your Best Day Is Today
M. Venkaiah Naidu (Author - Rallabandi Srirama Chakradhar, co-author, Smt. Amara Sarada Deepthi)	Thavaasmi: Life and Skills through the lens of Ramayana
Nayanjot Lahiri	Archaeology and the Public Purpose: Writings on and by

	M N Deshpande
Supriya Vani and Carl A Harte	Jacinda Ardern: Leading with Empathy
Ruskin Bond (Published by HarperCollins India)	How to Be a Writer
Rajendra Darda (Released by Bhagat Singh Koshyari)	Majhi Bhint (My Wall)
Published by Radhakrishna Prakashan; Edited by Yashwant Vyas	Boskiyana
Sonu Sood	I Am No Messiah
Prem Prakash (Published by Penguin Random House India)	Reporting India
Rajnath Singh	The Republican Ethic Volume III' and Loktantra Ke Swar
Shashi Tharoor	The Battle of Belonging
PM Narendra Modi (Penned by Kirpal Singh)	Book on the life and ideals of Guru Nanak Dev

Important Peoples' in News

Shane Watson to announce retirement from all forms of cricket

- **Shane Watson**, the **former Australia all-rounder** and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) opener, announced his **retirement from all forms of cricket**.
- He made the decision after CSK's final IPL 2020 match against Kings XI Punjab in Abu Dhabi.
- Watson, who was bought by CSK two years ago, had already **retired from international cricket in 2015**. He played a vital role in the Chennai-based franchise's third IPL title win in 2018 with a century in the final.
- Before CSK, he had also turned out for Rajasthan Royals and Royal Challengers Bangalore and had played a crucial role in the Royals' maiden title win in the inaugural edition in 2008.
- Watson, who has played 59 Tests, 190 ODIs, and 58 T20s at the international level, has won the **ICC World Cup with Australia twice, in 2007 and in 2015**.
- In Tests, Watson scored 3731 runs and picked up 75 wickets, and scored 5757 runs and scalped 168 wickets in ODIs to finish his career as one of the leading all-rounders of his era.

Syska Group announces Rajkumar Rao as its new brand ambassador

- Fast Moving Electrical Goods (FMEG) company **Syska Group**, has roped in actor **Rajkumar Rao** as the new face of the brand. Rao will work closely with the company to promote the Syska products across LED and fan segments.
- The partnership will also see Syska Group launch a new ad campaign with Rajkumar focusing on LED and fans.
- The company aims to leverage the actor's strong connect with urban audiences, as well as with those from **Tier 2 and 3 markets**, which make up the large segment of its target groups.

West Indies all-rounder Marlon Samuels announces retirement from all forms of cricket

- **West Indies all-rounder Marlon Samuels** has announced his **retirement from all forms of professional cricket**.
- He last played **international cricket** for the West Indies in December **2018** against Bangladesh.

- Marlon Samuels is much celebrated for his match-winning performances in the **two ICC World T20 finals** that the West Indians won.
- Marlon Samuels was honored as one of the **Wisden Cricketers of the year in 2013**. The West Indies Cricket Board also named him the **ODI Player of the Year** and the **Cricketer of the Year in 2016**.
- The right-handed batsman broke the record for the highest-ever ODI partnership, when he combined with Chris Gayle to put up 372 runs for the second wicket against Zimbabwe in the 2015 World Cup.
- Marlon Samuels is also the only player in the history of the game to have won Player of the Match awards in the finals of two global competitions.
- He was **handed a two-year ban in 2008** by ICC following an alleged involvement in transferring information to a bookie. This happened during the West Indies tour of India in 2008.
- The same then happened **again during the 2012 IPL** after which he could not bowl for the rest of the season. The first Test between West Indies and Sri Lanka at Galle in 2015 witnessed the third episode of Samuels getting reported for his bowling action.

Chacha Chaudhary becomes the Brand Ambassador for Namami Gange Project

- The iconic Indian superhero, **Chacha Chaudhary, the man whose brain works faster than a computer** has now come forward to join hands with **Namami Gange Programme**, an Integrated Conservation Mission to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.
- It is a joint initiative by **Diamond Toons** and **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.
- The character is all set to become the face of the movement and will help in successfully promoting this campaign across the country aggressively.

Javier Mascherano announces retirement

- Former Barcelona and Argentina great **Javier Mascherano** announced his **retirement from football**.
- The 36-year-old centre back, who started his professional career with domestic giant River Plate in 2003, also played Brazil's Corinthians, England's Liverpool, and Spain's FC Barcelona among other teams.
- Mascherano won one Argentine league title and one Brazilian league title, as well as many trophies with Barcelona. At the Spanish club, he won five LaLiga Santander titles, five Copa del Rey titles, two Champions Leagues, two UEFA Super Cups, two Club World Cups and three Supercopa de Espana titles.

Sudeep Tyagi announces retirement from all forms of cricket

- **Sudeep Tyagi**, who played for the **Indian national cricket team** in four ODIs and a lone T20I as a fast bowler, **announced his retirement** from all forms of the game.
- He was also a part of Chennai Super Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in the Indian Premier League.

Important Mergers and Acquisitions

Pidilite Industries completes acquisition of Huntsman Group's Indian subsidiary for Rs 2,100 cr

- **Pidilite Industries**, the manufacturers of the popular Fevicol brand of adhesives, stated it has completed acquisition of the **US-based Huntsman Group's Indian subsidiary** for **Rs 2,100 crore**.
- "The company has completed the acquisition of **100 per cent stake** in **Huntsman Advanced Materials Solutions Private Ltd (HAMSPL)**, on November 3, 2020. As such, HAMSPL is now a subsidiary of the company," Pidilite Industries stated in a regulatory filing.

- Huntsman Advanced Materials Solutions manufactures and sells adhesives, sealants and other products under brands such as Araldite, Araldite Karpenter and Araseal in the country.
- The deal also includes the company's Indian subcontinent business, apart from a trademark licence for the Middle East, Africa and ASEAN countries.
- In 2019, Huntsman had a revenue of around Rs 400 crore from its operations. Under the deal, Huntsman received around 90 per cent of the cash consideration at closing and balance around 10 per cent within 18 months if the business achieves sales revenue in-line with 2019

Axis Bank to acquire shares in CSC e-Governance for Rs 36 cr

- **Axis Bank** has acquired over 57,700 shares in **CSC e-Governance Services** India Ltd for **Rs 36.38 crore**, the lender stated.
- Axis Bank has executed a pact for subscribing to 57,743 equity shares of a face value of Rs 1,000 each to be issued by CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd at Rs 6,300 per equity share, the lender stated in a regulatory filing.
- CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd is a special purpose vehicle set up by the electronics and information technology ministry to oversee the implementation of the common services centre scheme.
- The transaction is for 9.91 per cent equity stake in CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd as a strategic investment by the bank. Axis Bank stated the transaction is expected to be completed by December 2020 for a cash consideration of Rs 36.38 crore.
- CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd had a total income of Rs 1,105.49 crore in 2019-20. Its total assets stood at Rs 1,495.93 crore as on March 31, 2020.

Merger of HDFC ERGO Health Insurance with HDFC ERGO General Insurance complete

- The merger of **HDFC ERGO Health Insurance**, which was **earlier known as Apollo Munich Health Insurance**, with **HDFC ERGO General Insurance**, **has been completed** with the **approval from** the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- The merger makes **HDFC ERGO** the **second largest private insurer** in the **accident and health insurance business**, **expanding its product suite to over 50 products** in this segment.

TCS acquires Pramerica Services unit from Prudential

- The IT major will acquire the staff and select assets of **Pramerica Systems Ireland, Prudential Financial Inc. (PFI)**'s subsidiary based in Letterkenny, Ireland.
- PFI is a financial wellness leader and premier active global investment manager with more than **\$1.5 trillion** in assets under management as of 30 September 2020, has operations in the United States, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.
- TCS will establish new global delivery centre in Ireland to provide Prudential with a range of business and technology services. Over 1,500 staff of Pramerica Systems Ireland will transfer to TCS and further expand the latter's global delivery capability. PFI will retain the Pramerica Ireland entity, which will continue to operate from Letterkenny and will focus on providing regional business services, reporting under its global asset manager, PGIM.

Reliance Retail buys Urban Ladder for \$24.4 million

- **Reliance Retail** has acquired a majority stake in furniture and decor platform **Urban Ladder**, making a broader push into e-commerce as the largest retail chain in India gears up to fight Amazon and Flipkart.
- Reliance Retail stated it had **acquired a 96% stake** in Urban Ladder for about **\$24.43 million**. The Indian retail giant, which retains the option to acquire the remainder stake in the seven-and-a-half-years-old startup, stated it has proposed to invest up to \$10.06 million more in Urban Ladder by December 2023.

- Founded in early 2012, Urban Ladder sells home furniture and decor products online. It also operates a chain of physical retail stores in several Indian cities. The deal size suggests that it was a fire sale.

NSE arm acquires ed-tech firm Talent Sprint

- The **NSE Academy Limited**, an arm of the **National Stock Exchange**, has acquired a majority stake of **51 per cent** in the Hyderabad-based **TalentSprint**, a deep tech education firm. In the phase-wise acquisition of the stake, the NSE arm would acquire the total stake over a period of three years.
- Santanu Paul, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of TalentSprint, would continue in the leadership position for three years.
- The education technology platform operates in professional learning and executive education space. It has tie-ups with premier institutes like Indian Institute of Science (IIS, Bengaluru), International Institute of Information Technology (Hyderabad) and the Indian Institute of Management (Calcutta) to offer courses in deep tech areas like artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain and fintech.

CCI Approves Acquisition by Reliance Retail Ventures of Retail of Future Group

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approves acquisition by **Reliance Retail Ventures Limited ("RRVL")**, **Reliance Retail and Fashion Lifestyle Limited ("RRVL WOS")** of the retail and wholesale undertaking and the logistics and warehousing undertaking of the Future Group under **Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002**.
- The following Future Group entities will be reorganized by way of amalgamation with Future Enterprises Limited (FEL):
- Future Consumer Limited (FCL); Future Lifestyle Fashions Limited (FLFL); Future Retail Limited (FRL); Future Market Networks Limited (FMNL); Future Supply Chain Solutions Limited (FSCSL); and Futurebazaar India Limited (FIL) and its subsidiaries.
- The Transferor Companies consists of several listed and unlisted companies, primarily engaged in retail, wholesale, logistics and warehousing businesses. These businesses operate on a pan-India basis, and include retail operations across segments such as food and grocery, apparel, footwear and accessories, other merchandise, etc.
- Post re-organisation of the Transferor Companies, RRVL and RRVL WOS will acquire retail and wholesale undertaking; and the logistics and warehousing undertaking of FEL.

Axis Bank revises stake acquisition agreement with Max Life

- **Axis Bank** announced a **revised stake acquisition** agreement with **Max Financial**.
- **Axis Bank** will acquire **upto 9%** of the equity share cap of **Max Life**. The bank's subsidiaries **Axis Capital Limited** and **Axis Securities Limited** (together 'Axis Entities') will together acquire **upto 3% of equity of Max Life**. **Axis Entities** will have a right to acquire an **additional stake of upto 7%**.
- Axis enter into **revised agreements** with Max Financial for acquisition of **upto 19.002%** of the equity share capital of Max Life ("Revised Agreements").
- The revised agreement happened **as Reserve Bank of India rejected Axis Bank's earlier proposal** to directly **buy 17% in Max Life**.

IRDAI approves Mitsui Sumitomo's Max Life stake swap with MFSL

- **Max Financial Services Ltd (MFSL)** stated Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) approved the proposed transfer of **39.47 crore shares** constituting **20.57% of the paid-up equity** share capital of Max Life Insurance held by **Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance** to MFSL.

- This is in exchange for issuance of 7.54 crore shares of MFSL, constituting 21.87% of issued and paid-up share capital of MFSL.
- "MFSL will now proceed for the implementation of the share swap transaction, which will entail swapping by MSI of its 20.57% stake in Max Life with a 21.87 per cent stake in MFSL by way of issue and allotment of 7,54,58,088 equity shares of Rs.2 each at a price of Rs.565.11 per equity share on a preferential allotment basis," the company stated.
- Upon consummation, this will effectively result in MFSL's stake in Max Life increasing to 93.10%. Presently, MFSL holds a 72.5% stake in Max Life and MSI owns 25.5% stake.
- MFSL had recently announced that Axis Bank and its subsidiaries, Axis Capital Limited & Axis Securities Limited (together Axis Entities), have entered into agreements with MFSL for acquisition of up to 19% stake in Max Life, in accordance with existing laws and regulations.

ICICI Lombard gets IRDAI's 'in-principle approval' to acquire Bharti AXA General Insurance

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) gave an in-principle approval to the **acquisition of General Insurance business of Bharti AXA General Insurance Company Limited** by **ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company Limited**, the company stated in an exchange filing.
- Earlier, BSE Limited, National Stock Exchange of India Limited and the Competition Commission of India (CCI) had approved the proposed acquisition by ICICI.
- The IRDAI mentioned that following the demerge, ICICI will issue 1.82 crore equity shares to Bharti General Ventures Private Limited and 1.75 crore equity shares to Societe Beaujon.
- Currently, Bharti Enterprises owns 51 percent in Bharti AXA General. The firm has joint venture with French firm AXA which owns 49 percent stake. With the deal with ICICI Lombard in place, Bharti and AXA will be public shareholders in the combined entity.

Bharti Airtel to acquire 5.2% stake in Avaada MHBuldhana for Rs.4.55 cr

- **Bharti Airtel** stated it will acquire **5.2 per cent stake** in solar power company **Avaada MHBuldhana** for **Rs.4.55 crore** in an all-cash deal.
- Avaada MHBuldhana Private Limited is a newly-formed company and developing a captive generating solar power plant in Maharashtra which will become operational by March 2021. It is a subsidiary of Avaada Energy Private Limited (AEPL).
- AEPL has developed a portfolio of over 1 gigawatt solar and wind projects across the country and the first independent power producer to cross 1 GW installed capacity milestone in India, according to a regulatory filing by Bharti Airtel.
- "The company has entered into an agreement on November 19 for acquisition of equity shares in Avaada MHBuldhana Private Limited a special purpose vehicle formed for the purpose of owning and operating the captive power plant, in terms of the regulatory requirement for captive power consumption under electricity laws," it added.
- The transaction is expected to close by March 31, 2021.

IBM To Acquire Solution Provider TruQua In SAP Channel Play

- **IBM stated** it plans to acquire **TruQua Enterprises**, a solution provider focused on the SAP ecosystem.
- With the acquisition of Chicago-based TruQua, IBM is getting a leader in SAP-based transformations in the financial, planning and analysis business, stated Bill Piotrowski, an IBM senior partner and the line leader of the company's Americas enterprise application service business.

- TruQua works with customers' CFOs and controllers to help them implement and optimize financial-focused technology.
- While IBM is already one of SAP's largest partners and recognized as a leader in the SAP business, it decided an acquisition of TruQua rather than a partnership was the best way to grow its SAP presence, Piotrowski stated.
- "The SAP technology space is continuously changing as clients shift workloads to the cloud," he stated. "IBM builds those capabilities from within, but we also look elsewhere. This move is up-skilling and acquiring new capabilities to meet clients' needs in their transformation journeys."

Revision points

Company	Merging Company
IBM	TruQua
Bharti Airtel	Avaada MHBuldhana (5.2%)
Bharti AXA General Insurance Company	ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company Limited
Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance	MFSL (20.57%)
Axis Bank	Max Financial (90%)
Reliance Retail Ventures Limited	Reliance Retail and Fashion Lifestyle Limited
NSE Academy Limited	TalentSprint (51%)
Reliance Retail	Urban Ladder
TCS	Pramerica Systems Ireland, Prudential Financial Inc.
Pidilite Industries	US-based Huntsman Group's Indian subsidiary
Axis Bank	CSC e-Governance Services
HDFC ERGO Health Insurance	HDFC ERGO General Insurance

Important Web Portals and Mobile Apps

'Wildlife Rescue' app launched to rescue wild animals in the city

- Chandigarh UT administrator **VP Singh Badnore** launched the mobile-based application '**Wildlife Rescue**' for monitoring of wildlife rescue, reporting and release of wildlife online. The app works on all Android smartphones.
- A mobile app has been launched for the people of Chandigarh to report wildlife entering human habitation or in distress, so that the animal can be rescued by the forest department officials.
- Through this app, timely dissemination of information to the authorities concerned is possible regarding injured and distressed wild animals in the city. The location of the incident can also be directly communicated, thereby making it easier and faster for the department to react to such calls.
- The link of the app is also available on the department's website www.chandigarhforest.gov.in.

CM Naveen Patnaik launches Secha Samadhan, online services for farmers

- Chief Minister **Naveen Patnaik** launched '**Secha Samadhan**', a bilingual mobile application, to address the **irrigation problems faced by farmers** without them having to visit the offices concerned. He also launched four other online services to resolve the issue of water distribution for industries, commercial establishments and other institutions.

- With the launching of the application, farmers need not run to the offices of the Water Resources department and can send their grievances through photographs or videos. The farmers will be informed about the status of their complaints through SMS. Besides, immediate steps will be taken to redress the grievances of the farmers.
- Farmers can apply for community lift irrigation points under **the Biju Krushak Bikas Yojana (BKBY)** through phones, computers or nearby Jana Seva Kendras using the app. Similarly, the Water Resources department has also developed **Go Swift portal** by which industries can apply for water. The department has also launched the website **www.waterallocationod.nic.in** for distribution of water to commercial establishments and other institutions.

Telangana unveils two mobile apps to monitor Palle Pragathi

- Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development of **Telangana Errabelli Dayakar Rao** unveiled two mobile apps aimed at improving the **functioning and supervision of Panchayat Raj department**.
- Both the apps – **Palle Pragathi Panchayat Secretary app** and **Palle Pragathi Inspection Officer app** – were designed by the State Panchayat Raj department.
- Panchayat Secretary app includes daily activities such as cleaning of roads, drainages, and government offices, maintenance of street lights and collection of household garbage.
- On the other hand the app also deals with monthly activities such as Palle Pragathi works, cleaning of water tanks, conduction of gram panchayat and gram sabhas, birth, death and marriage registrations, revenue and expenditure of the panchayat, receipts of salaries paid, bank accounts of employment guarantee committees. The details posted by the secretary will be ported to the inspector's login that will scrutinize and validate the entry. The inspection officer will have to complete the work in stipulated time.
- The inspection app will deal with sanitation work, cleaning of government offices, status of use off Vaikuntadhamams, dumping yard details, nursery works, approvals and certificates, financial dealings, issued cheques, maintenance of records, ranking of gram panchayats and others. The inspection app helps the officers to rank the panchayats based on their performance.

Kadalu App to help fishermen launched in Udupi

- The **Coastal Security Police** launched the **Kadalu App for fishermen** that will help them in submitting information about their arrival and departure from the fishing harbour using android mobile phones.
- The Coastal Security Police conceptualised the app and developed it for the **Department of Fisheries**. It was launched by the Minister for Fisheries, Inland Transport Department and Muzrai Kota Srinivasa Poojary at a fishing awareness programme held at Moodukudu, Krishnapura, **near Udupi, Karnataka**.
- With the app, those leaving on registered fishing boats can post details about the members onboard and upload their group photos before leaving the harbour. This information has to be uploaded even after returning to harbour with catch.
- In the next few days fishermen will get weather updates on the app. They will also provide information about places where fish will be available

Govt blocks access to 43 mobile apps

- Government blocked access to **43 mobile apps**. This action was taken based on the inputs regarding these apps for engaging in activities which are **prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity**, defence, security of state and public order.
- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has issued the order for blocking the access of these apps by users in India based on the comprehensive reports received from **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center**.

- Earlier on 29th June Government had blocked access to **59 mobile apps** and on 2nd September, **118 more apps** were banned under **section 69A** of the Information Technology Act.

Abhayam' app for safety of women passengers launched in A.P.

- Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy launched '**Abhayam**' **mobile phone application** which helps women and **children travelling in taxis and auto-rickshaws**, to raise alarm in case of any emergency.
- To start with, 1,000 auto-rickshaws equipped with Internet-of -Things (IoT)-enabled GPS devices will be rolled out in Visakhapatnam city. Five thousand vehicles will be brought on to the platform by February 1, 50,000 by July 1 and 1,00,000 by November 2021.
- Launching the app, Mr. Reddy stated the Government accorded top priority to the safety of women and children and that Andhra Pradesh was the first State to bring out a legislation (**Disha Bill**) for security of women.
- **Disha police stations** were set up and steps were taken for establishing special courts and posting dedicated public prosecutors to ensure speedy disposal of cases of attacks on women.

Tamil Nadu CM launches 'Thee' app

- The app is for the general public to reach the **Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services** in cases of fires, floods, mishaps in wells, chemical or gas leaks and other accidents
- Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami launched '**Thee**', a mobile phone-based application for the benefit of the general public to reach out to the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services when in need.
- The application has been designed to help the general public in case of fire accidents, floods, mishaps in deep wells, **rescue of wildlife**, chemical or gas leaks, among other accidents. Arrangements have been made to facilitate people in need getting help within **10 seconds** of their using the app.

Prakash Javadekar launches India Climate Change Knowledge Portal

- **Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar** launched the **India Climate Change Knowledge Portal**. The portal will have all the major steps the Government is taking at both national and international levels to address the climate change issues.
- Mr Javadekar stated, it will be a single-point information resource that provides information on the different climate initiatives taken by various Line Ministries enabling users to access d status on these initiatives.
- With regard to climate actions after the Paris Agreement, Mr Javadekar stated, India has practically achieved its **pre-2020 climate action** targets. He stated, though India is not responsible for climate change but it is taking responsible action to mitigate the challenge. Mr Javadekar also demanded that other countries must commit to the advance commitments of Kyoto Protocol which has not been followed by the countries that must be done.

Delhi Government Launches Jeevan Seva App For Safe And Timely Transportation Of COVID-19 Patients

- Aiming at safe and timely transportation of the COVID-19 patients to hospitals and healthcare facilities, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain launched Jeevan Seva app.
- The Delhi government launched the Jeevan Seva app to facilitate Delhi citizens in home isolation. "From health check-ups, ambulance requirements to admission in hospitals, health amenities are now just a click away.
- With this app, you will get access to an e-vehicle, which will provide free pick-up and drop services. Each vehicle will be properly sanitised after every ride.

BSE StAR MF Launches Corp Direct – A Direct Investment Portal for Corporates

- BSE has been leading the way in adopting newer technologies and launching new, innovative products.

- The leading exchange has announced the launch of Corp Direct – A Direct Investment Portal for Corporates, with more features which will further simplify and provide end-to-end value-based services to the AMCs, Distributors, Investors, and MF industry participants.
- The StAR MF Corp Direct Portal is loaded with salient new features and is currently live for Corporates. It will soon be available for other non-individuals (HUF, Partnership Firms, Societies, etc.)

Insurance company LIC launches its first digital app in the country

- The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) launched its first digital application “ANANDA”.
- The full form of this LIC ANANDA digital app is Atma Nirbhar Agent NewBusiness Digital Application
- LIC’s new Ananda App mainly facilitates the on-boarding process for getting life insurance policies.
- However, this will be a paperless module for the same process. Ananda App also offers a paperless KYC facility using Aadhar based e-authentication.

Thaawarchand Gehlot E-Launches ‘National Portal for Transgender Persons’

- Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot e-launched a ‘National Portal for Transgender Persons’ and e-inaugurated a ‘Garima Greh: A Shelter Home for Transgender Persons’ in Vadodara, Gujarat.
- This highly useful Portal would help a transgender person in applying for a Certificate and Identity card digitally from anywhere in the country.
- The most important benefit is that it helps the transgender person to get the I-Card without any physical interface and without having to visit any office.
- Through the Portal, they can monitor the status of their application that ensures transparency in the process.

TVS Motor launches augmented reality app ARIVE

- TVS Motor Company has launched an app which allows customers to explore and buy any model online from the comfort of their homes.
- The TVS Augmented Reality Interactive Vehicle Experience (A.R.I.V.E) app allows an in-depth product exploration and purchase experience using AR technology.
- The app would also make its foray with a module on the company's flagship models, TVS Apache RR 310 and TVS Apache RTR 200 4V, catering to its tech-savvy customers.

Revision Points

Applications/Web portals	Launched By/Developed By
India Climate Change Knowledge Portal	Prakash Javadekar
Thee app	Tamil Nadu CM
Abhayam	Andhra Pradesh
Kadalu App	Coastal Security Police
Palle Pragathi Panchayat Secretary app& Palle Pragathi Inspection Officer app	Telangana
Secha Samadhan	Naveen Patnaik
Wildlife Rescue	Chandigarh UT administrator VP Singh Badnore

Important Sports News

Cricket

BCCI announces Jio as title sponsor of Women's T20 Challenge 2020

- **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** has announced **Reliance Jio** as the title sponsor of the **Women's T20 Challenge 2020**. This is the first time a sponsor is partnering with the BCCI exclusively for the women's counterpart to the IPL. The Board announced the development in a post on the IPL T20 website.
- BCCI Chairman **Sourav Ganguly** stated the Board grows the game of cricket across all formats, one key area of focus has been to grow the women's game. The women's T20 challenge is scheduled to run from November 4-9 in **Sharjah**.

ICC Cricket Rankings 2020: ODI Ranking

Team:

RANK	TEAM	RATING
1	England	123
2	India	119
3	New Zealand	116
4	Australia	109
5	South Africa	108

BATTING

RANK	PLAYER	RATING
1	Virat Kohli India	871
2	Rohit Sharma India	855
3	Babar Azam Pakistan	837
4	Ross Taylor New Zealand	818
5	Faf du Plessis South Africa	790

BOWLING

RANK	PLAYER	RATING
1	Trent Boult New Zealand	722
2	Jasprit Bumrah India	719
3	Mujeeb Ur Rahman Afghanistan	701
4	Chris Woakes England	675
5	Kagiso Rabada South Africa	665

ALL ROUNDER

RANK	PLAYER	RATING
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1	Shakib Al Hasan Shakib Al Hasan Bangladesh	373
2	Mohammad Nabi Mohammad Nabi Afghanistan	301
3	Chris Woakes Chris Woakes England	281
4	Ben Stokes Ben Stokes England	276

Trailblazers beat Supernovas by 16 runs to win Women's T20 Challenge title

- The **2020 Women's T20 Challenge**, branded as **Jio Women's T20 Challenge**, was the **third season** of the Women's T20 Challenge, a **Twenty20** cricket tournament established by the **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** in **2018**.
- Women's T20 Challenge 2020 between Trailblazers and Supernovas at the **Sharjah Cricket Stadium**.
- So after two years of the Supernovas, the **Trailblazers** are **Women's T20 Challenge champions** for the first time.
- Player of the match goes to Smriti Mandhana.
- Player of the series goes to Radha Yadav.

Dream 11 IPL 2020

- **Mumbai Indians (MI)** beat **Delhi Capitals (DC)** by five wickets in the **Dream11 Indian Premier League(IPL) 2020** final in Dubai and clinched their fifth IPL title.
- The league was founded by the **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** in **2007**.
- Mumbai Indians wins DREAM 11 IPL 2020
- This is the 5th title for MI
- Edition: 13th
- Host Country : UAE
- Highest Runs (Orange Cap) : K L Rahul
- Highest Wickets (Purple Cap) : Kagiso Rabada
- Maximum no of Sixes : Ishaan Kishan
- Most Expensive Player : Patt Cummins 15.5 cr (Kolkata Knight Riders)
- First player to score century in DREAM11 IPL 2020 : K L Rahul
- Rahul is now only the third player after Virender Sehwag and David Warner to hit an IPL century both as captain and non-captain.
- KL Rahul Became the fastest Indian (60 innings) to reach 2,000 IPL runs
- Shikhar Dhawan became the first player to hit two consecutive centuries in IPL
- RCB pacer Mohammed Siraj became the first bowler to bowl two maiden overs in an IPL match
- Virat Kohli becomes first cricketer to reach 9000 T20 runs
- The Indian Premier League clash between Rajasthan Royals and Chennai Super Kings in Sharjah saw 33 sixes — a joint record in an IPL match.
- **MS Dhoni became First player to play 200 IPL matches**
- **Rohit Sharma became second player to play 200 IPL matches**

- Shikhar Dhawan became the 4th batsman to score 5000 runs in the IPL.
- David Warner became the fastest overseas batsman and 5th player after Virat ,Raina and Rohit to reach the 5000-run mark in the Indian Premier League.
- Most Valuable Player of IPL 2020: Jofra Archer – 20 wickets, 175 dot balls, 5 catches and 10 sixes.
- Emerging Player: Devdutt Padikkal (RCB) for scoring 473 runs with 5 fifties at a strike rate of 124.80
- Dream XI Game Changer of the Season: KL Rahul – 975 Fantasy Points
- Tata Altroz Super Striker of the Season: Kieron Pollard (Mumbai Indians) – Strike Rate of 191.42
- CRED Power Player of the Season: Trent Boult (Mumbai Indians) – 16 wickets in powerplay
- Fair Play Award: Mumbai Indians

Previous Title Winners

Year	Winner	Runner Up	Venue
2020	Mumbai Indians	Delhi Capitals	UAE
2019	Mumbai Indians	Chennai Super Kings	Hyderabad
2018	Chennai Super Kings	Sunrisers Hyderabad	Mumbai
2017	Mumbai Indians	Rising Pune Supergiants	Hyderabad
2016	Sunrisers Hyderabad	Royal Challengers Bangalore	Bangalore
2015	Mumbai Indians	Chennai Super Kings	Kolkata
2014	Kolkata Knight Riders	Kings XI Punjab	Bangalore
2013	Mumbai Indians	Chennai Super Kings	Kolkata
2012	Kolkata Knight Riders	Chennai Super Kings	Chennai
2011	Chennai Super Kings	Royal Challengers Bangalore	Chennai
2010	Chennai Super Kings	Mumbai Indians	Mumbai

2009	Deccan Chargers	Royal Challengers Bangalore	Johannesburg, South Africa
2008	Rajasthan Royals	Chennai Super Kings	Mumbai

BCCI ropes in MPL Sports as official Kit sponsor for Team India

- The **BCCI formally** announced **MPL Sports** apparel and accessories as the **official kit sponsor** and merchandise partner of both the national men's and women's sides as well as the U-19 team, replacing Nike.
- The deal was cleared by the Board's apex council on November 2. Nike had a five-year deal during which they paid **Rs.370 crore** from 2016 to 2020.
- MPL Sports, the sports merchandise brand from Mobile Premier League — an e-sports platform — offers a wide range of sports wear and cricket equipment, along with other accessories such as masks, wrist bands, footwear and headgear.
- As per the newly-inked strategic partnership, MPL Sports has entered into a three-year agreement from November 2020 to December 2023.
- MPL Sports' association with the BCCI begins with India's tour of Australia, which will see Team India sporting the new jerseys.

Cricket: ICC postpones 2022 women's T-20 world cup till February 2023

- The **International Cricket Council** has postponed the **South African edition** of the **Women's T20 World Cup** by **three months** to **February 2023** to avoid a cluster of big-ticket events in 2022.
- ICC stated the tournament, which was scheduled in November 2022, will now be held from February 9 to 26, 2023. It stated, if not postponed, the year 2022 will have three major events including Common Wealth Games and 50 over Women's World Cup.
- In August this year, the ICC had postponed the 50 over Women's World Cup slated in New Zealand from 2021 to 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and women's T20 cricket is also set to make its debut in the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

Football

FIFA cancels Women's Under-17 football World Cup; India to host 2022 edition

- The **Women's Under-17 football World Cup** in India, which was initially postponed to next year due to COVID-19 pandemic, was cancelled by **FIFA**, but India was handed the **hosting rights** of the **2022 edition**. The FIFA cancelled both the women's U-17 World Cup and U-20 World Cup which were scheduled to be held in India and Costa Rica respectively but handed both the countries the hosting rights of the 2022 editions.
- All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel stated the local organising committee is ready to start afresh for hosting the 2022 edition.
- It has also announced that the FIFA Club World Cup, originally planned for next month, will now be held from February 1st to 11 next year in Doha. Two clubs have already qualified for the tournament. European champions Bayern Munich will be joined by Qatar Stars League winners Al Duhail who are the host nation's representatives.

Others

Kiren Rijiju launches 2nd edition of 'Fit India School Week' programme

- **Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju** has launched the **second edition** of **Fit India School Week program**. To participate in the program the schools have to register themselves on www.fitindia.gov.in/fit-india-school-week.
- Mr Rijiju spoke about the importance of fitness in school life and stated students are the driving force behind making India fit. The **Fit India School week program** was launched in **November last year** and saw participation from over 15 thousand schools across the country.

Rublev Claims Fifth Title Of 2020 In Vienna

- The red-hot **Russian Andrey Rublev** beat **Lorenzo Sonego** to win the **Erste Bank Open**, lifting his **ATP Tour-leading fifth title of the season**.
- The 23-year-old is now **tied with World No. 1 Novak Djokovic** atop the **2020 match wins leaderboard with 39**.
- With the Vienna title, Rublev has qualified for the Nitto ATP Finals for the first time. There is only one singles spot remaining at the season finale, to be held at The O2 in London from 15-22 November.
- Rublev is the first Russian to win five ATP Tour titles in the season since Nikolay Davydenko in 2009. Davydenko played 23 tournaments that year, finishing it off by lifting the trophy at the Nitto ATP Finals. The Erste Bank Open was Rublev's 12th tournament of 2020.

Player	Titles
Andrey Rublev	5
Novak Djokovic	4
Cristian Garin	2
Ugo Humbert	2
Gael Monfils	2
Rafael Nadal	2
Alexander Zverev	2

Lewis Hamilton wins Emilia Romagna Grand Prix, earning Mercedes the Constructors' Championship

- To the surprise of no one that follows Formula 1, **Lewis Hamilton** has won yet another race. Formula 1 returned to the **Italian town of Imola** to race at the **Autodromo Internazionale Enzo e Dino Ferrari**. This race was added to the 2020 calendar in order to replace cancellations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The podium at the end of this race was topped by **Lewis Hamilton** and Mercedes teammate **Valtteri Bottas** taking positions one and two, respectively.
- With this win from Hamilton, Mercedes has won its **seventh consecutive Constructors' Championship**. The **Formula One World Constructors' Championship** is awarded by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile to the Formula One chassis constructor that scored the most points during a season. Previously tied with Scuderia Ferrari at six wins each, Mercedes now also holds the longest consecutive streak of Constructors' Championship wins. At seven wins, this now has Mercedes tied with the now defunct Team Lotus for fourth most wins overall.

Ritu Phogat Wins Third Straight MMA title at ONE Championship Inside the Matrix Event

- **Former Indian wrestler** and now a **Mixed Martial Arts star**, **Ritu Phogat** won her **third consecutive MMA championship title** in **Singapore**.
- 26-year-old Phogat **defeated Cambodia's Nou Srey Pov** with a technical knockout win in the second round.

- The match was part of ONE Championship's ONE: INSIDE THE MATRIX event that featured four exciting World Championship contests at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

Indian boxers Amit Panghal, Sanjeet and Ashish Kumar win gold at the Alexis Vastine International

- Indian boxers **Amit Panghal, Sanjeet and Ashish Kumar** have won gold medals at the recently concluded **Alexis Valentine International Boxing Tournament** held in Nantes, France.
- The tournament was the first international event that Indian boxers were a part of since the lockdown enforced earlier this year in March.
- **Amit Panghal**, silver medalist at the 2019 AIBA World Boxing Championships in the **52 kg-weight category**, overcame the challenge from **American boxer Rene Abraham**.
- Former India Open gold medal winner **Sanjeet** was up against **France's Soheb Bouafia** in the 91 kg final bout .
- **Ashish Kumar** won the gold medal after his opponent from USA, **Joseph Gerome Hiks**, gave him a walkover due to injury.
- **Kavinder Singh Bisht**, the boxer in the **57 kgweight category** claimed the **silver medal**, after he lost out in a close bout against Frenchman Samuel Kistohurry.
- Three Indian boxers - **Shiva Thapa (63 kg), Sumit Sangwan (81 kg) and Satish Kumar (Over 91 kg)** had secured the **bronze medals for India**.

Daniil Medvedev defeats Alexander Zverev in Paris Masters final to clinch his 8th ATP title

- In Tennis, world number five **Daniil Medvedev** defeated **Alexander Zverev** in the Paris Masters final to clinch his **eighth ATP title**. World number seven, Zverev of Germany, who beat World number two Rafael Nadal in semi-finals, took an early advantage.
- But Russian third seed Medvedev rallied to win in two hours seven minutes. He became the fourth Russian to capture the Paris Masters title after Marat Safin, Nikolay Davydenko and Karen Khachanov.

ITTF Women's World Cup: China's Chen claims maiden title

- World number one **Chen Meng** beat Chinese compatriot **Sun Yingsha** to win her maiden **ITTF Women's World Cup title in Weihai**.
- Chen's victory at the bio-secure Weihai Nanhai Olympic Center made her the first winner of the ITTF's #RESTART series and also took her tally of senior singles titles to 19.
- The women's and men's World Cup events were originally set to take place in Bangkok, Thailand and then Duesseldorf, Germany before the ITTF moved them to China.

Younis Khan appointed Pakistan's batting coach until 2022 T20 World Cup

- Former captain **Younis Khan** will continue as the **men's batting coach** of **Pakistan** until the **ICCTwenty20WorldCup** in **2022**.
- The **Twenty20WorldCup2022** is scheduled to be **held in Australia**.
- Younis had earlier accompanied Pakistan to England this summer and will now continue with his responsibilities for the upcoming series in New Zealand for which the side departs on 23 November.

Novak Djokovic equals Pete Sampras's record of six year-end No.1 trophies

- Tennis star **Novak Djokovic** has equalled **Pete Sampra's record** of winning **six year-end number one trophies**. The Serbian player achieved the feat as he was given the ATP Tour Number One trophy for finishing as the year-end number one. With this, Djokovic has become only the second player in tennis history to do it six times. Before this, Djokovic had finished as world number one in 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2018.

- Among past players, only Pete Sampras has managed to finish six years on top of the rankings which he did between 1993 and 1998.

F1 Turkish Grand Prix: Lewis Hamilton seals seventh world title

- **Hamilton** joins **Michael Schumacher** as a **seven-time F1 world champion** after amazing Istanbul victory from sixth on the grid; Hamilton now statistically the most successful driver of all time holding or sharing all of F1's biggest records
- Lewis Hamilton clinched the **2020 F1 championship** with a stupendous drive to victory in a wet and unpredictable Turkish GP to equal Michael Schumacher's illustrious record of seven drivers' world titles.
- In a race in which numerous drivers could have won in challenging wet conditions, Hamilton pulled off an unlikely but fitting triumph from sixth on the grid to seal his **seventh title** in the **94th win** of an unprecedented career.
- Hamilton came home over half a minute clear of **Sergio Perez** for Racing Point. Hamilton's old rival, four-time former champion **Sebastian Vettel**, finished third ahead of his Ferrari teammate **Charles Leclerc**, Carlos Sainz of McLaren and, after a wild and impulsive afternoon, Max Verstappen in the leading Red Bull.
- Hamilton, who sealed his first title in 2008, was adding to his unprecedented roster of records — most wins with 94, most pole positions (97), most podium finishes (163) and most consecutive points finishes (47).

Jannik Sinner Clinches Maiden ATP Tour Title In Sofia

- **Jannik Sinner** captured his maiden **ATP Tour trophy** at the **Sofia Open** in **Bulgaria**.
- The 19-year-old battled past experienced **Canadian Vasek Pospisil** to become the **youngest Italian** in the Open Era to win an ATP Tour title.
- The last player to have lifted a tour-level trophy at a younger age than Sinner was **Kei Nishikori** who had earned his maiden ATP Tour title as an 18-year-old at the 2008 Delray Beach Open.
- As a result of his title run in the Bulgarian capital, he will crack the top 40 of the ATP Rankings for the first time at **number 37**.

Daniil Medvedev beat Dominic Thiem to win ATP Tour Finals in London

- In Tennis, **Daniil Medvedev** beat **Dominic Thiem** to win **ATP Tour Finals**, the biggest title of his career. Medvedev fought back from losing the first set to beat Thiem 4-6, 7-6, 6-4 in a thrilling final in London. Thiem was denied the title second year in a row.
- In the doubles final, Dutch-Croatian duo Wesley Koolhof and Nikola Pietrangeli claimed their first title together edging Jürgen Melzer and Édouard Roger-Vasselin 6-2, 3-6, 10-5.

Sports Ministry restores AAI's recognition after eight years

- **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** has granted the annual recognition to **Archery Association of India** as a **National Sports Federation (NSF)**, validating its elections held for new office-bearers earlier this year. AAI's recognition was withdrawn by the ministry on December 7, 2012 on account of its failure to conduct elections in accordance with the sports code despite the directions of the High Court.
- This comes after AAI's independent elections and revocation of suspension by the World Archery and Indian Olympic Association. The recognition will be valid for one year. AAI president Arjun Munda welcomed the decision and stated that it will start a new chapter in Indian archery.

Mission Olympic Cell approves Bajrang's one-month training camp in U.S.A

- **Mission Olympic Cell** has approved a one-month training camp in the U.S.A for **wrestler Bajrang Punia**, one of India's biggest medal hopes at the Tokyo Olympics.

- Mission Olympic Cell is a body set up by the Sports Authority of India to select athletes who are to get assistance under the **Target Olympic Podium Scheme**.
- The camp will take place from December 4 to January 3 at Cliff Keen Wrestling Club, Michigan, at an approximate cost of Rs.14 lakhs. Bajrang, who has been training at the SAI Sonapat centre after the resumption of training camps post the coronavirus lockdown, will travel to the U.S.A with his coach Emzarios Bentinidis and physio Dhananjay.
- He will get to train with top international wrestlers under head coach, Sergei Beloglazov, who is a two-time Olympic champion. Bajrang has already qualified for the Tokyo Olympics after earning a quota at the 2019 World Championships.
- The World No. 2 in 65kg has preferred a stint in the U.S.A over Individual World Cup scheduled in Serbia's Belgrade from December 12 to 18.

ATP Finals: Dominic Thiem defeats 20-time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal

- In tennis, **Dominic Thiem** defeated **20-time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal** in straight sets at the **ATP Finals** in London. World number three Thiem of Austria clinched a victory over world number two Spaniard Nadal.
- Earlier, Thiem had beaten reigning champion Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece in his opening round-robin match and will qualify for the semi-finals if Tsitsipas beats Andrey Rublev later.
- Nadal, who beat Rublev in their opener, missed a chance to qualify with a match to spare and next will play Tsitsipas with a semifinal place at stake.

Revision Points

Organization	Headquarters	Key Person
DBS Bank	Singapore	Piyush Gupta
IBM	Armonk	Arvind Krishna
HCL Technologies	Noida	C Vijayakumar
World Economic Forum	Cologny, Switzerland	Klaus Schwab
Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)	New Delhi	Thulani Dlamini
United Nations	New York, USA	António Guterres
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Washington D.C.	Kristalina Georgieva
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	Beijing, China	Jin Lique
Competition Commission of India (CCI)	New Delhi	Ashok Kumar Gupta
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)	New Delhi	Rita Teatia
National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)	New Delhi	Manish Kumar
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)	New Delhi	Sangita Reddy
NTPC Ltd	New Delhi	Gurdeep Singh
Board of Control for Cricket in India	Mumbai	Saurav Ganguly

International Cricket Council	Dubai, United Arab Emirates	Shashank Manohar
World Bank	Washington D.C, USA	David Malpass
Asian Development Bank	Mandaluyong, Philippines	Masatsugu Asakawa
NHPC Limited	Faridabad	Abhay Kumar Singh
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)	Washington DC	James Morhard
United Nations Childrens' Fund (UNICEF)	New York, USA	Henrietta H. Fore
World Health Organization	Geneva, Switzerland	Tedros Adhanom
Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)	Zürich, Switzerland	Gianni Infantino
International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF)	Lausanne, Switzerland	Steve Dainton
Citigroup Inc	New York	Anand Selva
NSE	Mumbai	Vikram Limaye
ONGC Videsh Limited	New Delhi	AK Gupta
Vodafone Idea	Gandhinagar	Ravinder Takkar
Prasar Bharati	New Delhi	Shashi Shekhar Vempati
Microsoft	Redmond, Washington	Satya Nadella
Mastercard	Purchase, Harrison	Ajaypal Singh Banga
Alliance Air	Mumbai	Harpreet A De Singh
Electronics Sector Skill Council of India	New Delhi	PVG Menon
Volleyball Federation of India	Chennai	Achyuta Samanta
Sports Authority of India	New Delhi	Sandip Pradhan
World LPG Association	Neuilly-sur-Seine, France	James Rockall
Air India Express	Kochi	Aloke Singh
HIL (India) Limited	Kochi	Dhirup Roy Choudhary
Defence Research Development Organization	New Delhi	Sateesh Reddy
FlipKart	Bengaluru	Kalyan Krishnamurthy
United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization	Paris	Audrey Azoulay
Indian Council of Medical Research	New Delhi	Balram Bhargava
Google	California, United States	Sundar Pichai
Amazon	Washington, United States	Jeff Bezos
International Finance Corporation	Washington, D.C., United	Philippe Le Houérou

(IFC)	States	
Indian Oil	New Delhi	Sanjiv Singh
Dell Technologies	Texas, United States	Michael S. Dell
Myntra	Bengaluru	Amar Nagaram
United Nations Development Programme	New York	Achim Steiner
Bharat Electronics Limited	Bengaluru	Venkateswara Gowtama Mannava
National Capital Region Transport Corporation	New Delhi	Vinay Kumar Singh
Bharat Financial Inclusion Ltd	Hyderabad	Shalabh Saxena
Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd	Bengaluru	R Madhavan
Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)	New Delhi	Anupam Shrivastava
Indian School of Business	Hyderabad	Ankur Warikoo
Indian Council of World Affairs	New Delhi	Venkaiah Naidu
Energy Efficiency Services Limited	New Delhi	Rajat Sud
IndusInd Bank	Pune	Sumant Kathpalia
Infosys	Bengaluru	Salil Parekh
SpaceX	California, United States	Elon Musk
L & T	Mumbai	S. N. Subrahmanyam
United Nations Environment Programme	Nairobi, Kenya	Inger Andersen
Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)	Bengaluru	K Sivan
Indian Council of Social Science Research	New Delhi	Bhushan Patwardhan

Important Obituaries

Name	Field
R. Duraikannu	Tamil Nadu Agriculture Minister
Sean Connery	Scottish actor (best known for James Bond)
T N Krishnan	Violinist (Kerala)
Satish Prasad Singh	Former Bihar Chief Minister
Faraaz Khan	Actor
Carlos Gonzalez Valles SJ	Author and Gujarati columnist
Sudarshan Rattan	Filmmaker
Sanchaman Limboo	Fourth chief Minister of Sikkim
Ken Spears	Scooby-Doo co-creator

Satyajit Ghosh	Ex-Mohun Bagan defender
Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa	World's longest serving Prime Minister, Bahrain
Chandrawati	Haryana's first woman MP and former Puducherry Lt Governor
Arjun Prajapati	Padma Shri awardee and sculptor
Jerry Rawlings	Ghana's former president
Asif Basra	Bollywood actor
John Thomas Goslin Pereira	Indian Navy's former Chief of Materials
Bhanwarlal Meghwal	Rajasthan Social Justice and Empowerment Minister
Ray Clemence	Former England, Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur goalkeeper
Mridula Sinha	Former Goa Governor
Tarun Gogoi	Former Assam Chief Minister
Shaik Khaja Hussain	Telugu poet, journalist, scriptwriter, and Kendra Sahitya Academy award winner
Ashiesh Roy	TV Actor
Diego Maradona	Football player (Argentina)
Maulana Kalbe Sadiq	Islamic scholar, reformer, educationalist and vice-president of All India Muslim Personal Law Board
Ahmed Patel	Senior Congress leader
Faqir Chand Kohli	First CEO of Tata Consultancy Services (Padma Bhushan Awardee)
James Wolfensohn	Former President of World Bank
Aly Zaker	Bangladeshi actor