

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – October 2020

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Important Days

Date	Day	Theme/Others
Month of October - Breast Cancer Awareness Month		
October 1	International Day of Older Persons	Leave No One Behind
October 1	International Coffee Day	Launched First World Coffee Day in 2015 at Milan
October 1	World vegetarian day	It was founded in 1977 by the North American Vegetarian Society
October 2	International Day of Non-Violence	2020 marks 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi
October 2	World Day for Farmed Animals	
October 2	World Temperance Day	
October 4	World Animal Day	
October 4 - 10	World Space Week (In 1999, the United Nations declared as World Space Week)	In 2021, World Space Week celebrates Women in Space. 2020 - Satellites Improve Life
October 5	International Teachers Day	Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future
October 5	Ganga River Dolphin Day	Ganga Dolphins were declared national aquatic animals in 2010
First Monday of October	World Habitat Day	Housing For All — A Better Urban Future
October 2 to October 8	Wildlife Week	Roar (Roar and Revive) – Exploring Human-Animal Relationships
October 7	World Cotton Day	WCD was hosted by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2019.
October 8	88th Anniversary of Indian Air Force	IAF was officially established on 8 October 1932
Second Thursday of October	World Sight Day	Hope In Sight
October 9	World Post Day	Anniversary of the establishment of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1874 in Berne
Second Friday of October	World Egg Day	
Oct 09 to Oct 15	National Postal Week	9 th October - World Post Day; 10 th October - Banking Day; 12 th October - PLI Day; 13 th October - Philately Day; 14 th October -

		Business Development Day; 15 th October - Mails Day.
October 9	IFS Day	Celebrated every year since 2011
October 10	National Postal Day	
October 10	World Mental Health Day	Mental Health for All: Greater Investment – Greater Access
October 10	World Migratory Bird Day	Celebrated bi-annually; Birds Connect Our World
October 10	World Day Against the Death Penalty	Access to counsel – A matter of life or death (Organised by the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty in 2003)
October 11	International Day of the Girl	My voice, our equal future
October 12	World Arthritis Day	It's in your hands, take action (Observed since 1996)
October 13	International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction	
October 13	National Philately Day	
October 14	World Standards Day	Protecting the planet with standards
October 14	International E-Waste Day	It has been developed by the WEEE Forum
October 15	Global Handwashing Day	Hand Hygiene for All
October 15	International Day of Rural Women	Building rural women's resilience in the wake of COVID-19
October 15	World Students Day	
October 16	World Food Day	Grow, nourish, sustain. Together. Our actions are our future
October 17	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty	Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all
October 20	World Statistics Day (3 rd)	Connecting the world with data we can trust
October 20	World Osteoporosis Day	Campaign - THAT'S OSTEOPOROSIS
October 20	International Chefs Day	Healthy Food for the Future
October 21	Police Commemoration Day	
October 21	Global Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) Prevention Day/ World Iodine Deficiency Day	
October 22	International Stuttering Awareness Day	Journey of Words – Resilience and Bouncing Back
October 23	World's Snow Leopard Day	
October 24	United Nations' World Development Information Day	

October 24	United Nations Day	United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945
October 24	International Day of Diplomats	It was proposed by Indian poet-diplomat Abhay K.
October 27 to November 2	Vigilance Awareness Week (Birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel)	Satark Bharat, Samriddh Bharat (Vigilant India, Prosperous India)
October 27	World Day for Audiovisual Heritage	Your Window to the World (Commemorative day was chosen by UNESCO in 2005)
October 27	Infantry Day (74 th)	Celebrated by Indian Army
October 28	International Animation Day	Celebrated since 2005.
October 29	International Internet Day	
October 29	World Psoriasis Day	INFORMED
October 24-30	Disarmament Week	
October 30	World Savings Day	
October 31	National Unity Day or Rashtriya Ekta Diwas	The day was introduced in 2014. 2020 marks the 145th birth anniversary of Patel.
October 31	World Cities Day	Valuing our communities and cities

Important Banking News

RBI

RBI defers Basel III provisions amid covid uncertainty

- The **Reserve Bank of India** deferred implementation of provisions made under **Basel III capital** due to uncertainty related to Covid crisis.
- In two separate notifications, RBI stated it would push back the final tranche of the **capital conservation buffer (CCB)** and the implementation of net stable funding ratio by **six months**.
- The capital conservation buffer (CCB) is designed to ensure that banks build up capital buffers during normal times which can be drawn down as losses are incurred during a stressed period.
- RBI had asked banks to build up CCB of 2.5% in stages. The final stage of 0.625% was to be kept from 30 September 2020. This has been deferred to **1 April, 2020**. The RBI had earlier deferred the implementation by six months from **31 March 2020**.
- The net stable funding ratio (NSFR) ensures reduction in funding risk over a longer time horizon by requiring banks to fund their activities with sufficiently stable sources of funding. This is intended to mitigate the risk of future funding stress.
- As per the guidelines, banks in India were required to maintain NSFR of 100% from 1 April 2020. The RBI has now deferred it for a second time to 1 April 2021.

Reserve Bank of India's new Credit and Debit Card rules

- RBI has issued new guidelines to secure credit and debit cards and the changes will be effective from October 1, 2020.

- As per the new guidelines, card users will now be able to register the spend limits, opt-in or opt-out services, etc. for online transactions, international transactions as well as contactless card transactions.

RBI to conduct first-ever Open Market Operations (OMO) Purchase of State Government Securities worth Rs. 10,000 crores

- Reserve Bank will conduct Open Market Operations (OMOs) in State Developments Loans (SDLs) of total amount of Rs. 10,000 crores on October 22, 2020.
- This is the first ever OMO purchase of State Developments Loans (SDLs).

RBI sets WMA Limit for Govt at Rs 1,25,000 crore for second half of FY21

- The Reserve Bank of India has set the limits for Ways and Means Advances (WMA) for the second half of the financial year 2020-21 (October 2020 to March 2021) for the Central Government at Rs. 1,25,000 crore.
- The Reserve Bank will trigger fresh floatation of market loans when the Government of India utilizes 75% of the WMA limit.
- The interest rate on WMA/overdraft will be:
- WMA: Repo Rate
- Overdraft: Two percent above the Repo Rate

Interest subvention on MSME loans extended till end of March 2021: RBI

- **Reserve Bank of India** has stated that the **two per cent interest** subvention scheme for **micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** on loans offered by **co-operative banks** has been extended till **31st of March next year**.
- RBI has further informed that the scheme, initially announced for just two years, has been extended for the financial year 2020-21. RBI stated that the coverage of the scheme is limited to all term loans and working capital to the extent of 100 lakh rupees, adding that the requirement of **Udyog Aadhaar Number** may be dispensed with for units eligible for GST.
- RBI has also asked co-operative banks to take appropriate action as envisaged in the operational guidelines and issue necessary instructions to their branches or controlling offices for successful implementation of the scheme.

RBI keeps key interest rates unchanged

- The **Reserve Bank of India** in its bi-monthly Monetary Policy statement issued has maintained a status quo keeping the key interest rates unchanged.
- The reverse repo rate remains unchanged at **3.35 per cent**, the repo rate at **four per cent**.
- The Monetary Policy Committee has also decided to maintain its accommodative stance as long as necessary at least through the current financial year and next year as Indian economy is entering into decisive phase in its fight against coronavirus.
- He stated, the RBI stands ready to undertake further measures as necessary to assure market participants of access to liquidity and easy finance conditions.
- The new housing loans risk weights to be linked to Loan-to-value ratio and also rationalize risk weights for all new housing loans until **March 31, 2022**.
- Also the bank will extend scheme for co-lending to all NBFC, HFC. As for GDP, the growth may break out of contraction and enter positive zone by fourth quarter of current fiscal.

RBI to discontinue system-based automatic caution-listing of exporters

- In an effort to provide flexibility to exporters in the realisation of export proceeds, **the Reserve Bank** has decided to discontinue the **system-based automatic caution-listing of exporters**.

- As part of automation of the Export Data Processing and Monitoring System, the '**Caution/De-caution Listing**' of exporters was automated in 2016. Accordingly, the exporters were to be caution-listed automatically, if any shipping bill against them remained outstanding for more than two years.
- After contracting for six months in a row, India's exports grew by **5.27 percent** year-on-year to 27.4 billion dollars in September while the trade deficit narrowed to a three-month low of **2.91 billion dollars**.

RBI expects real GDP to fall by 9.5%

- India's recovery is likely to be a three-speed recovery predominantly, with individual sectors showing varying paces depending on sector-specific realities, according to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das.
- For the year 2020-21 as a whole, the central bank expects **real GDP** to decline by **9.5 per cent**, with risks tilted to the downside: **(-)9.8 per cent** in Q2 (July-September) 2020-21; **(-)5.6 per cent** in Q3 (October-December); and **0.5 per cent** in Q4 (January-March 2021).
- Real GDP growth for Q1 (April-June) 2021-22 will see a rebound, with the RBI placing it at 20.6 per cent.
- Das observed that the sectors that would 'open their accounts' the earliest are expected to be those that have shown resilience in the face of the pandemic and are also labour-intensive.

Reserve Bank of India reallocates portfolios of deputy governors

- Reserve Bank of India has reallocated portfolios of deputy governors, with the department of regulation entrusted to the newly-appointed **M Rajeshwar Rao**.
- Mr Rao was executive director of the Reserve Bank before being elevated to the post of deputy governor..Besides the department of regulation, Mr Rao will look after the departments of communication, enforcement legalities among others.
- Mr Rao was appointed to the post vacated by **NS Vishwanathan**, who stepped down three months ahead of his extended tenure on health grounds.
- RBI also announced portfolios of the four deputy governors effective from October 12, consequent upon the appointment of Mr Rao as deputy governor.
- Deputy Governor **MD Patra** will continue to look after the monetary policy department.
- His other portfolios, include department of economic and policy research, deposit insurance and credit guarantee corporation, financial markets operations department, and financial markets regulation department.
- Deputy Governor **MK Jain** will look after central security cell, corporate strategy and budget department, consumer education and protection department, department of supervision, and human resource management department, among others.
- Deputy Governor **BP Kanungo** will oversee coordination, currency management, external investments and operations, department of government and banks accounts, IT, payment and settlement systems, foreign exchange department, internal debt management department, Right of Information (RIA) Division, and secretary's department.

RBI raises banks' aggregate exposure limit for small businesses to Rs 7.5 cr

- The **RBI** raised **banks' maximum aggregate retail exposure limit** to entities with turnover up to **Rs 50 crore** to **Rs 7.5 crore**, up from **Rs 5 crore**.
- The **risk weight of 75 per cent** will apply to **all fresh exposures** and **also to existing exposures** where incremental exposure may be taken by the banks up to the revised limit of **Rs 7.5 crore**.
- The **RBI** has also been decided to extend the dispensation of the enhanced **Held to Maturity (HTM) limit of 22 per cent** for SLR securities acquired between September 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021, up to **March 31, 2022**.

- RBI has also decided that the enhanced HTM limit would be **restored to 19.5 per cent** in a phased manner, beginning from the quarter ending **June 30, 2022**.

RBI imposes Rs 4.5-cr penalty on IndusInd Bank for non-compliance with its directions

- The **Reserve Bank of India** has imposed a monetary penalty of **Rs 4.5 crore** on **IndusInd Bank Ltd** for non-compliance with certain provisions of directions issued by it
- The central bank stated the **non-compliance** was with respect to certain provisions of directions issued by it on 'Exposure Norms', 'Prudential Norms on Income Recognition, Asset Classification and Provisioning pertaining to Advances', among others.
- RBI also flagged non-compliance of its directions on '**SPARC** (Supervisory Programme for Assessment of Risk and Capital) – Monitoring of Information Submission by bank', 'Creation of a Central Repository of Large Common Exposures - Across Banks' read with directions on 'Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) – Revision in Reporting', and 'Disclosure in Financial Statements - Notes to Accounts'.
- "This penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested in RBI under...the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (the Act).

Reserve Bank bars payment system operators from launching new QR codes

- The **Reserve Bank barred Payment System Operators (PSOs)** from launching any new proprietary QR code for payment transactions.
- Currently, there are two interoperable QR codes -- **UPI QR and Bharat QR**.
- QR codes are two-dimensional machine-readable barcodes, which are increasingly used to facilitate mobile payments at the point-of-sale. QR codes can store a large amount of information.
- The decision to continue with the two existing Quick Response (QR) codes was based on the recommendations of the committee which was set up by the Reserve Bank **under the chairmanship of Deepak Phatak** to review the current system of such codes in India and suggest measures for moving towards interoperable QR codes.
- PSOs that use proprietary QR codes shall shift to one or more interoperable QR codes; the process of migration shall be completed by **March 31, 2022**.

NBFCs approach RBI for inclusion as beneficiaries to on-tap TLTRO

- **Non-banking financial companies (NBFCs)** have written to the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to include them as beneficiaries for availing funds under on tap **targeted long-term repo operations (TLTRO) scheme**.
- To ensure comfortable liquidity conditions in the system, the RBI on October 9 announced to conduct on tap TLTRO worth **Rs 1 lakh crore**.
- The central bank had stated the liquidity availed by banks under the scheme has to be deployed in corporate bonds, commercial papers and non-convertible debentures issued by the entities in specific sectors. Banks can also use the funds to extend credit to these specific sectors.
- The central bank made sectors such as agriculture agri-infrastructure, secured retail, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and drugs, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, eligible for deployment of funds availed under on tap TLTRO.
- The industry body stated NBFCs are well recognised conduits for reaching out last mile credit to the crucial sectors such as agriculture, agri-infrastructure, MSMEs, secured retail and drugs among others.
- NBFCs borrow only for the purpose of on-lending and hence can act as a force-multiplier and join hands with the banking system in expanding the credit reach to various sectors.

- The industry body also suggested to carve out a part of the on tap TLTRO funds for the NBFCs including small NBFCs to avail of loans from banks for the purposes of on-lending to the desired sectors only.
- The on tap TLTRO scheme will remain operational from **October 22, 2020 till March**

RBI revises norms for housing finance firms

- Home financiers must have at **least 60% of** all their assets in **housing finance** by **31 March 2024**, with individual loans making up at least 50% of all assets, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) stated.
- By March 2022, they must have 50% in housing finance and 40% in individual loans. By March 2023, the ratio should be at least 55% and 45%, respectively.
- In its review of the regulatory framework for **housing finance companies (HFCs)**, the central bank also outlined what type of loans can be classified as housing finance.
- RBI also set a **three-month deadline** for **mortgage lenders** to submit a board-approved plan to meet these criteria, along with a timeline for transition.
- The new rules are based on the recommendations made in July, after RBI took over the regulation of mortgage lenders from the National Housing Bank in August last year.
- Home financiers will now be regulated as a category of **non-banking financial companies (NBFCs)**.
- Home finance companies that are unable to fulfil these criteria must approach RBI to convert their certificates of registration from HFC to non-banking financial company-investment and credit company (NBFC-ICC).
- The new framework also mandates mortgage lenders to ensure they have sufficient high-quality liquid assets to survive an acute liquidity stress scenario lasting for 30 days.
- Home financiers must also have at least Rs.20 crore minimum net-owned funds to commence housing finance as its principal business or carry on the business of housing finance as its principal business.
- A home financier holding a certificate of registration and having net owned fund below **Rs.20 crore** may continue to carry on the business of housing finance, if it can achieve **Rs.15 crore** by 31 March 2022, and Rs.20 crore by 31 March 2023.

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

SBI in tie-up to offer digital payment solutions to HUL retailers and distributors

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** and **Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL)** have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), under which the bank will provide its digital payment and financing solutions to the FMCG company's retailers and distributors.

- SBI will offer an instant paperless overdraft facility of up to **Rs.50,000** to retailers for their billings with distributors as well as financing facilities to HUL's distributors.
- To ensure that customers get the option of digital payments in smaller towns as well, the bank will install point of sale (PoS) machines at multiple HUL touchpoints across the country, SBI stated.
- Additionally, it will provide **UPI-based solutions to HUL retailers** for hassle-free, safe and instant cashless payments to their dealers from HUL's retailer application 'Shikhar'. The bank will also offer HUL employees the option of a corporate salary package via an SBI microsite hosted on HUL's intranet.

SBI authorised to issue, encash Electoral Bonds from Oct 19-28

- The Ministry of Finance has stated that the **State Bank of India (SBI)**, in the **14th Phase of sale**, has been authorised to issue and encash **Electoral Bonds** through its **29 Authorized Branches** with effect from 19th October to 28th of October this year. Electoral Bonds will be valid for **fifteen calendar days** from the date of issue and no payment will be made to any payee Political Party if the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period. The Ministry stated, the Electoral Bond deposited by an eligible Political Party in its account will be credited on the same day.
- It stated, Election Commission of India has accorded 'No objection' from Model Code of Conduct (MCC) angle with conditions that no political functionary will make any reference in this regard during any public speech or communication to the press or public in the constituencies going for poll and the relevant provisions of MCC will be strictly followed. The Government had notified the Electoral Bond Scheme in 2018.

SBI raises USD 1 billion untied loan with JBIC, other lenders

- The **State Bank of India** signed a loan agreement amounting to up to **one billion US Dollars** with the **Japan Bank for International Cooperation**, a company statement stated. The loan is intended to promote the smooth flow of funds for the whole range of business operations of Japanese automobile manufacturers in India.
- As part of the agreement, **600 million US Dollars** will be financed by **JBIC** while the remaining amount will be financed by other participating banks. The facility will be co-financed by SMBC, MUFG Bank, Mizuho Bank, Shizuoka Bank and Bank of Yokohama.

SBI ties up with global education platform edX

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** has entered into a strategic partnership with global **non-profit education platform edX**, where the bank will offer its **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)** on the platform from November onwards.
- Initially, SBI will be offering three courses – Unleashing Creativity at the Workplace, Relationship Marketing Strategy for Financial Services, and Conflict Resolution, stated SBI.
- "The duration of these courses would be for four to six weeks, with an expected spend of two to three hours per week on a course. Interested learners need no specific academic qualifications to apply for the same," stated SBI.
- The bank's collaboration with edX is aimed at facilitating learners with expanding perspectives and access to knowledge beyond the classrooms, it added.
- The bank underscored that these courses have been curated and designed by practising bankers who possess rich experience and excellent academic credentials.

SBI raises Rs 5,000 crore by issuing Basel-III compliant bonds

- The **State Bank of India (SBI)** stated it has raised **Rs 5,000 crore** by issuing **Basel-III compliant bonds**.
- The committee of directors of capital raising met and accorded its approval to allot 50,000 Basel-III compliant non-convertible, taxable debt instruments, SBI stated in a regulatory filing. The debentures qualifying as tier II capital of

the bank of face value of **Rs 10 lakh each**, at par, bearing a coupon of 5.83 per cent aggregating to Rs 5,000 crore were allotted to bond subscribers on October 26, 2020, it stated.

- The interest on the bonds will be paid annually for a tenor of **10 years** and call option **after 5 years** and on anniversary date thereafter, the country's largest lender stated. Under call option, the bond issuer can call back the bonds before the maturity date by paying back the principal amount to investors.
- The Basel-III capital regulations are globally accepted banking norms under which banks need to improve and strengthen their capital planning processes. Basel-III norms are being implemented in phases since 2013 by Indian banks to mitigate concerns on potential stress on asset quality and consequential impact on performance and profitability of banks.

ADB

ADB approves 300 million US dollar loan to finance water supply, sanitation infrastructure in Rajasthan

- India and the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** signed a **300 million US dollar** loan to finance inclusive and **sustainable water supply** and sanitation infrastructure and services in 14 secondary towns of the state of **Rajasthan**.
- The signatories to the Rajasthan Secondary Towns Development Sector Project were Sameer Kumar Khare, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and Takeo Konishi, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission.
- Through the project, water supply systems in at least eight project towns are expected to improve by 2027, benefiting more than five lakh 70 thousand people. Citywide sanitation systems will benefit about seven lakh 20 thousand people in at least 14 secondary towns.

ADB, India Sign \$270 Million Loan to Improve Urban Services in 64 Madhya Pradesh Small Cities

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** and the **Government of India** have signed a **\$270 million loan** to develop water supply and integrated storm water and sewage management infrastructure and strengthen capacities of urban local bodies for improved service delivery in the state of **Madhya Pradesh**.
- This is an additional financing to scale up the scope of the ongoing Madhya Pradesh Urban Services Improvement Project, which was approved in 2017 with a \$275 million loan. It will expand the outcome of the current project by covering additional , benefiting 185,000 households that consist of about 1.3 million people.
- Through this project, ADB will continue innovative approaches and good practices of the ongoing project including universal coverage with **100% household metering, full operation and maintenance cost recovery, and reducing nonrevenue water**.
- The **project will receive support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**, specifically for the integration of Citywide Inclusive Sanitation principles into the planning, design, implementation, operation, and maintenance of the sanitation subprojects.

NDB

BRICS Bank Approves Loan worth USD 741 million for Mumbai Metro & Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Rapid Rail

- The **New Development Bank (NDB)** of the **BRICS countries** has approved **USD 241 million loan** for **Mumbai Metro** and **USD 500 million** for the **Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) Project**.
- The Mumbai Metro Rail II Project aims to improve Mumbai's transport and traffic conditions by providing a modern metro system, featuring high-capacity, safe and comfortable mode of transport.
- It is used for the purpose of implementing a metro rail Line 6 with a length of about 14.47 km in the city of Mumbai.

- The loan would be used by the **National Capital Region Transport Corporation Limited (NCRTC)** for construction of a rapid rail corridor connecting the National Capital Territory of Delhi with the cities of Ghaziabad and Meerut located in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- The RRTS will have a total length of **82.15 km (68.03 km elevated and 14.12 km underground) with 25 stations.**
- It will have a design speed of **180 km per hour**, maximum operating speed of 160 km per hour and high-frequency operations, which will reduce the journey time from Delhi to Meerut to 60 minutes.

Other Banking News

NHB imposes penalty of Rs.1.5 lakh plus GST on HDFC

- Mortgage lender **Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC)** Ltd stated that NHB has levied a monetary penalty of **Rs.1.5 lakh** and GST on it for non-compliance with two provisions of the Housing Finance Companies Directions.
- The penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested under **Section 52(A)** of the National Housing Bank Act, 1987, it added.

Indian Bank launched Green-Tech Initiative "IB-eNote"

- **Indian Bank** has launched a green initiative named "**IB-eNote**" to enable a **total paperless working environment**. This tool enables processing and tracking of notes put up by various offices digitally.
- The bank for this initiative has customised SharePoint, one of the features of Microsoft Office. The Bank also launched '**Ind Guru**', an e-learning platform for its employees.
- The IB e-Note is a tool that enables processing and tracking of notes put up by various offices digitally. This green initiative is expected to improve Turnaround Time considerably, besides saving on cost of paper, printing and other administrative expenses. For this Bank has customised SharePoint, which is one of the features of Microsoft Office. Microsoft is a leading technology company that has pioneered many industry-firsts.
- Bank's endeavor is to achieve greater efficiencies by consistently empowering its biggest asset – human resources/ staff members. And with IB e-Note, Bank is taking another step in that direction.

Govt keeps interest rates on small savings schemes unchanged for Oct-Dec quarter

- The government kept the **interest rates on small savings schemes**, including **PPF and NSC**, unchanged for the **October-December quarter** amid moderating bank deposit rates.
- **Public Provident Fund (PPF) and National Savings Certificate (NSC)** will continue to carry an annual interest rate of **7.1 per cent and 6.8 per cent, respectively.**
- Interest rates for small savings schemes are **notified by the Finance Ministry** on a **quarterly basis.**
- Accordingly, the interest rate for the **five-year Senior Citizens Savings Scheme** has been retained at **7.4 per cent.** The interest on the senior citizens' scheme is **paid quarterly.** Interest rate on savings deposits has been retained at 4 per cent annually.
- The girl child savings scheme **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana** will offer **7.6 per cent** rate during the third quarter of the current fiscal.
- The annual interest rate on **Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP)** has been retained at **6.9 per cent.**
- **Term deposits of 1-5 years** will fetch an interest rate in the range of **5.5-6.7 per cent**, to be **paid quarterly**, while the interest rate on **five-year recurring deposit** is pegged at **5.8 per cent.**

NABARD launches refinance scheme for WASH programme, earmarks Rs 800 cr for FY'21

- **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** announced a special refinance facility to support the government's **Water, Sanitisation and Hygiene (WASH)** programme.
- An amount of **Rs 800 crore** has been earmarked for this purpose for the financial year 2020-21.
- NABARD will provide concessional refinance to all eligible financial institutions, including commercial banks, regional rural banks and cooperative banks, with a repayment period of **up to 36 months**.
- The support will be channelised to fund **WASH activities**, a thrust area eligible for **95 per cent refinance**. The bank credit will also be extended to **NBFCs-MFIs (Non-Banking Financial Companies-Microfinance Institutions) and other MFIs (Societies, Trusts, etc)**.
- The funding will support eligible activities such as construction, repairing, enlarging of household toilets or converting an existing toilet to an accessible family toilet, domestic water motor pump, bore well/ tube well, sumps, rainwater harvesting structures, community water purifier plants and waste-water systems.
- While the initiative will act as a boost to the **"Swachh Bharat Mission"**, it will also encourage rural youth, small and medium enterprises and SHGs (Self Help Groups) to undertake commercial activities in the sanitisation sector.

PNB launches financial inclusion initiative Gram Sampark Abhiyan

- **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** launched a financial inclusion and literacy initiative '**Gram Sampark Abhiyan**' to commemorate the **150th birth anniversary** of Mahatma Gandhi.
- The nationwide campaign was launched by Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar, PNB stated.
- The campaign is centred on four key themes — **digital, credit, social security and financial literacy** that will encapsulate various activities and prescribes the cherished theme of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', it stated.
- Upon commencement, PNB's 3,930 rural and 2,752 semi-urban branches will aim to reach 526 districts during the campaign, with two camps per branch every month, it stated.
- This campaign will culminate on December 31, 2020 covering 526 districts in 24 states, including Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Odisha, Manipur, Tripura and Telangana.

Indian Bank's Kisan credit card loan for TN fishermen

- **Indian Bank** has introduced a **Kisan credit card loan scheme** for fishermen in Tamil Nadu. Under this scheme, Kisan credit card loans of up to **Rs.2 lakh** as working capital with low-interest rate will be provided.
- Fishermen can submit the application through the Department of Fisheries, along with details of the mechanised boat.
- The features of the scheme include the availability of revolving credit up to Rs.2 lakh, 7 per cent interest rate, interest subvention of 3 per cent for those who repay the loan within a period of one year. The loan can be renewed once in a year. There is no restriction on the number of credit and debit transactions.
- This loan will be provided under Mudra scheme. Borrowers will get Rupay Kisan Credit Card and beneficiaries can use the card to withdraw money from ATMs, BC (banking correspondent) points, and also make purchase through merchant POS.

Indian Bank launches its first Customer Acquisition & Processing Centre in Chennai

- Chennai-headquartered public sector lender **Indian Bank** opened its **first centralised Customer Acquisition & Processing Centre (CAPC)** in Chennai.

- Its branches in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry will be brought under CAPC before December 2020 and other branches across the country will be brought under the CAPCs in a phased manner, stated Executive Director of the Bank MK Bhattacharya, who inaugurated the CAPC.
- Over the next 30 days, 40 branches in Chennai will be brought under CAPC.
- He stated the account opening process at branch is a very critical, sensitive and time bound exercise. Regulators expect banks to have a consolidated view of customers and their transactions across businesses and jurisdictions.
- Capturing accurate data at the time of customer on-boarding is of crucial importance for reducing duplication of work, risk profiling of customers, data accuracy for MIS. The accounts opened with due diligence reduces the risk of non-compliance from the regulator's point of view, he added.

BFSL, ICSI launch co-branded credit card for Company Secretaries

- **BOB Financial Solutions Ltd (BFSL)**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bank of Baroda (BoB), and **the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI)**, have launched an exclusive co-branded credit card for **Company Secretaries (CS)**.
- The **BoB-ICSI Diamond credit card** will bring exclusive benefits and conveniences to Company Secretaries, who are influencers and opinion leaders in their own right, and are contributing in building a modern and Atmanirbhar (self-reliant) India, BFSL stated.
- The card will offer benefits and conveniences, including 12 free domestic lounge visits, 5X rewards on online spends and utility payments to activation, frequency and milestone-based rewards, and exclusive insurance benefits, it added.
- BFSL (formerly known as Bobcards Limited) is a Non-Banking Financial Company. It was established in 1994. The company's primary business is credit cards and merchant acquiring.

Reliance General partners SatSure Analytics for crop insurance business

- **Reliance General Insurance** stated it has partnered with **SatSure** for **satellite-based crop monitoring and predictive analytics support** to better risk management and improve efficiency of its crop insurance business operations.
- As part of the partnership, RGICL will supply extensive ground observation data and generate timely reports through SatSure Analytics' SAGE platform, combining the analysis of Earth Observation data, the company stated.
- It will help address the key areas of crop health, soil moisture, crop sown area, crop yield estimation and crop loss estimation, the company added.
- The insurer stated it is in 4th year of successful execution of its crop insurance business and has always relied on technology to strengthen its capabilities. RGICL is a **100 per cent** subsidiary of Reliance Capital.

ICICI Bank offers debit card to borrowers availing Loan Against Securities

- **ICICI Bank** has introduced a **debit card facility** for those **borrowers** who are availing the **Loan Against Securities (LAS) from the Bank**. The card is available on the **Visa platform**.
- It can be used by customers across all domestic merchant establishments to make seamless POS and online transactions like payments on e-commerce portals among others, using their sanctioned LAS amount.
- The ICICI Bank is the first bank in the country to launch the facility after the RBI allowing banks to issue electronic cards to customers who avail an OD facility, which is of the nature of a personal loan with no specific end-use restriction.
- Customers get a digital debit card within one business day of availing LAS, which can be accessed on the Bank's mobile app **iMobile**.

Key benefits of the debit card include:

- Transaction limit: The card offers a maximum daily transaction limit of Rs. 3 lakh each for POS and online transactions.
- Digital card: The Bank provides a digital card to customers, which is made available on iMobile app within one business day.
- Automatic renewal: The card is automatically renewed upon renewal of the LAS account.

Sebi introduces very high risk category in mutual fund schemes

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi)** has introduced detailed guidelines for determining the place of a mutual fund on its **risk o meter tool**.
- The new system introduces a fresh category of '**very high**' risk. It replaces the old model based simply on a scheme's category without adequately considering its actual portfolio.
- The circular goes into effect on **1st Jan 2021**.
- Mutual Funds have to update the riskometer on a monthly basis on their websites and the AMFI website, within 10 days from the end of the month. In case of a change in riskometer position, they have to send out communications to investors. Mutual Funds also have to publish a history of riskometer changes every year.
- Separately, Sebi introduced labelling norms for the dividend options of mutual funds which will come into effect from **1st April 2021**. Under the new norms, mutual funds will have to rename dividend options as income distribution cum capital withdrawal.
- Under the new riskometer, there are **six categories of risk**, going from low to very high.

FM launches Indian Bank's business mentoring programme for MSMEs

- **Indian Bank** has come out with '**MSME Prerana**', an **online Business Mentoring Programme** for MSMEs. The bank says it is the first-of-its-kind initiative by a bank in the country for the (MSME) sector.
- The initiative was formally launched by Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs, **Nirmala Sitharaman**, at the bank's headquarters in Chennai.
- MSME Prerana is for empowering entrepreneurs through skill development and capacity building workshops in the local language. The programme is in collaboration with **Poornatha & Co**, a firm that designs Entrepreneurial Development Programmes in vernacular using online web-based interactive sessions and case studies, according to a statement.
- On successful completion, all participants would get a certificate, issued jointly by Indian Bank, Poornatha & Co and **MADE (Michigan Academy for Developing Entrepreneurs), US**.
- MSME Prerana is our effort to bridge this gap in the skill sets – it is a Business Mentoring Programme that gives inputs in simple terms (no jargon) and in the local vernacular. The objective is to equip the entrepreneurs with business skills as well as communication & HR.
- The first two programmes will be in Tamil for the Coimbatore clusters of Indian Bank, then it will be scaled up across the country in Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali and Gujarati and work is already underway for this.

HDFC Bank partners with Apollo Hospitals for holistic healthcare solution

- **HDFC Bank and Apollo Hospitals** have joined hands to launch **The HealthyLife Programme**, a holistic healthcare solution which makes healthy living accessible and affordable on Apollo's digital platform, Apollo 24|7.
- Through which its customers can avail **unsecured loans of up to Rs 40 lakh** to pay for medical expenses incurred at the healthcare chain.

- The loans will be disbursed almost instantly as and when a need for money arises, and the hospital patients who are customers of HDFC Bank will also receive preferential treatment.

Chqbook launches India's first 'Financial Control Center' on mobile to empower 60 million small business owners

- **Chqbook, India's first Neobank** for small business owners like kiranas, merchants, chemists, and others running proprietorships, announced the launch of its new mobile platform. With this launch, Chqbook brings world-class financial services to a massive underserved segment.
- Chqbook's launch is the first in India to offer the power of a financial control centre in the hands of the busy 60 million small business owners, as they emerge from the effects of the pandemic. It brings together banking, lending, khata, insurance, and rewards.
- Positioned as the '**Financial Control Center**' for India's 60 million small business owners, **Chqbook's mobile app** will place the power of managing day-to-day financial requirements as well as access to other financial products in their hands and on-demand, helping to save valuable time, effort, and money as they grow their business.
- These small business owners will be able to use the Chqbook current account for daily transactions, apply for short-term and long-term business loans, secure their business, life, and health while benefiting from its unique, free bookkeeping service - **Chqbook Khata**; which manages suppliers and orders with ease, all in one place. Transactions across these services are powered by an industry-first rewards system specially designed for small business owners.

RTGS to be available 24x7 from December

- The Reserve Bank of India announced that the **Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS)**, which is used for large value fund transfers, will be available round the clock from December this year.
- At present, RTGS, which has a minimum fund transfer of **Rs.2 lakh**, is available for customers from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm on all working days of a week (except second and fourth Saturdays of the month).
- "With this, India will be one of the very few countries globally with a **24x7x365** large value real time payment system," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das stated.
- In December last year, the National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) system was made available on a 24x7x365 basis.
- Meanwhile, in another measure aimed at easing digital payments, the RBI also announced that it has been decided to grant authorisation for all **Payment Service Operators (PSOs)** – new applicants as well as existing players, on a perpetual basis, subject to certain conditions.
- This will "reduce licensing uncertainties and enable PSOs to focus on their business and optimise utilisation of scarce regulatory resources," it noted.
- Authorisation (including renewal of authorisation) of such PSOs has been largely for specified periods up to five years.

LIC Housing launches 'Project RED' to improve efficiencies

- **LIC Housing Finance Ltd (LICHFL)** launched "**Project RED**" (Reimagining Excellence through Digital transformation) to improve efficiencies at every level of the organisation.
- Project RED aims to create value across the entire spectrum of stakeholders that includes employees, shareholders, business associates, existing and potential customers of LICHFL, as per the housing finance company's statement.
- To be implemented over the next 21 months, the company stated the initiative is expected to bring transformational changes by organically linking LICHFL's work culture, strengthening processes across all verticals, deepen customer engagement and adopting the best-in-class technology to build capacity.

- LICHFL has engaged Boston Consulting Group as its consultant for this project and will be setting up a high-level Project Implementation Group which will approve and monitor capacity building plans of every constituent in the company, it added.

Axis Bank and Vistara strengthen partnership to launch a co-branded forex card

- **Axis Bank**, India's third largest private sector bank, strengthens its partnership with **Vistara**, India's finest full-service carrier, as they launch a **co-branded forex card** – '**Axis Bank Club Vistara Forex Card**'. This is also the first-ever collaboration by a bank and an Indian airline for a co-branded forex card.
- A multicurrency forex card that can load up to 16 currencies.
- Safety of emergency assistance services - Emergency cash, loss of passport assistance through TripAssist and insurance cover of up to Rs. 3.00 lakhs.
- Additional features - Tap&Pay, easy tracking of balance, reload on the go, temporary block and unblock facility.
- Benefit of locked-in exchange rates.

Axis Bank collaborates with Google Pay, Visa to launch a new ACE Credit card

- **Axis Bank** announced the launch of its **ACE Credit Card** in India in collaboration with **Google Pay and Visa**.
- The card meant to help with digital payments. From application to issuance, with the **entire user journey** for the credit card application **will be done digitally**.
- For essential use cases, including mobile recharges and bill payments made via Google Pay, users can earn a **cashback of 5 per cent**. The company is also offering 4 per cent-5 per cent cashback for expenses on food ordering, online grocery delivery, cab rides for transactions made on partner merchant platforms such as Swiggy, Zomato, BigBasket, Grofers and Ola.
- There is also an unlimited 2 per cent cashback on other transactions (terms and conditions applied).
- The tokenization feature enabled in partnership with Visa will allow Google Pay users to use their ACE Credit Card to make payments through a secure digital token attached to their phone without having to physically share their card details
- A joining fee of Rs.499 which is applicable from the second year of use will be waived for all users who apply for the card in 2020. In 2021, joining fee will be reversed if spends exceed Rs.10,000 within 45 days of issuance, the bank said. The annual fee of Rs.499 will also be waived off if for users who reach Rs.2 lakh spends in the year.

Exim Bank extends \$400 mn soft loan to Maldives for connectivity project

- The **Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank)** on behalf of the **Government of India** has extended a **Line of Credit (LoC) of USD 400 million** for undertaking Greater Male's connectivity project in **Maldives**.
- The loan agreement was inked in Male between Exim Bank General Manager Nirmal Ved and Maldives' Finance Minister Ibrahim Ameer.
- The soft loans to Maldives have funded connectivity, water, sewerage projects, Addu Development Project, an international cricket stadium, Gulhifalhu port, Hanimaadhoo airport and road construction work.
- LoCs or soft loans are concessional loans that are offered at cheap rates.

Paytm Payment Gateway launches same-day bank settlement

- **Paytm**, announced the launch of **same-day settlement facility** for fund transfers on its payment gateway service.
- "This will help business partners settle money transfers anytime in their bank account on the same day of receiving payment, without waiting for the next day," it stated.

- The feature can be accessed from Paytm Merchant Dashboard or Paytm for Business app. The minimum amount that can be transferred is Rs.50, and the maximum amount is **Rs.2 lakh** in a single transfer request.

Exim Bank's Government of India supported Line of Credit (LoC) of USD 310 million to the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe

- **Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank)** supported **Line of Credit (LoC)** of **USD 310 million** for the purpose of financing repowering of **Hwange Thermal Power Station** in the **Republic of Zimbabwe**.
- Out of the total credit by Exim Bank under the agreement, goods, works and services of the value of at least 75 per cent of the contract price shall be supplied by the seller from India, and the remaining 25 per cent of goods and services may be procured by the seller for the purpose of the eligible contract from outside India.
- The Agreement under the LoC is effective from September 30, 2020. Under the LoC, the terminal utilization period is 60 months after the scheduled completion date of the project.

Vivifi India Finance launches UPI-based credit option FlexPay

- **Vivifi India Finance**, a Hyderabad-based non-bank lender, has launched **FlexPay**, a payment option that offers credit using the **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**.
- FlexPay will enable customers to use a line of credit when they do not have funds available in their bank accounts or virtual wallets.
- The product facilitates offline purchases by scanning any UPI QR code or a UPI ID to salaried and self-employed individuals.

IKEA partners Mastercard, Citi to launch Family Credit Card

- **IKEA**, the Swedish home furnishings major, has joined hands with the **Citibank India** and **Mastercard** to launch '**IKEA Family Credit Card by Citi**' seeking to make acquisition of home furnishings more affordable for its diverse customers.
- This card provides instant in-store card bookings, direct payments via **Bharat QR**, accelerated reward points and attractive EMIs. Furthermore, the card will also offer reward points on all purchases with instant reward redemption at IKEA.
- The IKEA Family Credit Card by Citi will be available to IKEA Family members at 'zero joining fee and zero annual fee' and can be used for purchases made on IKEA's online and offline stores, or anywhere in the world that accepts credit cards.
- Together with Citi, IKEA will offer an affordable EMI option for the customers that extends from 03 to 48 months, allowing even more flexibility.

EarlySalary launches zero-touch digital card

- **Fintech lenders** are rolling out innovative credit options for consumers amidst the Covid-19 pandemic and upcoming festival season.
- Consumer lending platform **EarlySalary** launched a **zero-touch digital card** that provides instant access for salaried professionals to make instant purchases across thousands of merchants across India.
- **Called Salary Card**, it is powered by **RuPay** and allows consumers to set up a dynamic credit limit for their various spending requirements.
- "The rise of zero-touch experience and the increasing credit demand, even from small towns and villages have inspired us to launch the Salary Card," stated Akshay Mehrotra, CEO and Co-Founder, EarlySalary.
- Earlier this month, the company had also introduced the **EarlySalary Credit Suite** which aims to provide a one-stop credit solution to salaried individuals.

Flipkart-owned PhonePe launches car, bike insurance in association with Bajaj Allianz General Insurance

- Flipkart-owned **PhonePe** launched **car and bike insurance products** on its platform in association with **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance**.
- PhonePe users can also customise their car insurance plan based on their needs with a range of value-added offerings such as zero depreciation, 24X7 roadside assistance, and engine protection among others.
- With this launch, over 230 million registered PhonePe users can now insure their vehicles seamlessly in under 2 minutes, without the need for any documents to be uploaded before the purchase, and also view their policy documents instantly on the app

IRDAI asks life insurers to launch 'Saral Jeevan Bima' scheme by Jan 1

- Regulator **IRDAI** asked life insurance companies to launch a standard term insurance policy '**Saral Jeevan Bima**' by **January 1, 2021** to help customers take informed decisions.
- The **Saral Jeevan Bima** will be a **pure term life insurance product** that can be purchased by people in the age group of **18 to 65 years** and will have a **policy term of 4 to 40 years**, guidelines issued by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- The sum assured for the term life insurance policy will range **from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 25 lakh** (in multiples of Rs 50,000).

Axis Mutual Fund launches banking ETF

- **Axis Mutual Fund** has launched a **new fund offer – Axis Banking ETF (Exchange Traded Fund)**
- The new fund offers will be open for subscription between October 16 and 29.
- The ETF offers investors an opportunity to invest in the biggest banks. **Passive funds** are designed to track the performance of an index. They achieve this by replicating the portfolio of the underlying index.
- Axis Banking ETF is designed to track the performance of the 12 largest banks listed on the NSE. Only banking stocks that are allowed to trade in F&O segment are eligible to be constituent of the index. Currently, the index has 83.3 per cent exposure to private banks and 11.7 per cent to PSU banks.

Jana Bank to be sponsor bank for Ashoknagar Co-operative Bank

- **Jana Small Finance Bank**, a Bengaluru-based small finance bank (SFB), **has partnered** with **Ashoknagar Co-operative Bank Limited** under the bank **sponsorship programme**.
- With this, Jana Bank has become the **first SFB** to go live under the sponsorship programme.
- Recently, the **RBI permitted co-operative banks** that are **Core Banking Solution (CBS)-enabled**, to issue ATM cards/ATM-cum-debit cards in a tie-up with a sponsor bank.
- Ashoknagar Co-operative Bank Limited, in association with Jana Small Finance Bank, can extend ATM, POS and e-commerce services to its customers.
- This association marks the fulfilment of Jana Bank's endeavour to promote a full suite of services to co-operative banks.

IDBI Bank launches banking services on WhatsApp

- **IDBI Bank** announced the launch of **banking services** on **WhatsApp**. The WhatsApp Banking service is being offered through a dedicated WhatsApp verified number ensuring end-to-end encryption, the Bank stated.
- The facility will enable IDBI Bank customers to avail various essential services such as account balance information, last five transactions, request for a cheque book and an email statement, interest rates, as well as details of IDBI Bank branches/ATMs in the vicinity, to begin with.

Canara HSBC OBC Life Insurance launches Invest 4G plan with multiple saving options, protection cover

- **Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance** has launched a **new Unit Linked insurance plan (Ulip)** titled '**Invest 4G**'.
- It is an individual life insurance savings plan which can be customized as per the goals and changing requirements of the individual.
- This Unit Linked Individual Life Insurance cum Savings Plan provides a combination of Portfolio Management Options and flexibilities which gives choice to opt for protection suiting the demand for every individual as well as provide an opportunity to save for future goals.
- New "Invest4G" offers three options to the individuals: **Life Option, Care Option and Century Option**.
- **Life option** ensures financial protection to a family in case of the **customer's unfortunate demise**. **Care Option** provides **life coverage along with Premium Funding Benefit** and **Century Option** is a whole life option available for the policyholder **till the age of 100 years**.

Fino Payments Bank to add 300 more points at BPCL outlets in TN

- **Fino Payments Bank** is planning to **add another 300 points at BPCL outlets** to its existing 1,075 in **Tamil Nadu**, to help **truck drivers to get fleet cards** recharged by paying equivalent cash, without any hassles.
- Recharging the **Bharat Petroleum (BPCL) SmartFleet cards** that are used to pay for fuel has been a challenge to truck drivers for quite some time and in order to ease this discomfort.
- BPCL's SmartFleet is a unique fuel management programme designed for efficient, tech-savvy and cost conscious fleet owners.
- The digitised cash in the form of prepaid fleet cards allows drivers to make payments for fuel at BPCL outlets, which also completely frees BPCL from handling the cash given by the drivers.
- **Smartfleet program** is a first of its kind initiative in the country that **helps transporters manage their funds effectively**. The exclusive centre, opened in association with **Fino Payments Bank**, facilitates hassle free and instant recharge for Smartfleet customers.

SEBI constitutes committee for market data sharing

- **SEBI** has constituted a **Market Data Advisory Committee (MDAC) – a Standing Committee** - to recommend appropriate policy for access to securities market data, identify segment wise data perimeters, data needs and gaps, recommend data privacy and data access regulations applicable to market data.
- The committee is headed by **Madhabi Puri Buch, Whole Time Member, SEBI** and has CEOs of stock exchanges and depositories, representatives of various stakeholders and senior officials of SEBI as members.
- "SEBI's endeavour is to foster a "Data Culture" in the Indian Securities Market i.e. 'Data for Transparency', 'Data for Efficiency' and 'Data for Innovation' along with 'Respect for Data Privacy'. Thus, MDAC is part of SEBI's initiatives to make shareable data on the Indian securities market, available for researchers, policy makers, general public alike and to enhance the quality of such data. Some of the other initiatives taken by SEBI, through its Department of Economic and Policy Analysis (DEPA), include: SEBI Data Sharing Policy," SEBI stated.
- The Data Sharing Policy intends to facilitate access to data from SEBI to meet a variety of requirements, viz. to undertake Analytics projects, Research activities, etc. by various educational/research institutions and other regulators.

Paytm to introduce co-branded credit cards in India

- **Paytm** announced that it will be partnering with various card issuers to introduce **co-branded credit cards** for consumers. The company is aiming to issue two million cards in the **next 12–18 months**.

- Paytm announced that it is building '**Next Generation Credit Cards**' with various instant one-touch services including "changing of the security pin number, updating the address, blocking the card in case of loss or fraud prevention, issuance of a duplicate card and viewing outstanding credit-limit."
- Users will also be able to switch off the card for contactless payments or international transactions when not required to prevent fraudulent transactions.
- "Our credit card will provide insurance protection against fraudulent transactions to protect users' money," Paytm stated. Paytm's new digital service will also include a personalized spend analyzer to help cardholders keep track of and manage expenses.
- The fintech major further announced that it had digitised the entire credit card experience on its app. Consumers will be able to manage the entire process, from the application process to tracking and issuance of the credit card digitally.
- **Paytm** had launched its first co-branded credit card in May, in collaboration with Citigroup, called '**Paytm First.**' The company is now aiming at garner 10 per cent of the credit card market share in India, it stated.

Indian Bank launches credit scheme for start-ups in pact with IITMIC

- Public sector lender **Indian Bank** has introduced an initiative for funding start-ups, '**IND Spring Board**', in collaboration with the **IIT-Madras Incubation Cell (IITMIC)**.
- The Chennai-headquartered bank seeks to bridge the gap in funding for start-ups through this collaboration with IITMIC.
- Under the deal, IITMIC will refer start-ups with proven technology and established cash flows to the bank and also extend advisory to the bank on the business model. The bank will extend loans of up to **Rs.50 crore** to these start-ups for their working capital requirements or purchase of machinery, equipment.
- "IND Spring, the new model for financing start-ups, will be a game-changer in the banking industry, stated Panda.

Bank of Baroda ties up with Toyota Kirloskar Motor

- **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** has entered into a tie-up with **Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM)**, whereby the bank will be one of the **preferred financiers** for the entire range of vehicles sold by the latter.
- India's third-largest public sector bank, in a statement, stated that under the tie-up, customers can avail customised solutions such as high on-road funding of 90 per cent, long repayment period of 84 months, no prepayment or foreclosure charges.
- On the other hand, TKM dealers will benefit from 'digitised supply chain finance' with competitive interest rates.

IRDAI sets up panel to examine need for standard cyber liability insurance product

- The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai)** has **set up a panel** to explore possibility of a basic standard product structure to provide insurance cover for individuals and establishments **to manage their cyber risks**.
- The panel, **headed by P Umesh**, Consultant-Liability Insurance, has been asked to study various statutory provisions on information and cybersecurity, and to evaluate critical issues involving legal aspects of transactions in cyber space.
- It will also examine various types of incidents involving cybersecurity in the recent past and possible insurance coverage strategies for those, and the cyber liability insurance covers available in Indian market and in other developed jurisdictions.

- The nine-member panel has been asked to recommend the scope of the cyber liability insurance covers for the present context and for the medium term, and explore possibility of developing standard coverages, exclusions and optional extensions for various categories.

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- Under the deal, IITMIC will refer start-ups with proven technology and established cash flows to the bank and also extend advisory to the bank on the business model. The bank will extend loans of up to ₹50 crore to these start-ups for their working capital requirements or purchase of machinery, equipment.

CSB Bank partners with IIFL Finance for gold loan origination

- Private-sector lender **CSB Bank**, formerly Catholic Syrian Bank, has entered into a partnership with non-banking finance company, **IIFL Finance (IIFL)** for **sourcing and managing retail gold loan assets**.
- **IIFL**, acting as **Business Correspondent (BC)** of the bank, will source new business from markets where the Thrissur-based CSB Bank does not have an adequate branch network.
- IIFL would help CSB Bank penetrate the lower strata of customers and rural areas resulting in scaling up of the customer base.
- This arrangement would result in scaling up of the customer base.
- This partnership, which combines the strengths of the bank's balance sheet and NBFC's last-mile connect with customers, will enable the financial inclusion of under privileged customers in need of credit on reasonable terms.

SVC Bank launches rewards programme

- **SVC Bank (SVC Co-operative Bank)** stated it has tied up with **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** for a **rewards programme**.
- The SVC Rewards programme is designed to make banking experience more rewarding for its customers in the form of points earned upon use of SVC Bank Cards and digital solutions, the bank stated.
- These points can be then redeemed to purchase products and services across leading brands in electronics, home decor, fashion, lifestyle, sports and fitness and health and beauty, it stated.

BharatPe launches digital gold on its platform

- **BharatPe**, a leading merchant payment network, has announced the **launch of digital gold** on its platform. The launch of this new category of fintech product is in line with the company's commitment to offer the entire gamut of financial products to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).
- Through this latest offering, BharatPe's merchants will be able to buy and sell **99.5 per cent pure 24-carat gold**. Merchants can choose to buy in rupees or grams, any time of the day and from anywhere, by using the BharatPe app.
- To facilitate this, BharatPe has also partnered with **SafeGold**, a digital platform that allows customers to buy, sell and receive vaulted gold. SafeGold has appointed **IDBI Trusteeship Services** to protect the interest of merchants with regard to their gold purchases.

IndusInd Bank first bank to go live on RBI's 'Account Aggregator Framework'

- **IndusInd Bank** has gone live as a '**Financial Information Provider**' (FIP) under the new '**Account Aggregator Framework**' of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, making it the first bank in the country to do so.
- With this, customers can now avail a host of benefits such as viewing statements of their accounts, track deposits, plan investments (such as shares, mutual funds, Insurance, EPF, PPF), avail credit cards, etc. on a single window, thereby empowering them to take informed decisions pertaining to their finances.
- The initiative is a path breaking step taken by the RBI which will enable individuals as well as small and mid-sized businesses to avail services that will help them fulfill their financial requirements in a seamless way.
- The Account Aggregator framework is an important step towards that direction which will empower the customer to view as well as choose their preferred product & service from banks and other participating players.

The Account Aggregator system offers the following benefits to customers:

- Eliminates the existing process of physical document submission which is time consuming.
- Enables individuals and SME customers to share their financial information digitally with regulated financial institutions like banks, NBFC's among others, within a secure framework.
- Allows customers to have better control on financial information shared by providing his/her explicit consent before sharing the information.

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
Jana Small Finance Bank	Bengaluru	Ajay Kanwal
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
HDFC Bank	Mumbai	Sashidhar Jagdishan
Indian Bank	Chennai	Padmaja Chunduru
Axis Bank	Mumbai	Rakesh Makhija
State Bank of India	Mumbai	Dinesh Khara
Jammu & Kashmir bank	Srinagar	RK Chhibber
India Post Payments Bank	New Delhi	J Venkatramu
ICICI Bank	Mumbai	Sandeep Bakshi
SVC Bank	Mumbai	Ajit E. Venugopalan
CSB Bank	Thrissur	C.VR. Rajendran
BharatPe	New Delhi	Ashneer Grover
IndusInd Bank	Pune	Sumant Kathpalia

Punjab National Bank	New Delhi	S.S Mallikarjuna Rao
Bank of Baroda	Vadodara	Hasmukh Adhia
YES Bank	Mumbai	Prashant Kumar
BOB Financial Solutions Ltd	Mumbai	Pooja Karnani
Chqbook	Gurgaon	Vipul Sharma
Google Pay	California	Sundar Pichai
Visa	San Fransico	Alfred F Kelly Jr
LIC Housing Finance Ltd	Mumbai	Siddhartha Mohanty
Bank of India	Mumbai	Atanu kumar Das
Reliance General Insurance	Mumbai	Rakesh Jain
Export-Import Bank of India	Mumbai	David Rasquinha
Paytm	Noida	Vijay Shekhar Sharma
Small Industries Development Bank of India	Lucknow	Mohammad Mustafa
Bandhan Bank	Kolkata	Chandra Shekhar Ghosh
ICICI Securities	Mumbai	Vijay Chandok
Vistara	Gurugram	Leslie Thng
Vivifi India Finance	Hyderabad	Anil Pinapala
Mastercard	New York	Ajaypal Singh Banga
Citibank	New York	Michael Corbat
Securities and Exchange Board of India	Mumbai	Ajay Tyagi
Fino Payments Bank	Mumbai	Rishi Gupta
IDBI Bank	Mumbai	Rakesh Sharma
Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance	Gurugram	Anuj Mathur
National Housing Bank	New Delhi	Dakshita Das

Important Financial & Economy Affairs

Organization	GDP Rate (2020 – 21(FY21))
World Bank	- 9.6%
International Monetary Fund	-10.3% (CY 2020), - 8.8% (CY 2021)

World Bank projects India's GDP to contract 9.6% in FY21

- The World Bank projected India's gross domestic product (GDP) to plunge in **FY21** by **9.6%** revised down since its June forecast of 3.2% drop, reflecting the impact of the nationwide lockdown and the income shock experienced by households and small urban service firms.

- "However, there is substantial uncertainty related to the course and duration of the pandemic; the speed at which households and firm behavior will adjust to the lifting of lockdowns; and a possible new round of countercyclical fiscal policy," the World Bank stated in its latest South Asia Economic Focus report.
- While the government has signalled it is prepared to support the economy, there is no clarity about the timing or the extent of the next round of stimulus.
- The Indian economy contracted a record 23.9% in the June quarter, underlining the extent of economic damage brought about by the pandemic and the ensuing lockdown. Many forecasters now expect Indian economy to contract in double digits in FY21.

India's economy to shrink 10.3% in 2020, will register 8.8% growth in 2021: IMF

- **The Indian economy**, severely hit by the coronavirus pandemic, is projected to **contract by a massive 10.3 per cent this year**, report by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.
- However, India is likely to bounce back with an impressive **8.8 per cent growth rate in 2021**, thus regaining the position of the fastest growing emerging economy, **surpassing China's projected growth rate of 8.2 per cent**, the IMF said in its **latest 'World Economic Outlook' report**.
- **Global growth** would contract by **4.4 per cent this year** and bounce back to **5.2 per cent in 2021**.
- Last week, the **World bank** said **India's GDP** this fiscal is expected to contract by **9.6 per cent**.

Global trade likely to fall by 7 to 9% in 2020: UNCTAD

- The **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development** has stated that the value of global trade is set to fall by **seven to nine per cent in 2020** from the previous year.
- The report added that if the pandemic resurges in coming months, that could lead to a deteriorating environment for policy-makers and sudden increase in trade restrictive policies.
- Meanwhile, China's exports rebounded strongly in the third quarter after falling in the early months of the pandemic and have posted year-on-year growth rates of nearly 10 per cent.

FDI in India rises to over 358 billion during 2014-20: FM Nirmala Sitharaman

- The government has stated that total **Foreign Direct Investment- FDI inflow** grew by **55 per cent** from **231.37 billion dollar** in 2008 to 2014 to over 358 billion dollar in 2014 to 2020.
- Ministry of Commerce and Industry in a statement stated, FDI equity inflow also increased by 57 per cent from around 160 billion dollar during 2008-14 to over 252 billion dollar in 2014-2020. The Ministry stated, during April to August this year, total FDI inflow of **35.73 billion** is received.
- It is the highest ever for first 5 months of a financial year and 13 per cent higher as compared to first five months of 2019-20.
- It stated, FDI is a major driver of economic growth and an important source of non-debt finance for the economic development of India. It has been the endeavor of the Government to put in place an enabling and investor friendly FDI policy.

Remittances to India to fall by 9% to \$76 billion in 2020 due to COVID-19: World Bank

- **The World Bank** said **remittances to India** would **fall this year** by **nine per cent to \$76 billion** due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and global economic recession.
- **India** followed by **China, Mexico, the Philippines, and Egypt** continue to be the **top five countries in 2020 to receive foreign remittances**.

- Remittance flows to low and middle-income countries (LMICs) are projected to fall by 7 per cent to \$508 billion in 2020, followed by a further decline of 7.5 per cent to \$470 billion in 2021.
- **Remittances to South Asia** are projected to decline by around four per cent in 2020 to **\$1 35 billion**.
- The declines in 2020 and 2021 will affect all regions, with the steepest drop expected in Europe and Central Asia (by 16 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively), followed by East Asia and the Pacific (11 per cent and 4 per cent), the Middle East and North Africa (both 8 per cent), Sub-Saharan Africa (9 per cent and 6 per cent), South Asia (4 per cent and 11 per cent), and Latin America and the Caribbean (0.2 per cent and 8 per cent).

Important Business News

Google India launches campaign to drive demand for small businesses

- **Google India** announced the launch of its **nationwide campaign** to help support **small businesses and drive demand** through customer support.
- The tech giant's "**Make Small Strong**" campaign is meant to "rally support from the citizens for small businesses by buying locally, leaving reviews and ratings and promoting their favourite retailers on social media to help generate demand for these businesses, stated Shalini Girish, Customer Solutions Director at Google India.
- The new initiative is based on feedback from SMBs as part of a research by Google in collaboration with **Kantar**. According to the report, 5 out of 10 businesses are engaging customers through digital channels. However, 92 per cent of businesses overall are facing customer-related challenges, revenue loss due to low demand and payment of fixed costs.
- Google India, as part of its ongoing initiatives for SMBs, also announced new partnerships with Zoho, Instamojo, Dunzo and Swiggy.
- As part of the partnership, Zoho is offering a free three-month subscription for three of its services, Zoho Sites, Zoho Inventory and Zoho Commerce. The offer is valid until March 31, 2021.
- Instamojo, as part of its partnership, will offer a six-month free subscription to its 'Premium Online Store Solution'.

Reliance Industries' Retail Arm To Get Rs. 7,350 Crore Investment From GIC, TPG Capital

- Mukesh Ambani-led oil-to-telecoms conglomerate Reliance Industries stated that **Singapore's sovereign wealth fund GIC** and global private equity firm **TPG Capital** invested a combined **Rs. 7,350 crore (about \$1 billion)** in its retail unit.
- Reliance Industries, controlled by Asia's richest man Mr Ambani, has secured more than \$2 billion in investments from global investors, including KKR & Co, Abu Dhabi state fund Mubadala and Silver Lake Partners, in Reliance Retail Ventures over the past few months.
- GIC will invest **Rs. 5,512 crore** for a **1.22 per cent** stake, while TPG Capital Management will invest **Rs. 1,838 crore** to own a **0.41 per cent** equity stake in the retail arm, the company stated.
- The investments in Reliance Retail give the company a pre-money equity value of Rs. 4.285 lakh crore (\$58.47 billion), Reliance Industries stated.
- This is TPG Capital's second investment in Reliance. In June, the firm invested \$598 million in Reliance's digital unit Jio Platforms.

Puducherry airport turns into AAI's first 100% solar-powered airport

- **Puducherry airport** has developed into the **Airports Authority of India's (AAI) first fully solar-powered airport** within the nation with the commissioning of **500KWp ground-mounted solar energy plant** at a value of **Rs 2.8 crore**.

- The solar energy plant, which has 1,540 extremely environment friendly polycrystalline photo voltaic PV panels, generates a mean 2,000 models of vitality per day.
- The AAI had already begun the transition to renewable vitality in southern regional airports with the set up of its **first solar energy plant of 750-KWp** capability at **Kozhikode airport in 2016**.
- Puducherry airport turned the primary “**completely power-neutral**” airport assembly its whole energy requirement by the solar energy plant.

TCS Becomes Second Indian Firm To Cross Rs 10 Lakh Crore Market Cap

- **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** became the second Indian IT Indian firm after **Reliance Industries** to scale a **market cap** of more than **Rs 10 lakh crore**. Market cap of TCS at the time of close stood at **Rs 10.15 lakh crore**.
- **Reliance Industries Limited** was the **first Indian** firm to have crossed the Rs 10 lakh crore market valuation mark. Its market valuation currently stands at Rs 14.95 lakh crore - the highest for any listed company in the country.
- TCS will consider a buyback of shares on October 7, when the company board meets for the second quarter results, India's largest IT services company stated.
- The firm is the first technology company to announce buyback of its shares in the current fiscal. TCS had cash reserves of Rs 73,993 crore in March 2020. The company also stated in another filing that it would provide Rs 1,218 crore as an exceptional item in the upcoming earnings in relation to the EPIC Systems Corporation case TCS. The case relates to allegations of intellectual property theft against TCS is ongoing.

IBM to set up centre of excellence for AI with government e-marketplace

- **IBM Corp.** will be setting up an **artificial intelligence (AI)Centre of Excellence (CoE)** in partnership with the **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)**, CEO Arvind Krishna stated at an AI Summit titled Responsible AI for Social Empowerment (RAISE 2020).
- In India, IBM is collaborating with the local government in the state of **Karnataka** and **NITI Aayog** to deploy its precision agriculture solutions, which combine AI and weather data to help farmers make better decisions. “The platform’s critical capabilities were developed by our teams in India,” Krishna stated.
- IBM is also investing to address the “massive” skills shortage in AI. “Through the IBM STEM for girls initiative, we are re teaching 80,000 girls across India how to code and build AI models. Our goal is to reach 200,000 students by 2022,” Krishna stated.
- Earlier in July, IBM collaborated with the **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** to integrate AI into the high school curriculum of 200 schools across India.

India’s first B2B Crypto trading exchange DigitX launched

- **DigitX**, country’s **firstBusiness-to-Business (B2B) Crypto trading exchange** has commenced its trading operations. In a highly potential yet challenging market, DigitX aims to deliver **transparency and security** with its Platform armed with features to bring about a much-needed trust and confidence for the investors and traders of Crypto.
- This crypto trading exchange brings along a network of pre-verified, trained and closely monitored Trusted Links(members) to ensure a secure Crypto trading ecosystem. Investors can choose the Trusted Link closest to them, which are thoroughly scrutinized and are extensively trained for the completion of processes with near-nil errors and with complete satisfaction of Investors.
- DigitX combines the power of technology, proven trade models and best regulatory practices to lead a change in people’s involvement in the digital economy of the future.

Abu Dhabi Investment Authority invests Rs 5,512.5 crore in Reliance Retail for 1.2 % stake

- **Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd**, run by India's richest man Mukesh Ambani, raised **Rs 5,512.50 crore** from **Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA)**, taking the total fundraise to Rs 37,710 crore.
- ADIA's investment will translate into a **1.20 per cent equity stake**.
- With this investment, RRVL has raised Rs 37,710 crore from leading global investors including **Silver Lake, KKR, General Atlantic, Mubadala, GIC, TPG and ADIA** in less than four weeks.
- Reliance Industries has sold an **8.48 per cent stake** in the retail unit for a total of Rs 37,710 crore.

BharatPe Launches Brand Campaign With Record 11 Cricket Stars As Brand Ambassadors

- **BharatPe** has announced the launch of its high impact TV campaign starring '**Team BharatPe**' with **11 Cricket stars**. The TVC series has been directed by ace Bollywood director, Puneet Malhotra, and communicates the message '**Hum Hai Team BharatPe – Jo Desh Ke Har Dukandaar Ke Saath Hai Khade**'.
- This is the first time that a new age FinTech company has rolled out a **TV campaign** with 11 top cricket stars as its brand ambassadors. Team BharatPe includes Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, KL Rahul, Mohammed Shami, Ravindra Jadeja, Suresh Raina, Shreyas Iyer, Prithvi Shaw, Sanju Samson, Yuzvendra Chahal, and Shubhman Gill.
- The company is set to redefine the financial services landscape with its 4 TV advertisements designed to drive awareness around BharatPe's range of financial products for small shop owners across India, including QR based payment acceptance, no collateral loans, card payment machine with 0% transaction fee, and the exciting loyalty program.

Amazon Pay, Uber collaborate to push digital payments in India

- **Amazon Pay**, an online payment processing service, and **Uber**, a technology company that offers vehicles for hire, announced a partnership that will integrate Amazon Pay as a payment option on the **Uber app**.
- According to the joint official release, this partnership aims at enabling millions of customers to make contactless, safe, and secure payments for their Uber rides.
- The report stated that the partnership will bring contactless payments to more Indians by ensuring social distancing measures.
- The strategic association will also focus on providing users one-click payment experience with cashback offers to drive adoption and further strengthen the digital payments ecosystem.
- To facilitate their Uber trip, customers will need to link their Amazon Pay account to Uber by clicking on the 'Payments' icon and choosing Amazon Pay.
- In order to make the payment process as seamless as possible, the ride fare for any subsequent Uber trips will be automatically paid from their Amazon Pay balance after the completion of a trip.

Microsoft collaborates with AICTE to upskill students, educators in next-gen tech

- **Microsoft** announced that it has partnered with the Government of India's **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)** to provide online course modules to students across the country.
- The tech giant will offer courses to help "learners and educators with future-ready skills." It will offer over 1,500 course modules to students and educators free of cost through AICTE's e-learning portal, ELIS.
- The tech giant has also integrated its learning resource centre, Microsoft Learn, with the ELIS platform "to provide access to personalised learning paths and resources for students, covering a broad range of technologies including AI, IoT, data science and cloud computing, among others."
- Educators can also access relevant online learning resources and instructor-led training material through the Microsoft Learn for Educators platform available through the collaboration. Eligible educators and faculty members

can access Microsoft's 'ready-to-teach' curriculum and teaching materials and can get industry-recognised Microsoft certifications.

BBNL Taps Hughes India to Connect 5,000 Panchayats with Satellite Broadband

- **Hughes Communications India Private Limited ('Hughes India')**, a majority-owned subsidiary of **Hughes Network Systems, LLC (HUGHES)**, the global enabler in broadband satellite networks and services, has announced its selection by **Bharat Broadband Nigam Limited (BBNL)** and **Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd.(TCIL)** to provide high-speed satellite connectivity to 5,000 remote gram panchayats.
- Hughes India will enable Internet service for each gram panchayat using capacity from **ISRO's GSAT-19 and GSAT-11 satellites** with the Hughes **JUPITER™System**, the de facto standard for satellite broadband implementations, in use on more than 40 satellites worldwide.
- The awards are part of the government's flagship **BharatNet Programme** to provide broadband connectivity to all 250,000 gram panchayats throughout India.

TCS surpasses Accenture to become most-valuable IT services firm globally

- **Tata Consultancy Services** became the **world's most valuable IT services company**, overtaking **Accenture** in market capitalisation, with **IBM** at third place. The tables have turned since 2018, when IBM was in first place, Accenture second and TCS third.
- **TCS** is the second most valued company across sectors in India, just behind Reliance Industries. Earlier this week, TCS also became the second Indian to cross a market capitalisation of **Rs 10 lakh crore**.
- TCS has seen its market cap go by more than 20% in just the last two weeks, on the back of its Q2 results, Rs 16,000 crore share buyback and its outlook.
- "TCS impressed with revenue growth of 4.8 per cent quarter-on-quarter. Broad-based growth across geographies and verticals indicates healthy recovery across segments," stated a report by Motilal Oswal Research.

Mastercard partners Indian start-up Signzy for global rollout of Video KYC

- **Mastercard**, a global technology company in the payments industry, has partnered with **Signzy, a RegTech startup** based in India, for global rollout of Signzy's **video-based KYC** (Know Your Customer) solution for its banking customers.
- With this partnership, Mastercard customers will benefit from a completely paperless, remote and secure onboarding solution for end-users. It maybe recalled that Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had in January this year amended its KYC norms allowing banks and other lending institutions regulated by it to use Video based **Customer Identification Process (V-CIP)**, a move which will help them onboard customers.
- **Signzy's Video KYC solution** will enable end-users to complete and submit their KYC application from the safety and security of their homes. This would be 99 per cent faster than the traditional paper-based KYC process. Signzy is an Artificial Intelligence-powered Robotic Process Automation platform for financial services.

PepsiCo to set up greenfield potato chips production unit in UP with investment of Rs. 814 crore

- The multi-national food and beverage major **PepsiCo** is setting up a **greenfield potato chips production** unit in **Uttar Pradesh** with an investment of Rs. 814 crore.
- The unit is being set up in Kosi - Mathura on 35 acres of land provided by UP State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA).
- The unit, which is expected to commence commercial production by middle of the next year, will facilitate direct and indirect employment to about 1,500 patrons.

- Ahmed El Sheikh, the Chairman of PepsiCo India stated that the initial investment in this project was pegged at Rs. 500 crore which has been revised to Rs. 814 crore.
- Significantly, the raw material, potato will be procured through local sources which could change the fortune of potato growing farmers in central UP.
- MoU was signed by PepsiCo to set up this project at **UP Investors Summit-2018** and the project started with the arrangement of land at the ground breaking ceremony held in July 2019. This is the first time that PepsiCo is setting up a greenfield project in state itself.

Tech Mahindra signs agreement to form joint venture with Sumitomo Corp

- **Tech Mahindra** has signed an agreement with **Japan-based Sumitomo Corporation** for setting up a joint venture to provide engineering service to the automotive sector, a company official stated. Both the companies will hold an equal stake in the joint venture.
- "Japan is a strategic market for Tech Mahindra and we are delighted to partner with a globally diversified group like **Sumitomo Corporation**. The joint venture is subject to regulatory filings and approvals, and we will elaborate on the details of our plans post such approvals," Vivek Agarwal, Global Head, Enterprise Verticals Solutions and Portfolio Companies, Tech Mahindra told.
- Each of the joint venture partners will initially subscribe to 2,000 ordinary shares and contribute around 7 crore towards capital.

Nokia picked by NASA to build first cellular network on the Moon

- **Nokia Oyj** has been chosen by **NASA** to build the **first ever cellular network** on the moon.
- The partnership will create a path toward sustainable human presence on the lunar surface, and will result in the **first LTE/4G communications system in space**.
- Nokia's Bell Labs unit is planning to build what it describes as an ultra-compact, low-power, space-hardened, end-to-end LTE solution that will be available on the moon by **late 2022**.
- Nokia is working with Intuitive Machines to integrate the network into a lunar lander and deliver it to the surface of the moon, where it will self-configure.

Microsoft, Elon Musk's SpaceX tie up to woo space customers

- **Microsoft Corp** is partnering with billionaire entrepreneur **Elon Musk-led SpaceX** and others as it expands its **cloud-computing platform** into **space**, the software giant stated.
- The partnership would allow Microsoft to connect its **Azure cloud computing platform** to SpaceX's network of low-Earth orbiting satellites, offering the software company an edge in its battle with the rival cloud platform from **Jeff Bezos' Amazon.com Inc**.
- Microsoft in recent months has tested its Azure cloud with satellites in space, and in September unveiled its Azure Space venture, tapping into the demand for data-heavy space services.
- The services include "disaster prediction and tracking, increased visibility of supply chains and economic activity, and many others," the company has stated in US regulatory filings.
- SpaceX, known for its reusable rockets and astronaut capsules, is ramping up satellite production for Starlink, a growing constellation of hundreds of internet-beaming satellites that Musk hopes will generate enough revenue to help fund SpaceX's interplanetary goals.
- Earlier this month, SpaceX won a **\$149-million contract** to build missile-tracking satellites for the Pentagon, its first government contract to build satellites.

UNDP and EIF partner to develop initiatives for implementation of SDGs and sustainable finance

- The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **European Investment Fund (EIF)** are joining forces to develop joint initiatives for sustainable finance and the implementation of **the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- EIF and UNDP have also agreed to explore cooperation opportunities in fields of common interest: Sustainable Development Goals, risk management, socio-economic and environmental impact assessments, as well as design and delivery of financial instruments and asset management services to support inclusive, private sector-led, growth.
- This MoU falls into the wider UNDP partnership with EIB Group (composed of the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund), which is essential to help countries to access and leverage COVID-19 response financing and better prevent future crises. Both organizations aim to jointly address global challenges and share knowledge with each other in areas such as migration, climate change, and crisis response.
- Building on the European Investment Bank's – UNDP Indicative Joint Action Plan and capitalizing on successful initial institutional collaboration, EIF would leverage UNDP's socio-economic assessments and seek support from UNDP in the context of embedding the SDGs into the deployment of financial instruments. At the same time, UNDP seeks to benefit from EIF's unique experience in the context of structuring, deploying, and managing financial instruments and the related risks.

India and US to hold two plus two Ministerial Dialogue on Oct 27

- External Affairs Ministry stated **the third India-US 22 Ministerial Dialogue** to be held on **27th October** will entail a comprehensive discussion on cross-cutting bilateral issues of mutual interest. India will be hosting the Dialogue in **New Delhi**.
- The spokesperson stated, the two leaders will also be meeting NSA Ajit Doval and there will be a joint call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The spokesperson stated India and the US have comprehensive global strategic partnership which includes political, security, defence, economic, commercial, technology and people to people contact.
- The first two 22 Ministerial dialogues were held in New Delhi in September 2018 and in Washington DC in December 2019. The agenda for the third dialogue will cover all bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.

Nippon Life Invests in World Bank Sustainable Development Bonds and Highlights Support for Nutrition

- The **World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, IBRD, Aaa/AAA)** issued a **15-year AU\$150 million Sustainable Development Bond**, while for the first time, highlighting the importance of good nutrition to build human capital. **Nippon Life Insurance Company** was the sole investor in this transaction.
- World Bank bonds support the financing of sustainable development projects and programs in member countries across a range of sectors in line with its mission to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity.
- This includes US\$4.9 billion in projects, of which US\$1 billion are in IBRD countries, helping to improve nutrition. Good nutrition is key to unlocking human capital and improving economic growth as better nourished children achieve greater learning outcomes, better earnings in adulthood and are therefore more likely to escape from poverty when they grow up.

ACKO Partners With Finserv MARKETS To Offer Car And Bike Insurance

- India's first and fastest-growing wholly digital general insurance provider, **ACKO** has partnered with **Finserv MARKETS**, a leading fintech aggregator, for offering **two and four-wheeler insurance policies**.
- Customers can now buy ACKO Insurance for their car or bike on the Finserv MARKETS platform by providing basic details.

- In partnership with Finserv MARKETS, ACKO has made the insurance buying experience transparent, intuitive and effortless. ACKO offers value added services like hassle-free claims, zero paperwork, one-hour pick-up, 3-day assured claim servicing and 1-year repair warranty - in select cities.
- This is coupled with the option for instant cash settlements for low value claims, makes it extremely beneficial for customers.
- Finserv MARKETS has been launched by **Bajaj Finserv Direct Limited**, a subsidiary of **Bajaj Finserv**. It is a one-stop digital marketplace that helps consumers compare and choose from a wide range of financial products. It has partnered with leading financial providers in the Lending, Insurance, Investments and Payments space to provide 500+ financial and lifestyle products, all in one place.

BPCL ties up with Fino Payments Bank for recharging truck drivers' fleet cards

- The association between **BPCL** and Fino Payments Bank, the drivers would now be able to get the fleet cards recharged by paying equivalent cash at the bank's point.
- The digitised cash in the form of prepaid fleet cards would allow truck drivers to make payment for fuel at BPCL outlets.
- Biswajeet Sinha, Senior Divisional Head, **Fino Payments Bank** (South), stated that cash digitisation through cash management is one of the key services offered by the bank to partners that have huge cash flow. BPCL's Fleet Sales Officer (Coimbatore region) S Sruti stated the **SmartFleet programme** was the first-of-its-kind initiative in the country aimed at helping transporters manage their funds effectively. More than 4.5 lakh transporters across the State are using Smartfleet till date. BPCL sources expect the daily recharge at this point at over Rs.35 lakh.
- In addition to BPCL outlets, a network of 5,000+ small business owners such as kirana, mobile repair, dairy outlets are part of Fino's banking network in the State. The bank has facilitated transactions amounting to Rs.1,800+ crore since the start of FY 2020-21, with cash management services at over 50 per cent of the total.

In India's biggest property deal, RMZ to sell \$2bn of offices to Brookfield

- **Brookfield Asset Management** will buy an **Indian developer's commercial properties** for **\$2 billion**, the biggest real estate deal in the **South Asian nation**.
- The Canadian asset manager is acquiring **12.5 million square feet** of rent-yielding offices and co-working spaces from RMZ Corp., the privately held developer stated. The Indian firm stated it will have zero debt after the transaction and will use the money to expand its portfolio.
- The firm plans to expand its real asset portfolio to **85 million square feet** over the **next six years** from 67 million square feet. Some of the clients in RMZ's technology and business parks include Accenture, Google and HSBC. It is selling properties in the southern Indian cities of Bengaluru and Chennai.

Mastercard Partners with Atlantis to Expand Digital First Program in India

- **Mastercard** is partnering with **Atlantis**, a financial technology company headquartered in **Singapore**, to provide users with a technology solution that will enable them to enjoy a best-in-class digital banking experience. Mastercard in partnership with Atlantis announced the expansion of the **Digital First Program** in India.
- The Digital First Program aims to reignite users' relationships with more meaningful experiences. Users will be able to use their cards/accounts for digital transactions within minutes of application, enabled by a fully digital online application and issuance process, including **video KYC (in collaboration with Signzy)**. Cardholders will no longer need to wait to receive a physical card to begin using their cards for online shopping or at physical stores.

- Following the launch in India, the partnership will subsequently expand to Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Atlantis has recently announced the launch of its **Neo-Bank platform** in India for Gen Z and Millennials. Atlantis has a great opportunity in India with 10 million-plus youth across the country. Together with Mastercard's Digital First program, Atlantis will offer users an end to end digital payments product.

HAL, Tech Mahindra sign Rs 400 cr contract for 'Project Parivartan'

- Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)** stated the company signed a contract worth **Rs 400 crore** with **Tech Mahindra** for implementation of **enterprise resource planning (ERP)** to support its **project Parivartan**. "Project Parivartan is a comprehensive business transformation exercise initiated by HAL through technology enhancement and centralised ERP. As a system integrator, Tech Mahindra will implement project Parivartan over a period of nine years at a cost of Rs 400 crore," HAL stated .
- HAL stated Tech Mahindra will be responsible for the transformation and modernisation of the ERP system as an implementation and support partner enabling HAL to streamline and standardise its business processes across the organisation. Tech Mahindra will transform the distributed application to a centralised application, for all the 20 divisions and research and development centers of HAL based on a business transformation engineering process.

Important State Wise News

List of Festivals

Festivals	Place	Inaugurated by /Others
'Jashn-E-Dal (3-day water sports festival)	Jammu and Kashmir	Jammu and Kashmir Police
Kati Bihu	Assam	

Andhra Pradesh

AP govt launches Rs.650 crore scheme to distribute kits to school students

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has launched a new scheme, **Jagananna Vidya Kanuka**, providing free kits to students studying in government schools from Class 1 to 10 ahead of the academic which is scheduled to begin from November 2.
- The Vidya Kaunaka kits comprise three pairs of uniform cloth, one pair of shoes, two pairs of socks, a belt, textbooks and notebooks and a school bag. The distribution of the kits will continue for the next three days all over the state.
- The kits will be given to about 42.32 lakh students studying in government schools and the stitching charges for uniforms would be credited to mothers' account directly so that the children will be ready for November 2 reopening of schools. The total cost of the scheme is Rs.650 crore.

Alstom partners with APSSDC for skill development

- Alstom** has started training of the first batch of young diploma engineers, in collaboration with **Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC)** in Sri City.
- Under the SKILL AP initiative by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, this programme will upskill 30 diploma engineers from across the State and make them industry ready.
- "Alstom's Sri City unit is a state-of-the-art rolling stock manufacturing facility in the Asia-Pacific region, where technically advanced metro trainsets are being developed for Indian and international customers.

- The **45-day training programme** will include classroom training on technical skills, employee health and Safety (EHS), Quality fundamentals, railway safety and an introduction to Alstom's operations.

AP govt launches YSR Bima scheme

- **Andhra Pradesh** Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched **YSR Bima scheme** .
- The scheme will benefit 1.41 crore families by providing insurance cover. The State government will be paying **Rs.510 crore every year as a premium** for the scheme.
- All the families with white ration cards are eligible for this scheme and the village/ward volunteers shall visit the families and enroll the names of the primary householders.
- Under this scheme, insurance amount for **accidental death** and total permanent disability for people **aged between 18-50 years** is **Rs.5 lakh** and for those between **51-70 years Rs.3 lakh**.
- Similarly, for **natural death cases (18-50 years)** **Rs.2 lakh** and for **partial permanent disability** in an accident case (**18-70 years**) **Rs.1.5 lakh** assistance will be provided.
- In addition to this, an immediate assistance of **Rs.10,000** will be provided to the families.

AP Govt to resume State formation day fete from Nov 1

- Six years after the State bifurcation, **Andhra Pradesh Government** will officially resume celebrations of Andhra Pradesh **State Formation Day** on **November 1**.
- The Government has issued an order asking the official machinery in the State capital as well as district headquarters to observe the state formation day from this year.
- The celebration of the AP formation day was halted by N Chandrababu Naidu-led TDP government after the bifurcation of the State in 2014 carving out Telangana as a sign of the protest over the manner in which the bifurcation was carried out.
- Instead, June 2 which was declared as the Appointed Day for State bifurcation in 2014, has been observed as a day to mark a resolve to rebuild the State along with June 8 as the first popularly elected government was formed after elections post bifurcation.
- As a State, Andhra had seen many ups and downs in history. It was a part the Madras Province during the British period. After a strong movement for Andhra State, it was carved out as a new state with present **Andhra and Rayalaseema regions** in **1953**.
- It had become Andhra Pradesh on **November 1, 1956** with the addition of the Telangana region as was the first linguistic State to be formed in the country.

Arunachal Pradesh

AAI to develop greenfield airport at Hollongi by November 2022

- **Airports Authority of India** stated that it will develop a **greenfield airport** at **Arunachal Pradesh's Hollongi, near Itanagar**, which is expected to be completed by **November 2022**.
- This airport, when operational, will service Arunachal Pradesh's capital Itanagar. The closest airport to the state capital is currently **Lilabari** airport in Assam, situated 80 kilometres away.
- The upcoming airport project is expected to cost about Rs.650 crore to develop, which includes construction of airport pavements, air side work, terminal building, city side works, ATC (Air Traffic control Tower), Fire station, Medical Centre and other ancillary works.

- "With an area of 4100 sqm, the new domestic terminal building of the **Hollongi Airport** will be able to handle 200 passengers during peak hours. Equipped with eight check-in counters, the terminal building will have all modern passenger facilities," AAI stated.
- "The terminal will be an energy efficient building provisioned with **Rain Water Harvesting** system and sustainable landscape," it added.

Assam

Assam CM launches "Swa-nirbhar Naari: Atmanirbhar Asom" scheme

- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the 'Swa-nirbhar Naari: Atmanirbhar Asom' scheme in a bid to empower the economically disadvantaged women of the State at a programme organised by Panchayat & Rural Development Department at Chandrapur in Kamrup (Metro).
- The new scheme aims to create more than 3.72 lakh sustainable individual and 822 community assets benefitting around 4 lakh families in first phase under MGNREGA with convergence of schemes of various State government departments and missions, including Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission, Agriculture & Horticulture, Fishery, Environment & Forest, Handloom & Textiles, Sericulture, Veterinary & Animal Husbandry, etc.
- He also announced awards to first three best performing panchayats to the tune of Rs 3 lakh, Rs 2 lakh and Rs 1 lakh each.

Kati Bihu Celebrated In Assam

- Locals in Bongaigaon celebrated the **Kati Bihu festival in Assam**.
- Kati Bihu marks an important day for the Assamese people as they celebrate it by lighting up their **homes and agricultural fields**. People perform cultural dances and organise feasts.
- During this time of the year, the paddy in the fields are in the growing stage and the granaries of the farmers are almost empty.

Assam CM lays foundation stone of Agar International Trade Centre at Dabidubi

- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation stone of Assam Agar International Trade Centre at Dabidubi, Golaghat.
- The ambitious project is expected to provide an environment of investment in agarwood which aims at boosting Assam's economy.
- The new trade centre would significantly help the farmers and entrepreneurs of Agar to sell their products.
- The Assam Agar International Trade Centre would be a step towards making a self reliant Assam. Reiterating the government's commitment to double the farmer's income in the State by 2022.

Bihar

Kabartal Wetland (Bihar) and Asan Conservation Reserve designated as New Ramsar Sites

- **Kabartal**, a freshwater marsh of **North Bihar** and **Asan Barrage** in Doon Valley of **Uttarakhand** were designated as **Ramsar Sites**.
- With these two sites, the network of **Indian Ramsar Sites** becomes the **largest in South Asia**.
- Earlier in 2020, India designated 10 more wetlands as a Ramsar site, taking the total number from 27 to 37.
- With 2 more inclusions, the **total number of Ramsar sites in India is 39**, the highest in South Asia.

- Wetlands can be designated to the Ramsar List under any (one or more) of the nine criteria that ranges from uniqueness of the site to those based on species and ecological communities supported. Designation of **Kabartal and Asan Conservation Reserve to this list**, will go a long way in facilitating their conservation and management.
- **Asan Conservation reserve** is a 444-hectare stretch of the Asan River running down to its confluence with the Yamuna River in **Dehradun district of Uttarakhand**. The site is a biodiversity hub that supports 330 species of birds including the critically endangered redheaded vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*), white-rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) and Baer's pochard (*Aythya baeri*). It also supports large congregations of migratory birds like red-crested pochard and ruddy shelduck and is a known feeding, spawning and migrating site for over 40 fish species.
- **Kabartal, also known as Kanwar jheel** covers 2,620 hectares of the Indo-Gangetic plains, in **Begusarai district of the state of Bihar**. The site acts as a vital flood buffer for the region besides providing livelihood opportunities to the local communities. As a habitat to biodiversity, the wetland supports about 165 plant, 394 animals and around 50 fish species. Kabartal is also an important stopover along the Central Asian Flyway, with 58 migratory waterbirds using it as a wintering site. Besides, critically endangered vultures including red-headed vulture and white-rumped vulture also use the site as a habitat.

Delhi

Yudh Pradushan Ke Virudh: Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal launches anti-pollution campaign

- Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced a "Yuddh Pradushan Ke Virudh" (war against pollution) campaign, with a seven-point action plan ranging from measures to control dust and mitigate hot spots, to a mobile application for complaints to a "war room" for monitoring.
- Under the campaign "Yudh Pradushan ke Virudh", separate plans have been prepared for each of the 13 pollution hotspots in the city
- The government is also preparing a "Green Delhi" mobile application.

Delhi govt launches 'first-of-its kind' tree transplantation policy

- The Delhi government has launched a "first-of-its kind" tree transplantation policy under which trees won't be cut for development projects but will be uprooted and placed elsewhere.
- At least 80% of the trees uprooted during a project need to be transplanted and agencies must ensure that 80% of the transplanted trees survive.

DPCC bans diesel generators in Delhi from October 15 to curb air pollution

- **Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC)** issued directions **banning the use of diesel generators** in the national capital under the **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)**.
- **GRAP** is a set of **anti-pollution measures** that come into force in Delhi and its vicinity towns according to the severity of the situation.
- It was notified by the **Ministry of Environment and Forests in 2017** for implementation through the Supreme Court-mandated Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority.
- Essential services include healthcare facilities, elevators, railway services, Delhi Metro, airports and interstate bus terminals and the data centre run by the National Informatics Centre.

Delhi govt launches 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' initiative

- In a bid to tackle air pollution in the national capital, Delhi government launched 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' initiative.

- The initiative part of 'Yuddh, Pradushan Ke Viruddh' campaign promotes switching off the engine of the vehicles while waiting at the red signals.
- "Delhi has one crore registered vehicle, even if 10 lakh vehicles turn off ignition at traffic signals, around 1.5 tonnes of PM10 will go down in a year and the PM 2.5 will decrease by 0.4 tonnes," stated Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal
- Every time vehicles stop at the red signal, it has been noticed that drivers do not turn the engine off. These vehicles, even when they are at the red sign, emit pollution while idling, he added.
- "One car spends around **15 to 20 minutes** at the red signal on an average and utilizes around **200 mL of fuel**. But if you switch off the engine at the red signals, you can save **Rs. 7000 per month**," stated Kejriwal.
- In the coming days, the Delhi government also plans to launch a massive awareness campaign regarding this.

Gujarat

Gujarat to get country's first two Organic Spices Seed parks

- A first-of-its-kind **organic spices seed park** will come up at **two places in Gujarat** with an aim to encourage capacity building and adoption of best practices in the production cumin and fennel seeds, the main crops in the region.
- NABARD-supported Organic Spices Seed Park for *saunf* (fennel seed) in the **Banaskantha district** and *jeera* (cumin seed) in **Patan** for promotion of organic seed value chain of the spices.
- A total of **Rs.23 lakh** in grant assistance has been accorded to both the parks, which will have 50 farmers each. Once ready, the specialised institutions will collect seeds, which will be sent for testing on quality control.

PM Modi inaugurates seaplane services to Statue of Unity

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the country's first seaplane service between the Statue of Unity near Kevadiya in Gujarat's Narmada district and Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad.
- He travelled in the maiden flight of the twin-engine plane from pond-3 close to Sardar Sarovar Dam and landed at Sabarmati riverfront where a water aerodrome has been set up.
- The 19-seater seaplane will be used for flights between the Sabarmati riverfront and Kevadia as a part of the regional connectivity scheme. Initially, the plane will make four trips a day.

PM launches three key projects in Gujarat; says efforts on to connect every village with better health facilities

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi today virtually launched three key projects in Gujarat.
- Mr Modi launched the 'Kisan Suryodaya Yojana' for the farmers of Gir-Somnath, Patan and Dahod districts, which will provide day time power supply to farmers for irrigation.
- He also inaugurated India's biggest cardiac hospital, U.N. Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Center at Civil Hospital campus in Ahmedabad.
- Prime Minister also launched the Girnar hill ropeway project in Junagadh.

Gujarat govt announces Digital Seva Setu Programme for rural areas

- **Gujarat Government** has announced **Digital Seva Setu Programme** for the rural areas. Under this programme, the citizens will be able to get benefit from various public welfare services at the Panchayat level.
- The Digital Seva Setu has been initiated under the **Bharat Net Project**- an initiative to connect the Village Panchayats through fibre network.
- The villages of Gujarat will be connected with a 100 MBPS optical fibre network under the Digital Seva Setu programme. The Phase-1 of Digital Seva Setu will start from 8th October, which will cover 2,000 Village Panchayats.
- About 20 types of pro-people services will be provided at the village panchayat level.

- Another eight thousand Village Panchayats will be covered by December 2020. Citizens in rural areas will be able to get the benefits of this programme by paying a nominal fee of Rs. 20.
- The citizens can get various documents like duplicate ration card, income certificate, senior citizen certificate, caste certificate at their doorstep under this programme.

CM Vijay Rupani e-dedicates online e-Sanjeevani OPDs scheme across Gujarat

- Gujarat Chief Minister **Vijay Rupani** e-dedicated online e-**Sanjeevani OPDs scheme** across Gujarat through videoconferencing. The main objective of this scheme is to provide medical facilities online to the patients for common diseases at their homes.
- e-Sanjeevani OPDs scheme is the central scheme and now the people of Gujarat will get its benefits.
- The Chief Minister Vijay Rupani described this service as an extension of free treatment and medicines being provided to Covid-19 patients.
- It is one step ahead of tele-medicine facilities for diagnosis on the phone through the latest technology.
- The State Government is also planning to extend its scope to medical colleges and young doctors.

Gujarat govt announces setting up of world's biggest Zinc Smelter project in Dosawada in Tapi district

- **Gujarat government** has announced the setting up of the **world's biggest Zinc Smelter project** in **Dosawada** in Tapi district. The Memorandum of Understanding for this project was signed with **Vedanta Group**.
- The proposed 300 KTPA production capacity project would provide big employment opportunities to the local youths in this tribal area. The first phase of the proposed plant will be operational in 36 months.
- The project with the investment of **Rs.10 thousand crore** will also have a State-of-the-art Research and Development Centre. The project will satisfy the domestic as well as global needs through exports.

Surat now has India' longest BRTS network

- **Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani** e-launched projects worth **more than Rs 200 crore** in **Surat**.
- The BRTS corridor **from Kumbharia to Kadodora** was opened.
- With the opening of this BRTS corridor, Surat has become the only city in the country to have the longest BRTS network of **108 km**.
- Unveiling the development works of SMC and SUDA through video conference from Gandhinagar.

Goa

Goa launches 'DISHTAVO' YouTube channel for e-learning in higher education

- **Goa state government** has launched a YouTube channel '**DISHTAVO**', wherein the students will be able to view recorded lectures.
- The digital platform was launched by the Directorate of Higher Education (DHE) to provide e-learning content 24 hours a day for college students.
- Goa is the 1st state in the Country to have the entire syllabus online. Students can take maximum benefit from this channel.
- **DISHTAVO** is a comprehensive and holistic programme to create online e-content in the form of video lectures of syllabus pertaining to the colleges affiliated to the Goa University.
- Though online classes have resumed across all colleges in the state, poor network connectivity has proven to be a major hindrance in the e-learning process. The project will help students to access to the academic content 24 hours a day through recording lecturer.

Goa becomes first Har Ghar Jal State in country by providing tap water connection to every rural household

- Goa has become the first Har Ghar Jal State in the country by providing tap water connection to every rural household.
- The state has provided tap water connection to two lakh 30 thousand rural households.
- North Goa with one lakh 65 thousand rural households and South Goa with 98 thousand rural households in 191 Gram Panchayats are fully saturated with assured piped water supply through tap connections.
- The State is now planning for a sensor-based service delivery monitoring system to monitor the functionality of water supply.

Goa Govt Ties Up With India Post To Get Farmers Enrolled In PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme

- **Goa Government** has tied up with **India Post** to get **11,000 farmers enrolled** in the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi** scheme.
- This is the **first such exercise** in India to enrol farmers in the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, whereby the **postman will be utilised to benefit farmers**
- All 255 post offices in Goa and 300 staff are involved in this initiative.
- This PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme where the farmers directly received direct benefit transfer of Rs 2,000 in three instalments every year, is for the economically weaker farmers.

India's First Sand Dune Park To Come Up In Goa With The Support Of World Bank

- **Goa**, the beach state is all set to have **India's first sand dune park**. The **World Bank** accepted the proposal of the Biodiversity Board of the state and has sanctioned a sum of **Rs 3 crore** for the project. Sand dunes are geological deposits formed by the action of wind.
- The long stretches of sand dune ecosystem along the state's coastal line have been largely neglected by both local officials and tourists, often turning them into garbage dumps.
- However, under the new initiative, this ecosystem will be revived and thematic and interpretation centres will educate locals and tourists on the importance of preserving the sand dunes.
- As part of the efforts, **bridges will be constructed using eco-friendly materials** to reduce the chances of the sand dune vegetation being walked over.

The plan also includes the **setting up of nurseries of sand dune vegetation**, which will allow its replantation on beach stretches, where the vegetation has completely eroded. Morjim and Galibaga beaches are among the ones that'll get this sand dune feature.

Haryana

Haryana gets a water testing lab on wheels

- **Haryana chief minister (CM) Manohar Lal Khattar** launched a **Rs 99-lakh mobile water testing laboratory** that is fully equipped with the latest multi-parameter systems to determine the quality of potable water.
- The van will be stationed at the state water testing laboratory in **Karnal** but its area of operation will stretch throughout the state.
- It is equipped with features such as GPS, and can measure different water quality parameters such as pH, alkalinity, dissolved solids, hardness, residual chlorine, zink, nitrite, fluoride, turbidity and micro-biological test of water samples.

- The objective of this facility is to provide easy access for water testing in remote locations of the state and also help identify the water-quality problems on the spot.
- The CM also launched the '**Swachhta Pakhwada**', a two-week cleanliness drive, from Panchkula. The focus of the drive this time would be on cleaning sewerage systems and ponds.

Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh

NDDB, Ladakh in pact to conduct survey for promotion of dairying

- The **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)** and the **Union Territory Administration of Ladakh** inked an agreement to conduct a benchmark survey in the newly formed UT.
- The survey is aimed at gathering required details to prepare a roadmap for **development and promotion of dairying** in the UT.
- The Survey will take into consideration crucial aspects like climatic conditions, suitability of breeds, animal health and AI support, feed and fodder availability, impediments in logistics and supply chain, marketing etc.
- Promotion of milk production and rural livelihoods is aimed at enhancing income of the rural population.

J-K Police organises 'Jashn-E-Dal' festival to boost water sports activities, tourism in Valley

- Jammu and Kashmir Police have organised a **three-day water sports festival -- 'Jashn-E-Dal'** -- with an aim to boost water sports activities and promote tourism in the valley. The festival was organized by Jammu and Kashmir Police under civic action programme in collaboration with water sports association after three years.
- "This event was last organised in 2017. 'Jashn-e-Dal' has been one of the favourite events as far as the celebration of these beautiful water bodies are concerned.
- Kashmir, which is famous for natural beauty and water bodies including the world-famous Dal Lake, which has always played a tremendous role in attracting visitors from across the world. Such events can play a vital role in promoting water sports in the valley and energetic young players can get professional platforms to showcase their talent. "Jashn-e-Dal is being organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Police in association with J-K water sports association. Over 200 participants will be performing in various competition in this three-day event.

J&K: "SAKHI" One-Stop Service Centre for women in Ramban district inaugurated

- In **Jammu and Kashmir**, Senior Consultant in the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development, Dr. Jupaka Madhavi and Additional Superintendent of Police, Ramban, Rajni Sharma inaugurated a **"SAKHI" One-Stop Service Centre for women** in Ramban district.
- The Ministry is implementing a scheme for setting up One Stop Centres since April 2015 to support women affected by violence.
- The scheme aims to facilitate access to an integrated range of services including medical aid, police assistance and legal aid or case management, psycho-social counselling and temporary support services to women affected by violence.
- Under the scheme, it has been envisaged that One Stop Centre would be set up across the country at district level in a phased manner.

"My Town My Pride" campaign will be for urban areas on the lines of "Back to Village" in J-K

- **Jammu and Kashmir** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha announced that the government is coming up with a movement called **"My Town My Pride"** from October 19 to provide governance at the **doorsteps in urban areas** on the pattern of the **"Back to Village"** programme.

- Three main objectives – public outreach in towns, strengthening grassroots democracy, and service delivery at doorsteps.

Ladakh LG launches 100-day campaign to provide potable water supply in schools, anganwadi centres

- In Kargil, Ladakh Lieutenant Governor, R K Mathur launched a **100 day campaign** to provide assured **potable water supply to schools and anganwadi centres**. He also inaugurated drinking water quality testing labs for the general public under the **Jal Jeevan Mission's (JJM) Har Ghar Jal project**.
- In a virtual programme in Kargil, Mr Mathur also launched the field test kits (FTKs) training to Panchayats for drinking water quality testing.
- Out of 907 schools and 1140 Anganwadi Centres in Ladakh, 258 Schools and 401 Anganwadi Centres do not have reliable and functional water supply facilities. However, during the next 100 days all such schools and Anganwadi Centres will be provided functional tap connection by the UT Administration.

J&K: LG R K Mathur flags off Ultimate Ladakh Cycling Challenge

- In Leh, Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R. K. Mathur flagged off **Ultimate Ladakh Cycling Challenge**. At an altitude of over **17 thousand feet** this is one of the toughest cycling challenges in the world.
- Ladakh Police, Ladakh Tourism Department in association with the Cycling Federation of India with the support of Ladakh Cycling Association have organized the four-day event. Union Territory administration is taking all measures to promote tourism and Ladakh as the centre for adventure sports. As part of the activities, Ladakh Police and Tourism Departments are organizing a four-day Ultimate Ladakh Cycling Challenge in Leh.
- On various routes, the cyclists peddle a total of **263 kilometres** in the **four-day event**. On 3rd and 4th Day the cyclists have to climb the **world's 3rd highest Taglang La** and the highest motorable road Khardung La that test the stamina, endurance and the will power of a cyclist. Top national and local cyclists are taking part in the challenge. Winners will be awarded 10 lakh rupees as prize.
- Cycling Federation of India General Secretary Maninder Singh appealed for a proposal from the UT Administration to tap the potential of conducting National and International events with the Union Cyclist International (UCI) recognition, to put Ladakh in the World event's map.

Karnataka

Karnataka govt gives nod to switch implementing agency for Bhagyalakshmi scheme

- The **Karnataka cabinet** granted approval to implement the **Bhagyalakshmi scheme**, which provides **financial security to girl child of BPL families**, through **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana** of the postal department **instead of LIC**.
- Since the interest rate offered by the LIC was way less, the state government decided to switch the agency. Under this scheme, a girl child belonging to below poverty line (BPL) families is eligible to receive **Rs one lakh after completing 18 years of age**.
- The scheme is aimed at elevating the status of a girl child in the family and society. Re-designing and implementing the Bhagyalakshmi scheme will not result in any loss to the beneficiary.
- The cabinet also approved the **Karnataka Unregulated Deposit Schemes Regulation -2020**, which restricts the functioning of private financial institutions and chit fund companies, which dupe the investors.

Kerala

Kerala's first and nation's twentieth mega food park Inaugurated

- **Kerala's first and nation's twentieth mega food park in Palakkad district of Kerala** was virtually inaugurated by the Union Minister for Food Processing Industries, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, **Shri Narendra Singh Tomar** and Chief Minister of Kerala, **Mr. Pinarayi Vijayan**.
- MFP will play an important role in providing assistance and relief to the farmers of Kerala. With this, the conditions of farmers will improve with the involvement of agricultural entrepreneurs.
- The facilities created in the park will not only reduce wastage of agricultural produce but will also ensure value addition.
- **Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (Kinfra) Mega Food Park** has been set up in 79.42 acres of land at a project cost of **Rs. 102.13 crore**.

Kerala govt sets up welfare board for farmers

- **In a first in the country, the Kerala government** has decided to form a **Welfare Fund Board** for the **uplift of farmers in the state**.
- They decided to set up the board to be known as '**Kerala Karshaka Kshemanidhi Board**'.
- The cabinet also decided that **Dr P Rajendran** would be appointed as the **chairman of the Kerala Farmers Welfare Fund Board**.
- As per the Kerala Karshaka Kshemanidhi Act, agriculture includes horticulture, medicinal plant cultivation, nursery management, fish, ornamental fish, mussels, bees, silkworms, poultry, ducks, goats, rabbits, livestock, and the maintenance and use of land for such agricultural purposes.
- For the farmers to become a member of the Board, they need to pay Rs 100 as registration fee and a monthly fee of Rs 100.
- Farmers can pay the monthly fee together for six months or one year. The government will provide an equivalent share of upto Rs 250 to the members of the Welfare Fund.
- The Board members are entitled to personal pension, family pension, sickness benefit, disability benefit, medical assistance, marriage and maternity allowance, education assistance and posthumous benefits.
- The benefit would be given for the marriage of women members and daughters of members of the Welfare Fund.
- As per the Act, a farmer is an owner, licensee, sole proprietor, oral tenant, government land leaseholder who owns **not less than 5 cents and not more than 15 acres**, with an annual income of **less than Rs five lakh**.

Kerala introduces high-tech digital classrooms in all its public schools

- **Kerala**, the highly literate state, is pioneering **digital classroom technology**. And it is introducing high-tech classrooms in all its public schools.
- Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan made the official announcement of all the public schools in the State becoming completely digital this morning. The state has successfully completed the hi-tech smart class project in government schools with financial aid from **KIIFB** as part of the Public Education Rejuvenation Mission.
- **Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE)** has implemented the project which comes under the general education department. Over 3.74 lakh digital equipments were distributed in 16,027 schools for the smart classroom project. Apart from KIIFB fund, the asset development funds of public representatives and local government funds were also utilized for the project.

Water taxi service to be launched in Alappuzha

- **Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan** will launch a **water taxi service** of the State Water Transport Department (SWTD) in **Alappuzha**.

- A **catamaran diesel-powered craft** will be used for the water taxi service. The boat, with a **seating capacity for 10 passengers**, will pick passengers and drop them at their destination. The tariff fixed had been **₹ 50 for 30 minutes**.
- It can cruise at a maximum speed of 19 knots (35 km/hour). The vessel has been constructed by Kochi-based **Navgathi Marine Design and Constructions Private Limited**, which built the country's **first solar ferry, Aditya**.

IAV's first phase becomes operational at Thonnakkal

- The **Institute of Advanced Virology (IAV)** in the district will evolve into a **global centre** for high-end virology research and help **Kerala** scale greater heights in its efforts to improve public health and contain virus outbreaks, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has stated.
- The first phase of IAV, situated at the **Bio 360 Life Science Park at Thonnakkal**, became functional with two divisions. Dedicating the facility to the State at an online function, the Chief Minister stated it was heartening to note that IAV has become functional at a time when Kerala is battling the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A robust public health system has helped Kerala effectively check the Nipah virus outbreak of 2018 and fight the current COVID-19 pandemic. However, such a system alone will not help the State tackle lifestyle diseases or epidemics. Institutes such as the IAV gain relevance in this context, according to him.

Kerala becomes first state in the country to fix floor price for vegetables, rates to be effective from Nov 1

- **Kerala** has become the **first state in the country** to set floor prices of **16 varieties of vegetables**, Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan informed. He said that the scheme would come into effect from November 01, 2020.
- This is the first time the floor price is being fixed for vegetables produced in the state and this is the first for a state in the country also. This is going to provide relief as well as support for the farmers.
- The 16 varieties for which base prices (per kg) have been announced in the first phase are: tapioca (Rs 12), banana (Rs 30), Wayanadan banana (Rs 24), pineapple (Rs 15), ashgourd (Rs 9), cucumber (Rs 8), bitter gourd (Rs 30), snake gourd (Rs 16), tomato (Rs 8), beans nadan (vallipayar) (Rs 34), lady's finger (Rs 20), cabbage (Rs 11), carrot (Rs 21), potato (Rs 20), beans (Rs 28), beetroot (Rs 21), and garlic (Rs 139).
- The base price mechanism will function like the MSP system. Under the new mechanism, the government will procure the commodity from the farmer at the base price if the market price of some vegetable or fruit falls below the stipulated base price, and the amount thereafter will be credited to the farmer's account.

Madhya Pradesh

PPL tournament to be played in Indore to free city from single use plastic

- On the lines of IPL cricket, a unique **Plastic Premier League (PPL)** tournament is being played in **Indore, Madhya Pradesh** to free the city from **single use plastic**.
- Indore is known for its innovative efforts regarding cleanliness. Indore has been awarded as the cleanest city in the country four times so far. four teams have been formed for the Plastic Premier League competition. The 19 zones of Indore Municipal Corporation are divided into these four teams.
- For the competition, the team captain Radio Jockey will encourage citizens to donate more and more plastic from their radio station.
- These teams have been provided municipal workers and five vehicles to collect plastic. The team that collects the most single-use plastics in this 45-day competition will be awarded the PPL Trophy.

Maharashtra

MCGM, Google collaborate to mark Containment Zones in Mumbai on Google Maps

- The **Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM)** and **Google** have collaborated to mark **Containment Zones** in the city on the **Google Maps**.
- The BMC has now provided on Google Maps, information about civic-run hospitals and COVID Care Centres besides marking Containment Zones.
- To view this info, click on “COVID-19 info” on the Google Maps, zoom in the Mumbai Metropolitan Map, the Containment Zones are seen **marked in grey colour** with labelled COVID-19 containment zones.
- Also after clicking on “COVID-19 info” on Google Maps, if one goes to BMC option, the user is directed to the BMC website **www.stopcoronavirus.mcg.gov.in**, which too provides similar information.

GOI, ADB inks 177 million dollar loan pact to upgrade 450 kms of state highways & major district roads in Maharashtra

- **Asian Development Bank, ADB** and **Government of India** signed a **177-million dollar** loan to upgrade 450 kilometres of state highways and major district roads in **Maharashtra**.
- The signatories to the Maharashtra State Road Improvement Project were Additional Secretary (Fund Bank and ADB) in Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance **Sameer Kumar Khare** on behalf of Government of India and Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission Kenichi Yokoyama, on behalf of ADB.
- Overall the project will upgrade two major district roads and **11 state highways**, with combined length of **450 km**, to two-lane standard across seven districts of Maharashtra and improve connectivity to national highways, interstate roads, seaports, airports, rail hubs, district headquarters, industrial areas, enterprise clusters and agricultural areas.
- The project will also focus on training the Maharashtra Public Works Department project staff to build their capacity in climate change adaptation and disaster resilient features in road design, road maintenance planning and road safety.

Maharashtra's Women & Child welfare dept launches initiative to fulfill nutritional requirements of lactating mothers & children

- **Maharashtra's** Women and Child welfare department has launched a new initiative to fulfill the nutritional requirements of lactating mothers and children in the state.
- Women and Child welfare minister Yashomati Thakur inaugurated the platform ‘ **TARANG SUPOSHIT MAHARASHTRACHA**’ which is based on the interactive voice response system. The platform is expected to create more awareness about the nutritional requirements of women and children in the state.
- Maharashtra stood first in the recently concluded Poshan Mah in the country and now the Women and Child development department is trying to interact directly with lactating mothers and the parents of the children to create awareness about their nutritional requirement with the help of technology. The digital platform Tarang Suposhit Maharashtra is equipped with the facilities like a helpline, broadcast call, whatsapp chatbot etc.
- The number 8080809063 will give important guidance about the nutritional food, special care to pregnant women, lactating mothers and parents of the children.

Meghalaya

Meghalaya partners with Israel to set up centre of excellence on high-value vegetables

- **Meghalaya government** has decided to partner with **Israel** for establishing a **Centre of Excellence (CoE)** on **high value vegetables** in the state.
- The CoE is vital to tap the diverse bio-diversity and resources available in the State in terms of its soil and agro-climatic conditions.

- It will also act as an impetus for further research and expansion into multi-fold aspects, including tourism potential considering the State has a gene pool of important vegetables, fruits and plants such as the Citrus fruits in Nokrek, East Garo Hills District.

Meghalaya CM launches 'micro ATM' service in rural areas

- Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma launched the 'micro ATM' service in rural areas of the state.
- He distributed the handheld devices, through which money could be withdrawn, to banking correspondent agents (BCA).
- "The implementation of various development and welfare schemes get delayed due to the absence of basic banking infrastructure".

Nagaland

Nagaland launches livelihood generation programme for returnees

- The Nagaland Government launched a **livelihood generation programme** for those returning to the state due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Christened as the “**Livelihood Generation Programme for Returned Migrant Workers due to Covid-19 pandemic**,” the dedicated online portal for the programme was officially launched by State's Advisor for Industries & Commerce, Labour & employment, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Imnatiba, at Nagaland Civil Secretariat Conference Hall, Kohima.
- The North Eastern Council (NEC) funded scheme, among others, promised to provide awareness and re-orientation programme, capacity building session, re-skilling of identified beneficiaries and seed money or monetary assistance.
- As per the portal, the eligibility criteria for the programme are:
 1. The returnee should be an Indigenous Migrant Worker from Nagaland.
 2. The returnee should have registered with the State COVID-19 returnees' portal.
 3. The Migrant worker Returnee should have reached Nagaland via Special Train, Airway, or Roadway between May 22 - August 6, 2020.
 4. The Migrant Worker Returnee should have release documents or certificate from the assigned Quarantine Centres.

Nagaland Minister for Health & Family Welfare launches handbook on “TB Harega, Desh Jeetega”

- **Nagaland Minister for Health and Family Welfare** , Mr. S. Pangnyu Phom launched a handbook on “**TB Harega, Desh Jeetega**” .
- The government's commitment to **end Tuberculosis by 2025** in the country.
- The National TB Elimination Programme, NTEP Nagaland is committed to reduce TB burden in terms of incidence, prevalence, morbidity and mortality to make the state free from tuberculosis.
- The main purpose of this handbook, is to proactively engage more elected representatives such as MLAs, members of Zila Parishad, VDB members and Gram Panchayat or Gram Sabha to help address social stigma as well as to promote advocacy and community involvement in TB programme.

Odisha

Odisha CM Naveen Virtually Launches 'Sujal'- Drink From Tap Mission Initiative

- Chief minister Naveen Patnaik virtually launched the “Drink from the tap Mission-Sujal”, an initiative under the 5T model of governance, that aimed to ensure **24x7 safe and quality drinking water to the people** in urban areas.
- The Sujal project has been launched in **Bhubaneswar and Puri** and over 1.80 lakh people will benefit from the initiative.
- **Bhubaneswar is the first city in the country** (over 10 lakh population) to have **100 percent piped water facility**.
- **By March 2022**, households in all urban areas will have piped water connection.
- Apart from Bhubaneswar, 100 percent household water supply connection has been achieved in Gopalpur, Digapahandi, and Kashinagar
- The Drink From Tap Mission will be executed in 15 cities in the State which will benefit over 15 lakh people. The State government will spend **Rs 1300 crore** for the project.

Govt partners with FICCI for Make-in-Odisha 2020

- **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)** has been selected as the national industry partner for the **third edition** of ‘**Make in Odisha**’ conclave, the flagship industrial summit of Odisha Government that showcases the State as an industrial power house and a preferred investment destination in the country.
- An MoU was signed between **IPICOL and FICCI** in presence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for investment promotion and investor outreach activities to be undertaken leading up to the conclave.
- The conclaves in 2016 and 2018 brought in a significant increase in the quantum of new investments to Odisha and helped create a diversified industrial base in the State.
- The State Government has decided to continue investment outreach activities with prospective investors on virtual platforms till the time the situation is ripe for organising the mega industrial carnival in physical form.

Odisha CM Patnaik launches web portals for student scholarships, inter-caste marriage incentives

- **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik** launched two web portals - **Integrated Odisha State Scholarship Portal** to help eligible **students of the state** avail scholarship benefits in a seamless and transparent manner, and **Sumangal Portal**, to help people avail **inter-caste marriage incentives**.
- 21 scholarships would be offered by eight state departments and more than 11 lakh beneficiary students from Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, and educationally backward classes would benefit from the scholarship portal.
- Professional programs of the SC and ST Department, Higher Education, Schools and Mass Education, Labor and ESI, Skills Development and Technical Education, and Agriculture Department will be administered on the portal.
- Scholarships will be credited directly to students' bank accounts as the portal is linked to the state treasury.
- Rs 2.5 lakh can be availed for beneficiaries within 60 days of applying at the portal.

Punjab

Punjab CM digitally launches construction of 750 rural stadiums

- Punjab Chief Minister **Amarinder Singh** digitally launched the construction of **750 rural stadiums** and playgrounds in the state.
- The 750 stadiums are being built at a cost of **Rs 105 crore** in rural areas under the state government's rural transformation strategy and “**Tandarust Punjab Mission**”, an official statement stated.
- The government has set a target of minimum five stadiums per block to be completed in 2020-21, it added.

- The initiative is part of the **Smart Village Campaign** launched in 2019, under which 19,132 projects with a total cost of Rs 835 crore were taken up in its Phase-I stage for 2019-20.
- The projects under the campaign include renovation of ponds, street lights, parks, gymnasiums, community halls, drinking water supply, model Anganwadi centers, smart schools and solid waste management systems are the integral part of the campaign.
- Meanwhile, an MoU was inked digitally between the state **Local Government Department** and the **Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Odisha** to help push the implementation of the Punjab Slum Dwellers Proprietary Act, framed in April, 2020. The MoU was signed by the Principal Secretary (Local Government) Ajoy Kumar Sinha and CPR president Yamini Aiyer.

Punjab to launch its own SC post-matric scholarship scheme

- **The Punjab Cabinet** to launch its own **Scheduled Caste Post Matric Scholarship Scheme** in place of the Centre's scheme, in order to facilitate **students to pursue higher education in government and private institutions**.
- With this, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh announced an increase in income criteria from **earlier Rs 2.5 lakh to Rs 4 lakh** to accommodate more Scheduled Caste (SC) students.
- The Cabinet, at a meeting chaired by the Chief Minister, approved the **Dr BR Ambedkar SC Post Matric Scholarship Scheme**, to be effective from **2021-22**.
- The scheme will be applicable to persons belonging to the SC, who are domiciled in Punjab and have done matriculation from Punjab and Chandigarh.
- All Central, state government and private institutions in Punjab and Chandigarh will be covered under the scheme.
- The total financial implication of the proposal is estimated to be about **Rs 600 crore**. Of this, the tentative liability of the government institutions would be about Rs 168 crore and the remaining Rs 432 crore would be borne by the private educational institutions and the government.

Rajasthan

Rajasthan govt launches month long mass awareness campaign on COVID-19

- The Government of **Rajasthan** has launched a **month long mass awareness campaign** on COVID 19. The campaign will run till **31 of October** as part of the statewide mass movement against Corona. Ministers and legislators are organising programmes at different districts to create awareness about wearing masks and maintain social distancing.
- The state government has decided to distribute one crore masks to protect the public from COVID infection. Health Minister Dr. Raghu Sharma told that every person needs to be aware of this disease. He informed that the corona testing facility is available at 38 places in the state. Soon this facility will also be available in the remaining 11 districts of the state

Sikkim

ITBP launches cycling expedition from its Pegong base in Sikkim

- The **Eleventh Battalion Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** launched a **cycling expedition** from its **Pegong base** in **Sikkim** to border villages of the state. The Minister of Culture, Road and Bridges Department of Sikkim Samdup Lepcha flagged off the expedition. Total 218 Kilometers will be covered by the ITBP team in the course of 20 days in difficult terrains.

- The team will generate more awareness among masses of the border villages on Covid 19 related issues, will organize medical and veterinary camps, distribute hygiene and sanitation items. They will also spread awareness about various government missions for the welfare of the society at large.
- The **18 member team of ITBP** will cover difficult terrain in the expedition. Most of the members are highly trained mountaineers and rescuers. The expedition will reach Gurudongmar lake in extreme high altitude as its destination before starting the return journey.
- Raised in 1962, the ITBP is primarily a mountain force known for being deployed in harsh Himalayan borders of China since its inception. With more than 215 successful mountaineering expeditions undertaken till now, the force will complete 58 years of its raising on 24 October.

SIFCO begins construction of integrated food processing units in Sikkim

- In a boost to **organic farming** and food production in **Sikkim**, IFFCO's organic joint venture, **Sikkim IFFCO Organics Ltd. or SIFCO**, has initiated construction of two integrated food processing units at **Rangpo, East Sikkim**. The project would be completed by October 2021 at a cost of around 50 crore rupees.
- Establishment of integrated food processing units in Sikkim is aimed at providing a safer food supply chain to domestic and global consumers. The units would initially process ginger, turmeric, large cardamom and buckwheat, which are the major agricultural products of Sikkim with significant export potential. Sikkim IFFCO Organics would start trading fresh ginger through its agencies in Germany, Italy and other European countries. MoUs for marketing and distribution in North America and Europe have also been signed.
- All products will be 100 per cent organic certified. This is expected to promote sustainable agriculture and promote **Green Himalayan Economy** through Sikkim, which is already recognized as a 100 per cent organic state. Additionally, the project would contribute towards increasing farmers' income as the produce will be directly procured from them.

Tamil Nadu

TN & WEF to set up advanced manufacturing hub

- **Guidance**, a nodal investment promotion and facilitation agency of the State of **Tamil Nadu**, has partnered with **World Economic Forum** to establish **India's first advanced manufacturing hub (AMHUB)** in the State.
- This will help the State harness opportunities in the sectors of electronics, electric mobility, solar energy and textiles through collaboration with AMHUB.
- AMHUB will help the production ecosystem in Tamil Nadu by identifying and addressing regional opportunities brought by the **Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)**, highlighting and amplifying regional success stories globally and engaging directly with other AMHUBs through WEF's network of AMHUBs to share best practices globally.
- Tamil Nadu will be able to promote sustainable manufacturing by adopting new models of collaboration to scale sustainable solutions in manufacturing that enable Circular Economy transition and accelerate towards a carbon-neutral manufacturing industry.
- The **Advanced Manufacturing HUB or AMHUB** is one of the 19 platforms **designed by the WEF**.

Tamil Nadu govt implements Smart Black Board scheme in 80,000 govt schools

- **Tamil Nadu government** is implementing the **Smart Black Board scheme** in **80,000 government schools** to ensure better teaching environment.

- The **Smart Black Board scheme** envisages usage of **audio visual teaching material** that can be fed into the computer screens in classes using widely available pen drives.
- The Central Education Ministry's Smart Class Room scheme is being implemented in 7500 schools in the state.
- The central government has also launched a similar scheme called as **Operation Digital Board Scheme**.

Tamil Nadu CM Edappadi Palaniswami lays foundation for nine industrial projects worth Rs 10,000 cr

- **Tamil Nadu chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami** laid the foundation for **nine new industrial projects** with an investment of **Rs 10,062 crore** and to provide employment opportunities for around 8,666 people.
- He also commissioned commercial production in seven industrial units with an investment of Rs 1,298 crore which provides employment opportunities for 7,879 persons.
- The new industries are coming up in the districts of Kancheepuram, Thiruvallur, Dindigul, Thoothukudi, Villupuram, Tirupur, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, and Coimbatore.

Foundation laid for the following nine industrial units

- Adani Gas (Rs.2,000 crore investment and job opportunities for 1000)
- Philips Carbon Black Limited (Rs.600 crore investment - jobs for 300)
- Dindigul Energy Private Limited Phase-II (Kalpathi AGS Group) (Rs.300 crore investment - jobs for 500)
- Aquasub Engineering (Rs 300 crore investment - jobs for 400)
- Vikram Solar (Rs 5,512 crore investment - jobs for 4,738)
- Integrated Chennai Business Park (DP World) (Rs 1,000 crore investment - jobs for 1,100)
- Shreevari Energy Systems Private Limited (Rs 250 crore investment - jobs for 228)
- Chennai SSSS Equipments (Rs 50 crore investment - jobs for 400)
- Hyundai (Rs 150 crore investment)

Young Advocates Welfare Fund launched in Tamil Nadu

- In Tamil Nadu, the **Young Advocates Welfare Fund** has been launched. It provides a monthly financial assistance of **three thousand rupees** each for **two years** to the lawyers who just come out of law colleges.
- Normally a fresher from law colleges takes three to four years to begin practice as an advocate in the court as the registration in the Bar Council, and the mandatory practicing under a senior advocate takes time. Unable to sustain themselves during the initial period, many from poor and rural backgrounds shifted their profession.
- The Young Advocates Welfare Scheme is aimed at helping such fresh candidates to withstand the initial challenges.

Telangana

Telangana govt undertakes door-to-door survey to update non-agricultural property details through NAP app

- The state government has deployed teams of municipal staff to visit every single household to gather the property details through an app to update them on the **Dharani portal**. The government has decided to issue **non-agricultural property record (NAGPR)** to the owners as a comprehensive ownership document.
- The program has been taken up to update all current property details to simplify future registrations, according to officials. The properties are identified on the basis of **property tax identification number (PTIN)**. All the districts in the state have been divided into seven units for the purpose. Teams of three municipal administration officials are in the field under the supervision of a senior official who monitors the work from a control room at the district headquarter.

- Another team of officials has been appointed at the state control room to guide the field teams and sort out technical issues while working on the app.
- The government has decided to update online all non-agriculture properties such as houses, constructions near agriculture fields and wells, farm houses and beyond the village settlement areas and incorporate them in the Dharani web portal free of charge.
- Once the updation is complete, the owners would be given **maroon colour passbooks** with all the details while green color passbooks are given to the farmers for agricultural lands.
- The app is designed to register 52 details including the owner name, family members, Aadhaar number, the mode of ownership - whether through inheritance, purchase or gift, caste, electricity and water connection details, etc.
- All properties would be integrated with the Aadhaar of the owner.

Telangana CM launches revamped Dharani portal to end corruption during land registration

- **Telangana government** launched the **Dharani portal**, a first of its kind in the country, for storing digitised land records and registration of properties.
- Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao unveiled the portal at Muduchintalapalli village in Medchal-Malkajgiri.
- The portal, which can be accessed from anywhere in the world, will allow people to access property information, book slots for registration of land and can write their own documents (for registrations), using the open proformas available on the portal.
- It will take 15-20 days for the registration of non-agricultural properties to commence.
- The property registrations, except non-agriculture properties, resumed in the state with the launch of the Dharani portal.
- Earlier, farmers were supposed to go to the Revenue Division Office for mutation of records. Now, the mutation will be done automatically once the property registration is done.

Details of the Project:

- **Dharani project**, the Telangana government's **online facility** for **enlistment of non-agricultural properties**, has been conceptualised as a comprehensive system for safeguarding ownership and streamlining transactions related to immovable properties in the state.
- A digital database of **agricultural properties** has already been created and **Pattadar passbooks** (green) have been issued. Now, a similar database is proposed to be created for **non-agricultural properties** for which maroon colour Non-Agriculture Immovable Property Passbooks (NPBs) will be issued.
- The **maroon passbooks** will be printed with state-of-the-art security features. The data furnished by property owners will be stored in encrypted format on dedicated state government servers and will be used solely for the purpose of Dharani.
- In this regard, requisite information is already being collected from property owners using a specially-designed mobile app.
- To further supplement the effort, two new channels have been created for property owners in GHMC and other municipalities to furnish information. Property owners can access the portal and update details on their own using the URL **www.npb.telangana.gov.in** and also register at **MeeSeva centres**.
- This facility of enlisting properties at MeeSeva will be available free. In this regard, service charges payable to MeeSeva will be borne by the GHMC/municipality concerned.

Uttar Pradesh

UP govt decides to set up women help desk in every police station of state

- In a major decision related to **women security** in the state, **Uttar Pradesh** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered to establish **women help desks** in **each and every police station of state**.
- The official press release says that generally women hesitate in registering their complaints with male cops in police station. Keeping this in mind, Women police personnel will be given the charge of these women help desks so that every woman in state can register her complain freely and fearlessly.
- Government has directed to implement this order with immediate effect. The women police personnel deputed on helpdesk will not only listen to the complaints of women but will always be ready to help them anytime. Government had earlier established pink booths at various intersections of Lucknow.
- Women Cops are also deployed at major Crossings in various big cities including state capital Lucknow. It has also made arrangements to drop working women to their homes at odd hours.

UP cops to converse in regional dialects also on 112 helpline number

- In a novel initiative of Uttar Pradesh government, police personnel will also converse in regional dialects on 112 police Help Line to the convenience of the rural population of the state.
- As part of this scheme, it has been decided to include Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Braj, Bundeli and other local dialects in the system.

UP secured first rank in disbursing loans under PM Swanidhi Scheme

- Uttar Pradesh government has secured the first rank in central government's PM Atmanirbhar Nidhi Scheme (SVANidhi Scheme) by approving the highest number of loans under the scheme.

UP govt starts digital library to help students in higher education

- Uttar Pradesh government has started a digital library to help the students in higher education to get the education content in digital format.

UP Governor launches Safe City Project, a women's safety campaign, in Lucknow

- Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel on Saturday said the movement of women police personnel in Lucknow will inculcate a feeling of pride and safety for women in the city here.
- The Governor spoke while inaugurating the 'Safe City Project', a 180-day-long campaign under which the police and other departments will work towards safety of women.
- In a statement issued here, the UP Raj Bhavan said the Governor flagged off 100 pink scooties and 10 four-wheeler police vehicles. Lucknow is among eight cities in the country selected for the 'Safe City Project'.

UP govt to launch 6-month long women empowerment programme 'Mission Shakti' to raise awareness

- **Uttar Pradesh government** will launch **6-month long women** empowerment programme '**Mission Shakti**' to raise awareness and tackle crime against women in the state. Governor Anandiben Patel will launch the campaign in Lucknow while chief minister Yogi Adityanath will kick-start it in **Balrampur**. Ministers and other people's representatives will launch the campaign in other districts.
- Six month campaign has two phases, **Mission Shakti** and '**Operation Shakti**'. Mission Shakti will feature awareness campaigns related to women's safety. The CM's Office stated that initiatives like gender-based sensitisation, training, corporate activity, voice messages, interviews, programmes in Durga Puja and other cultural pandals should be organised to create greater awareness under 'Mission Shakti'.

- A weeklong special campaign will be launched every month during the campaign to create awareness among masses and sensitise people on the subject.

UP Govt to establish anti-human trafficking Police Stations in each and every district

- **Uttar Pradesh Government** has decided to establish **anti-human trafficking Police Stations** in each and every district in a major step towards the security of women and children.
- These Police Stations will be given enough powers to register the case and investigate the matter independently.
- The state government is going to establish **40 new anti-trafficking units** which will work like police stations in districts and will conduct investigation after registering the cases.
- Earlier, only 35 district in the state had Police stations of anti human trafficking unit which was established in 2011 and 2018.
- The new Police stations are being established after directives from women safety division of union Government. Union Government has also allocated funds for these units.

Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand CM inaugurates first Pirul power project

- Chief Minister **Trivendra Singh Rawat** recently inaugurated a **25-kilowatt capacity project** worth Rs. 25 lakhs for generating electricity using **Pirul (dry pine needles)** at **Chakon Dhanari** village in Dunda block of Uttarkashi district.
- The Chief Minister underlined that Uttarakhand, which currently purchases electricity worth Rs 1,000 crores stated such projects will also help the state financially.
- Rawat pointed out that about 23 lakh metric tonnes of Pirul is produced annually in the state, which can be used to generate about 200 megawatt of electricity.
- He further stated that Kalavasa is found in considerable quantities in the remote areas of the state and exhorted farmers to cultivate Kalavasa while citing the medical properties of this herb.

Uttarakhand CM launches forest and wildlife helpline 1926

- Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat launched a forest and wildlife helpline number 1926 which will ensure the protection of forests and tackling human-wildlife conflict.
- The "helpline will prove useful in resolving public grievances linked for forests and wildlife only if complaints received on it are addressed expeditiously."
- "The helpline will enable swift solutions to incidents occurring in forests, smuggling, poaching and other forest related crimes and issues. The focus must be laid on ensuring food for wildlife in the forests to tackle the challenge of protecting crops from wild animals.

Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Singh Rawat launches Saur Swarojgar Yojana to generate self-employment for youth, migrants

- **Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat** launched the **Mukhya Mantri Saur Swarojgar Yojana** for self-employment by solar energy farming at the Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali auditorium in **Dehradun**.
- The Yojana aims at **creating self-employment** for nearly **10,000 youths** in the state.
- The beneficiaries will be allocated solar plants of 25 kilowatts each. 10,000 people will get self-employment under this scheme.
- The installation of solar panels for integrated farming, fruits, vegetables and herbs can be produced on the same land. Seeds of climate-based medicinal and spongy plants will be provided free of cost on the land to be set up.

- The targeted beneficiaries, including the youth and migrants who have returned home after leaving their jobs in various parts of the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Asan Conservation Reserve becomes Uttarakhand's first Ramsar site

- **Asan Conservation Reserve** has become **Uttarakhand's first Ramsar site**, making it a '**Wetland of International Importance**', announced the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The Reserve is located on the banks of Yamuna river near Dehradun district in Garhwal region of the Himalayan state.
- "Ramsar declares Asan Conservation Reserve as a site of international importance. With this, the number of Ramsar sites in India goes up to 38, the highest in South Asia and Uttarakhand gets its first Ramsar site," tweeted the environment ministry. It cleared the category on species and ecological communities, one on water-birds and another on fish.
- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty adopted on February 2, 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea. The name of the Convention is usually written "Convention on Wetlands". The Convention on Wetlands came into force for India on February 1, 1982. Those wetlands which are of international importance are declared as Ramsar sites.
- Spread across 4.44 sq km area in Dehradun district on the banks of Yamuna river, Asan receives about 40 migratory species, including Rudy Shelduck, Common coot, Gadwall, Kingfisher, Indian cormorant, Baer's pochard, Northern pintail, Bar-headed goose.
- The criteria cleared by Asan Conservation Reserve to get Ramsar site tag include that it supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species, it supports populations of plant and/or animal species important for maintaining the biological diversity, it supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles and it is an important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path on which fish stocks, either within the wetland or elsewhere, depend.

Uttarakhand CM Rawat Launches Integrated Model Agricultural Village Scheme

- **Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat** inaugurated **Integrated Model Agricultural Village scheme (Ekikrit Adarsh Krishi Gram Yojana)** in the state in **partnership with NABARD**.
- Integrated Model Agricultural Village scheme is a concept which will prove to be a milestone in **strengthening the economy of farmers and doubling their income**.
- The limit for interest free loan given to farmers is being hiked to Rs 3 lakh from Rs 2 lakh.
- 10,000 people will be deployed to give impetus to water conservation efforts and reduce man-animal conflict which has become a deterrent for people wanting to take up agriculture as a means of livelihood.

West Bengal

West Bengal Launches Pathashree Abhijan Scheme

- **West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee** launched the **Pathashree Abhijan**, a **road repair scheme**, where more than 7,000 stretches of roads comprising 12,000 kilometers across the state will be repaired.
- Under the scheme the roads will be repaired in a mission mode and in a time-bound manner.
- The government of West Bengal has collated a list of the roads that will be repaired under the new scheme after the people of the state reached out to her through the '**Didi Ke Bolo**' initiative of the government.
- 'Didi Ke Bolo' campaign to address public grievances. The state government unveiled a website and provided a telephone number, through which people could register their complaints.

West Bengal Government Launches Campaign To Curb Elephant Deaths Due To Electrocution

- **West Bengal government** launched a **campaign** in areas adjoining **elephant habitats** in the northern part of the state.
- This campaign has been launched **to prevent electrocution deaths of elephants**.
- The campaign will focus on areas adjoining **Buxa Tiger Reserve, Jaldapara and Gorumara national parks**.
- The campaign to prevent elephant deaths due to electrocution has been launched in villages and tea gardens of Bagdogra and Naxabari area of Darjeeling district as well.

Revision Points

State	Capital	Chief Minister	Governor
Andhra Pradesh	Amaravati	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 Koshiyari (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	BandaruDattatraya
Jharkhand	Ranchi	Hemant Soren	Droupadi Murmu
Karnataka	Bengaluru	B S Yediyurappa	VajubhaiRudabhaiVala
Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram	Pinarayi Vijayan	Arif Mohammed Khan
Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	Shivraj Singh Chouhan	Anandiben Patel
Maharashtra	Mumbai	Uddhav Thackrey	Bhagat Singh Koshiyari
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	Trivendra Singh Rawat	Baby Rani Maurya
West Bengal	Kolkata	Mamata Banerjee	Jagdeep Dhankhar

Important National News

List of Schemes

Schemes/Campaign/Initiative	Launched by
Jagananna Vidya Kanuka	Andhra Pradesh
YSR Bima scheme	Andhra Pradesh
Swa-nirbhar Naari: Atmanirbhar Asom	Assam
Yuddh Pradushan Ke Virudh	Delhi
Red Light On, Gaadi Off	Delhi
Digital Seva Setu Programme	Gujarat
'DISHTAVO' YouTube channel	Goa
Swachhta Pakhwada	Haryana
SAKHI	Jammu and Kashmir
My Town My Pride	Jammu and Kashmir
Bhagyalakshmi scheme	Karnataka
Drink from the tap Mission-Sujal	Odisha
Smart Black Board scheme	Tamil Nadu
Mission Shakti	Uttar Pradesh
Mukhya Mantri Saur Swarojgar Yojana	Uttarakhand
Integrated Model Agricultural Village scheme (Ekikrit Adarsh Krishi Gram Yojana)	Uttarakhand
Pathashree Abhijan Scheme	West Bengal
Operation My Saheli	South Eastern Railway
Sunidhi	Central government
My Ganga My Dolphin campaign	National Mission for Clean Ganga, Wildlife Institute of India & Forest Department
Jan Andolan	PM Narendra Modi
Jan Andolan Campaign	Ministry of AYUSH
Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojna	Dr Harsh Vardhan
'KAPILA' Kalam Program	Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'
Ayushman Sahakar scheme	Narendra Singh Tomar (formulated by National Cooperative Development Corporation)

Meri Saheli initiative	Railway Protection Force, Visakhapatnam
CSIR Ushered Repurposed Drugs (CuRED)	Dr Harsh Vardhan
Life in Miniature	Prahlad Singh Patel
Kisan Suryodaya Yojana	PM Narendra Modi
Arogya Van	PM Narendra Modi
Meri Saheli	Indian Railways
SERB-POWER (Promoting Opportunities for Women in Exploratory Research)	Dr Harsh Vardhan

NITI Aayog and Embassy of the Netherlands sign Statement of Intent on 'Decarbonization and Energy Transition Agenda'

- **NITI Aayog and Embassy of the Netherlands**, New Delhi, signed a **Statement of Intent (Sol)** to support the **decarbonization and energy transition agenda for accommodating cleaner and more energy**.
- The Sol was signed by **NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant** and **Ambassador of the Netherlands to India Marten van den Berg**.
- Through this collaboration, NITI Aayog and the Dutch Embassy seek a strategic partnership to create a platform that enables a comprehensive collaboration among stakeholders and influencers, including policymakers, industry bodies, OEMs, private enterprises, and sector experts.
- The focus of the partnership is on co-creating innovative technological solutions by leveraging the expertise of the two entities. This will be achieved through an exchange of knowledge and collaborative activities.
- Key elements include i) lowering the net carbon footprint in industrial and transport sectors ii) realise the target potential of natural gas and promote bio-energy technologies iii) adopt clean air technologies from monitoring to reducing actual particulates iv) adopt next-generation technologies, such as hydrogen, carbon capture utilization, and storage for sectoral energy efficiency v) financial frameworks to deliver and adopt climate change finance.

Thaawarchand Gehlot launches Ambedkar Social Innovation & Incubation Mission under Venture Capital Fund for SCs

- **Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot** launched the **Ambedkar Social Innovation and Incubation Mission under Venture Capital Fund for SCs**, with a view to promoting innovation and enterprise among SC students studying in higher educational institutions.
- The objective of this fund is to provide concessional finance to the entities of the SC entrepreneurs. Under this fund, 117 companies promoted by SC entrepreneurs have been sanctioned financial assistance to set up business ventures.
- The Minister stated, under Ambedkar Social Innovation Incubation Mission initiative, one thousand SC youth will be identified in the next four years with start-up ideas through the Technology Business Incubators in various higher educational institutions.
- They will be funded 30 lakh rupees in three years as equity funding to translate their start-up ideas into commercial ventures. Successful ventures would further qualify for venture funding of up to five Crore rupees from the Venture Capital Fund for SCs.

Centre releases COVID-19 Safe Workplace Guidelines for Industry

- Union Health Minister **Dr. Harsh Vardhan** and Labour Minister **Santosh Kumar Gangwar** have virtually released a booklet on '**COVID-19- Safe Workplace Guidelines for Industry**' in the presence of Member (Health) in NITI Aayog, VK Paul.
- Health Minister stated, the guidelines will act as a comprehensive planning guidance for employers and workers to use it to help identify risk levels of Covid-19 at individual workplace settings in their premises and to determine appropriate control measures.
- The Minister stated, these guidelines consolidate all important measures into a ready reckoner of action points to make the workplace safe based on the bulwark of infection control measures like respiratory hygiene, frequent hand washing, social distancing and frequent sanitization of the workplace.
- Labour Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar stated, these guidelines for safety of industrial workers will encourage people. He stated, it is important to prepare ourselves mentally for the present situation and spread awareness about the COVID appropriate behaviour.

South Eastern Railway launches project to enhance security of women passengers

- The South Eastern Railway has launched **Operation My Saheli** to boost the security of women passengers in trains, an official stated. '**Operation My Saheli (friend)** gives security to women passengers during their journey on train.
- It has been introduced as a pilot project in three trains **Howrah-Yeshvantpur Durgam Special**.
- The sub-inspector teams collect the seat numbers and contacts of a specified number of women passengers and remain in touch with them throughout their journey.
- The information is also passed to all scheduled stoppage stations and destination stations, it stated.
- The project has been executed under the framework of the '**Nirbhaya Fund**', and it does not involve any additional expenditure under the head of Railways, the statement added.

Tamil Nadu and Arunachal Pradesh integrated with existing national portability cluster under One Nation One Ration Card Scheme

- Two more States, **Tamil Nadu and Arunachal Pradesh** have been integrated with existing national portability cluster of 26 States/UTs under **One Nation One Ration Card**.
- With this, a total of **28 States/UTs** are now seamlessly connected with each other under the One Nation One Ration Card plan.
- "One Nation One Ration Card" plan, which aims to provide an option to all **NFSA beneficiaries**. The beneficiaries of these states can lift their entitled foodgrains under NFSA from any ePoS enabled Fair Price Shop (FPS) of their choice anywhere in the country, by using their existing/same ration card with Aadhaar authentication on **ePoS device**.

PM to dedicate to nation world's longest high altitude tunnel 'Atal Tunnel' on Oct 3

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate to the nation **the world's longest high altitude tunnel, the Atal Tunnel**, at **Rohtang**. It is built at an altitude of 10000 feet. The **9.2 km long highway tunnel** has been constructed at an estimated cost of 3,200 crore rupees.
- The tunnel will prove to be beneficial for the development of the tribal area of **Lahaul-Spiti** which remains isolated for six months due to heavy snowfall at **Rohtang Pass**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the world's longest 9.2 km all-weather motorable Atal tunnel Rohtang located at an altitude of 10,000 feet to the people of the country. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will also be present on this occasion.

Arjun Munda to launch largest market of tribal products 'Tribes India E-Marketplace'

- Minister of Tribal Affairs **Arjun Munda** will virtually launch **India's largest handicraft and organic products marketplace- Tribes India E-Marketplace** on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti.
- TRIFED will showcase the produce and handicrafts of tribal enterprises from across the country. It will help them market their products directly.
- Mr Arjun Munda will also flag off several other TRIFED initiatives that are aimed to support tribal brethren. These include the inauguration of Tribes India's 123rd and 124th outlets in Rishikesh and Kolkata, inclusion of new tribal product ranges from the states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh and partnership of TRIFED and Tribes India with Amazon in their Seller Flex program. Mr Munda will also launch Pakur Honey which is 100 per cent natural honey, gathered by Santhal Tribals from Pakur, Jharkhand.

Centre agrees to waive interest on interest during moratorium for individual, MSME loans up to Rs 2 crore

- The **Government** has informed the Supreme Court that loans up to **Rs.2 crore** taken by individuals and **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** will be eligible for waiver of compound interest during the **six-month moratorium period**, i.e., March-August 2020.
- In other words, these borrowers will not have to pay interest on interest. During the period of moratorium, interest accrued in case of equated monthly instalment (EMI) deferred becomes a part of principal and then interest calculated on the larger base. This compound interest is basically interest on interest.
- Though, the government has not mentioned the cost of this waiver, according to industry sources, it could be up to Rs.6,000 crore and likely to be paid by the Centre.
- The affidavit listed eight categories of loans for waiver of compound interest. These include – MSME loans up to Rs.2 crore, education loans up to Rs.2 crore, housing loan up to Rs.2 crore, consumer durable loans up to Rs.2 crore, credit card dues up to Rs.2 crore, auto loans up to Rs.2 crore, personal loans to professionals up to Rs.2 crore and consumption loans up to Rs.2 crore.
- According to affidavit, full waiver of interest on all the loans and advances to all classes and categories of borrowers for six-months period would cost Rs.6-lakh crore. "If the banks were to bear this burden, it would necessarily wipe out a substantial and major part of their net worth, rendering most of the banks unviable and raising a very serious question mark over their very survival," it stated.

'Sunidhi' project to digitise provident fund, pension services of CMPFO

- The government announced the launch of an ambitious information technology project '**Sunidhi**' to digitise all **provident fund** and pension related activities of the **Coal Mines Provident Fund Organisation (CMPFO)**.
- CMPFO, a statutory body under the coal ministry, administers different schemes of provident fund, pension and deposit linked insurance for coal mine workers.
- The Sunidhi module was inaugurated by settling the provident fund and pension dues of three retired employees of Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCCL) in the virtual presence of Coal Secretary Anil Kumar Jain and Coal India (CIL) Chairman Pramod Agrawal, among others.
- The information technology project is an effort to digitise all provident fund and pension fund related activities of CMPFO so as to make the system more robust, the ministry stated.
- This software application is running from its data centre at Hyderabad in sync with the **Disaster Recovery Centre** at Bhubaneswar.
- **CMPFO** was established in 1948 through an Act of Parliament to administer different schemes of provident fund, pension and deposit linked insurance for coal mine workers.

- These schemes are administered through the board of trustees, comprising 23 members representing the Centre, state governments and employees' representatives under the chairmanship of the coal secretary.

Jal Shakti Minister launches 100-day campaign to provide potable piped water in Schools and Anganwadi Centres

- **Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** launched a **100-day campaign** to provide potable piped water supply in Schools and Anganwadi Centres. This mission was envisaged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while releasing the '**Margdarshika**' for Gram Panchayats and Paani Samitis for implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission. The Prime Minister had appealed to the States to make best use of this campaign to ensure provision of potable piped water supply in these public institutions.
- Under the Jal Jeevan Mission States and Union Territories are to ensure that during the campaign, Gram Sabhas are convened at the earliest to pass a resolution for providing safe water in all schools, anganwadi centres and other public institutions in the village in the next 100 days.
- These facilities will be operated and maintained by the Gram Panchayat and its sub-committee. The Ministry stated this is a befitting tribute to the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on his 151st birth anniversary. Jal Jeevan Mission aims at the universal coverage of provision of tap water connection to every rural home by 2024. Under the mission, special focus is on women and children.

Piyush Goyal Inaugurates Renaming Of Naugarh Railway Station To Siddharthnagar

- **Railway Minister Piyush Goyal** through a video link inaugurated the **renaming of Naugarh railway station to Siddharthnagar railway station** situated at Siddharthnagar district in **Uttar Pradesh**.
- The approval has been given for the construction of a new railway line of 240 km from Khalilabad to Bahraich via Dumariyaganj-Utraula-Balrampur-Shravasti. With the completion of this project, the development of Sant Kabir Nagar, Siddharthnagar, Shravasti, Bahraich and Gonda districts will be accelerated.

India's first 5 Animal bridges to come up on this greenfield expressway

- The road infra structure development is currently one of the major focuses of the government as various expressway projects are underway in the country. The construction of one such highway project and also the most awaited is **Delhi-Mumbai greenfield expressway**. This upcoming expressway is tipped to be the longest greenfield expressways that is expected to be completed by **2024**.
- While there are many features of this upcoming expressway that will lead to better connectivity between the two metropolis, one such highlights of the Delhi-Mumbai expressway is going to be **animal bridges** or **animal overpasses**.
- The upcoming expressway project will have **India's first animal bridges or animal overpasses** that will be designed keeping in mind not to disturb the environment and wildlife section that comes up on way of over 1,200 km long expressway.
- In total, the Delhi-Mumbai expressway will have 5 such animal overpasses with a combined length of over 2.5 km.
- These bridges have been planned to abide by the concerns of not disturbing the wildlife movement on a section of **Ranthambore Wildlife Corridor** that comes on way connecting Ranthambore and Mukundra (Darrah) wildlife sanctuaries in Rajasthan.

Integration between PM SVANidhi & SBI portals 'API' launched to ease processing of loan applications

- Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra launched the Application Programming Interface, integration between the **PM SVANidhi Portal** and the **State Bank of India** portal to ease processing of loan applications.

- This integration will facilitate seamless flow of data between the PM SVANidhi Portal and **SBI's e-Mudra Portal** in a secure environment and expedite the loan sanctioning and disbursement process, which will benefit the street vendors seeking working capital loan under the scheme.
- The Ministry is implementing Prime Minister Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi, PM SVANidhi Scheme since 1st June this year, for providing affordable working capital loan to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to COVID-19 lockdown.
- This scheme targets to benefit over 50 lakh Street Vendors who had been vending on or before 24th of March this year, in urban areas. Under the scheme, the vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to ten thousand, which is repayable in monthly installments in the tenure of one year.

My Ganga My Dolphin campaign launched at six sites across river Ganga

- The **National Mission for Clean Ganga**, the **Wildlife Institute of India** and the **Forest Department** launched the **My Ganga My Dolphin campaign** on the occasion of **Ganga River Dolphin Day**.
- A Dolphin-based ecotourism programme was launched at various sites along the Ganga River. It was started in **six sites** across the states of **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal**.
- "This is a joint venture of WII, NMCG and the State Forest Departments, for sustainable tourism linking livelihood through Dolphin Conservation for ecotourism along the Ganga river,".
- The **Ganga Praharis** in all the sites have been trained in biodiversity-based eco-tourism and will take the tourists on boat rides to view Dolphin and another biodiversity present in the Ganga River.
- "In the My Ganga My Dolphin campaign, Dolphin census will be conducted in the 250 km stretch from **Bijnore to Narora**, many community awareness campaigns will be carried out and young volunteers will be encouraged to enrol as Ganga Mitras," the statement added

Govt launches online startup discovery platform 'Startup India Showcase'

- The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** launched an online discovery platform for startups called "**Startup India Showcase**".
- The website will feature startups handpicked by experts that have gone through multiple rounds of screening and evaluation.
- The website will also feature companies that have won national competitions, are successful sellers on the **Government e-Marketplace portal**, are solving critical problems, and have shown exceptional innovation in their sectors.
- The website will include startups from across sectors such as fintech, enterprise tech, social impact, healthtech, and edtech, among others.

Union Cabinet approves signing of Memorandum of cooperation in field of cyber-security between India & Japan

- The cabinet also gave its approval for signing a **Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC)** in the field of **cyber-security** between **India and Japan**.
- The MoC will enhance cooperation in areas of mutual interest, which includes capacity building in the area of cyberspace, protection of critical infrastructure, cooperation in emerging technologies, sharing information on cyber security threats and malicious cyber activities. Another MoU was signed between **Zoological Survey of India** and its Canadian Counterpart on bar coding of faunal Genomes.
- The Cabinet also approved the ratification of seven chemicals listed under **Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)**. The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and environment

from POPs, which are identified chemical substances that persist in the environment, bio-accumulate in living organisms, adversely affect human health and have the property of long-range environmental transport

PM Modi launches 'Jan Andolan' campaign for COVID-19 Appropriate Behaviour

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched a campaign by way of a **Tweet** on **Jan Andolan** for COVID-19 **Appropriate Behaviour**. The campaign has been launched in view of the upcoming festivals and winter season as well as the opening up of the economy.
- Mr Modi appealed to the people to unite to fight Corona. He urged the people to always remember to wear a mask, wash hands, follow social distancing and practice '**Do Gaz Ki Doori**.' He stated, together, we will succeed and win against COVID-19.
- The Prime Minister stated, India's COVID-19 fight is people driven and gets great strength from our COVID warriors. He stated, our collective efforts have helped saved many lives. Mr Modi stated, we have to continue the momentum and protect our citizens from the virus.

Smriti Irani launches first ever Brand & Logo for Indian Cotton on 2nd World Cotton Day

- **Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani** launched the **first ever Brand and Logo for Indian Cotton** on Second World Cotton Day through video conferencing
- Now India's premium cotton would be known as '**Kasturi Cotton**' in the world cotton trade. The Kasturi Cotton brand will represent Whiteness, Brightness, Softness, Purity, Luster, Uniqueness and Indianness.
- The Minister recounted the importance of cotton in Indian economy. She stated, cotton is one of the principal commercial crops of the country and it provides livelihood to about six million cotton farmers. She stated, India is the **second largest cotton producer** and the largest consumer of cotton in the world.
- It produces about six million tonnes of cotton every year which is about 23 per cent of the world cotton. She stated, India produces about 51 per cent of the total organic cotton production of the world, which demonstrates India's effort towards sustainability.
- Ms Irani also stated that Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) made ever highest Minimum Support Price (MSP) operation of cotton. She hoped that during the new cotton season, the procurement under MSP will be increased. She stated, CCI has opened 430 procurement centres in all cotton growing states and payments are being made digitally to farmers' account within 72 hours.

NITI Aayog, MNRE and Invest India hold symposium on solar PV manufacturing

- **NITI Aayog, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), and Invest India** organized a symposium on solar PV manufacturing, "**India PV Edge-2020**", on **6 October** to inform the global PV industry of opportunities in India.
- In addition to the vision of **450 GW** installed renewables capacity by **2030**, India has a plan not only for grid-connected solar and renewables but also an ambitious vision for mobility, followed by electricity-based cooking. As a result of the government's measures to achieve Aatmanirbhar Bharat, already EoIs for 20 GW of the module and cell manufacturing have been issued. India will continue to be the fastest and largest-growing market for investment in renewables."
- Around 60 prominent Indian and global CEOs attended the event, along with a number of global PV manufacturers, developers, investors, think tanks, and top policymakers. An investor's roundtable was also organized after the pitching sessions to deliberate on ways to mobilize affordable capital into solar manufacturing.
- India now has the **third-largest solar** installed capacity in the world. It is one of the few countries on track to meet its three key NDC targets – achieve 40% non-fossil-fuel-based installed power capacity, reduce 33%–35% emissions,

and create a carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tons of carbon dioxide – by 2030. India is likely to achieve these goals much earlier.

Union Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot inaugurates virtual “International conference on Mental Health: Looking Beyond COVID 19”

- Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment **Thaawarchand Gehlot** inaugurated the virtual “**International conference on Mental Health: Looking Beyond COVID 19**” through video conferencing.
- He also spoke about the recent initiatives of the government including setting up of National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation at Sehore in Madhya Pradesh and KIRAN mental health rehabilitation helpline for addressing mental health issues.
- Prof. Craig Jeffrey, Director of Australia-India Institute co-chaired the conference.

Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' virtually inaugurates Gyan Circle Ventures

- Union Minister for Education **Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** virtually inaugurated the **Gyan Circle Ventures**, a MeitY funded Technology Business Incubator (TBI) of Indian Institute of Information Technology, Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh through Video Conference.
- Mr. Pokhriyal stated that Innovation is the engine that powers the progress of the nation.
- He stated innovation and entrepreneurship needs to be fostered to ensure self-sustainability and remain a global leader.
- The Minister stated that centers like ‘Gyan Circle ventures’ instill entrepreneurship in young minds and steward them to become successful innovators.

Government to launch Ayurveda and Yoga protocols for management of Covid-19

- **The National Clinical Management Protocol** based on **ayurveda and yoga** for the management of coronavirus disease (Covid-19) will be jointly released by Union health and family welfare minister Harsh Vardhan and **minister for Ayush (ayurveda, yoga & naturopathy, unani, siddha and homoeopathy) Shripad Yesso Naik**. The event will be held virtually.
- The government has been promoting medicinal herbs under the Ayush system for people to improve their immunity levels to be able to fight off infections.
- Last month, the Union health ministry issued guidelines on managing post-recovery symptoms of Covid-19 such as fatigue, body ache, cough, sore throat, breathing difficulty, etc., which largely promoted medicinal herbs for the purpose.
- “Take immunity promoting Ayush medicine to be practiced and prescribed by a qualified practitioner of Ayush. If health permits, regular household work to be done. Professional work to be resumed in graded manner. Depending on the physical condition, mild to moderate exercise daily such as yogasana, pranayama and meditation... breathing exercises as prescribed by treating physician and daily morning or evening walk at a comfortable pace as tolerated,” the ministry’s guidelines advise.
- The Ayush ministry also approved a clinical study last month to assess the role of medicinal herbs vasa and guduchi in the therapeutic management of symptoms in Covid-19 cases.

Dr Harsh Vardhan Inaugurates DBT-BIRAC Clean Tech Demo Park In Delhi

- **Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr Harsh Vardhan** inaugurated the “**DBT-BIRAC Clean Tech Demo Park**” at Barapullah drain site, New Delhi in a virtual event.

- Clean Tech Demo Park at Barapullah drain site is a Department of Biotechnology (DBT) initiative that will demonstrate innovative waste-to-value technologies.
- This Clean Tech Demo Park would be a good attraction not only for Innovators, Investors but also for students and common public for awareness and popularization of clean technological solution for waste management.
- The novel indigenous technologies developed for the treatment of sewage and industrial wastewaters should be promoted and given wide publicity to ensure their commercialization and adoption for achieving Swachh Bharat and Atmanirbhar Bharat goals.
- The **DBT-BIRAC Clean Tech Demo Park** will be used to demonstrate innovative **Waste-to-Value technologies** with support from **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)**, the Government of India, and the **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)**, a DBT PSU.
- This park will be managed by the **Clean Energy International Incubation Centre (CEIIC)**, a public-private-partnership incubator set up jointly by DBT, BIRAC and Tata Power.

Coal Ministry launches website for research endeavors in coal sector

- **Ministry of Coal** has launched the website to promote **Research & Development (R&D) activities** of the ministry and attract research institutes for R&D endeavors in coal sector.
- Shri Anil Jain launched the **website (<https://scienceandtech.cmpdi.co.in/>)** during the 56th meeting of Standing Scientific Research Committee of the Ministry. Coal India R&D arm, **Central Mines Planning & Design Institute Limited(CMPDI)** has **designed and developed this website**.
- The website will help in disseminating and promoting the knowledge and research work in the coal sector.
- MoC has been promoting R&D activities in Coal & Lignite sectors through its Coal Science & Technology (S&T) Plan for improvement in production, productivity, safety, coal beneficiation & utilization, protection of environment & ecology, clean coal technology & allied fields etc. MoC also provides funds to carry out research work on these subjects.

Narendra Modi launches physical distribution of property cards under SWAMITVA scheme

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has launched the **physical distribution of property cards** under the **SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages And Mapping With Improvised Technology In Village Areas) scheme** via videoconferencing that enables rural masses to use the property as a financial asset.
- The move will pave the way for villagers to use property as a financial asset for taking loans and other financial benefits.
- The launch will enable around one lakh property holders to download their property cards through an SMS link sent on their mobile phones, and this would be followed by the physical distribution of property cards by respective state governments.
- Prime Minister Modi also interacted with some of the beneficiaries during the event. Union Minister for Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Narendra Singh Tomar were present.

About Property Card

- A property card is the land record of ownership and history of ownership of the land in an urban area. Normally, when your land property is located in a municipal area and has got city survey number, the details of transfers of ownership/ transactions of such property are recorded in the property card. So, a property card basically provides information about the ownership of a property and the history of holdings of land located in an urban area. If you are

planning to buy land in an urban area, it is essential that you check the property card of the seller and ensure his/her ownership of the land.

Details included in Property Card:

- Name of the landowner
- Survey number of land
- Area of the land
- Location
- Changes in ownership
- Details of loans taken by the owner from government agencies
- Details of pending litigations, if any
- Details of tax levied on the land. This includes paid and unpaid taxes

PM Modi releases Rs 100 commemorative coin in honour of Vijaya Raje Scindia

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** released a commemorative **100 rupee coin** in the honour of **Vijaya Raje Scindia**. One of the founder members of BJP, Vijaya Raje Scindia is also popularly known as the **Rajmata of Gwalior**.
- The special commemorative coin was minted by the **Finance Ministry** as a part of these celebrations.
- She was a Jana Sangh leader and one of the founding members of the BJP.
- Coming from a royal family, **Scindia** was one of the major faces of the saffron party and vocal proponent of its core Hindutva issues.
- She was born on October 12, 1919. Her daughter Vasundhara Raje and grandson Jyotiraditya Scindia are senior BJP leaders.

All eight beaches recommended by Govt gets coveted International Blueflag Certification: Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar

- Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar stated that all **eight beaches** recommended by the Government has got the coveted **International Blueflag Certification**.
- The beaches which got International Blueflag Certification are Shivrajpur beach in Dwarka Gujarat, Ghoghla beach in Diu, Kasarkod and Padubidri in Karnataka, Kappad in Kerala, Rushikonda in Andhra Pradesh, Golden Beach in Odisha and Radhanagar beach in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The **iconic Blue Flag** is one of the world's most recognised voluntary awards for beaches, marinas.
- In order to qualify for the Blue Flag, a series of stringent environmental, educational, safety and accessibility criteria is met and maintained.
- A world-renowned award trusted by millions around the globe, the Blue Flag programme is operated under the auspices of the Foundation for Environmental Education, FEE and is headquartered in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Nirmala Sitharaman announces major schemes to boost demand in country by Rs 73,000 Cr

- Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** announced major schemes to boost demands in the country by nearly **73 thousand crore rupees**.
- Ms. Sitharaman informed that the new proposals aim at giving a thrust of around **36 thousand crore rupees** to the consumer demands by the Leave Travel Concession LTC Voucher and Festival advance scheme. Additionally she stated, **37 thousand crore rupees** will be infused in the capital expenditure by the Centre and the State Governments.
- The Finance Minister informed that the new proposal is likely to cost nearly 5 thousand 675 crore rupees to the Central Government. In her announcement towards special assistance for states for utilisation under capital

expenditure, the Finance Minister informed that special interest free loans with a 50 year repayment term and amounting to 12 thousand crore rupees will be disbursed. Under the assistance scheme, 2 thousand 500 crore rupees will be given to the North Eastern States and Northern States Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Seven thousand 500 crore rupees will be given to other states in proportion to their share in Finance Commission devolution.

- The Minister also announced that an additional amount of 25 thousand crore rupees will be provided by the Centre through capital expenditure on roads, defence infrastructure, water supply, urban development and domestically produced capital equipment.

MoRTH enhances allocation of funds for SARDP-NE related works

- **The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** has enhanced the allocation of funds for expenditure under **Special Accelerated Road Development Programme in North Eastern Areas (SARDP-NE)** related works during the current financial year.
- Under the revised allocation, almost double the amount originally allocated has been allowed. Against the earlier Rs **390 crore** expenditure envisaged to be incurred from National Investment Fund during 2020-21, a sum of Rs 760 crore has been set aside for the same period. Of this, Rs 300 crore is specifically marked for Arunachal Pradesh package.
- Additionally, the allocations to National Highways in NE Region under 10% mandatory Pool Fund has been on an upward route in the last five years.
- A sum of Rs 4,520 crore was allocated for the year 2016-17, Rs 5,265 crore for the year 2017-18, Rs 6,210 crore for the year 2018-19, Rs 6,070 crore was allocated for the year 2019-20, and Rs **6,780 crore has been allocated for the year 2020-21.**

Atal Innovation Mission collaborates with CGI to promote innovation across schools

- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog**, has signed a Statement of Intent with **CGI India** in order to promote innovation across the schools.
- Atal Innovation Mission, AIM has collaborated with CGI India which is one among the largest IT and business consulting services firms, for creating a successful and innovative workforce from the **Atal Tinkering Lab**, ATL schools.
- As part of the Statement of Intent, CGI has agreed to adopt 100 schools with ATLs across Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad and Mumbai to promote and train students. CGI volunteers will coach and mentor students at the ATLs to enhance technical literacy and provide immersive learning experiences to the students through hands-on experience using STEM tools.
- CGI will also conduct training workshops for teachers at select schools on topics such as design thinking, computational thinking, robotics and coding.
- **AIM** is the **flagship programme** of the Government that promotes a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across country. Its **ATLs** are accessed by over 2.5 million school kids in India. ATL is a dedicated innovation workspace set-up at schools where students get access to do-it-yourself (DIY) kits and learn to tinker and create innovative solutions using the latest technologies.

TRIFED in Collaboration with Chhattisgarh MFP Federation and IIT, Kanpur to Launch "Tech for Tribals Initiative"

- **TRIFED** under **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** in collaboration with **Chhattisgarh MFP Federation** and IIT, Kanpur will be launching Tech for Tribals initiative. In order to provide advance level training to the Vandhan tribal beneficiaries,

TRIFED has collaborated with MSME through its ESDP scheme for providing skill upgrading and entrepreneurial capacity building support to the Van Dhan tribal beneficiaries to establish their sustainable enterprise.

- The program titled "**Tech for Tribals**" aims at the holistic development of tribals with a focus on entrepreneurship development, soft skills, IT, and business development through SHGs operating through Van Dhan Kendras (VDVKs).
- The beneficiaries will undergo a 30 days program over six weeks comprising 120 sessions. The training will be initially held from 12th Oct. to 7th Nov., 2020, in which Vandhan beneficiaries across all districts of Chhattisgarh State will be trained on various facets of micro-enterprise creation, management and functioning.
- The training module developed by IIT, Kanpur will be disseminated among beneficiaries in a phased manner through various modes like online lectures and trainings, online activities and gradually move to face to face interactions in class rooms, practical, onsite visits and exposure visits.

India among top 3 overseas investment destinations'

- **India** will be one of the **top three overseas investment destinations** for the **next two-three years**, according to a survey by **Confederation of Indian Industries (CII)** and **EY**, which assessed the country's competitiveness on selected parameters.
- According to the survey, India is the number one choice for future investments for over two-thirds of multinational companies. More than 80% of all respondents and 71% of the non-India headquartered respondents plan to invest globally over the next two-three years and about 30% companies were planning to invest over **\$500 million** each globally.
- It stated new investments will be driven by capacity expansion, digital transformation, research and development and greenfield investments. The respondents stated market potential, skilled workforce and political stability are the top reasons to make India their favoured destination.

PM Modi to release commemorative coin on 75th anniversary of FAO

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will release a **commemorative coin** of **Rs 75 denomination** on the **75th anniversary** of the **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** to mark India's long-standing relations with the UN agency.
- Modi will also dedicate to the nation 17 recently developed biofortified varieties of eight crops.
- India's proposals for declaring 2016 as the International Year of Pulses and **2023 as the International Year of Millets** have also been endorsed by the FAO.
- Indian civil service officer Binay Ranjan Sen was the Director General of FAO during 1956-1967. **The World Food Programme**, which has **won the Nobel Peace Prize 2020**, was established during his time.

Prolonged closure of schools may cost India \$400 billion: World Bank

- According to the recent **World Bank** report titled '**Beaten or Broken?** Informality and Covid-19 in South Asia', the prolonged closure of schools in India could cost the country over **\$400 billion** in future earnings.
- For the continent, the estimated loss, in an optimistic scenario, stands at **\$622 billion**, while for the pessimistic scenario, this could stand at **\$880 billion**. The report added that this continental loss is largely driven by India.
- The report further estimated that the South Asian region is going to witness its worst-ever recession this year, exacerbated by the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The report noted: "Temporary school closures in all South Asian countries have had major implications for students. They have kept 391 million students out of school in primary and secondary education, further complicating efforts to resolve the learning crisis."

- It added: "While most governments have made enormous efforts to mitigate the impact of school closures, it has been difficult to engage children through remote learning initiatives."
- The report stated that around **55 lakh students** may drop out of the education system that can have a lifetime impact on them.

Cabinet approves World Bank supported 'STARS' project to boost school education system

- The **Union Cabinet** has approved **World Bank** supported **Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States - STARS project**. The Project seeks to support States in developing, implementing, evaluating and improving interventions with direct linkages to improved education outcomes. Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar stated that the total project cost is **5 thousand 718 crore rupees** with the financial support of World Bank amounting to **500 million US dollar**.
- Mr Javadekar stated, STARS project would be implemented as a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme under Department of School Education and Literacy. He stated, it will cover six States, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Odisha. The Minister stated, this is an important milestone and the beginning of the New Education Policy.

Ministry of AYUSH launches Jan Andolan Campaign on COVID-19

- The **Ministry of AYUSH** has launched the **Jan Andolan Campaign** on COVID-19.
- This Andolan is regarding "**Public Health Response to COVID-19: Campaign for COVID-Appropriate Behaviour**" which has been launched Prime Minister.
- In the Ayush Sector, the practitioners and other Ayush professionals will act as catalysts for dissemination of relevant information throughout the country. The campaign emphasizes on "**Unlock with Precautions**".
- The three key messages which are being highlighted across the sector are - "**Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, and Maintain Hand Hygiene**."

Government sets up a panel of secretaries headed by Rajiv Gauba to streamline telecom spectrum allocation

- The **government** has constituted a **panel of secretaries** under **cabinet secretary Rajiv Gauba** to streamline the **spectrum allocation process** and examine the **possibility of drawing up** an annual calendar for auction of airwaves that will give telcos a clear road map of the quantum as well as the frequency of spectrum on offer for commercial use.
- Besides Gauba, the panel comprises the secretaries of home, defence, railways, telecom, I&B and department of space. People familiar with the matter stated that the ambit of the panel may be widened in the future to also include spectrum pricing issues. The committee had its first meeting.
- Telcos have for long been demanding that the government gives a clear road map for auctioning spectrum, which would help them plan and allocate resources efficiently, roll out latest technologies, optimise networks and ensure quality services. In the past 10 years, the government has auctioned spectrum six times – in calendar years 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 – but has refrained from giving any clarity on the frequency of future airwaves sale.

Cabinet Decisions

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved a **Special Package worth Rs.520 crore** in the UTs of J&K and Ladakh for a period of five years till FY 2023-24 and ensure funding of **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** in the UTs of Jammu and Kashmir & Ladakh on a demand driven basis without linking allocation with poverty ratio during this extended period.

- Cabinet approved MoU between **India and Australia** for collaboration in capacity building, research and development and making impact for sustainable groundwater management.
- Implementation of the **Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS)** project with a total project cost of **Rs 5718 crore** with the financial support of **World Bank amounting to US \$ 500 million** (approximately Rs. 3700 crore).

Dr Harsh Vardhan launches second phase of “Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojna” for underprivileged thalassemic patients

- **Union health minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan**, launched the second phase of “**Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojna**” for the underprivileged thalassemic patients, virtually from Nirman Bhawan.
- **Launched in 2017**, this scheme is a **CoalIndia CSR funded Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation (HSCT) programme** that aims to provide a one-time cure opportunity for haemoglobinopathies like thalassaemia and sickle cell disease for patients who have a matched family donor.
- The CSR initiative was targeted to provide financial assistance to a total of 200 patients by providing a package cost not exceeding **Rs. 10 lakhs per HSCT**.

Foreign Secretary inaugurates 1st edition of Lectures designed to introduce India to foreign diplomats posted in New Delhi

- The **first edition of Lectures** designed to introduce India to foreign diplomats posted in New Delhi was inaugurated by Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla.
- It has been named as **Sushma Swaraj Lectures 2020**.
- MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava stated, **45 foreign diplomats** are attending the lectures which will give them an introduction to Indian history, polity, culture and economy.

India designated Vice-Chair of OECD Working Group on GLP

- **India** has been designated the **Vice-Chair of Good Laboratory Practice**, GLP Working Group of the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**, recognising the contribution of the Indian GLP programme.
- Good Laboratory Practice is a quality system, which has been evolved by OECD to ensure that safety data generated on various chemicals like industrial chemicals, pharmaceuticals, cosmetic products and medical devices can be relied upon by regulatory authorities.
- The Department of Science and Technology had established **the National GLP Compliance Monitoring Authority (NGCMA)** with the approval of the Union Cabinet on April, 2002. NGCMA is the National body which grants GLP certification to test facilities conducting safety studies on new chemicals of the mentioned categories in accordance with OECD Council norms.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari initiates Asia's longest ZojiLa Tunnel works virtually

- In Ladakh Union Territory, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Mr Nitin Gadkari initiated **Asia's longest ZojiLa Tunnel works** virtually, by igniting ceremonial blasts.
- The 15 years old languishing project finally took off with twin blasts at East portals of Meenamarg and Baltal.
- At a height of 3000 meters in the **Peerpanjal mountain range**, construction of Zojila tunnel is a historic necessity to provide an all weather road connectivity between Ladakh and the rest of the world.
- Minister Nitin Gadkari also sets a target for the **National Highway Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL)** and the contractor to complete the construction before **2024**.
- ZojiLa is a challenging and dangerous route especially during the winters. This pass on national Highway One gets closed nearly six months in a year. The Rs. 4,430 crore Tunnel will reduce the travel time in the stretch from three and half hours to just 15 minutes.

Films Division to stream documentary 'People's President' on Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's birth anniversary

- The **89th Birth Anniversary** of **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**, who served as the **11th President of India** is being celebrated. In its tribute, Films Division is streaming the **52-minute English documentary** titled '**People's President**' on its website and YouTube Channel.
- Directed by **Pankaj Vyas**, the documentary is dedicated to Dr Kalam's life and work including the Missile Man's pivotal role in the success of Indian aerospace science programme.
- Watching the biopic, the viewer can experience Dr. Kalam's strong spirit of nationalism and scientific temper, all the while inspiring generations with his simplicity, intellect and wisdom.

NTPC collaborates with cement manufacturers across country to supply fly ash

- **NTPC Limited** has started to collaborate with **cement manufacturers** across the country to supply fly ash as part of its endeavour to **achieve 100 per cent** utilization of the by-product produced during power generation.
- The power producer is leveraging Indian Railways' sprawling network to transport fly ash in an economical and environment friendly manner. Power Ministry stated, **NTPC Rihand** is the first power plant in Uttar Pradesh to send conditioned fly ash to cement manufacturers. The plant recently transported three thousand 834 Metric Tonnes of conditioned fly ash to Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Limited plant at Nagaon, Assam.
- During the financial year 2019-20, almost 44.33 Million Tonnes of fly ash was utilized for various productive purposes. NTPC produces approximately 65 Million Tonnes of Ash annually, out of which 80 per cent is Fly Ash.
- Presently, about 73 per cent of total ash is being utilized for production of cement and fly ash bricks, road embankment construction, mine filling and low-lying land development.

India among high-burden TB nations to register 25-30 pc drop in case notifications: WHO report

- Disruptions in services caused by the Covid-19 pandemic have led to further setbacks and according to a new report, there has been a **25 to 30 per cent drop in tuberculosis (TB)** case notifications across three high-burden countries – **India, Indonesia and the Philippines** – between January and June 2020 compared to the same period a year before.
- The Global TB report, released by the **World Health Organisation**, has collated data from over 200 countries that has shown significant reductions in TB case notifications. These reductions in case notifications could lead to a dramatic increase in additional TB deaths, according to WHO modelling. Their analysis of the pandemic's impact on TB mortality indicates that a 50 per cent drop in the detection of TB cases over three months will lead to almost 4,00,000 more people dying from TB.
- Notifications of new people diagnosed with TB and relapse cases in the country increased from **1.2 million** in 2013 to 2.2 million in 2019. This followed the introduction of a national policy of mandatory notification in 2012, and the roll out (also since 2012) of a nationwide web- and case-based reporting system (called '**Nikshay**'), which facilitates reporting of detected cases by care providers in the public and private sectors.
- Globally, approximately 1.4 million people died from TB-related illnesses in 2019. Of the estimated 10 million people who developed TB last year, some 3 million were not diagnosed with the disease, or were not officially reported to national authorities. The number of people who fell ill with TB has been declining very slowly in recent years.

GST compensation: Centre to borrow Rs 1.1 lakh crore to meet shortfall

- The central government will borrow **Rs 1.1 lakh crore** under the **special window** to meet the shortfall of **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** compensation.
- The amount borrowed will be passed on to the states as **back-to-back loan** in lieu of GST compensation cess.

- This borrowing will not have any impact on the fiscal deficit of the government. The amount will be reflected as the capital receipts of the state governments and as part of financing of its respective fiscal deficits.
- The general government (states + centre) borrowings will not increase because of this, as the states that get the benefit from the special window are likely to borrow a considerably lesser amount from the additional borrowing facility of **2 percent of gross state domestic product** (from 3 percent to 5 percent) under the Aatma Nirbhar Package.

Union Education Minister virtually launches 'KAPILA' Kalam Program for IP Literacy and Awareness Education campaign

- Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' virtually launched the 'KAPILA' Kalam Program for Intellectual Property Literacy and Awareness campaign on the 89th birth anniversary of former President and Scientist Late **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam**.
- Under this campaign, students pursuing education in higher educational institutions will get information about the correct system of application process for patenting their invention and they will be aware of their rights.
- The Institution Innovation Council (IIC 2.0) annual report was also presented on the occasion and the launch of IIC 3.0 was announced. It has also been decided to celebrate the week of **October 15th to 23rd as 'Intellectual Property Literacy Week'**. The **IIC 3.0 website** was also launched.

Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurates Food and Agri Week 2020

- Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Food Processing Industries, Rural Development and Panchayati **Raj Narendra Singh Tomar** virtually inaugurated the India - **International Food & Agri Week** being organised from **16th to 22nd October 2020**.
- Tomar stated that Indian food processing sector is **32% of India's food market**. He stated that the focus of this agro and food tech is the use of technology in the field of food and agriculture sector to increase the income of farmers.
- MFP scheme is an important element of PMKSY whose objective is to link agricultural production to the market by bringing together the farmers, processors and retailers.
- Under this scheme, Ministry will provide 50% subsidy for transportation of eligible crops from surplus production cluster to consumption centre for six months and/or Hiring of appropriate storage facilities for eligible crops (for maximum period of 3 months).
- CII in association with the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Ministry of Fisheries & Animal Husbandry and Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India, is organizing its first ever **Virtual CII Agro & Food Tech : India - International Food & Agri Week from 16th to 22nd October 2020** on CII HIVE – virtual platform with an intent to create a platform for the benefit of the stakeholders involved in the agriculture & allied sectors.

SC appoints former justice Lokur to monitor steps to prevent stubble burning

- The Supreme Court appointed former justice **Madan B Lokur** to monitor steps taken to prevent **stubble burning** in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh amid rising levels of pollution in the national capital and adjoining regions.
- The order was passed by an apex court bench headed by **Justice SA Bobde** while hearing a PIL filed by two environmental activities seeking directions to ensure the implementation of the complete ban on stubble burning.
- As many as 2,873 incidents of stubble burning were reported between 21 September and 12 October, up from 755 a year ago.
- The bench also directed court-appointed **Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA)** and chief secretaries of Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh to help the **Lokur panel** with physical surveillance of fields to check instances of stubble burning and other related matters.

- "The concerned state governments will provide secretarial, security and financial facilities to this committee. The committee will submit its report to the Supreme Court in 15 days," the court stated.
- It has also directed that the **National Cadet Corps (NCC)**, National Service Scheme and Bharat Scouts be deployed to assist the panel.

Govt amends Panchayat law to set up District Development Councils in J&K, elections soon

- The Central government has amended **Jammu and Kashmir's Panchayati Raj Act, 1989**, to establish **District Development Councils (DDCs)** in all districts in the union territory.
- This is the first time such councils have been established in the country, senior government officials stated.
- According to the amendment, every district in J&K will be divided into 14 territorial constituencies to elect members of the body in the maiden DDC elections to be held later this year.
- The final step in the implementation of the **73rd Amendment**, which envisages the Gram Sabha as the foundation of the **Panchayat Raj system** and empowers Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women.
- "For each district there shall be a **District Development Council**, having jurisdiction over the entire district excluding such portions of the district as are included in a **Municipality** or **Municipal Corporation** constituted under any law for the time being in force," states the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of State Laws) Fourth Order, 2020, which was issued.

Prime Minister to inaugurate India Energy Forum

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the **annual India Energy Forum** by **CERAWEEK**, which gathers energy leaders to further important dialogue on the nation's new energy future.
- Modi will deliver the inaugural address at the virtual event, to be held on **October 26-28**, organiser IHS Markit stated.
- India Energy Forum by CERAWEEK, now in its fourth year, is hosted by IHS Markit, a world leader in critical information, analytics and solutions.
- "The event will convene an international group of speakers and delegates as well as a community of a thousand delegates from India and regional energy companies, energy-related industries, institutions and governments," it stated.
- The event's speakers include energy ministers, senior industry executives and leading national and international energy experts.
- Besides Modi, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, US Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) secretary general Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo and Saudi Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman Al Saud are scheduled to speak at the three-day event.

Gadkari to lay foundation stone for country's first multi-modal logistic park in Assam

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways **Nitin Gadkari** will virtually lay the foundation stone for the **first-ever multi-modal logistic park in Assam**.
- The **Rs 693.97 crore park** will provide direct connectivity to air, road, rail and waterways to the people. It will be developed under the ambitious **Bharatmala Pariyojana** of the Government of India.
- Meanwhile, the NHAI has awarded TOT 3 bundle (566 Km in length) consisting of nine toll plazas in the state of UP, Jharkhand, Bihar and Tamil Nadu under its ambitious Toll-Operate-Transfer (ToT) model to Cube Mobility Investment Pte. Ltd. (Cube Highways) and has received upfront consideration of Rs 5,011 crore.
- The award ceremony was held through video conferencing and chaired by Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Gadkari, MoS Road Transport and Highways General V.K. Singh and NHAI Chairman SS Sandhu.

RPF launches 'Meri Saheli' initiative on AP Express

- **Railway Protection Force (RPF), Visakhapatnam**, started implementing '**Meri Saheli**' initiative in AP Express (Visakhapatnam to New Delhi in order to **provide proactive security to women passengers**).
- The main motto of 'Meri Saheli' is to provide safety and security to women passengers travelling in trains throughout their journey.
- A team of women Sub Inspectors and women constables of RPF will enter all coaches including ladies coaches and identify women passengers, who are travelling alone before the departure of the train.
- These passengers will be briefed about all precautions to be taken during the journey and inform about **help no. 182** apart from giving contact numbers of RPF to contact in case of any issue.

NITI Aayog to establish Frontier Technologies Cloud Innovation Centre with AWS

- **NITI Aayog** announced the establishment of a **Frontier Technologies Cloud Innovation Centre, CIC** with **Amazon Web Services, AWS**. It is the first of its kind in India.
- This CIC is part of the AWS CIC Global Programme which provides an opportunity for government agencies, non-profits and educational institutions, to come together on pressing challenges, apply design thinking, test new ideas, and access the technology expertise of AWS.
- The NITI Aayog Frontier Technologies CIC will be a great enabler to budding innovators and start-ups and help in piloting state-of-the-art, cloud-centric digital innovations by leveraging emerging technologies such as AI, IOT and robotics, blockchain.

CSIR-IHBT makes history by introducing asafoetida (Heeng) cultivation in Indian Himalayan region

- **Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), Palampur**, a historical shift in farming practices is in the offing with farmers of the remote **Lahaul valley** in **Himachal Pradesh** taking up cultivation of **asafoetida(Heeng)** to utilize vast expanses of waste land in the cold desert conditions of the region. CSIR-IHBT brought in seeds of asafoetida and developed its agro-technology.
- **Asafoetida** is one of the top condiments and is a high value spice crop in India. India imports about 1200 tonnes of raw asafoetida annually from Afghanistan, Iran and Uzbekistan and spends approximately 100 million USD per year. Lack of planting material of *Ferula assa-foetida* plants in India was a major bottleneck in cultivation of this crop.
- Since asafoetida is a major condiment in Indian cuisines, team CSIR-IHBT made relentless efforts for introduction of this important crop in the country. The institute introduced six accessions of seeds from Iran through ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBPGR), New Delhi in October, 2018. ICAR-NBPGR confirmed that in the past thirty years, this has been the first attempt for introduction of asafoetida (*Ferula assa-foetida*) seeds in the country.
- **CSIR-IHBT** raised the plants of heeng at CeHAB, Ribling, Lahaul & Spiti, H.P. under the vigil of NBPGR. The plant prefers cold and dry conditions for its growth and takes approximately five years for the production of oleo-gum resin in its roots, therefore cold desert areas of Indian Himalayan region are suitable for cultivation of asafoetida.

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launches AYUSHMAN SAHAKAR scheme

- Union **Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar** launched **AYUSHMAN SAHAKAR** scheme. The scheme is a unique way to assist cooperatives play an important role in creation of healthcare infrastructure in the country. AYUSHMAN SAHAKAR scheme has been formulated by the **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)**.

- Mr. Tomar announced that NCDC would extend term loans to prospective cooperatives to the tune of 10 thousand crore in the coming years. NCDC's scheme will be a step towards strengthening farmers welfare activities by the Central Government.
- NCDC's Ayushman Sahakar scheme aims at bringing transformation in the health services primarily in the rural areas. The scheme also provides working capital and margin money to meet operational requirements of the health facilities. It provides interest subvention of one percent to women majority cooperatives.
- The NCDC set up under the Ministry of Agriculture in 1963 has, till date, financed various cooperative initiatives aggregating Rs.1.57-lakh crore.
- The whole thing was inspired by what successful cooperatives have done in the healthcare sector in Kerala.
- One of conditions for getting credit under the Ayushman Sahakar scheme is that members of a cooperative facility should be given services at discounted rates.
- Working capital and margin money to meet operational requirements will be available under scheme. Interest subvention of **one per cent** is available to women-majority cooperatives.

Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandaviya launches indigenous software solution for vessel traffic

- Union Minister **Mansukh Mandaviya** e-launched an **indigenous software solution** for **Vessel traffic services (VTS) and Vessels Traffic Monitoring Systems (VTMS)**.
- Presently, India has approximately 15 VTS systems operational along the Indian Coast and there is no uniformity of VTS software as each system has its own VTS software.
- VTS and VTMS is a software which determines vessel positions, position of other traffic or meteorological hazard warnings and extensive management of traffic within a port or waterway.
- VTS contributes to safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and protection of the marine environment, adjacent shore areas, work sites and offshore installations from possible adverse effects of maritime traffic.
- Data from traffic movements can be stored and used as reference information for port administration, port authorities, coastguards and search and rescue services.
- VTMS is mandatory under IMO Convention SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea).
- The VTMS traffic image is compiled and collected by means of advanced sensors such as radar, direction finding, CCTV and other co-operative systems and services.
- VTS Software can be provided to Indian trade friendly nations like Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Gulf countries.
- Ministry of Shipping has sanctioned an amount of **Rs 10 crore to IIT, Chennai** for development of indigenous VTS software.

Defence Minister releases new version of DRDO Procurement Manual 2020

- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** released a new version of the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Procurement Manual 2020 (PM-2020)**. The previous Procurement Manual was modified in 2016.
- "Bid security declaration option for earnest money deposit, increase of threshold limit for advance payment, placement of order on lowest bidder 2 (L2) in case L1 backs out are some of the salient features of the new manual, which will assist the industry for the speedy execution of projects," an official statement stated.
- This is being done to encourage more participation of Indian industry, including start-ups and micro, small & medium enterprises (MSMEs) in defence research and development, the statement added.

- Some more enabling measures of PM-2020 are exemption of bid security and performance security up to Rs.10 lakh, no negotiations for commercial off-the-shelf items/services wherever price discovery is happening through market forces.
- Performance security for service contracts is linked to the payment cycle instead of total contract value. Procurement of stores from development partners, safeguarding of free issue material through insurance cover instead of bank guarantee are other facilitating measures have been adopted to help the industry.
- “In the new PM-2020, the liquidated damage (LD) rate for development contracts has been reduced. The delivery period (DP) extension process has been simplified for faster decision making. Many of the internal procedures have been further simplified for faster engagement with industry,” the statement stated.

Dr Harsh Vardhan Launches CuRED, CSIR Partnered Clinical Trials Website

- Union Health and Science and Technology Minister **Dr Harsh Vardhan** launched **CuRED**, a website that gives comprehensive info about the numerous COVID-19 clinical trials that the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) is engaged in partnership with industry, other government departments and ministries.
- CSIR Ushered Repurposed Drugs (CuRED) provides information about the drugs, diagnostics and devices including the current stage of the trials, partnering institutions and their role in the trials and other details, as per a release by the Science & Technology Ministry.
- CSIR is exploring multiple combination clinical trials of anti-virals with host-directed therapies for the potential treatment of COVID-19. It is also working with the AYUSH Ministry for conducting clinical trials of AYUSH drugs. It has also undertaken safety & efficacy trials of AYUSH prophylactics and therapeutics based on individual plant-based compounds and in combination.
- In addition to these, CSIR has also been involved in clinical trials of diagnostics and devices.

Indian spends 3.5% of average daily income on food

- On an average an Indian spends **3.5% of his/ her daily income** for a plate of food as compared to **0.6% by a New Yorker** and an astonishing , according to the “**Cost of a Plate of Food**” report released by the UN’s World Food Programme (WFP).
- As per the report, the most expensive plate of food is of **South Sudan** where people on average would have to spend **186%** of their daily salary on basic ingredients. In the list that features 36 countries across the globe, India stands at 28th position as per the percentage of money, people would pay on a plate of food compared to their salaries.
- It has brought to light how countries in sub-Saharan Africa feature heavily in the report with 17 of the top 20 drawn from this region.
- “The region’s high dependency on food imports leaves it vulnerable to global economic conditions, while high use of informal labour means masses of workers are prey to sudden losses of income,” it stated.
- The report stated such a difference brings into sharp focus the huge inequalities at play between people living in developing countries and others in more prosperous parts of the world. It stated conflict and climate change have long affected people’s ability to afford food across multiple countries, as they are driven from their land and livelihoods and left unable to produce or buy the produce they need to feed their families.
- Now Covid-19 has added another layer to the challenges faced by most vulnerable groups, through increased unemployment, loss of remittances and weak economies that prevent countries offsetting the worst effects of the pandemic, the report has highlighted. Market-dependent groups in urban areas are increasingly at risk.

Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (I/C) virtually launches “Life in Miniature” project

- **Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (I/C) Shri Prahlad Singh Patel** virtually launched the **“Life in Miniature”** project, a **collaboration between the National Museum, New Delhi, Ministry of Culture, and Google Arts & Culture**.
- On the Google Arts & Culture app, online viewers can experience the first Augmented Reality-powered art gallery designed with traditional Indian architecture, and explore a life-size virtual space where you can walk up to a selection of miniature paintings.
- The artworks showcased are presented along with five universal themes of the human relationship with nature, love, celebration, faith, and power.
- Users will be able to see famous **miniature collections** of the National Museum, like the **Ramayana, Royal Saga, Pahari style paintings** in never before seen ways and in extraordinary detail, in just a few clicks at g.co/LifeInMiniature.

ECI Sets Up Panel To Examine Expenditure Limit For Candidates

- The **Election Commission** has constituted a **two-member committee** to examine the **issues concerning expenditure limit for a candidate** considering increase in number of electors and rise in Cost Inflation Index and other factors.
- Former Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer **Harish Kumar**, who was a Director General, Investigation, and the EC's Secretary General and Director General, Expenditure, **Umesh Sinha** will be the committee members.
- The committee's terms of reference are to assess the change in number of electors across the states or Union Territories and its bearing on expenditure, the change in Cost Inflation Index and its bearing on the pattern of expenditure incurred by the candidates in recent elections, and seeking views of the political parties and other stakeholders.
- Also examining other factors which may have bearings on expenditure and examine any other related issue, it has been asked to submit its report within 120 days of its constitution.

CBSE introduces facial recognition systems for accessing digital documents)

- Using the state of the art **Facial Recognition System**, CBSE will enable students, to download their digital academic documents of **class X and XII**. This computer application matches human face from a digital image already stored in the database. The computer and the human interact to map the facial features. In a Similar way, a live image of the student will be matched with the photograph on the CBSE admit card already stored in repository, and once successful, the certificate will be emailed to the student.
- This application is now available on **“Parniaam Manjusha”** and **Digi Locker** at <https://digilocker.gov.in/cbse-certificate.html> for all 2020 records.
- CBSE has already pushed 12 crores digital academic documents in Digi locker which can be opened by a student to access Mark sheets, Pass and Migration Certificates. The latest facility of Face Matching will immensely help foreign students and those who are unable to open Digi locker account for any reason such as Adhaar Card or wrong mobile numbers.

Dept of Posts to release stamp on 75th anniversary of United Nations

- **Department of Posts** will be releasing a stamp in the presence of External Affairs Minister **Dr S Jaishankar** on the eve of **75th anniversary** of the **United Nations**.
- External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava stated India attaches highest priority to the expansion of the UN Security Council so that it reflects contemporary realities of the world.

- He stated reformed multilateralism will be a key pillar of overall approach in the upcoming innings of India as a non permanent member.

MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari launches India's first-ever high quality Khadi Fabric Footwear

- **Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises- MSME, Nitin Gadkari** launched **India's first-ever high quality Khadi Fabric Footwear**, designed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) through Video Conference. These footwear are made of Khadi fabric like Silk, Cotton and Wool.
- Mr Gadkari also launched the online sale of **Khadi footwear** through **KVIC's e-portal** www.khadiindia.gov.in.
- Mr Gadkari stated, such unique products has high potential of capturing the international market and at the same time, Khadi fabric footwear will create additional employment and higher income for artisans.
- Mr Gadkari also urged the KVIC to develop alternatives to leather accessories like ladies' handbags, purses, wallet in handcrafted Khadi fabric that has a huge potential in foreign markets.
- He stated, by developing and marketing such products overseas, Khadi India can capture a market worth Rs. 5000 crore.

PM Modi approves MoU for ICAI to help strengthen Papua New Guinea's financial and audit knowledge base

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the **Institute of Chartered Accounts of India (ICAI)** and the Certified Practising Accountants, **Papua New Guinea (CPA PNG)** to work together in capacity building and strengthening the Accounting, Financial and Audit Knowledge base in Papua New Guinea.
- Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and Certified Practising Accountants Papua New Guinea (CPA PNG) will work together to hold and conduct technical events, seminars and conferences in PNG, establishing possible cooperation and collaboration in areas of Corporate Governance, technical research and advice, quality assurance, forensic accounting, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and other subjects of mutual interest, share available unrestricted information concerning the accountancy profession in India and PNG and internationally when required, develop the modules for specific subjects for CPA, PNG Examination, to have students and faculty exchange programmes and to offer short term professional courses in the domain of accounting, finance and audit in PNG.
- The Indian Chartered Accountants (CA) fraternity is helping the local business community and stakeholders on Financial Reporting matters and is held in high esteem. The proposed MoU is expected to consolidate the trust and help to build positive image for Indian Chartered Accountants in Papua New Guinea. ICAI has a strong membership of over 3000 members in Australasia-Oceania Region comprising its chapter in PNG.

Cabinet Gives Nod To MoU Signed Between India, Nigeria On Space Cooperation

- The Union Cabinet on October 21 gave a go-ahead to the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** signed between **India** and **Nigeria** on cooperation in **space exploration** for peaceful purposes. The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the MoU that was signed between both the nations in August this year. The MoU was signed between India's Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and **Nigeria's National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA)**.
- The MoU signed between India and Nigeria will enable cooperation in areas such as remote sensing of the earth, satellite communication and satellite-based navigation, space science and planetary exploration, use of spacecraft, launch vehicles, space systems and ground systems, and practical applications of space technology including geospatial tools and techniques.

- A Joint Working Group would be set-up keeping in line with the MoU and the members would include officials from ISRO's Department of Space and NASRDA.

AYUSH Minister inaugurates Regional Raw Drug Repository at AIIA

- AYUSH Minister Shripad Yesso Naik inaugurated the **Regional Raw Drug Repository** at **All India Institute of Ayurveda** in **New Delhi** through a virtual function.
- This RRDR is the second in the series of repositories proposed by National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB).
- AYUSH Ministry has stated that there is an increased demand for the natural healing and herbal products across the globe which has been further pushed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- In order to document the diversity in the genetics and chemistry of medicinal plants, eight RRDR and one NRDR have been proposed by Ministry of AYUSH
- Out of them, three Regional Raw Drug Repositories have already been developed.

PM Modi to inaugurate 3 projects including Kisan Suryodaya in Gujarat

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate three projects, including '**Kisan Suryodaya Yojana**' for the farmers in Gujarat, via video conferencing. To provide day-time power supply for irrigation, the Gujarat Government under Chief Minister Vijay Rupani had recently announced the Kisan Suryodaya Yojana.
- Under this scheme, farmers will be able to avail power supply from **5 AM to 9 PM**. The state government has allocated a budget of **Rs.3,500 crores** for installing transmission infrastructure under this scheme by **2023**. The Prime Minister will also inaugurate Paediatric Heart Hospital attached with the UN Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre and a Mobile Application for tele-cardiology at the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital in Ahmedabad.
- The UN Mehta Institute of Cardiology is undergoing expansion at the cost of Rs.470 crores. The number of beds will increase from 450 to 1251 after the completion of the expansion project.
- The Institute will also become the biggest single super speciality cardiac teaching institute in the country and one of the biggest single super speciality cardiac hospitals in the world. He will launch the **Girnar ropeway** in which initially, there will be 25-30 cabins, with a capacity of 8 people per cabin.
- A distance of 2.3 km will now be covered in just 7.5 minutes through the ropeway. In addition to this, the ropeway will also provide a scenic view of the lush green beauty surrounding the Girnar mountain.

Indian Railways launches Freight Business Development Portal to boost freight business

- The **Indian Railways** launched a **Freight Business Development Portal** amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to boost the **freight business**. As per a statement, the aim of the new portal is to motivate new customers to transport goods through railways and provide better facilities to existing customers.
- The portal, which has been specially designed and developed on the principle of '**Customer First**', shows the complete timetable of all goods trains, routes, distance from one station to another and freight fares. Stakeholders can also make suggestions and seek help on the portal. Real-time monitoring of all the suggestions received on the portal by Indian Railways has been arranged.
- Additionally, it will provide a channel to establish contact with railway authorities and to remove the hassles faced by freight customers. It is also expected that this portal will be divided into division and headquarter business development units to reach potential freight customers.

Indo-Tibetan Border Police celebrates 59th Raising Day

- **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** on **Oct 24th** celebrated its **59th Raising Day** across the country.

- Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy took part in the Raising Day function organized in Greater Noida and took the salute at the Parade.
- Mr Reddy informed that the Ministry of Home Affairs has given approval to the ITBP to establish 47 border outposts.
- This year 28 types of new vehicles have been provided. A budget of Rs 7,223 crore has been allocated for the ITBP and more than Rs. 15 crore has been sanctioned for management.
- He presented **six Presidential Police Medals to ITBP personnel** and **23 Police Medals for Meritorious Services**.

Income tax return filing deadline for FY20 extended till December 31

- The **deadline for filing returns by individual** taxpayers for FY 2019-20 has been **extended by a month till December 31**.
- **For those taxpayers whose accounts need to be audited**, the Income-Tax Return filing deadline has been **extended by two months till January 31, 2021**.
- The government had in May extended the date for filing ITR for FY2019-20 from July 31 to November 30, to give compliance relief to taxpayers.

MoS for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan inaugurates philately exhibition on 'India and the UN: A Postal History'

- On the occasion of the **75th UN Day**, Minister of State for External Affairs, **V. Muraleedharan** inaugurated a **philately exhibition on 'India and the UN: A Postal History'**. This was done during a virtual event organized by the UN in India.
- Mr Muraleedharan highlighted India's multifaceted contribution to the work of United Nations over the last seven decades. Reaffirming India's commitment to the United Nations, he underlined that India looks forward to working with all other nations to reform and revitalize the United Nations during its term at the UN Security Council from 2021-22.

Ministry of Earth Sciences dedicates Flash Flood Guidance services for South Asian countries

- Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Dr. M. Rajeevan dedicated **Flash Flood Guidance services**, first of its kind for South Asian countries namely **India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka**.
- The system was launched virtually and was participated by distinguished National and International dignitaries including Head of Hydrological and Water Resources Services Division, World Meteorological Organization, Dr. Hwirin Kim, Director, Hydrologic Research Centre, USA Dr. Konstantine P. Georgakakos, and Member Secretary NDMA, G.V.V. Sarma.
- An automated mode of dissemination is to be established with the stakeholders along with the use of social media, so that the information reaches the concerned disaster authorities in a timely manner.
- Dr. M. Mohapatra, Director General of IMD and Permanent Representative of India with WMO assured the member nations that the Guidance for flash floods in the form of **Threats 6 hours** in advance and **Risks 24 hours** in advance will be provided by Regional Centre to National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, National and State Disaster Management Authorities and all other stake holders for taking necessary mitigation measures.

Centre forms panel to bring in reforms in urban planning education system

- The Union government has constituted a **14-member advisory committee** for introducing reforms in **urban planning education system** in India. According to official sources, the panel is being formed considering the multiple challenges being faced in the cities and India's commitment towards global agenda.
- The Committee will review the current urban planning education system in India in terms of multi-disciplinary curriculum and related issues at graduate and post graduate levels in the context of rapid urbanisation and will suggest changes.

- The committee will also examine the present availability, demand and supply of qualified urban planners in India. It will also strengthen the mechanisms of empowering States and local bodies with skilled and qualified human resources for planning and managing the settlements.
- Vice chairman of Niti Aayog **Rajiv Kumar**, CEO of Niti Aayog **Amitabh Kant**, Union Housing secretary, Union education secretary, chairperson of Town and country Planning department, Union secretary of Ministry of Panchayati Raj, president of Institute of Town Planners, India, director of National Institute of Urban Affairs, chairman of University Grants Commission, director of school of planning and architecture among others

Centre notifies new laws allowing any Indian citizen to buy land in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notified new land laws for the **Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh** and omitted any precondition on **the purchase of land in Jammu and Kashmir**, as existed under **Article 370** for the outsiders.
- Before the repeal of Article 370 and Article 35-A in August last year, non-residents could not buy any immovable property in Jammu and Kashmir. However, the fresh changes have paved the way for non-residents to buy land in the union territory, sparking fears among locals that this will dilute Jammu and Kashmir's demography.
- The MHA in its release stated that the order will be called the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of Central Laws) Third Order, 2020**. It added that it will come into effect immediately.
- The Centre also notified that the “**permanent resident of the state**” clause has been omitted now.
- Under this, 12 state laws have been repealed and 26 others have been adapted with changes or substitutes, according to news agency ANI. Those completely repealed include the Jammu and Kashmir Alienation of Land Act, 1995, the Jammu and Kashmir Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, the Jammu and Kashmir Common Lands (Regulation) Act, 1956, and the Jammu and Kashmir Consolidation of Holdings Act, 1962.
- The notification issued by MHA also says that the government can now, on the written request of an army officer not below the rank of Corp Commander, declare an area as Strategic Area within a local area, only for direct operational and training requirements of armed forces, which may be excluded from the operation of this Act and rules and regulations made there under in the manner and to the extent.
- The government also can allow the transfer of land in favour of a person or an institution for the purpose of promotion of healthcare or senior secondary or higher or specialised education after the new notification.

Wealth of Indian adults rises marginally amid covid outbreak: Credit Suisse

- **Wealth per adult in India rose 0.6% to USD 17,420**, despite covid-19 bringing economic activities across the nation to a standstill with gross domestic product (GDP) contracting **23.9%** in the first quarter of the current fiscal, shows the **Global Wealth Report 2020 by Credit Suisse**. As per the report, wealth per adult in India stood higher at USD 17,299 as on 31 December 2019, from USD 14,569 in June 2019.
- The Credit Suisse Research Institute attributed the upgrade to a change in its entire data series based on estimates from Karvy Private Wealth, an arm of the Karvy Group.
- Comparing this to the World Bank's estimate of per capita income at USD 2,104 for 2019, India's wealth per adult translates to 8.27 times it's annual per capita income. In rupee terms at exchange rates, this implies wealth of Rs.12.86 lakh per adult. The Credit Suisse Wealth report measures wealth in current and not constant prices.
- The 2020 report has made similar changes to other parameters of India's wealth. Personal debt per adult was reduced from **USD 1,345** (end June 2019) to **USD 1,080** (end December 2019). Population with wealth below USD 10,000 fell from 78% to 73% and the proportion of adults with wealth above USD 100,000 rose from 1.8% to 2.3%.

- Putting aside the divergence between the old and new series, a look at the new series alone also reveals relatively optimistic estimates. According to Credit Suisse, financial assets of Indians in calendar year 2019 grew by 8.6%, non-financial assets grew by 12.5% and debts grew by 14.4%. This placed a growth in wealth per adult at 9.4% in calendar year 2019. According to the report non financial assets are 78% of household wealth implying a buoyant growth in the real estate market. Official data however has presented a more muted picture, pegging nominal GDP growth in FY 2019-20 at **7.2%**.

Centre sets up high-level committee to commemorate Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur's 400th birth anniversary

- The Centre set up a **high-level committee** headed by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** to **commemorate the 400th birth anniversary of Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur**.
- The mandate of the **70-member committee** includes approval of policies, plans, programmes and supervision and guiding the commemoration, besides deciding broad dates for detailed programmes of celebration.
- The members of the committee include former prime minister Manmohan Singh, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Union ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman, Hardeep Singh Puri, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, chief ministers of Haryana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan.
- Other members include Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, Akali Dal leaders Parkash Singh Badal, Sukhbir Singh Badal, SGPC president Gobind Singh Longowal, former chief of Indian Army J J Singh, former chief of Indian Air Force Birender Singh Dhanoa, and sportspersons Milkha Singh and Harbhajan Singh.
- Union Home Secretary **Ajay Kumar Bhalla** will be the member secretary of the high-level committee.

Mandaviya inaugurates direct entry facility at VOC port

- Union Minister **Mansukh Mandaviya** inaugurated **direct port entry facility** at **VO Chidambaranar Port** in Tuticorin, a move that **will reduce logistics cost and boost ease of doing business**.
- The DPE facility would enable direct movement of containers from factories, without intermediate handling at any CFS, thus facilitating shippers to gate-in their factory stuffed exports directly to the container terminal on **24x7 basis**.
- The facility is created in an area of 18,357 sq m inside the truck parking terminal which was developed under the '**Sagarmala**' for issuing customs clearance of export cargo
- It can handle 18,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) per month.
- Port entered into an MoU with Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) to operate the facility for 30 years and the Customs department has also approved operating the DPE facility in the port.

Shri Arjun Munda launches two Centers of Excellence for tribal welfare in partnership with Art of Living

- **Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, Shri Arjun Munda** launched **two Centers of Excellence for Tribal Welfare** in a collaboration between **Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA)** and **Art of Living (AoL)** through video conference.
- It is a very praiseworthy initiative of Art of Living (AoL) to launch two Centres of Excellence in partnership with The first initiative '**Strengthening PRIs**' will be launched in **5 districts** covering 30 Gram Panchayats and 150 villages of Jharkhand, in creating awareness among elected representatives of PRI about various Tribal Acts and Rules and different welfare schemes available for these tribals and help them getting access to these schemes. The model is designed to create the youth volunteers among the tribal youths by giving them personality development training, instilling the sense of social responsibility among them and thereby creating the tribal leaders who will work for their community in spreading this awareness.

- The second is about **training 10000 tribal farmers** in Aurangabad District of **Maharashtra** on sustainable natural farming based on **Go-Adharith farming techniques**. Farmers will be helped in getting the Organic certification and the marketing opportunities will be made available to them to make each of them Atmanirbhar Tribal Farmers.

V Prez Venkaiah Naidu launches virtual festival of 'Parampara Series 2020-National Festival of Music and Dance'

- Launching the virtual festival of '**Parampara Series 2020-National Festival of Music and Dance**' organized by **Natya Tarangini** in partnership with the **United Nations**, the Vice President stated that music and dance make lives more fulfilling by rejuvenating and energising. He added that they bring harmony into lives and nourish inner spirit by dispelling gloom and despair.
- Referring to Samaveda and Bharatamuni's Natyashastra, the vice president stated India has a glorious tradition of music and dance.
- He stated that India's diverse art forms of dance, music, and drama represent our common civilisational philosophy and values like harmony, unity and solidarity.
- There is also a distinct focus on devotion, spirituality and there is an entire gamut of expressions of nine 'rasas' that constitute human existence, he added. It may be noted that this festival has been organized to coincide with the **World Day for Audio-visual Heritage**.

Microsoft, NSDC collaborate to empower 1 lakh women with digital skills

- **Microsoft** stated it has collaborated with the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** to impart digital skills to more than one lakh **underserved women** in India over the next ten months.
- This initiative is an extension of Microsoft's partnership with NSDC to provide digital skills to over 1 lakh youth in the country. NSDC, Microsoft join hands to provide digital skills to over 1 lakh youth.
- The programme will curate a series of live training sessions and digital skilling drives to help create opportunities for young girls and women, particularly first time job seekers and those whose jobs may have been impacted by Covid-19, to join the future workforce.
- Under this partnership, **eSkill India - NSDC's digital skilling initiative** - will support in building the outreach of this engagement through its skilling ecosystem, which includes sector skill councils, training partners, and training centres. Microsoft and NSDC will award a joint e-certificate to participants post-course completion.
- Furthermore, 20,000 young women from regions with the least female labour force participation will be selected by NSDC and skilled through dedicated skills for the employability training program for employment in IT/IT-enabled job roles

NITI Aayog, Rockefeller Foundation & Smart Power India Launch Electricity Access & Utility Benchmarking Report

- **NITI Aayog, Ministry of Power, Rockefeller Foundation, and Smart Power India** launched the '**Electricity Access in India and Benchmarking Distribution Utilities**' report.
- Based on a primary survey conducted across 10 states—representing about 65% of the total rural population of India and with a sample size of more than 25,000, including households, commercial enterprises and institutions—the report assesses 25 distribution utilities.
- 'The report highlights the benefits of government-led schemes such as **Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana** and **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana**, which have been well received in rural as well as urban areas.'
- Evaluate the status of electricity access in India across these states and distribution utilities along all dimensions that constitute meaningful access
- Benchmark utilities' capacity to provide electricity access and identify the drivers of sustainable access

- Develop recommendations for enhancing sustainable electricity access

Key findings of the report:

- As much as 92% of customers reported the overall availability of electricity infrastructure within 50 metres of their premises; however, not all have connections, the primary reason being the distance of households from the nearest pole.
- Overall, 87% of the surveyed customers have access to grid-based electricity. The remaining 13% either use non-grid sources or don't use any electricity at all.
- The hours of supply have improved significantly across the customer categories to nearly 17 hours per day.
- Nearly 85% of customers reported to have a metered electricity connection.
- Access to electricity is observed in 83% of household customers.
- A satisfaction index was created to assess the overall satisfaction level of customers with utility services. The study suggested that a total of 66% of those surveyed were satisfied—74% of customers in urban areas and 60% in rural areas.
- The report underlines some best practices adopted by the better-performing electricity distribution utilities in India and provides key recommendations to enhance sustainable electricity access. The data from the survey provides evidence that the infrastructure of providing electricity across sectors has improved over time. It also shows that reforms undertaken by the Government have been appreciated by the stakeholders.

Govt extends payment date for 'Vivad se Vishwas' scheme to March 31

- The government extended for the third time the **deadline for making payment** under the direct tax dispute settlement scheme '**Vivad Se Vishwas**' by three months to **March 31, 2021**.
- **Vivad se Vishwas** is a direct tax scheme for settling tax disputes between individuals and the income tax department.
- This is a scheme for the benefit and convenience of the taxpayers as they would get instant disposal of the dispute with no further cost of litigation besides monetary benefits in the form of waiver of penalty, interest and prosecution.
- It was decided in the meeting to adopt a proactive approach for implementation of the scheme by approaching taxpayers directly, guiding and facilitating them in filing of declarations and removing any difficulties or problems faced by them in availing the scheme.
- In order to provide more time to taxpayers to settle disputes, earlier the date for filing declaration and making payment without additional amount under Vivad se Vishwas was extended from March 31, 2020 to June 30, 2020. This date was again extended to December 31, 2020.

Cabinet approves Rs 10,000 crore project to improve dams in India

- The **cabinet committee on economic affairs** approved a **Rs 10,211-crore** project to improve the safety and performance of select dams across India.
- The **dam rehabilitation and improvement project (DRIP)**--phase II and phase III--is financially supported by the **World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank**.
- **India is the third ranked country** in terms of **total number of dams**, next after the US and China, and it has 5,334 big dams and another 412 dams under construction.
- DRIP will be implemented over a period of 10 years in two phases - each of six years with two years overlapping from April 2021 to March 2031. The first phase of this project started in 2012.

- Out of the total cost of the project, the share of external funding is Rs 7,000 crore, while the balance Rs 3,211 crore will be borne by the concerned implementing agencies.

PM Modi inaugurates 'Arogya Van' in Narmada district of Gujarat

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, who is on a two-day visit to Gujarat, inaugurated **four new tourist attractions** near the Statue of Unity at Kevadiya in Narmada district
- The prime minister inaugurated **Arogya Van, Ekta Mall, Children's Nutrition Park and Sardar Patel Zoological Park/ Jungle Safari**.
- He was scheduled to launch 17 new projects, including a **seaplane service**.
- Modi first inaugurated Arogya Van ('health forest'), spread over 17 acres with a wide range of medicinal plants.
- The sprawling garden, which boasts of five lakh plants of 380 species, also highlights the importance of Yoga, Ayurveda and meditation
- It also has a 'yoga and meditation' garden, souvenir shop and a cafeteria serving "Ayurveda foods".
- Modi also visited a digital information centre and an indoor plants garden inside Arogya Van.
- The prime minister then inaugurated **Ekta Mall**, a unique store near the Statue of Unity where **tourists can buy handloom and handicraft products** from various states.
- The PM next inaugurated a **Children's Nutrition Park**, dubbed as the **world's first such technology-driven theme park** developed over 35,000 square meters. Its primary objective is to make children understand the importance of nutritious food.
- The park has 47 attractions providing "infotainment" to children with the underlying theme of **"Sahi Poshan Desh Roshan"**.
- Modi then inaugurated **Jungle Safari**, a state-of-the-art Zoological Park spread across 375 acres and seven levels.
- It houses over 1,100 indigenous and exotic birds and animals of more than 100 species including tigers, lions, giraffes, zebras and leopards.

Indian Railways launches 'Meri Saheli' to provide safety to women passengers

- **Indian Railways** started another great initiative named **"Meri Saheli"** to provide more safety and security to **women passengers** during their entire journey.
- The "Meri Saheli" initiative is to provide more safety and security of lady passengers travelling by trains in their entire journey from originating station till destination station.
- Under the initiative, a team of lady officer and staff have been formed. The team will visit all of the passenger coaches including ladies coaches to identify women passengers.
- Passengers will be briefed about RPF Security Helpline Number 182, GRP Security Helpline Number 1512 as well as other precautions like, not to take food with strangers, buying food from only authorized IRCTC stalls, taking care of luggage, etc.
- The 'Meri Saheli' initiative was started as a pilot project in the **South Eastern Railway** in September 2020 and after getting positive response from women passengers, **it was extended to all zones**.
- **Central Railway** has always been at the forefront in providing a safe and comfortable journey to Women and **"Meri Saheli"** will be another important part of the dedicated efforts to ensure safety and security of women passengers.

Dr Harsh Vardhan launches DST initiative SERB – POWER for women scientists

- **Dr Harsh Vardhan**, Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare launched a Scheme titled “**SERB-POWER (Promoting Opportunities for Women in Exploratory Research)**”, designed exclusively for women scientists, in a function on an e-platform.
- The **Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)**, a statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, has been contemplating to institute a scheme to mitigate gender disparity in science and engineering research in various S&T programs in Indian academic institutions and R&D laboratories.
- Integration of the gender dimension in research design has gained considerable attention in the global scenario. Enhancement of participation and promotion of women in the research workforce is one of the prime priorities of our Government.
- **SERB – POWER Scheme will have two components namely (i) SERB-POWER Fellowship (ii) SERB- POWER Research Grants.** The salient features of each of these are as follows:

Salient features of the SERB-POWER Fellowship

- Target: Women researchers in 35-55 years of age. Up-to 25 Fellowships per year and not more than 75 at any point in time.
- Components of support: Fellowship of Rs 15,000/- per month in addition to regular income; Research grant of Rs 10 lakh per annum; and Overhead of Rs 90,000/- per annum.
- Duration: Three years, without the possibility of extension. Once in a career.

Salient features of the SERB – POWER Research Grants

- Level I (Applicants from IITs, IISERs, IISc, NITs, Central Universities, and National Labs of Central Government Institutions): The scale of funding is up to 60 lakhs for three years.
- Level II (Applicants from State Universities / Colleges and Private Academic Institutions): The scale of funding is up to 30 lakhs for three years.
- POWER Grant will be regulated through terms of reference conforming to SERB-CRG (Science and Engineering Research Board-Core Research Grant) guidelines.

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	Prahlad Joshi	Dharwad
Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey	Chandauli
Ministry of Animal Husbandry, dairying and fisheries	Giriraj Singh	Begusarai

Important International News

India-Bangladesh Naval Forces To Hold Exercise Bongosagar In Bay Of Bengal

- The **second edition** of India-Bangladesh Bilateral Exercise **Bongosagar** is scheduled to begin in the **Bay of Bengal**.

- The exercise between the two navies aims at fostering inter-operability and joint operational skills with both forces conducting a wide spectrum of joint maritime exercises.
- The **first edition** of this exercise was held in 2019.
- This edition of the joint naval exercise between India and Bangladesh will include surface warfare drills, seamanship evolutions and helicopter operations.
- The **Exercise Bongosagar** will then be followed by the third edition of **IN-BN Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT)**. This joint exercise will take place in the Northern Bay of Bengal.
- During the CORPAT exercise, India and Bangladesh's navy will patrol along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL).
- **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kiltan**, an indigenously built Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette and **INS Khukri**, an indigenously built Guided-Missile Corvette are participating along with **Bangladesh Naval Ship (BNS) Abu Bakr**, a Guided-Missile Frigate and **BNS Prottoy**, a Guided-Missile Corvette. In addition to ships, Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both navies and integral helicopter(s) would also be **participating in the exercise**.
- **Exercise Bongosagar and IN- BN CORPAT** will take place over a span of three days and this year's edition hold extra significance as it is the **100th birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**, the **first president of Bangladesh**.
- The exercise also goes to show the importance that the Indian Navy accords to the Bangladesh Navy as a part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of **SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region)**.

Embassy of India in Nepal marks 56th Anniversary of ITEC Day-2020

- The Embassy of India in Nepal marked the **56th Anniversary of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Day-2020** through a Webinar on "**Sharing Knowledge and Experiences on COVID-19 Management**". ITEC is India's flagship capacity building assistance initiative with near global coverage to 160 developing countries, including Nepal.
- The webinar brought together distinguished ITEC alumni from Nepal as well as expert voices from Government and industry in India and Nepal to exchange views and share perspectives on addressing the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Ambassador Vinay Kwatra noted with appreciation the on-going bilateral cooperation to support Nepal in building indigenous capacities, including under the ITEC initiative. Since last year, several ITEC capsules have been organized at India's premier institutions for officials from various institutions of Nepal in areas like judicial services for Supreme Court of Nepal, Public Finance Management for Finance Ministry, training for revenue officials, anti-money laundering, countering financing of Terrorism training, intensive training in water resources and development and the e-ITEC program on COVID-19 Management.
- **ITEC Programme** is fully funded by the Government of India to share India's developmental experience and expertise with 160 developing countries, including Nepal. A number of institutions of Government of Nepal have benefitted from regular, e-ITEC and tailor-made ITEC courses designed on the basis of customized needs.

Foreign Ministers of all four Quad countries- India, US, Japan, Australia to meet in Tokyo

- Foreign ministers of all **four Quad countries** will meet in the **Japanese capital Tokyo**.
- External Affairs Ministry said, Foreign Ministers will discuss the post-COVID-19 international order and the need for a coordinated response to the various challenges emerging from the pandemic.

- Four ministers will also discuss regional issues and collectively affirm the importance of maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific.
- The foreign ministers of all four Quad countries - External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne, and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi will be present for the face to face meeting, a first amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This is the **second such Quad foreign ministers** meet. In 2019, all the foreign ministers of Quad countries met on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.
- On the sidelines of the meet, Mr Jaishankar will also have bilaterals with his Quad counterparts, including the US Secretary of State.
- It takes place even as India and the US are getting ready for 22 foreign and defence ministers meeting that will take place later this month.

India and Myanmar agree to operationalise Sittwe port in the first quarter of 2021

- **India and Myanmar** have agreed to work towards the operationalization of the **Sittwe port** in the **Rakhine state** in the first quarter of **2021**.
- The announcement came through a press release issued by the Ministry of External Affairs after the conclusion of the two day long visit of Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General M M Naravane and Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla to Myanmar on 4-5 October.
- During the visit COAS and Foreign Secretary called on the State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and Commander in Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing among several other senior civilian and army officers.
- Both sides agreed to further strengthen their partnership in connectivity projects, capacity building, power and energy. They also agreed to deepen economic and trade ties, further facilitate people to people and cultural exchanges, and broad-base their defense exchanges across all the three services.
- India and Myanmar discussed the progress in the ongoing Indian-assisted infrastructure projects such as the Trilateral Highway and the **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project**.
- India announced a grant of **USD 2 million** for the construction of the border **haat bridge at Byanyu/Sarsichauk** in Chin State that will provide increased economic connectivity between Mizoram and Myanmar.

Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin gives country's top job to a teenager for a day

- **Finish Prime Minister Sanna Marin stepped aside** to let **16-year-old take her place**, with the **young campaigner Aaava Murto** using the platform to decry online violence and gender stereotypes about technology.
- The teenager also warned of **online violence that restricts girls' access to information**.
- This swap was part of an international campaign dubbed Girls Takeover, which comes ahead of the **UN Girls Day on Oct 11th**.
- During her brief tenure as the country's top leader, Murto met with Marin, as well the minister for development and trade and the country's chancellor of justice.

World Economic Forum shifts annual meeting 2021 from Davos to Lucerne

- The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** will hold its Annual Meeting **2021** in **Lucerne-Burgenstock, Switzerland**, from May 18 to 21.
- It was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2021 Davos summit, themed as **"The Great Reset"**.
- The meeting will focus on the solutions required to address the world's most pressing challenges.

- The WEF aims to be back in Davos for 2022.

Argentina becomes 1st nation to approve genetically modified wheat

- Argentina has approved HB4 drought-resistant GMO wheat by biotechnology firm Bioceres, making it the first country in the world to approve a strain of GMO wheat.
- It will only begin marketing HB4 once it's approved for importation by Brazil.
- The HB4 technology provides seeds that are more tolerant to drought and helps minimize production losses.

Indian, Taiwanese think tanks join hands to foster cooperation in Indo-Pacific region

- The Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF), a leading think tank from Taiwan has signed a memorandum with India's National Maritime Foundation (NMF) in order to foster cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region as part of Taiwan's South bound policy.
- The two groups will set up a joint task force to deepen bilateral dialogue. The memorandum's aim is to conduct joint research and expand cooperation.
- The goal of the TAEF is to promote comprehensive ties between Taiwan and the 10 ASEAN countries, six South Asian states, as well as Australia and New Zealand through cooperation and exchanges in three major fields – including think tanks, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and young leaders – to consolidate a sense of regional community in Asia and establish long-term cooperative partnerships.

Seventh round of military level talks between India & China underway to de-escalate tension along LAC

- In Ladakh region, the talk between India and China is underway to resolve the border issues on Line of Actual Control. The Commander level talks between both the countries began at the Chushul border personnel meeting point on Indian side.
- The Military commanders are meeting for the seventh time to work out the measures to preserve the peace and tranquility at the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh region.
- Fire and Fury GOC, Lt Gen Harinder Singh and his successor after a couple of days, Lt Gen PGK Menon are leading the Indian delegation.
- Sources associated with the talks process said that for the first time, China also sent a senior level foreign ministry official in their delegation. During the sixth round of talks between commanders on September 21, a senior diplomat and East Asia region joint secretary Naveen Srivastava participated in Indian delegation.
- The talks mainly focus on disengagement of forces from several friction points especially finger areas of Pangong Tso to ease the unprecedented tensions on the border between the two countries.

India donates 1.8 million N95 masks to Philadelphia

- India has donated 1.8 million N95 masks to Philadelphia, the largest city in the US state of Pennsylvania, to help in its fight against Covid-19, setting another example of a robust Indo-US partnership in the health sector.
- The move comes after the Mayor of Philadelphia, Jim Kenney, made a request to India for supply of masks to be used by the city's frontline workers.
- "Philadelphia receives 1.8 million N95 masks from India to aid their fight against COVID-19," India's Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu. "Another example of the robust India-US reliable partnership in the health sector!" he added.
- 1.8 million N95 masks were delivered to Philadelphia for use of frontline workers. Philadelphia is the sixth-most populous US city.

- The move is also an indication of India's capabilities in manufacturing personal protective equipment (PPE) not only for domestic use, but also exports, officials said.

FATF's Asia Pacific Group keeps Pakistan on 'enhanced follow-up list' for slow progress against terror financing

- In a major setback to **Pakistan**, the **Financial Action Task Force's (FATF's) Asia Pacific Group (APG)** on Money Laundering has reprimanded the South-Asian country for its slow progress on the technical recommendations of the FATF to fight terror financing.
- Earlier, Pakistan had requested for its ratings pertaining to targeted financial sanctions on terrorism and terrorist financing to be revised.
- The APG stated that the insufficient progress made by the country fails to justify a re-rating.
- The APG stated, Pakistan will remain in the enhanced follow-up list and will have to continue to report back to the APG on progress to strengthen its implementation of comprehensive Anti-money Laundering and Terrorist Financing measures.

In a world first, iodine sanitisers to hit Indian market soon

- The **world's first iodine-based sanitisers**, which are stated to be more effective and long-lasting than alcohol-based hand cleansers, will be launched in India.
- Moreover, India would be the manufacturing hub for supplying the **iodine sanitiser**, which will be named as **I2Cure**, to other parts of the world, stated Anil Kejriwal, Global President of the Singapore-based biotechnology firm I2Pure, which holds the patents for this molecular iodine-based product.
- I2 in the name stands for molecular iodine, the active ingredient in the product. Though the disinfectant properties of iodine was known for decades, American scientist Jack Kessler tremendously improved upon it through years of research.
- More importantly, while medical iodine products like povidone contain only 5 to 10 parts per million (ppm) iodine, iodine contained in the iodine sanitiser is close to 1,500 ppm, he stated.

Nepal Re-Elected To UN Human Rights Council

- **Nepal** has been **re-elected** as a member of the **United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC)** in the elections held at UN Headquarters in New York, Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced.
- Established by the **UN General Assembly** in **2006** as the principal United Nations entity dealing with human rights, the Human Rights Council consists of **47 elected Member States**.
- The Council seats are allocated, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, to the five regional groups as follows: the African States, 13 seats; Asia-Pacific States, 13 seats; the Eastern European States, 6 seats; Latin American and Caribbean States, 8 seats; and Western European and other States, 7 seats.

World Bank approves USD 12 billion to help developing countries finance coronavirus vaccines

- The **World Bank** has approved **USD 12 billion** in financing to help developing countries buy and distribute **coronavirus vaccines, tests**, and treatments, aiming to support the vaccination of up to 1 billion people.
- The USD 12 billion "**envelop**" is part of a wider World Bank Group package of up to **USD 160 billion** to help developing countries fight the COVID-19 pandemic, the bank stated.
- The World Bank stated its COVID-19 emergency response programmes are already reaching 111 countries. Citizens in developing countries also need access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, it stated.
- The International Finance Corporation, the private sector lending arm of the World Bank is investing in vaccine manufacturers through a \$4 billion Global Health Platform, the statement stated.

- The World Bank stated it will draw on expertise and experience from its involvement in many large-scale immunization programs and other public health efforts.
- The funding is meant to also help countries access tests and treatments and to support management of supply chains and other logistics for vaccinations in developing countries, the bank stated.

One stillbirth occurs every 16 seconds, according to first ever joint UN estimates

- Almost **2 million babies** are stillborn every year – or **1 every 16 seconds** – according to the first ever joint stillbirth estimates released by **UNICEF, WHO**, the World Bank Group and the **Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs**.
- The vast majority of stillbirths, **84 per cent**, occur in low- and lower-middle-income countries, according to the new report, *A Neglected Tragedy: The Global Burden of Stillbirths*. In 2019, 3 in 4 stillbirths occurred in sub-Saharan Africa or Southern Asia. A stillbirth is defined in the report as a baby born with no signs of life at 28 weeks of pregnancy or more.
- The report warns that the COVID-19 pandemic could worsen the global number of stillbirths. A 50 per cent reduction in health services due to the pandemic could cause nearly 200 000 additional stillbirths over a 12-month period in 117 low- and middle-income countries. This corresponds to an increase in the number of stillbirths by 11.1 per cent. According to modeling done for the report by researchers from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 13 countries could see a 20 per cent increase or more in the number of stillbirths over a 12-month period.
- Most stillbirths are due to poor quality of care during pregnancy and birth. Lack of investments in antenatal and intrapartum services and in strengthening the nursing and midwifery workforce are key challenges, the report says.
- Over 40 per cent of stillbirths occur during labour—a loss that could be avoided with access to a trained health worker at childbirth and timely emergency obstetric care. Around half of stillbirths in sub-Saharan Africa and Central and Southern Asia occur during labour, compared to 6 per cent in Europe, Northern America, Australia and New Zealand.

India and France re-elected as president and co-president of International Solar Alliance

- **India and France** were **re-elected** as the **president and co-president** of the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** for a term of **two years** at the virtual meeting of the third assembly.
- **A total of 53 member countries** and 5 signatory and prospective member countries participated in the assembly.
- Four new Vice-Presidents were also chosen to represent the four regions of ISA. The representatives of **Fiji & Nauru for Asia Pacific Region**; **Mauritius & Niger for Africa Region**; **UK & Netherlands for Europe and others Region**, and **Cuba and Guyana for Latin America and Caribbean Region** assumed the vice presidency.

India contributes 1 million dollars to UNRWA for Palestine Refugees

- India has contributed **one million dollars** to the **United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)** for **Palestine Refugees** in Near East.
- This aid will support the Agency's programmes and services, including education, health care, relief and social services.
- The Representative Office of India in Ramallah stated, India's support for the Palestinian cause is an integral part of the nation's foreign policy. It shall continue supporting the UNRWA's activities in providing vital services and necessary humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees.

Climate change spurs doubling of disasters since 2000: UN

- The **UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)** stated **7,348 major disaster** events occurred between **2000 and 2019**, claiming **1.23 million lives**, affecting **4.2 billion people**, and costing the global economy some **\$2.97 trillion**.
- The figure far outstrips the 4,212 major natural disasters recorded between 1980 and 1999, the UN office stated in the new report, The Human Cost of Disasters 2000-2019.
- The sharp increase was largely attributable to a rise in **climate-related disasters**, including extreme weather events like floods, drought and storms, the report stated, adding that extreme heat is proving especially deadly.
- The report did not touch on biological hazards and disease-related disasters like the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed over one million people and infected over 37 million in the past nine months.
- But Mizutori suggested coronavirus was “the latest proof that political and business leaders are yet to tune in to the world around them”.
- The report showed 6,681 climate-linked events had been recorded since the turn of the century, up from 3,656 during the previous 20-year-period.
- While major floods had more than doubled to 3,254, there had been 2,034 major storms up from 1,457 in the prior period.

After Sputnik V, Russia grants approval to 2nd COVID-19 vaccine EpiVacCorona

- In a significant development, **Russia** announced that it has granted regulatory approval to another coronavirus COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine named **EpiVacCorona** comes after Russia recently granted similar approval to its first COVID-19 vaccine named **Sputnik V**. Notably, Sputnik V is also the first vaccine candidate in the world to attain regulatory approval.
- Developed by **Siberia-based Vector Institute**, **EpiVacCorona** completed its early-stage human trials in September. The pharmaceutical company is yet to publish the results of human trials and Phase III trial of this vaccine is yet to begin.
- Novosibirsk-based Vektor Centre has registered a second coronavirus vaccine, EpiVacCorona. Unlike with the first Russian vaccine, Sputnik V, which is an adenovirus vector-based vaccine, the new one is a promising synthetic vaccine based on peptide," the Russian government stated.
- **Sputnik V**, which was developed by **Gamaleya Institute in Moscow**, was licensed for use in Russia in August. Sputnik V was also registered before Phase III trials just like EpiVacCorona. A human trial of Sputnik V is currently under way in Moscow for it.

Myanmar Navy to acquire its first submarine, INS' retrofitted Sindhuvir

- **Myanmar** is all set to acquire its **first diesel-electric submarine**, with the **Indian Navy handing over** its retrofitted **INS Sindhuvir** to the country for training and operations.
- India will be delivering a kilo class submarine INS Sindhuvir to the Myanmar Navy. This will be the first submarine in the Myanmar navy. This is in accordance with our vision of **SAGAR - Security and Growth for All in the Region**.
- New Delhi and Naypyidaw are also working on the supply of Indian field guns (105 mm artillery guns), ammunition, night vision devices and other military hardware.
- Both India and Myanmar are in talks for the supply of more military hardware, including 105 mm artillery guns, ammunition, sonars and advanced light torpedoes 'Shyena'. The two countries are also working on more joint-training and exercises to enhance **Indo-Myanmar military-to-military cooperation**.
- The **Indian Navy had bought the INS Sindhuvir**, a Soviet-origin Kilo-class submarine, **from Russia in 1980s** and has operated it since 1988.

- It is currently being modernized by the **Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) in Vizag**, after which its service life will be extended by 10-15 years. It will then serve the Myanmar Navy till the 2030s.

Singapore Becomes First Country to Use Facial Recognition to Pay Taxes

- In **Singapore**, **online government services** can now be accessed **by facial recognition -- a world first**.
- This technology is being rolled out to the city-state's **SingPass digital identity scheme**, offering access to no less than 400 online services, including tax declarations and public housing applications. Facial recognition is also increasingly being used to access other online services, such as banking.
- The function is designed to work via home computers, tablets and cell phones, as well as at public kiosks.
- According to the Singapore authorities, the technology helps ensure that the right person is genuinely present in front of their screen, rather than a photograph, a video, a replayed recording or a deepfake.
- In the future, facial recognition could find other applications in Singapore, such as making sure students sit their own examinations or for verification purposes in secure areas of the city-state's ports.

India , Netherlands collaborate in e-health initiative

- **India** and **the Netherlands** discussed a joint thrust in **e-health sector** with the purpose of providing digital health facilities and security to Indians and helping the Netherlands accelerate the digital transformation of health.
- Part of India's ambitious **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)**, this collaboration will see the two countries work closely to create capacities and put in place the requisite technology backbone to enable this revolutionary initiative, according to a statement.
- The NDHM, unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Independence Day, aims to create a mechanism to improve healthcare significantly and provide better access to it.
- "The National Digital Health Blueprint provides for the architectural approach towards realising the goal of longitudinal electronic health record. A mission mode approach is being followed through launch of **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)** in that direction. The activities have already been embarked in selected Union territories under pilot phase," he stated.

Israel Embassy to have 'Water Attache' in India from January

- **Israel Embassy** in Delhi will have a separate '**Water Attache**' from **January 2021** to help share their country's best practices and technologies for advancements in **India's water management** and **agriculture sectors**.
- In another significant development, Israel will soon nominate an honorary Consul in the North-East with the aim to increase its presence and collaboration in that region.
- It is announced by Israeli Ambassador to India **Ron Malka**.
- As many as **29 such centres** of excellence have already been established across India and nearly 1.5 lakh farmers have been trained at these centres in just one year.

5th Joint Working Group Meeting On Coal Between India, Indonesia On Nov 5

- **India** will host **5th Joint Working Group (JWG) on coal** with **Indonesia** and the meeting will be on November 5 through video conference.
- The meeting will be co-chaired from the Indian side by **Vinod Kumar Tiwari**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Coal and by Dr Ir. Ridwan Djamaluddin, Director General of Mineral and Coal Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources from the Indonesian side.

- According to an official release, the meeting will deliberate on recent updates related to Indian coal policy reforms, coking coal exploration and commercial coal mining in India and potential of business cooperation on coal post COVID-19.
- The release stated that a **B2B session** will bring together industries from both the sides to discuss the issues impacting business opportunities in the backdrop of the regulatory framework. This will also explore more areas of business opportunities in the coal sector. The deliberations will guide the coal business between the two countries.

Andorra joins the IMF and becomes the organization's 190th member

- **Europe's Andorra** formally **joined the International Monetary Fund**, becoming the crisis lender's **190th member state** as the tourism and trade-dependent principality struggles with the coronavirus pandemic.
- IMF's Membership allows the Andorran government to benefit from IMF policy advice, especially as the country tackles the crisis caused by COVID-19 and can now receive an annual review or "health check" of its economy by the IMF, tap technical assistance, and access IMF lending if needed.

India gets chairmanship of International Labour Organisation's governing body after a gap of 35 years

- **India** has assumed the **chairmanship** of the governing body of the **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** after a gap of **35 years**.
- **Labour secretary Apurva Chandra** has been elected as the **chairperson of the governing body** of the organisation for the period **October 2020- June 2021**.
- At present, **ILO has 187 members**. Chandra will be presiding over the upcoming meeting of the governing body to be held in November 2020.
- It meets thrice a year, in March, June and November.
- It will also provide a platform to appraise participants of the transformational initiatives taken by government in removing the rigidities of labour market besides making its intention clear about universalisation of social security to all workers whether in organised or unorganised sector.

NATO plans to set up new space center in Germany

- The **NATO alliance** is to build a **headquarters for space operations** at its airbase in **Ramstein in Germany**, to counter a rising Russian and Chinese threat.
- The new center is to be a central point of contact to support NATO missions with communication and satellite images. It will also be a place to exchange information on potential threats to satellites.
- Some 2,000 satellites orbit the Earth, more than half of which are operated by NATO members, allowing everything from mobile phone services to weather forecasts.
- Currently, at least 40 percent of NATO's communications are via satellite.

Pakistan to remain in grey list of global terror financing watchdog- FATF till February 2021

- **Pakistan** will remain on **the grey list** of global terror financing watchdog, **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** as it has not been able to fulfil six out of the 27 mandates to check terror funding. The decision was announced by the President of FATF Marcus Pleyer.
- The FATF strongly urged Pakistan to swiftly complete its full action plan by **February 2021**. It stated, Pakistan needs to do more to check terror funding, adding that the 6 items which Pakistan is yet to address are serious deficiencies.
- The implementation plan to curb money laundering and terror financing was supposed to be put in place by the end of 2019. However, the deadline was extended in the wake of COVID pandemic.

US, EU launch new bilateral dialogue on China

- The **United States** and **European Union (local time)** have launched a **new bilateral dialogue** between the **European External Action Service** and the US Department of State on China.
- "During the meeting, they launched a new bilateral dialogue between the European External Action Service and the US Department of State on China. Borrell and Pompeo welcomed the start of this dialogue as a dedicated forum for EU and US experts to discuss the full range of issues related to China," the statement read.
- They also discussed a range of issues of common interest in the context of the Transatlantic Partnership, read an official statement issued by the State Department.
- The leaders also agreed to continue meetings at the senior official and expert levels on themes including human rights, security, and multilateralism.
- The next high-level meeting between the Deputy Secretary of State and European External Action Service Secretary-General will be held in mid-November 2020, the department stated.

Bangladesh govt orders 'no mask, no service' policy

- The **Bangladesh government** has decided that **no service will be provided** to people **who don't wear mask**.
- The cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina decided that no one will be allowed to enter offices without the mask.
- It decided that all offices must install notice boards saying '**no mask, no service**' in order to control the spread of COVID 19 virus in the country.

Third India-US 2 plus 2 Ministerial Dialogue underway in New Delhi

- The **Third India-US two plus two Ministerial Dialogue** is underway at **Hyderabad House** in **New Delhi**.
- From the Indian side, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar are leading the delegation.
- United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defence Mark Esper are leading the US delegation. Both the Secretaries earlier paid tributes at National War Memorial.
- The First two plus two dialogue was held in **New Delhi** in September 2018 and the Second in **Washington DC** in 2019. The agenda for the Third dialogue will cover all bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.
- The Third Annual two plus two Ministerial Dialogue will focus on advancing the Indo-US comprehensive global strategic partnership.
- It will also deliberate on further strengthening cooperation to promote stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and the world.

The World's Longest Immersed Tunnel Will Connect Germany and Denmark — and Make Trips So Much Shorter

- After 10 years of planning, the construction of **the world's longest immersed tunnel** has officially begun. The **Fehmarnbelt Tunnel** that will connect **Denmark** and **Germany**, is scheduled to be officially opened by **2029**. It's one of Europe's largest ongoing infrastructure projects, with a budget of more than US\$8 billion.
- The tunnel will have an 18 kilometers extension and will be built across the Fehmarn Belt, a strait between the **German island of Fehmarn** and the **Danish island of Lolland**. It will be an alternative to the current ferry service, which takes 45 minutes. Traveling through the tunnel will take seven minutes by train and ten minutes by car.
- It will be the **longest combined road and rail tunnel in the world**, with two double-lane motorways, separated by a service passageway, and two electrified rail tracks. Besides the benefits to passenger trains and cars, it will have a positive impact on the flow of freight trucks and trains.

- The Fehmarnbelt Tunnel project started back in 2008 when Germany and Denmark signed a treaty to build the tunnel. But it took more than a decade for the necessary legislation to be passed by both countries and for geotechnical and environmental impact studies to be carried out. Still, many organizations have currently open appeals against the project.

India, UK to set up bilateral Sustainable Finance Forum

- **India and the United Kingdom** agreed to establish a **bilateral Sustainable Finance Forum** to drive forward deeper cooperation on sustainable finance.
- The decision was taken during the **10th Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD)** between India and the UK that also saw participation of UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- "India and the United Kingdom enjoy close bilateral relations in diverse areas. India-UK economic ties are important as together they are two of the world's top seven economies with a combined GDP of over **\$5 trillion**."
- "India-UK trade has more than doubled since the first EFD in 2007, with bilateral investment supporting over half a million jobs across both countries," Union finance ministry stated.
- It was also decided to establish bilateral India-UK Sustainable Finance Forum, the statement stated, adding that private sector initiatives under the **India-UK Financial Partnership (IUKFP)** and **India-UK Sustainable Finance Working Group** were welcomed.
- Sitharaman highlighted the work being done by India's **\$1.4 trillion National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)** and the City of London to ensure flows of sustainable finance.
- This partnership is helping set up a **Project Preparation Support Facility cum Centre of Excellence for PPP (Public Private Partnership) projects**, as per the statement. The Green Growth Equity Fund (GGEF) was launched in 2018 as a joint venture with 240 million pounds funding to catalyse financing into green infrastructure in India. British Petroleum became the first private investor contributing \$70 million, it added.

European Commission, ICSSR sign new implementing arrangement to enhance scientific cooperation

- **The European Commission** and the **Indian Council of Social Science Research** signed a new implementing arrangement to enhance **scientific cooperation**. In a statement, the EU stated it encourages top Indian social scientists to join temporary research teams in Europe funded by the **European Research Council (ERC)**. The joint initiative is the second of its kind for the ERC with an Indian funding body, it stated.
- The Ambassador of the European Union to India, Ugo Astuto, and the Member Secretary of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Virendra Kumar Malhotra, signed the Implementing Arrangement in a virtual mode. "This initiative will provide opportunities to Indian researchers (Principal Investigators of Research Projects, Senior Fellowship Awardees and Post-Doctoral Fellows) who are supported by the ICSSR and want to pursue research collaborations with European researchers, supported by the ERC. The role of the ERC and the ICSSR is to facilitate contacts between their respective scholars who are interested in international cooperation," the statement stated.

India extends \$1 bn credit line to Central Asian countries for priority projects

- India extended a **\$1-billion line of credit** to **Central Asian countries** for priority projects in connectivity, energy, IT and health care, with the move being perceived as part of New Delhi's efforts to boost its role as a transparent development partner
- The line of credit was welcomed by ministers of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan during the second meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue held via video conference under the

chairmanship of external affairs minister S Jaishankar. Acting Afghan foreign minister Haneef Atmar joined the meeting as a special invitee.

- The meeting discussed cooperation in political and security matters, and all the countries called for settling the Afghan conflict on the principle of an “Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace process”, according to a joint statement. The countries also condemned terrorism and reaffirmed their determination to destroy terrorist safe havens, networks, and funding channels. Besides the \$1-billion line of credit, India offered grant assistance for high impact community development projects to boost socio-economic development in Central Asia.

India Post, US Postal Service sign agreement for electronic exchange of customs data

- **Department of Posts** and **United States Postal Service, USPS** have entered into an agreement for **electronic exchange of customs data** related to postal shipments exchanged between the two countries.
- The agreement will make it possible to transmit and receive electronic data of international postal items prior to their physical arrival at the destination and would enable customs clearance of postal items in advance in line with the evolving global postal framework.
- USA is the top export destination for India which is also reflected in exchange of goods through postal channel. In 2019, around 20 per cent of outbound EMS and 30 per cent of Letters and Small Packets transmitted by India Post were destined to USA whereas 60 per cent of the Parcels received by India Post were originated from USA.
- **Exchange of Electronic Advance Data** as per the Agreement will be a key driver towards promoting mutual trade with emphasis on the exports from different parts of India to USA through postal channel. USA is a major destination of MSME products, Gems and Jewellery, Pharmaceuticals and other local products from India. This will fulfill a major demand of export industry to expedite customs clearances of export items.

Japan to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050

- Japanese Prime Minister **Yoshihide Suga** has stated that the country will achieve **zero carbon emissions** by **2050**.
- The Prime Minister stated, he intends to make a sustainable economy a pillar of his growth strategy and put maximum effort into achieving a green society.
- Mr. Suga emphasized the need to shift away from fossil fuels to counter climate change as an opportunity rather than a burden. As per Japan's current energy plan, **56 per cent** of its energy requirements come from fossil fuels.

India, U.S sign five agreements including 'Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement'

- **India** and **the U.S** inked a landmark **defence agreement** that will allow sharing of **high-end military technology**, classified satellite data, and critical information between the two countries. The signing of the long-negotiated Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement -- also known as **BECA** -- during the third edition of the 2+2 dialogue between the two strategic partners boosts bilateral defence and military ties. It comes in the backdrop of India's tense border standoff with China in eastern Ladakh.
- A joint statement issued towards the end of the talks stated India and the U.S would cooperate on infrastructure development in the Indo-Pacific and partner with like-minded countries in the ASEAN and beyond for a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific.
- The U.S reiterated its support for India's quest for a permanent membership of the **United Nations Security Council**.
- India reiterated the importance of peace, stability and prosperity for all countries in the Indo-Pacific region.
- India and the U.S agreed to ramp up their security ties and boost cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, amidst China's growing belligerence and expansionist designs. India-U.S collaboration in defence production and counter-terrorism figured in the talks.

Panna (India), Fuvahmulah and Addu Atoll (Maldives) join UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves

- UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme included Panna in India and Fuvahmulah and Addu Atoll in the Maldives, to UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
- For India it is the **twelfth entry**, whereas for Maldives **second and third after Baa Atoll**.
- In total 25 new sites were added, one of them transboundary, in 18 countries to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, which now numbers 714 biosphere reserves in 129 countries around the globe.
- **Panna Biosphere Reserve (India)**

Located in the centre of India, in the state of **Madhya Pradesh**, **Panna** is characterized by forests and marshy vegetation, with an abundance of rare medicinal plants as well as other non-timber forestry products, such as Kattha, gum and resins. It is a critical tiger habitat area and hosts the Panna Tiger Reserve, as well as the World Heritage site of the Khajuraho Group of Monuments. The area has undergone substantial ecosystem restoration in the buffer zone. With only three urban centres and over 300 villages, agriculture is the main source of income, together with horticulture, forestry, and cultural and eco-tourism.

- **Fuvahmulah Biosphere Reserve (Maldives)**

A large island in the southern part of the Maldives, the biosphere reserve encompasses an entire atoll ecosystem, including the most diverse of coral ecosystems in the country with healthy habitats and unique coral sand beach formations. The surface of the island is in the form of a very shallow bowl with two mangroves and wetlands (locally known as Kilhi) at medial low points, forming two small linked sub-catchments. These Kilhis have influenced the lifestyle of the island's inhabitants, who make a living mostly with tourism, small-scale fishing and agriculture

- **Addu Atoll Biosphere Reserve (Maldives)**

Addu, the southernmost atoll of the Maldives, comprises a total of 30 islands, 17 of which are uninhabited. It is one of the most diverse coral reef ecosystems in the Maldives including lagoons, reef passes, seagrass beds, sandbanks, coral islands, lush tropical vegetation, mangroves, wetlands, brackish lakes locally known as kilhis, agricultural land and residential areas. About 14,352 ha of its total area of 17,174.40 ha are marine areas, with an outstanding biodiversity that includes over 1,200 fish species. It is home to internationally threatened species and an important habitat for migratory birds. Most of the inhabitants make a living from fisheries and tourism related to underwater sports. The establishment of Addu Atoll Biosphere Reserve reinforces ongoing efforts to manage coral reef ecosystem services through sustainable development.

AIM Launches India–Australia Circular Economy Hackathon(I-ACE), with Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)

- **AIM (Atal Innovation Mission)**, in association with **CSIRO**, is organizing a **two-day hackathon** on circular economy, '**India–Australia Circular Economy Hackathon (I-ACE)**', on **7 and 8 December**.
- I-ACE will focus on identification and development of innovative technology solutions by bright-minded students, startups and MSMEs of both nations.
- Shortlisted students and startups/MSMEs will be called for the hackathon, where two winners (one student and one startup/MSME) per theme from each country will be announced at an award ceremony on 11 December.
- The winning Indian student and startup/MSME teams will be awarded a prize of Rs 2 lakh and Rs 5 lakh, respectively, coupled with post-hackathon product development opportunities. The winning Australian student will be awarded a prize of AUD\$3500 and the winning Australian SMEs/startup team a prize of AUD\$9500.

The four key themes for the hackathon are as follows

- Innovation in packaging reducing packaging waste
- Innovation in food supply chains avoiding waste
- Creating opportunities for plastic waste reduction
- Recycling critical energy metals and e-waste

Revision Points

Country	Capital	Currency	Head
The Netherlands	Amsterdam	Euro	Mark Rutte
Nigeria	Abuja	Naira	Muhammadu Buhari
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Taka	Abdul Hamid
Myanmar	Naypyitaw	Burmese kyat	Win Myint
Argentina	Buenos Aires	Peso	Alberto Ángel Fernández
Taiwan	Taipei	Dollar	Tsai Ing-wen
Pakistan	Islamabad	Rupee	Imran Khan
France	Paris	Euro	Emmanuel Macron
Singapore	Singapore City	Dollar	Halimah Yacob
Indonesia	Jakarta	Rupiah	Joko Widodo
Germany	Berlin	Euro	Frank-Walter Steinmeier
Denmark	Copenhagen	Krone	Mette Frederiksen
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	Donald Trump
Denmark	Copenhagen	Krone	Mette Frederiksen
Nepal	Kathmandu	Rupee	K. P. Sharma Oli
China	Beijing	Renminbi	Xi Jinping
Japan	Tokyo	Yen	Yoshihide Suga
Israel	Jerusalem	Shekel	Reuven Rivlin
Seychelles	Victoria	Rupee	Wavel Ramkalawan
Guinea	Conakry	Franc	Alpha Condé
Bolivia	La Paz, Sucre	Boliviano	Luis Alberto Arce Catacora
New Zealand	Wellington	Dollar	Jacinda Ardern
Kyrgyzstan	Bishkek	Som	Sadyr Zhaparov
Jordan	Amman	Dinar	Bishr Al-Khasawneh
Cambodia	Phnom Penh	Riel	Devyani Uttam Khobragade
Lebanon	Beirut	Pound	Saad Hariri
South Korea	Seoul	Won	Moon Jae-in
North Korea	Pyongyang	Won	Kim Jong-un

Solomon Islands	Honiara	Dollar	Manasseh Sogavare
Australia	Canberra	Dollar	Scott Morrison

Important Appointments

National Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation	Predecessor/Others
S S Deswal	Additional charge of National Security Guard DG	A K Singh
Sourav Ganguly	Brand ambassador, Bengal Peerless Housing	He is the current president of the Board of Control for Cricket
Purnachandra Rao Surapaneni	National President of Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC)	
Rahul Parikh	Digital Head, Bandhan Bank	He is the former Bajaj Capital chief
RJ Duckworth	Air Officer in charge Personnel	He was awarded Vishisht Seva Medal in 2008
Apurva Chandra	Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment	He was serving as Special Director General, Defence Acquisition
S Aparna	Secretary in the Department of Pharmaceuticals Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers	Dr PD Vaghela
Charanjit Surinder Singh Attra	Chief Financial Officer, State Bank of India	Attra was a partner with EY India
Madhabi Puri Buch	Whole-Time Member, Securities and Exchange Board of India	
Madhu Mahajan & B. R Balakrishnan	Special Expenditure Observers for General Election	
Ashima Goyal, Jayanth R Verma and Shashank Bhide	Monetary Policy Committee	
M A Ganapathy	Director General, BCAS	Rakesh Asthana
Rakesh Asthana	MD & Chief Executive Officer, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited	
Amar Bahl	Deputy Managing Director & COO, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited	
M Rajeshwar Rao	Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India	

Dinesh Khara	Chairman, State Bank of India	Rajnish Kumar
RK Chhibber	Chairman & MD, Jammu & Kashmir bank	Extended for 6 months
Ajinkya Rahane	Brand ambassador and advisor of Hudle	
Rana Daggubati	Brand ambassador, Ubon	
J Venkatramu	MD & CEO, India Post Payments Bank	Suresh Sethi
Bhuvan Bam	Digital brand ambassador, Mynta	
Piyush Goyal	Additional charge of the Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution ministry	Ram Vilas Paswan
Nilesh Shah	Chairman, Association of Mutual Funds in India	MD, Kotak Mahindra Asset Management
Saurabh Nanavati	Vice-chairman of Association of Mutual Funds in India	Chief executive officer of Invesco Asset Management
Chetan Anand	Brand ambassador, Badminton brand 'Transform'	
Amit Banerjee	Director (Rail and Metro Business) and Member on the Board of BEML Limited	
Srikant Datar	Dean of Harvard Business School	Nitin Nohria
Subhash Kelkar	Chief Technology and Digital Officer, ICICI Securities	Yagnesh Parikh
R. Balasubramaniam (Founder and chairman of GRAAM, Mysuru)	Technical Group on Social Stock Exchange, SEBI	Committee is chaired by Harsh Kumar Bhanwala
Pradeep Kumar Rawat	Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Netherlands	He is the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Indonesia
Uma Shankar	Additional Director (non-executive, independent), Karnataka Bank	He is a former Executive Director of Reserve Bank of India
Amitabh Bachchan	Brand ambassador , Cello Group	
Gurdeep Singh	Chairman and Managing Director, NTPC Ltd	
Rajkiran Rai G	Chairman, Indian Banks' Association	
Dinesh Kumar Khara	Deputy Chairman, Indian Banks' Association	
Rohan Jaitley	President, Delhi and District Cricket Association	

Sashidhar Jagdishan	Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, HDFC Bank	
Priyanka Chopra Jonas	Brand ambassador, Parle Agro's B-Fizz	
Ajay Kumar Bhalla	Home Secretary	Extended up to August 22, 2021
Rohit Sharma	Brand ambassador, Vega	
Rajendra Prasad Goyal	Chief Financial Officer, NHPC	Mahesh Kumar Mittal
Dr Neena Malhotra	Ambassador of India to the Republic of San Marino	She is serving as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Italy
Ghanshyam Jha	Chairperson, Jammu and Kashmir Water Resources Regulatory Authority	
Nanda Kishore Sahoo	Director General, Dental Services and Colonel Commandant of Army Dental Corps	
Bimal Julka	Chairman, Federation of Indian Fantasy Sports	John Loffhagen
Saman Habib	Fellow of Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi	He is CSIR-CDRI Scientist
Justice BL Bhat	Acting Chairperson, National Company Law Appellate Tribunal	

International Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation	Predecessor/Others
Devyani Uttam Khobragade	India's next ambassador to Cambodia	
South Korea's Yoo Myung-hee and Nigeria's Okonjo-Iweala	Nominated Next attorney-general, World Trade Organisation	
Bishr Al-Khasawneh	13th premier, Jordan	Omar Al-Razzaz
Saad Hariri	Prime Minister, Lebanon	
Sadyr Zhaparov	Acting PM, Kyrgyzstan	Kubatbek Boronov
Myktybek Abdyldaev	Speaker of the parliament, Kyrgyzstan	
Chaitanya Venkateswaran	British High Commissioner of India	Called the 'High Commissioner for a Day'
Constantina Dita	Ambassador, World Athletics Half Marathon Championships Gdynia 2020	Romania's 2008 Olympic champion
Vishal V Sharma	Permanent Representative of India	

	to UNESCO	
Michael Irani	President, International Weightlifting Federation	
Jacinda Ardern	Prime Minister, New Zealand	
Lewis Hamilton	Global ambassador, LG Electronics	
Sushil Kumar Singhal	High Commissioner of India to Solomon Islands	Presently serving as the High Commissioner of India to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea
Wavel Ramkalawan	President, Seychelles	He defeated President Danny
Alpha Condé	President, Guinea	His main opponent - Cellou Dalein Diallo
Luis Alberto Arce Catacora	President, Bolivia	Carlos Mesa

Resignation/Retirement

Name of the Person	Designation
Uday Shankar	Chairman, Star & Disney India
Sooronbai Jeenbekov	President, Kyrgyzstan
Vineet Nayyar	Executive Vice-Chairman, IL&FS Group
Michel Aoun	President, Lebanon

Supreme Court Appoints One-Man Panel To Monitor Prevention Of Stubble Burning

- The **Supreme Court appointed** a one-man panel of retired apex court judge **Justice MB Lokur** to monitor the steps taken by the neighbouring states **to prevent stubble burning**, while brushing aside objections of the Centre, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.
- The top court ordered deployment of National Cadet Corps, National Service Scheme and Bharat Scouts and Guides for assisting in the monitoring of stubble burning in the agricultural fields of **Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi-NCR**.
- A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde** directed the court-appointed Environment Pollution Control Authority and chief secretaries of Delhi and the three states to assist the Lokur panel to enable physical surveillance of fields where stubble is burnt.
- The panel shall submit its report on stubble burning within 15 days to the apex court.

Important Awards and Honours

Winner	Prize	Awarded By/Theme/Purpose
Kerala Tourism	PATA Grand Award 2020 for Marketing	For its Human by Nature
Harvey J. Alter (New York), Michael Houghton (United	Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2020	For the discovery of Hepatitis C virus

Kingdom) and Charles M. Rice (Sacramento, US)		
Ratan Tata	Lifetime achievement award	Awarded by Indo-American Chamber of Commerce
Ravi Santhanam (HDFC Bank)	The World's Most Influential CMOs	Recognized in the Forbes list
Roger Penrose, Reinhard Genzel and Andrea Ghez	2020 Nobel Prize in Physics	Black holes and the Milky Way's darkest secret
Taraltech Solutions Private Limited	National Start-Up Awards- 2020	Urban Services category
Wealthy Therapeutics	National Start-Up Awards- 2020	Health care category
Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer A. Doudna	2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry	Development of a method for genome editing
Sarah Hall	BBC National Short Story Award	Won the top honour for the story, The Grotesques.
Louise Glück (American poet)	Nobel Prize in Literature for 2020	Unmistakable poetic voice that with austere beauty makes individual existence universal
Nityanand Nayak (Odia poet)	Sarala Puraskar	Setebelaku Nathiba (Published in 2017)
World Food Programme	Nobel Peace Prize 2020	Achievement of food security
Paul R. Milgrom and Robert B. Wilson	2020 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences	Improvements to auction theory and invention of new auction formats
Bank of Ghana	Central Bank of Year award	Governor of the BoG, Dr Ernest Addison
Harish Kotecha	Sandra Neese Lifetime Achievement Award	Needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness
Mrs. Seema Gupta	2020 Gold Stevie Awards for Women in Business	Director Operations POWERGRID
Aishwarya Sridhar	Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2020	Titled 'Lights of Passion'
Sana Hazari	Young Achievers Award 2020	Founder of The Social Corporate
Anika Chebrolu	America's Young Scientist Challenge	
Rakayet Ul Karim Rakim (Chittagong, Bangladesh) (Theme-'Nature in Your	12th edition of the Greenstorm International Nature Photography Contest	Mohamed Noufal (Sharjah, UAE) and Kartikeya Grover (Ghaziabad)

Neighbourhood')	title	
Pravir Krishna (Managing Director of TRIFED)	CEO of the year and visionary leadership award	Virtual edition of National Awards for Excellence in PSU for Investment in Start-UPS
Dr Jajini Varghese (UK-based Indian-origin plastic surgeon)	Outstanding Young Person 2020	Recognised in the "Medical Innovation" category
India-assisted Mangdechhu hydroelectric project in Bhutan	Brunel Medal for excellence in civil engineering	It built on the Mangdechhu River
Anzar Mustaeen Ali	Special prize in Global Art Competition	Organised by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations
Om Puri (posthumously)	Lifetime Achievement Award	At the third India International Film Festival of Boston

Gajendra Singh Shekhawat gives away Swachh Bharat Awards 2020; Gujarat bags first position under Swachh Sundar Samudayak Shouchalaya category

- The **Swachh Bharat Awards-2020** were given to States, Districts, Blocks and Village Panchayats by Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. The awards were given particularly under drinking water and cleanliness categories.
- The Union Government had earlier launched three missions under **Swachh Sundar Samudayik Shouchalaya**, **Samudayik Shouchalaya Abhiyan** and **Gandagi Mukth Bharat**. Under the Swachh Sundar Samudayik Shouchalaya category **Gujarat** bagged the first position at state level whereas **Tirunelveli** in **Tamil Nadu** got the Award for cleanliness at District Level.
- Khachrod block in Ujjain district in Madhya Pradesh was awarded the first position and Chinnanur Village in **Tamil Nadu** bagged the top slot at Gram Panchayat level. Under the Samudayik Shouchalaya Abhiyan, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh were awarded as the best performing states whereas **Prayagraj** and **Bareilly** got it for being the best performing districts. Under the Gandagi Mukth Bharat Mission, **Haryana** and **Telangana** were awarded the top slot.

Alternate Nobel Prize 2020': Belarus, Iran, US, Nicaragua Activists Awarded the Right Livelihood Award

- Activists from **Belarus**, **Iran**, **Nicaragua** and the United States were awarded the **Right Livelihood Award**, sometimes referred to as the "**Alternative Nobel**". A prominent Belarus opposition figure and an imprisoned Iranian human rights lawyer were among the awardees.
- Nasrin Sotoudeh**, an Iranian lawyer, who has defended activists, opposition politicians and women prosecuted for removing their headscarves, was given the award "for her fearless activism, at great personal risk, to promote political freedoms and human rights in Iran."
- Bryan Stevenson**, US civil rights lawyer won the award "for his inspiring endeavour to reform the US criminal justice system and advance racial reconciliation in the face of historic trauma."
- Lottie Cunningham Wren**, the 61-year-old rights and environmental activist of **Nicaragua** won "for her ceaseless dedication to the protection of indigenous lands and communities from exploitation and plunder."
- 58-year-old human rights activist **Ales Bialiatski** and the non-governmental organisation Human Rights Center Viasna which he heads, won "for their resolute struggle for the realization of democracy and human rights in Belarus."
- Although the Right Livelihood Award is promoted as an "**Alternative Nobel Prize**", it is not a Nobel prize. It does not have any organizational ties at all to the awarding institutions of the Nobel Prize or the Nobel Foundation.

Billboard Music Awards: Post Malone and Billie Eilish win big, Jonas Brothers rake in 3 wins. Complete winners list

- Walking into the show with **16 nominations**, **Post Malone** won **nine honors** at the 2020 **Billboard Music Awards**.
- He beat out **Eilish** for the top prize, but she was still a winner, taking home **top Billboard 200 album** and top female artist. Other winners included **Lil Nas X**, who was also on-hand to accept top Hot 100 song for “Old Town Road,” which set the record for most weeks at No. 1. After his performance, **Luke Combs** was named top country artist .
- This year’s Billboard Awards were originally supposed to take place in April but were postponed because of the pandemic. It’s the reason why some of the nominees in the 55 categories may feel dated.

Here is the complete winners list at BMAs.

Top Hot 100 song: “Old Town Road,” Lil Nas X and Billy Ray Cyrus

Top Billboard 200 album: Billie Eilish, “When We Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?”

Top artist: Post Malone

Top new artist: Billie Eilish

Top female artist: Billie Eilish

Top male artist: Post Malone

Top streaming songs artist: Post Malone

Top song sales artist: Lizzo

Top radio songs artist: Jonas Bros.

Top duo/group: Jonas Bros.

Top R&B artist: Khalid

Top rap artist: Post Malone

Top country artist: Luke Combs

Top rock artist: Panic! at the Disco

Top Latin artist: Bad Bunny

Top dance/electronic artist: The Chainsmokers

Top Christian artist: Lauren Daigle

Top gospel artist: Kanye West

Top social artist: BTS

Top touring artist: Pink

Chart achievement award: Harry Styles

Icon award: Garth Brooks

ISA Confers the Very First ISA Solar Awards at Third Assembly

- **For the first time** since the inception of the framework agreement of ISA, **solar awards were conferred on countries and institutions** working for solar.
- The assembly witnessed the conferment of the Visvesvaraya award which recognises the countries with maximum floating solar capacity in each of the four regions of ISA.
- **Bharat Ratna M. Visvesvaraya** to the representatives of the countries of Japan, and the **Kingdom of the Netherlands**.
- **The awards** went to **Japan for the Asia Pacific region** and the **Netherlands for Europe and other regions**.
- The recipients of the **Kalpana Chawla award**, named after the American astronaut of Indian origin.
- The inaugural award in this category was conferred to **Dr. Bhim Singh** from IIT Delhi (India), and **Dr. Aesha Alnuaimi (UAE)** from Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA).

- The award recognizes outstanding contribution of scientists and engineers working in the field of solar energy.
- **The Diwakar award** has been awarded to **Arpan Institute (Haryana) and Arushi Society**.
- The award recognises organisations and institutions that have been working for the benefit of differently-abled people and have maximised the use of solar energy in the host country.

'Gully Boy' wins Best Original Music at 14th Asian Film Awards

- The 14th edition of **Asian Film Awards** ("AFA14") was organized by the **Asian Film Awards Academy** ("AFAA").
- **Indian Movie Gully Boy** received the award for the **Best Original Score at the event**. in Gully Boy, Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt played leading roles.
- The award was given to The Salvage Audio Collective and Karsh Kale.
- Zoya Akhtar has directed Film Gully Boy and was displayed on cinema screen on 14th February 2019.

Best Actor	Lee Byung-hun – The Man Standing Next (South Korea)
Best Actress	Zhou Dongyu – Better Days (China)
Best Cinematography	Dong Jinsong – The Wild Goose Lake
Best Costume Designer	Pacharin Surawatanapongs– Happy Old Year
Best Director	Wang Xiaoshuai for So Long, My Son (China)
Best Editing	Yang Jin-mo – Parasite
Best Film	Parasite (South Korea)
Best Newcomer	Jackson Yee – Better Days
Best New Director	Hikari – 37 Seconds
Best Supporting Actor	Ryo Kase – To the Ends of the Earth
Best Supporting Actress	Ko Shu-chin – A Sun
Best Screenplay	Bong Joon-ho, Han Jin-won – Parasite
Best Original Music	Karsh Kale, The Salvage Audio Collective – Gully Boy
Best Production Design	Ha-jun Lee – Parasite
Best Visual Effects	Tomi Kijo, Renovatio Pictures – Detention
Best Sound	Yoshifumi Kureishi – Listen to the Universe

Important MOU's

NHPC signs MoU with Ministry of Power for FY2021

- **NHPC Limited**, India's premier hydropower utility and a Scheduled 'A' Mini Ratna Enterprise of the Government of India has signed **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** with **Ministry of Power, Government of India for the year 2020-21**.
- The MOU was signed by **Sanjiv Nandan Sahai, Secretary, Ministry of Power**, Government of India and **A.K. Singh, CMD, NHPC** in the presence of senior officers from MOP and NHPC.
- Generation target under Excellent rating has been set as 27500 MUs as against last year target of 26000 MUs. Excellent Targets for Revenue from Operations (Net) has been kept as **Rs. 8900 crore**, Operating Profit as a percentage of Revenue from Operations (Net) has been kept as 38.00% and PAT/ Average Net Worth has been kept as 10.50 %.

- Centre has set an ambitious revenue target of **Rs 36,000 crore** along with various performance-related parameters such as Operating Profit as percentage of Revenue from Operation, PAT as a percentage of Average Networth and Non-financial parameters viz., IPDS-related parameters.

SJVN signs MoU with Govt. of India for year 2020-21

- **SJVN Limited** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Govt. of India** for the year **2020-21**. The MOU was signed between Shri S.N. Sahai, Secretary (Power), Government of India and Shri Nand Lal Sharma, Chairman & Managing Director, SJVN. The MoU was signed through Video Conferencing.
- As per the targets set in MOU, SJVN shall strive to achieve **9680 Million Units** of electricity generation during the year under the 'Excellent' category. Further, **SJVN** will have **Capital Expenditure (CAPEX)** target of **Rs.2880 Crores** and Turnover target of Rs. 2800 Crores under 'Excellent' category along with other targets related to operational efficiency and Project monitoring.

Tata Steel & CSIR sign MoU

- Considering the importance of **Carbon Capture, Utilisation & Storage (CCUS)** in India's fight against Climate Change and Global Warming, meeting the growing energy demands and building a strong ecosystem to meet commitments under Paris Agreement, **Tata Steel Limited** and the **Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)** have joined hands to work in the field of CCUS.
- As part of this strategic MoU signed between Tata Steel Limited and the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), the teams from Tata Steel and CSIR will work towards accelerating development and deployment of CCUS technologies in the steel industry. These technologies would expedite transition to a **decarbonised economy** in other carbon intensive sectors like Power, Cement, and Fertilizer etc.
- This collaboration would entail work across key areas of CO2 capture, utilization and storage and would be co-led by Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Director NEERI (National Environmental Engineering Research Institute) as the CSIR nodal and Dr. Debashish Bhattacharjee, VP, Technology & New Materials Business, Tata Steel. In addition, several other CSIR laboratories would also participate given their diverse competencies in this area.

CSC partners with HelpAge India to impart digital literacy to elderly citizens

- The **Common Services Centre (CSC)**, a special purpose vehicle under the **Ministry of Electronics and IT**, has partnered with **HelpAge India** to provide digital literacy to citizens above the age of **55 years** through a pilot project in selected states.
- The move is aimed at digital inclusion and literacy of the rural elderly, especially those disadvantaged, at a time when online and digital services have assumed paramount significance due to social distancing in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.
- As most elderly, especially those living in rural areas are not digitally literate, it is deeply impacting their way of life accessing basic goods and services and survival.
- "Access to digital learning will provide them with a window of hope so that they can carry on with their daily living and livelihood activities without putting themselves at risk," he stated.
- As per the MoU signed between **CSC Academy**, the education arm of CSC, and **HelpAge India**, CSC will provide digital literacy to 1,500 elderly citizens in the three aspirational districts of Karauli in Rajasthan, Birbhum in West Bengal and Ramanathapuram in Tamil Nadu.

- The MoU rolled out under the project '**Aalambana**' of **HelpAge** India will be implemented in a span of one year and seeks to empower the elderly so that they can digitally avail their entitlements as well as access financial and healthcare services.

ISLRTC & NCERT to ink MoU to make education materials accessible for Deaf children

- A historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be signed between **Indian Sign Language Research and Training Center (ISLRTC)** and **NCERT** to make education materials accessible for Deaf children in their preferred format of communication.
- This MoU will be signed in the virtual presence of Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thawar Chand Gehlot and Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'.
- As part of this MoU, educational print materials including NCERT Textbooks, Teachers Handbook and other Supplementary materials and resources of Class I-XII of all subjects of both Hindi and English Medium will be converted into Indian Sign Language in Digital format.
- The signing of this MoU is seen as a historic step as availability of NCERT textbooks in **Indian Sign Language** will ensure that **Deaf children** can also now access educational resources in Indian Sign Language.
- This will also ensure educational standardization of Indian Sign Language as mandated in the New Education Policy, 2020.

MoHUA enters into MoU with Swiggy to take street food vendors online under PM SVANIDHI scheme

- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** has entered into an MoU with **Swiggy**, one of the leading food delivery platforms, to onboard **street food vendors** on its **e-commerce platform**. The MoU aims at giving the street food vendors online access to thousands of consumers and help them grow their businesses. The arrangement has been facilitated under the **Prime Minister Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme**.
- The Ministry and Swiggy will run a pilot programme by on-boarding 250 vendors across five cities namely - Ahmedabad, Chennai, Delhi, Indore, and Varanasi. The street vendors will be helped with **PAN** and **FSSAI** registration, training on technology, menu digitization and pricing along with hygiene and packaging best practices. Upon the successful completion of the pilot programme, Urban Affairs Ministry and Swiggy plan to expand this initiative across the country in phases.
- In a first of its kind initiative, the Urban Affairs Ministry has coordinated with the key stakeholders including Municipal Corporations, FSSAI, Swiggy and GST officials to ensure that necessary pre-requisites are completed for this initiative.

IFFCO, Prasar Bharati sign MoU to broadcast & promote new agriculture technology & innovations

- **Prasar Bharati** and **Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited, IFFCO** have signed a MoU to **broadcast** and **promote new agriculture technology and innovations**. According to the agreement, **DD Kisan** will broadcast various innovative techniques being adopted in agriculture field in easy language through 30 minutes program series for the benefit of farmers.
- To make the farmers Atmanirbhar, it is necessary that these new agriculture techniques and their implementation should be explained to the farmers. The MoU will help in achieving this objective. IFFCO's innovations will be shared with farmers in easy language through DD Kisan in approximate 25 episodes.
- Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government, **Dr K. Vijay Raghavan** stated this initiative as a historic step for the betterment of farmers.

Bengal govt inks MoU with IIM-C wing to set up technology development centre

- **West Bengal government** entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Indian Institute of Management Calcutta**-run Entrepreneur & Innovation Park to set up a **Technology Development and Adaptation Centre (TDAC)**.
- The TDAC will build technologies which will address need-based, location specific problems, an official release stated.
- The state Department of Science and Technology and Biotechnology and the IIM-run Entrepreneur & Innovation Park have mutually agreed to set up the **TDAC through the West Bengal Science & Technology Council** with the objective of building and nurturing an ecosystem to support S&T-led entrepreneurship, promoting Scientific research and innovation, it stated.
- This will entail mentoring product development, motivating youth to take up S&T entrepreneurship, supporting job creation and employment. The promising S&T solutions/Research in the state will enable sustainable ventures, businesses, and facilitate commercialization of research output, it stated.

NABARD inks 3 MoUs with SBI to extend credit support for various projects

- In Gujarat, the **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development -NABARD** has inked three Memoranda of Understanding with **Public Sector Bank- State Bank of India** to extend credit support for various projects.
- The signing of MoUs took place between D. K. Mishra, Chief General Manager of NABARD in Gujarat and Dukhbandhu Rath, Chief General Manager, SBI Ahmedabad Circle in the presence of NABARD Chairman G. R. Chintala.
- The MoUs were signed for financing **joint liability groups** and **Self-Help Groups-support** credit inflows to Farmer Producers' Organizations and economic support for watershed development projects. These will help in providing credit support to the different sections of the society including the priority sector.

FLO, the women wing of FICCI signs MoU with NSDC for empowering women through skill training

- **FLO**, the Women's Wing of FICCI, signed an MoU with **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** for empowering women through **skill training** to enhance their employability and promote entrepreneurship. With a primary focus on sustainable livelihood generation for women, the collaboration between the two organizations will support empowerment of women to create sustainable economic possibilities at different levels – grassroots, medium and senior.
- FLO and NSDC will work towards supporting **short-term training of women** in various sectors such as healthcare, tourism and hospitality among others; and will aid with domestic and overseas placements.
- **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** is committed to promoting skill development by catalyzing creation of large, quality and for-profit vocational institutions. A unique public-private-partnership entity, NSDC engages a gamut of stakeholders including industry bodies, corporates, academicians, and Central & State governments to raise employability of workforce through vocational training, digital learning and soft skills.
- FLO plays an integral part in this process and contributes effectively towards the growth agenda of the nation. Since the inception in 1983, FLO has been working towards empowering and enabling women entrepreneurs and professionals of India and working towards economic self-reliance.

Amazon ties up with IRCTC for train ticket booking

- **Amazon** has tied up with **IRCTC** for **train ticket booking**, giving cashback offers to its prime and non-prime members.
- Train ticket booking is available only on the latest version of Amazon App and mobile web.
- This offer is applicable only on first train ticket booking on Amazon.
- Customers receive will depend on the booking amount and 'Prime membership' status.

- Prime members will get flat 12 percent back, up to Rs 120 while non-Prime Members will get flat 10 percent back, up to Rs 100.

Zurich firm signs agreement with UP government Jewar airport

- **Uttar Pradesh government** signed the **concessionaire agreement** with **Zurich Airport** to begin the development of **Jewar Airport**.
- In November last year, Zurich Airport International AG had won the bid for building the greenfield airport set to come up in Greater Noida's Jewar.
- The agreement grants Zurich Airport the license to design, build and operate Noida International Airport for a period of 40 years.

CII-IGBC partners with Naredco to advance green building movement

- The Confederation of Indian Industry's **Indian Green Building Council (CII-IGBC)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the **National Real Estate Development Council (Naredco)** to accelerate the country's green buildings movement.
- The new partnership will enable networking, capacity building, and sharing of information between the two premier councils and facilitate India's growth as a global leader in green buildings environment.
- Niranjan Hiranandani, President, Naredco, stated CII- IGBC has been at the forefront of facilitating green buildings that encompasses every sector. He emphasised the need for introducing green aspects in affordable housing and slum rehabilitation with a focus on structural aspects.
- IGBC will seek support of the Naredco members in all its local chapters and work closely with stakeholders.

14 investors sign MoUs with Tamil Nadu govt to invest over Rs 10,055 Cr in various industrial projects

- In **Tamil Nadu**, 14 investors have signed MoUs with the state government to invest over **10,055 crore rupees** in various industrial projects. The MoUs were inked in the presence of the state Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy in Chennai.
- A release from the state government says the investments would generate over seven thousand direct jobs and many more indirect jobs. It says 42 MoUs have been signed since last January worth over 31464 crore rupees.
- Notable among the investment proposals include the JSW Renewable Energy Ltd's plans to generate renewable energy in Thoothukudi, Tenkasi, Tirunelveli, Ramanadhapuram and Tirupur districts.
- The Apollo Tyres has signed the agreement for expanding its operations at Oragadam in Kanchipuram district. The Hiranandani group establishes an industrial logistics park at Oragadam. The Spanish IT firm Mantra Data Centre established its Data Centre near Chennai.
- **Aosheng Hitech Ltd** has signed the agreement for launching a carbon fibre plates manufacturing unit.

NIT Tiruchirappalli signs MoU with C-DAC Pune for installing state of art super computer

- **National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirappalli** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune** for installing a state of the art super computer in the process of becoming part of the National Super Computing Mission of the Government of India.
- A total of **10 Centrally Funded Institutions** have been inducted into NSM including IISc, Bangalore and seven IITs in addition to NIT, Trichy. The objective of the NSM is to empower technology institutions with high-performance computing capabilities that can be used for solving socially relevant, computationally intensive problems.
- NIT Director Dr Mini Shaji Thomas said that the super Computing facility worth 17 crore rupees will be made available to neighbouring educational institutions, as mandated and in line with NEP-2020.

J&K Govt inks MoU with Flipkart to provide platform for local artisans, craftsmen, weavers to reach customers worldwide

- In a significant step to promote the rural economy and to boost the sale of genuine products of **Jammu & Kashmir**, the JK Government signed an historic **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with online store **Flipkart** to provide a platform for local artisans, craftsmen, weavers to reach customers across the globe.
- He stated that partnership with the e-commerce marketplace like Flipkart will enable the **local artisans, craftsmen** and weavers to reach global market and also provide an appropriate opportunity for the momentous growth and development of the respective sectors.
- The Lt Governor also underscored the steps Government of J&K has taken in the recent past for improving the financial conditions of artisans and weavers like enhancement in loan to Rs 2 lacs under **Artisans Credit card scheme**.
- This e-marketing channel shall involve and benefit artisans and weavers both in organized and unorganized sector and for the first six months, Flipkart will not charge any fee from the artisans and weavers.

Indian Bank inks MoU with Ministry, SIDBI for street vendors

- **Indian Bank** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** and with **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** for payment of subsidy to street vendors under the **Centre's SVANidhi Scheme**.
- The Centre introduced the **Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (SVANidhi Scheme)** to provide loans to the vendors and hawkers, among others.
- The MoU was signed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs joint secretary (NULM) Sanjay Kumar and Indian Bank's New Delhi field general manager Vikas Kumar, among others, in the capital, a bank statement stated.

GreenBase, Tamil Nadu sign MoU to set up industrial, logistics park

- **GreenBase, a Hiranandani Group** subsidiary, stated it has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **Tamil Nadu government** to set up an industrial and logistics park near here at an investment of **Rs 750 crore**.
- The setting up of the park would see creation of multiple direct and indirect jobs besides boosting the socio-economic growth in the region.
- The proposed park, about 45 kms from the city, envisages development of 2.8 million square feet of built-up area for companies planning to set up manufacturing and logistics units.
- GreenBase COO Hemant Prabhu Keluskar stated the industrial park is amid the sprawling mixed-use integrated township 'Hiranandani Parks' at Oragadam offering a cutting-edge advantage with a fully developed integrated socio-civic ecosystem and modern infrastructure.
- With 700 acres of seed land bank across Chennai, Pune, Nashik, Mumbai, and Durgapur, GreenBase has made rapid strides in a short time and is on course to deliver close to 12 million square feet in the next 3-5 years.

Tata Motors partners with HDFC Bank for financing of passenger vehicles

- **Tata Motors** has partnered with **HDFC Bank** for financing of its passenger vehicles.
- Through the partnership, the company has introduced two new schemes -- '**Gradual Step Up Scheme**' and '**TML Flexi Drive Scheme**'
- The schemes will be available till the end of November 2020 and can be redeemed on the entire new BS-VI range of cars and SUVs along with the company's EV range.

- Under the Gradual Step Up scheme, customers can avail EMI options as low as Rs.799 per lakh per month, depending on the product and variant. The EMI payments gradually increase over a period of 2 years depending on the payment convenience of the buyer.
- Flexi Drive scheme offers the option to the consumer to choose any three months every year, where s/he can pay a minimum EMI of Rs.789 per lakh per month, depending on the product and variant as per convenience.

CRPF collaborates with IIT Delhi, DRDO, JATC to augment R&D capabilities

- The **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)**, the country's largest para-military force deployed for the internal security of the nation, **has collaborated with IIT Delhi, Defence Research and Development Organisation, and Joint Advanced Technology Centre (JATC)** – DRDO and IIT Delhi joint initiative -- to augment its **Research and Development capabilities**.
- The force is now working to create a pool of highly specialized technology experts from among its officers. This will equip them with unique skills, capabilities, and knowledge to tackle complex challenges, meet operational and strategic needs, and enhance competitive advantage.
- The officers/SOs of the CRPF trained by the IIT Delhi will also be associated with joint research projects undertaken by DRDO and IITD in the field of defense/security tech solutions.
- The initiative will also provide operational feedback on futuristic technologies enabling IIT Tech experts towards proactive Research and Development.
- The CRPF, with its strength of more than three lakh personnel, has more than 500 officers/SOs holding a degree in Engineering.
- This provides the force with a wide scope to train them in the varied fields of technology.

BSE joins hands with Telangana govt to help MSMEs raise equity funds

- Major stock exchange **BSE** has joined hands with the **Telangana government**, along with **GlobalLinker**, to help **micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) raise equity funds**.
- The partnership with the BSE would help in addressing a vital challenge of access to finance and increasing credibility of the MSMEs.
- As part of the association, the BSE will provide **intellectual and manpower support** to create awareness about the importance and benefits of listing.

Bank of Baroda inks pact with Mahindra & Mahindra for tractor finance

- To push agriculture finance, state-owned **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** stated it has entered into a pact with **Mahindra and Mahindra** for tractor finance business.
- The lender, through its over 5,000 rural and semi-urban branch network, will provide tractor loan facility to customers of Mahindra and Mahindra.
- This memorandum of understanding (MoU) will give a boost to agri business and will help farmers in availing hassle-free credit facilities for buying tractors, BoB Executive Director Vikramaditya Singh Khichi stated.
- The tractor financing scheme was first piloted in the UP zone for a year and it has been successful, he stated adding that this is being expanded into 11 zones of the bank.
- The bank has tied up with **Gromax** under the **Mahindra stable** as the preferred brand, he added.
- Besides, he stated, the bank is focussing on dairy sector self-help groups and farmer producer organisations for expanding the agriculture finance portfolio.

BSE inks MoU with ICCI to support SMEs, start-ups in listing

- Stock exchange **BSE** has signed an agreement with **Inventivepreneur Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ICCI)** to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups, and promote their listing on the exchange.
- Through this association, ICCI will offer assistance in evaluating SMEs and start-ups for listing on BSE SME board.
- Besides, it will also sensitise the investor network about listed SMEs and start-ups.
- ICCI will offer industry connections to respective BSE start-ups globally and support entrepreneurship nationwide through knowledge transmission on government announced programs, acceleration fund, international presence and global business relations.
- **Recently, BSE tied up with Telangana government** and SME networking portal GlobalLinker to help MSMEs in raising equity funds.

IIT Kanpur and ASI sign MoU with Italian institutes for restoration of monuments

- The Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IIT-K) and the Archaeological Survey of India have signed an agreement with **two institutions from Italy**, seeking restoration and protection of historical monuments.
- The MoU was signed among IIT-K, **Ca'Foscari University of Venice, Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti E Paesaggio, Venice**, on creating a network and sharing skills for restoration and protection of historical monuments.
- All institutes have agreed to develop collaborative scientific study activities and sharing skills to restore and protect monuments on a reciprocal and equal basis.
- All institutes shall seek to promote collaboration and activities in areas such as collaboration in scientific studies and skill sharing, the exchange of knowledge, experience, academic materials and publications, conducting workshops, undertaking joint field studies and technology development.

Punjab Inks MOU with Game To Support Msmes, In Partnership With Omidyar Network India

- **Punjab Government** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **The Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship (GAME)**.
- The two-year project aims to make Punjab a leading state in India in terms of **ease of doing business (EODB) for MSMEs**, by driving simplification, digitization, and decriminalization of compliances. This project builds on a blueprint developed by the GAME MSME Task Force.
- Punjab has been at the forefront of supporting MSMEs through dedicated district level banker committees to monitor the deployment of the Central Government's Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) scheme and announcing the Right to Business Act that seeks to radically improve ease of incorporating a business through self-declaration, exemptions, speedier approvals, and inspections.
- The project will be led by the Chair of the GAME Taskforce on MSME, **Dr KP Krishnan** who is a former Secretary, Government of India.

Revision Points

Organizations	Purpose
NHPC Limited & Ministry of Power	For FY2021 Generation target
SJVN Limited & Govt. of India	Strive to achieve 9680 Million Units of electricity for FY2021
Tata Steel & CSIR	To work in the field of CCUS

Common Services Centre & HelpAge India	To impart digital literacy to elderly citizens
Indian Sign Language Research and Training Center & NCERT	To make education materials accessible for Deaf children
Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs & Swiggy	Street food vendors online under PM SVANIDHI schemeo
Prasar Bharati and Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited & IFFCO	To promote new agriculture technology & innovations
West Bengal & Indian Institute of Management Calcutta	To set upTechnology Development and Adaptation Centre
National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development & State Bank of India	To extend credit support for various projects.
FLO & National Skill Development Corporation	Empowering women through skill training
Amazon & IRCTC	For train ticket booking
Uttar Pradesh & Zurich Airport	The development of Jewar Airport.
Indian Green Building Council & National Real Estate Development Council	To advance green building movement
NIT Tiruchirappalli & C-DAC Pune	For installing state of art super computer
J&K Govt & Flipkart	Providing platform for local artisans, craftsmen, weavers to reach customers worldwide
Indian Bank, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs & Small Industries Development Bank of India	Providing loans to the vendors and hawkers under the Centre's SVANidhi Scheme
GreenBase & Tamil Nadu	To set up industrial, logistics park
Tata Motors & HDFC Bank	Financing of passenger vehicles under 'Gradual Step Up Scheme' and 'TML Flexi Drive Scheme'
Central Reserve Police Force, IIT Delhi, DRDO & JATC	To augment R&D capabilities
BSE & Telangana govt	To help MSMEs raise equity funds
Bank of Baroda & Mahindra & Mahindra	Tractor finance business
BSE & Inventivepreneur Chamber of Commerce and Industries	To support SMEs, start-ups in listing
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur & Archaeological Survey of India	Restoration and protection of historical monuments.
Punjab & Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship	To Support Msmes, In Partnership With Omidyar Network India

Important Summit & Conference

PM Modi to inaugurate artificial intelligence 'RAISE 2020' Summit

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the **Summit RAISE 2020 - 'Responsible AI for Social Empowerment 2020. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and NITI Aayog** are organizing the Mega Virtual Summit on Artificial Intelligence from **5th to 9th of October**. The summit will discuss cross-sector subjects like 'Leveraging AI for Pandemic Preparedness', the Impetus that Innovation Places on Digitisation', Inclusive AI and Partnerships for Successful Innovation.
- The summit will be a global meeting of minds to exchange ideas and chart a course for using AI for social transformation, inclusion and empowerment in areas like Healthcare, Agriculture, Education and Smart Mobility, among other sectors. During the summit, delegates and experts in research, policy and innovation on Artificial Intelligence will join from across the globe.
- The Summit will also feature some of the most exciting startups working in Artificial Intelligence-related fields. Startups chosen through the AI Solution Challenge will showcase their solutions in the AI Startup Pitch fest scheduled on 6th October. This is part of the Government's continuing support to tech entrepreneurs and startups by providing exposure, recognition and guidance.

PM addresses international webinar on textile traditions organized by ICCR

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed an **international webinar on textile traditions** organized by ICCR.
- The Prime Minister lauded Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Uttar Pradesh Institute of Design for their efforts in bringing people from different countries to participate in the webinar on the theme **"Weaving Relations: Textile Traditions."**
- This Program is organized in the context of Gandhi ji's 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations.

Nirmala Sitharaman to chair 42nd GST Council meeting

- Union finance minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** will chair the **42nd Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council** meeting.
- Minister of state (MoS) for finance **Anurag Thakur** and finance ministers of states and union territories (UTs) will also be present at the meeting.
- In the last meeting held on **August 27, the GST Council presented** two options to states regarding GST compensation including a special window in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to provide Rs 97,000 crores at a reasonable interest rate and that the entire GST compensation gap of Rs 2,35,000 crores this year can be met by them in consultation with RBI.

12th BRICS Summit to be held virtually on November 17

- The **12th BRICS Summit** will be held on 17th November 2020 via **video conference**.
- The theme of the Meeting of the Leaders of BRICS countries which includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa is **"BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth"**.
- **The Summit this year** is being held under the **Chairmanship of Russia** and aims at a multifaceted cooperation between the member countries.
- The five member countries have continued close strategic partnership on all the three major pillars of peace and security, economy and finance, cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

7th Justice Ministers' Meeting of SCO Member States to be hosted by Ravi Shankar Prasad on Oct 16

- The **Seventh Meeting of Ministers of Justice** of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** Member States will be hosted by **Union Minister of Law and Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad** on 16th October. In this connection, Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice Anoop Kumar Mendiratta will also host the Second Meeting

of the Experts Working Group on 13th and 14th of October. Both the meetings shall be conducted through Video Conferencing mode.

- The Experts Working Group will discuss and share their experiences, best practices and the novel steps taken by them for creating conducive environment for promoting resolution of disputes and other related activities including legal services and forensic activities.
- In the Seventh Meeting of the Ministers of Justice of the SCO, Member States shall further deliberate on areas of cooperation, creating favourable conditions for resolving disputes and implementation of the Action Plan of the Working Groups of Experts on Forensic Activities and Legal Services. A Joint Statement following the results of the Seventh Session of the Ministers of Justice of the SCO Member States will also be signed.
- The Ministers of Justice and senior officials and experts from the Ministries of Law and Justice of India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will be participating in the Meeting.

Fifth meeting of BRICS energy ministers to start under Russia's chairmanship

- The **fifth energy ministers' meeting** of the **BRICS group** of countries, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, will take place under **Russia's presidency** in the association.
- The meeting, which starts virtually at 11 am (local time), will be chaired by Russian Energy Minister **Alexander Novak**. The ministers will discuss coordination of international efforts on overcoming the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the energy sector as well as the expansion of cooperation within BRICS.
- The sides plan to touch upon the future development of the BRICS Platform for Energy Studies, launched last year at Russia's initiative.
- The BRICS ministers will also come up with a road map for the development of energy cooperation until **2025**.

India, Chile hold first joint commission meeting

- **India and Chile** held their **first joint commission** meeting and agreed to add new momentum to their relations in a wide range of fields including trade and commerce, agriculture, health and social security, defence and space. The meeting held virtually was co-chaired by **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar** and his Chilean counterpart Andres Allamand Zavala.
- Both sides noted that the Joint Commission was a significant development in India - Chile relations, being the first institutionalized dialogue between the two countries at the level of Foreign Ministers. India welcomed Chile's decision to designate India as a **priority country** in its foreign policy. Chile will also be opening its Consulate General in Mumbai.

India hosts virtual Summit of Ministers of Justice of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

- **India** hosted the **virtual Summit of Ministers of Justice of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, SCO**.
- The **Seventh Meeting** of Ministers of Justice of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Member States was hosted by **Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad**, Minister of Law & Justice, Communication and Electronics & Information Technology.
- As part of activities of Justice Ministers' Forum, the Minister urged SCO Member States to promote exchange of ideas, best practices and experiences in identified areas through the platform. He also stressed on widening the spectrum of activities being undertaken in the Forum.

FM Nirmala Sitharaman participates in 102nd meeting of World Bank Development Committee Plenary

- Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** participated in **102nd meeting** of the **World Bank Development Committee Plenary** through video conference.

- Mrs Sitharaman shared that the Government has announced the first stimulus of **23 billion dollar** to provide direct cash transfers and food security measures to the poor. She also mentioned that the Government has committed 2.03 Billion dollar for strengthening health infrastructure in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Finance Minister stated that collective action is the key for effective response to the pandemic and welcomed the strong performance in quarter - 4 of financial year 2020 wherein World Bank Group has committed 45 billion dollar for COVID-19 response.

First SCO Startup Forum to be launched on October 27

- The **first-ever SCO Startup Forum** will be launched on **27th October 2020** ahead of the SCO trade ministers meeting on 28th October.
- The forum will lay the foundation for **multilateral cooperation** and engagement among the SCO Member States to develop and hone their startup ecosystems, collectively
- The Forum shall identify areas of cooperation by launching multiple entrepreneurial activities like startup showcase through a dedicated virtual platform, mobilizing capital for startups, sharing of best practices, procuring social innovations, multilateral incubator programs and knowledge exchange workshops etc. It will aid to understand the cultural and economic features of the startup ecosystem in the SCO Member States. In the run up to the launch of SCO Startup Forum, a virtual SCO preparatory Seminar and a workshop were also organized by India.
- Around 40 Indian Missions roped in to further augment Startup India efforts. India is currently the **third-largest startup ecosystem** in the world with over 35,000 startups, close to 25% of which are core technology startups operating in areas of AI, Robotics, Cloud Computing, IoT, Digital Health, Financial & Education Technology.
- The '**Startup India**' has launched 10 bilateral bridges since its inception and has helped many technology-based startups to expand their businesses to global markets. Government has roped in around 40 Indian missions to further augment the efforts undertaken by the 'Startup India' program by exploiting the opportunities across the geographies.

Shri Kiren Rijju addresses Y20 Global Summit

- Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports **Shri Kiren Rijju** represented India in the **Y20 Global Summit**, aimed at exchanging ideas and dialogues between nations **to empower the youth across the world**.
- The **host country** for the Y20 Summit this year was **Saudi Arabia**.
- The theme of the Summit is '**Government – Youth dialogue on post-COVID-19 opportunities**'.
- The Y20 Youth Summit is a youth-led event bringing young leaders from across G20 countries to discuss and debate the G20 Leaders' agenda. The Summit concludes with the drafting of the Y20 communique.

9th Session Of India-Oman Joint Commission Held

- The **ninth session** of the **India-Oman Joint Commission** was held virtually.
- The meet was co-chaired by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, **Hardeep Singh Puri**, and Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion of the Sultanate of Oman, Qais bin Mohammed.
- Among other things, both sides agreed to cooperate in areas of Agriculture and Food Security, Standards & Metrology, Tourism, Information Technology, Health and Pharmaceuticals, MSMEs, Space, Civil Aviation, Energy including renewable energy, Culture, Mining, and Higher Education.
- The two sides also reviewed the progress of prospective Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) in the field of mining, standards and metrology, financial intelligence, cultural exchange, and information technology, and agreed to conclude them expeditiously.

- "The economic and commercial relations between India and Oman are robust and buoyant. India is among Oman's top trading partners. For Oman, India was the **3rd largest source for its imports** and **3rd largest market** for its non-oil exports. Bilateral trade between India and Oman grew at 8.5 per cent in 2019-20 over the previous year to reach USD 5.93 billion. While India's exports to Oman were valued at USD 2.26 billion, India's imports from Oman amounted USD 3.67 billion in 2019-2020," stated the release.

Finance Minister holds 4th review meeting on CAPEX of Central Public Sector Enterprises

- Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs **Nirmala Sitharaman** held a video conference with secretaries of the Ministries of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Coal, along with the chairman cum managing directors of **14 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE)** belonging to these ministries, to review the capital expenditure (CAPEX) in this financial year.
- The finance ministry stated: "This was 4th in the ongoing series of meetings that the Finance Minister is having with various stakeholders to accelerate the economic growth in the background of COVID-19 pandemic."
- "In FY 2019-20, against the CAPEX target of Rs. 1,11,672 crore for these 14 CPSEs, the achievement was Rs 1,16,323 crore i.e. 104 per cent. FY 2019-20, H1 achievement was Rs 43,097 crore (39 per cent) and achievement of FY 2020-21, H1 is Rs 37,423 crore (32 per cent). CAPEX target for 2020-21 is Rs 1,15,934 crore,"
- While reviewing the performance of CPSEs, Sitharaman stated CAPEX by CPSEs is a critical driver of economic growth and need to be scaled up for the FYs 2020-21 & 2021-22.
- The CPSEs CAPEX review is carried out jointly by Department of Economic Affairs and Department of Public Enterprises, the statement added.

18th meeting of SCO Prosecutors General held via videolink

- India participated in **18th meeting of Prosecutors General of SCO** via video conference.
- The sides inter alia agreed to strengthen cooperation in preventing and combating corruption, mutual legal assistance, exchange of regulatory legal acts.
- Representing India, **Solicitor General Tushar Mehta** attended the meeting.
- **India will host** the next meeting of **Prosecutors General in 2021**.
- SCO is an important regional grouping which gives India an opportunity to engage its extended neighbourhood specially central Asian countries.
- The eight member bloc is holding this year's **SCO Council of Heads of Govt** on 30th Nov which will be **hosted by India**.

6th India International Science Festival to be held in Virtual format from 22nd to 25th December, 2020

- The **6th edition of India International Science Festival (IISF) 2020** will be held from **22nd to 25th December, 2020**.
- This was announced by The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare, **Dr. Harsh Vardhan**.
- The **fifth IISF** was held in **Kolkata**. ALL these IISFs had generated immense response from people within India and from abroad.
- IISF is an annual event organised jointly by science & technology-related Ministries and Departments of the Government of India and Vijnana Bharati (Vibha).
- IISF is a festival to celebrate the achievements of India's scientific and technological advancements with students, innovators, craftsmen, farmers, scientists and technocrats from India and abroad.

- IISF 2020 expects participation of large number of scientist and institutions from India and abroad as well as young people.

14th session of Food and Agri Week 2020 held

- Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare , Food Processing Industries and Rural Development and Panchayati Raj **Narendra Singh Tomar**, virtually inaugurated the **14th session of the India – International Food and Agri Week 2020**. The Food & Agri week is being organised from **16 Oct to 22 Oct 2020**.
- Ministry of Food Processing Industries started **Anna Devo Bhava** awareness campaign to mark the Food & Agri Week. Such campaign are required to raise the awareness about the value of food and to reduce food wastage.

Indian Parliamentary Delegation led by LS Speaker to attend VIth BRICS Parliamentary Forum

- The **VIth BRICS Parliamentary Forum** will be held in **Virtual format** on **27 October, 2020**. The meeting will be chaired by the **HE Vyachaslav Volodin**, Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.
- Speakers and members of five BRICS Parliaments namely Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa will participate in the Forum. An Indian Parliamentary Delegation led by **Om Birla**, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha and consisting of Kanimozhi Karunanidhi, MP, Lok Sabha will attend the Forum. Smt. Snehlata Shrivastava, Secretary General, Lok Sabha will also attend the above event.
- The theme of the Forum is BRICS partnership in the interest of global stability, **general safety and innovative growth: Parliamentary dimension**. During the meeting, in the backdrop of the COVID-19, the Forum will have discussions on a wide range of cross-cutting issues related to the following subjects: **Improvement in the quality of life of people of BRICS countries: Parliamentary dimension**.
- Preparation of legislative initiatives in the area of public health care, social protection of citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic, economic rehabilitation in the post-COVID period including the support measures to MSMEs and the development of distant regions.

India hosts 19th Meeting of SCO Ministers of Foreign Economy & Foreign Trade

- **India** hosted the **19th Meeting** of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Ministers of Foreign Economy and Foreign Trade**.
- In his opening remarks, Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal stated the current crisis due to Covid-19 is a clarion call to the SCO countries to leverage the economic strength and explore partnerships that enhance trade and investment in the region. He stated cooperation should be continued to enhance intra-SCO trade and investment which would be critical in ensuring the speedy recovery from the aftermath of the pandemic. This statement highlights the importance of the rule-based multilateral negotiations.
- Besides, statement on SCO Cooperation on **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)** was also adopted which relates to cooperation of intellectual property and include sharing information and experience on legislation and enforcement, cooperation in international organisations and other areas.
- The virtual meeting was attended by the Secretary General of SCO and Ministers from, **Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan**.

Women Startup Summit 2020 gain key focus in KSUM initiative

- As **Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM)** began its **six-day programme** that aims to boost female presence in entrepreneurial ventures, the October 31 '**Women Startup Summit 2020**' gained key focus as a culminating event providing tips for success in businesses.

- The month-end summit will feature speeches by corporate captains, marking the highlight of the KSUM initiative that is part of the state government's dynamic measures to promote women-led industry ventures.
- The summit, which features a startup competition named '**She Loves Tech India 2020**', is being co-organised by Startup India, TiE Kerala and Indian Women Network of Confederation of Indian Industry.
- The programme began with a Hackathon Orientation. Titled 'InnovatHer', it was led by KSUM, ICFOSS and TCS. Subsequently, Anterprise Network co-founder Robert Lobo led a session on 'Decoding Investor Mindset'. This was followed by 'She Loves Tech India 2020' a pitch workshop for startups.
- KSUM is the state government's nodal agency for entrepreneurship development and incubation activities.

Piyush Goyal launches First-ever SCO Startup Forum ahead of SCO trade ministers meeting

- Commerce and Industries minister **Piyush Goyal** launched first-ever **SCO Startup Forum** ahead of the SCO trade ministers meeting to be held virtually.
- The forum will lay the foundation for multilateral cooperation and engagement among the SCO Member States to develop and hone their startup ecosystems, collectively.
- **Innovation and Startups** will be the key focus area of SCO Heads of Government meeting on 30th November 2020 which will be hosted by India for the first time.
- The Forum shall identify areas of cooperation by launching multiple entrepreneurial activities like startup showcase through a dedicated virtual platform, mobilizing capital for startups, sharing of best practices, procuring social innovations, and knowledge exchange workshops etc.
- India is currently the **third-largest startup ecosystem** in the world with over 35,000 startups, close to 25% of which are core technology startups operating in areas of AI, Robotics, Cloud Computing, IoT, Digital Health, Financial & Education Technology.
- India has organized many events in the run up to SCO Heads of Government meeting including ministerial meetings which have received support from all the SCO member states.

PM Modi to inaugurate VAIBHAV Summit through video conferencing

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate **Vaishvik Bhartiya Vaigyanik, VAIBHAV Summit** through video conferencing. The VAIBHAV Summit is a global virtual summit of overseas and resident Indian researchers and academicians. The Summit will continue till the 31st of this month.
- The aim of the summit is to bring Indian origin luminaries in **academic institutes and Research and Development organizations** across the world and resident counterparts on a single platform to debate upon collaboration mechanisms to strengthen academic and Science and Technology base in India for global development.
- The inauguration will be followed by online deliberation sessions. The initiative involves multiple levels of interactions among overseas experts and Indian counterparts over a month-long series of webinars, video conferences etc. More than 3 thousand overseas Indian origin academicians and scientists from 55 countries and more than 10 thousand resident academicians and scientists are taking part in the summit.

Revision Points

Conference/Summits	Venue/Host Country	Chaired By/Theme/Addressed By/Others
RAISE 2020 - 'Responsible AI for Social Empowerment 2020	Virtual	PM Narendra Modi (Organized by The Ministry of Electronics

		and Information Technology and NITI Aayog)
International webinar on textile traditions	Addressed by Narendra Modi	Organized by ICCR. Theme - Weaving Relations: Textile Traditions
42nd Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council	-	Chaired by Nirmala Sitharaman
Seventh Meeting of Ministers of Justice of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization	Hosted by Ravi Shankar Prasad	
Fifth energy ministers' meeting of the BRICS group	Hosted by Russia's presidency	Chaired by Alexander Novak
First joint commission meeting (Held between India and Chile)	Virtual	Co-chaired by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar
7 th Summit of Ministers of Justice of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, SCO	Hosted by India	Hosted by Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
102nd meeting of the World Bank Development Committee	Virtual	Participated by Nirmala Sitharaman
Y20 Global Summit	Host country - Saudi Arabia	Represented by Kiren Rijju. Theme - Government – Youth dialogue on post-COVID-19 opportunities
9th session of the India-Oman Joint Commission	Virtual	Co-chaired by Hardeep Singh Puri,
18th meeting of SCO Prosecutors General	Virtual	Represented by Tushar Mehta. India will host the meeting of Prosecutors General in 2021
6th edition of India International Science Festival	Fifth IISF was held in Kolkata	Announced by Dr. Harsh Vardhan
14th session of Food and Agri Week 2020	Virtual	Inaugurated by Narendra Singh Tomar
VIth BRICS Parliamentary Forum	Virtual	Chaired by the HE Vyacheslav Volodin
19th Meeting of SCO Ministers of Foreign Economy & Foreign Trade	Hosted by India	
First-ever SCO Startup Forum	-	Launched by Piyush Goyal
VAIBHAV Summit	-	Inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi

Important Defence News

Exercises	Countries
Exercise Suraksha Kavach	Army and Police
SLINEX-20	India & Sri Lanka
Exercise Sagar Kavach	Navy and Coast Guard
Bilateral naval exercise Bongosagar	India and Bangladesh

DRDO successfully test fires Brahmos surface-to-surface cruise missile

- **India** successfully test-fired **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** with several indigenous features from a test range in **Odisha**, in a major step towards achieving "Atmanirbhar Bharat" pledge.
- The **surface-to-surface cruise missile**, featuring indigenous booster and airframe section along with other Made in India sub-systems, blasted off from the launching complex-III.
- The missile which has a strike range of **more than 400 km**.
- The BrahMos Land-Attack Cruise Missile (LACM) was cruising at a top speed of **Mach 2.8**.
- **Jointly developed by the DRDO and NPOM**, a leading aerospace enterprise of Russia, the BrahMos missile is a medium-range **ramjet supersonic cruise missile** capable of being launched from **submarines, warships, fighter jets or land**.

Indian Coast Guard ship Kanaklata Barua commissioned in Kolkata

- **Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) ICGS 'Kanaklata Barua'** of the Indian Coast Guard was commissioned at the **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd., Kolkata**.
- The commissioning was done through video conferencing by **Jiwesh Nandan**, additional secretary, Ministry of Defence and was attended by senior officials of the Indian Coast Guard and GRSE, including its chairman and managing director **Rear Admiral V K Saxena (retd)**.
- **ICGS Kanaklata Barua** is **one of the five FPVs** built by GRSE.
- The FPVs are medium-range surface vessels with a length of 50 metres, width of 7.5 metres and displacement of around 308 tonnes.

DRDO Test Fires Laser-Guided Anti-Tank Guided Missile

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully test-fired an indigenously developed **laser-guided anti-tank guided missile (ATGM)** in **Maharashtra's Ahmednagar**.
- The missile was test-fired from an **MBT Arjun Tank** at KK Ranges in Armoured Corps Centre and School (ACC&S) in Ahmednagar to practice defeating a target located at longer range.
- The laser-guided missile has been developed by **Armament R&D Establishment (ARDE), Pune** in association with **High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL), Pune** and **Instruments Research & Development Establishment (IRDE), Dehradun**.
- It has a tandem HEAT warhead to destroy Explosive Reactive Armour (ERA) protected armoured vehicles in ranges from 1.5 to 5 km.
- It has been developed with multiple-platform launch capability and is currently undergoing technical evaluation trials from 120 mm rifled gun of MBT Arjun.
- The primary purpose of ATGMs, which can be both medium and long-range, is to destroy armoured vehicles including tanks.

- The missiles use several types of guidance systems to do this, including laser, TV cameras and wire guiding. Some are flexible enough to be used via an aircraft, by the infantry and through land vehicles.

India successfully test-fires nuclear-payload capable Shaurya missile

- An advanced version of the **'Shaurya'** surface-to-surface nuclear-capable ballistic the missile was successfully test-fired, in **APJ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha**.
- **'Shaurya'**, which is the **land variant of India's K-15 missile**, has a strike range of **700 km to 1000 km** and is capable of carrying payloads of **200 kg to 1000 kg**.
- It has been **tested by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- It is a ground version of a ballistic missile launched from a submarine.
- It is a two-stage rocket missile.
- The missile can be launched from silos and canisters mounted on a truck and fixed on the ground. A truck itself can become a launching platform.

Indian Navy Helicopters Along With GVMC Undertake Aerial Seeding Initiative

- The **Indian Navy** has partnered with **Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC)** to undertake **Aerial Seeding at Visakhapatnam**.
- **Rajya Sabha MP V Vijayasai Reddy** and **Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain** flagged off aerial seeding at Visakhapatnam at **INS Dega**.
- This initiative of GVMC aims to enhance the green cover in and around Visakhapatnam.
- **Two UH3H helicopters** with 2 tons of seed balls undertook the aerial seeding.
- The Naval helicopters will be airdropping **50,000 seed balls** weighing approx. 6.25 tonnes in five locations around Visakhapatnam covering an area of nearly 200 acres which are inaccessible by road necessitating aerial seeding which is being undertaken with the assistance of Eastern Naval Command (ENC).

NASA launches SS Kalpana Chawla Cygnus spacecraft to International Space station

- **Northrop Grumman** launched another flight to the **International Space Station**, this time named after late astronaut **'Kalpana Chawla'**.
- The **Cygnus vehicle S.S Kalpana Chawla** along with **Antares rocket** for **NG-14 mission**.
- The International Space Station (ISS) is gearing up to receive the flight which will supply thousands of kilograms essential space supplies and related-equipments to the astronauts.
- The Vehicle will deliver a cargo of 1,217 kg of science experiments, personal items and 850 kg of crew equipment.
- The astronauts will connect the **Cygnus to International Space Station** through its robotic arm of **Canadarm2**.
- This space vehicle is also carrying **'SharkSat'** which will **test emerging technologies for 5G networks**.
- This **S.S Kalpana Chawla Cygnus spacecraft** is made by **Thale Alena Space** in **Turin, Italy** and has a composition of pressurized cargo module. The vehicle consists of two solar arrays, navigation equipment and propulsion element. The launch of the vehicle was carried out by **Antares 230+ rocket**, parts of which have been built by Yuzmash factory in Ukraine.

US approves \$90 million sale of spares, support for C-130J Super Hercules aircraft to India

- The **Pentagon** has approved India's request to buy **USD 90 million worth of equipment, spare parts and logistical support** for its fleet of **C-130J Super Hercules cargo aircraft**.

- The items ordered by India are aircraft consumable spares and repair/return parts; ground support and equipment; Cartridge Actuated Devices/Propellant Actuated Devices (CAD/PAD) fire extinguisher cartridges; flare cartridges; BBU-35/B cartridge impulse squibs.
- India has also ordered for one spare AN/ALR-56M Advanced Radar Warning Receiver shipset; spare AN/ALE-47 Countermeasures Dispenser System shipset; ten Lightweight Night Vision Binocular (F5032); ten AN/AVS-9 Night Vision Goggle (NVG)(F4949); GPS and Electronic Warfare.
- It is also seeking instruments and lab equipment support; joint mission planning system; cryptographic device spares and loaders; software and software support; publications and technical documentation; personnel training and training and training equipment; contractor engineering, technical and logistical support, and other related elements of programme support.
- **India is one of the 17 countries** to whom the **US has sold its C-130J Super Hercules aircraft**. The Indian Air Force currently operates a fleet of five C-130J-30s. India has placed order for additional six C-130J-30s Super Hercules aircraft.

India conducts successful flight test of SMART

- **DRDO** conducted a successful flight test of the **Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART)** from **Wheeler Island** off the coast of **Odisha**.
- This will be a major technology breakthrough for stand-off capability in anti-submarine warfare.
- SMART is a missile assisted release of lightweight Anti-Submarine Torpedo System for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) operations for far beyond torpedo range. This launch and demonstration are significant in establishing ASW capabilities.

ICG Offshore Patrol Vessel 'Vigraha' Launched to Enhance Coastal Security

- The **seventh offshore patrol vessel** of the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)**, '**Vigraha**' was formally unveiled at the **Kattupalli port** near **Chennai**.
- The vessel, built by **Larsen and Toubro**, is the last in the series of seven OPVs contracted to the company by the Ministry of Defence in 2015.
- It was the first time a private sector shipyard has undertaken the design and construction of offshore patrol vessel class of ships. The OPV is 98 metres long, 15 metres wide, has 3.6 m draught, 2140T displacement and a range of 5,000 nautical miles.
- It can attain a sustained speed of upto 26 knots and would be fitted with 30mm 2A42 gun and two 12.7 mm guns and equipped with twin engine helicopters enhancing its operational, surveillance, search and rescue capability.
- The vessel is expected to be inducted into the Coast Guard after completion of extensive trials and testing for the equipment and machinery by March 2021.
- Larsen and Toubro has already designed and built ICGS 'Vikram', ICGS 'Vijaya', ICGS 'Veera', ICGS 'Varaha', ICGS 'Varad', ICGS 'Vajra'.

Russia reports successful test launch of hypersonic missile

- Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed the successful test launch of a **new Zircon hypersonic cruise missile**.
- It took place from the Admiral Groshkov frigate located in the White Sea, in the north of Russia.
- The missile successfully hit a target in the Barents Sea.
- It is capable of flying at nine times the speed of sound and will have a range of 1,000 kilometers (620 miles).

India Test-Fires First Indigenous Anti-Radiation Missile "Rudram"

- India successfully test-fired the "**Rudram**" Anti-Radiation Missile, developed by **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, from a **Sukhoi-30 fighter aircraft** off the east coast.
- The **New Generation Anti-Radiation Missile (Rudram-1)** which is India's first indigenous anti-radiation missile developed by DRDO for **Indian Air Force** was tested successfully at ITR, **Balasore**.
- It is integrated on **Su-30MKI fighter aircraft**. Its range depends on the height at which the fighter jet is flying. It can be launched from a height ranging from **500 metres to 15 km** and can hit radiation emitting targets within a range of **250 km**.
- It has INS-GPS navigation with Passive Homing Head for the final attack. The RUDRAM hit the radiation target with pinpoint accuracy.
- The missile is a potent weapon for the Indian Air Force for suppression of enemy air defence effectively from large standoff ranges.

North Korea unveils 'monster' new intercontinental ballistic missile at parade

- **North Korea unveiled** a previously unseen '**monster**' missile capable of hitting targets in the USA at a massive military parade.
- This would be one of the **largest road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)** in the world if it becomes operational.
- Also displayed were the **Hwasong-15**, which is the longest-range missile ever tested by North Korea.

Indian Navy Ships Sahyadri and Kora adjudged as Best Ships in FAF 2020

- **Fleet Award Function (FAF)**, 2020 was organised to mark the successful culmination of the **Operational Cycle** of the Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy at Visakhapatnam.
- FAF is of great significance as it acknowledges the resilience and perseverance of Men-in-Whites appointed onboard ships of 'Poorvi Beda' or colloquially called the 'Sword Arm' of ENC. During the event, the Fleet Operations Officer presented the Annual Report of activities and achievements of the Fleet for 01 Apr 19 to 31 Mar 20.
- Sixteen trophies were awarded in recognition of excellence in various operational verticals. The most coveted trophies of Best Ship were awarded to **INS Sahyadri** amongst Capital ships and **INS Kora** amongst Corvettes and similar classes of ships.
- Indian Naval Ships Airavat and Kiltan jointly bagged the 'Best Spirited Ship' displaying indomitable spirit and grit whilst undertaking a plethora of challenging missions.

DRDO fires Nirbhay cruise missile into sea

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** launched the **800-km range Nirbhay cruise missile** from **Odisha's test facility** into the **Bay of Bengal**.
- But the missile developed a snag and the trial was aborted 8 minutes later.
- Nirbhay is a subsonic missile, flying at a speed of 0.7 Mach, with sea-skimming and terrain-hugging capability that helps the missile stay under enemy radar to avoid detection.

Exercise Suraksha Kavach- Joint Anti Terrorist Exercise By Army and Police

- The aim of the exercise was to **harmonize the drills** and procedures of both **Army** and **Police** for activating anti-terrorist **Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs)** to counter any terrorist actions in **Pune**.
- The exercise involved participation of Quick Reaction Teams, Dog Squads and Bomb Disposal Teams of Army as well as Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) and Quick Reaction Team of Maharashtra Police.

- A simulated exercise scenario was built up regarding the presence of terrorist in family accommodations at Lullanagar, based on which Quick Reaction Teams of Army initially established the outer cordon.
- Joint action was carried out by **Army's Counter Terrorism Task Force (CTTF)** and Quick Reaction Team of Maharashtra Police to neutralize terrorists, it involved room intervention drill, search of room for any unidentified items/explosives by Dog squads and their neutralization/ diffusion by Bomb Disposal Units.

India Conducts Successful Night Trial of Nuclear-Capable Prithvi-2 Missile From Odisha Test Range

- A night trial of the **indigenously developed** nuclear-capable missile **Prithvi-2** was successfully conducted as part of a user trial **by the Army** from a test range in integrated Test Range (ITR) at **Chandipur, Odisha**.
- The trial of the missile, which has a strike range of 350 km, was carried out from a mobile launcher.
- The Prithvi-2 missile is capable of carrying 500-1,000 kg of warheads and is powered by liquid propulsion twin engines.
- Already inducted into the armory of Indian defence forces in **2003**, the nine-metre tall '**Prithvi**' was the **first missile to have been developed by DRDO** under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP).

BrahMos missile test-fired from destroyer INS Chennai in Arabian Sea

- India successfully test fired the **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** from the indigenously-built stealth destroyer **INS Chennai**, with the weapon hitting a pre-designated target **in the Arabian Sea**.
- The 290-km range missile an Indo-Russian joint venture has **land, air and naval variants**.
- The missile has a top speed of Mach 2.8 nearly three times the speed of sound.
- Defence minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the **Defence Research and Development Organisation, BrahMos and the Indian Navy** for the successful launch.
- Other weapons recently tested by India include a new version of the nuclear-capable hypersonic **Shourya missile** with a range of 750 km and the **anti-radiation missile** to take down enemy radars and surveillance systems.

Indian Navy – Sri Lanka Navy Maritime Exercise SLINEX-20 off Trincomalee

- The **Eighth Edition** of annual Indian Navy (**/N**) – Sri Lanka Navy (**SLN**) bilateral maritime **exercise SLINEX-20** is scheduled off **Trincomalee, Sri Lanka** from 19 to 21 October 2020.
- The Sri Lanka Navy will be represented by **SLN Ships Sayura** (Offshore Patrol Vessel) and **Gajabahu** (Training Ship) led by Rear Admiral Bandara Jayathilaka, the **Flag Officer Commanding Naval Fleet, Sri Lanka Navy**.
- **Indian Navy Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH)** and **Chetak helicopter** embarked onboard **/N** ships, and Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft will also be participating.
- The **previous edition of SLINEX** was conducted off **Visakhapatnam** in September 2019.
- SLINEX-20 aims to enhance inter-operability, improve mutual understanding and exchange **best practices and procedures for multi-faceted maritime operations** between both navies.

ADTL To Build, Run Rs.753 cr. MiG-29 Simulator Centre For IAF

- ADTL stated it has signed the **first of two-phase defense contracts**, together worth **Rs.753 crores**, with the **Ministry of Defence and Russia's RAC MiG**.
- The **Bengaluru-based company**, which is involved in military aircraft, electronic devices for the military, and satellite assemblies for ISRO, stated it has been chosen by the two to build, own and maintain two types of simulators for fighter aircraft.

- Under the first contract worth Rs.53 crores, Alpha Design would set up and run the **MiG-29 simulator center** at the **Adampur airfield** near **Jalandhar** initially for two years. The second 18-year contract would be signed after two years, stated ADTL CMD Col. (retd.) H.S.Shankar.
- Earlier this year Indian Air Force bought **21 multirole mig-29** from Russia along with **Su-30MKI**. These were bought in light of the india-china standoff these were bought under an emergency procurement program these were most probably bought to fulfill the requirements of the Indian air force.

India invites Australia to join Malabar naval exercises in snub to China

- The Centre announced that **Australia will join** the high-level **Malabar naval exercises**.
- The annual drill, which **India, Japan and the United States** participated in, will now include the complete **"quad" or quadrilateral coalition**. The announcement came amid India's border tensions with China.
- The exercise is scheduled to take place in November.
- The exercise will strengthen the coordination between the Navies of the participating countries.
- The annual exercise was held off the coast the Japan in 2019. This year, it will be held in the **Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal**.

SANT Missile successfully testfired from Odisha coast

- India has successfully test fired the **Stand-off Anti-tank (SANT) Missile** off the **coast of Odisha**.
- The Missile is being developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** for the Indian Air Force (IAF) and will have **both Lock-on After Launch and Lock-on Before Launch capability**.
- Recently, BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was successfully test-fired from the Indian Navy's indigenously-built stealth destroyer INS Chennai, hitting a target in the Arabian Sea.

Indigenous stealth corvette INS Kavaratti commissioned into Navy

- Chief of Army Staff General **M M Naravane** commissioned the Anti-Submarine Warfare stealth corvette, **INS Kavaratti, into the Indian Navy**.
- INS Kavaratti is the **last in the series of four Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvettes** built for the Navy by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata**, a leading shipyard, **under Project 28**.
- INS Kavaratti and INS Kiltan are the first two major warships in the country to have the unique feature of superstructure made of Carbon Fiber Composite Material.
- Ships of this class have a displacement of 33,000 tonnes (as a comparison a Kalveri class submarine is 1,565 tonnes), with a span of 109m lengthwise and beam of 13.7m. Along with **INS Kamorta, INS Kadmatt and INS Kiltan** will form a major part of the Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy.

Indian Navy operationalises first batch of 3 women pilots at Kochi, ready to fly Dornier aircraft

- The **Indian Navy** has operationalized its **first batch of women pilots** on **Dornier Aircraft** by the **Southern Naval Command (SNC) at Kochi**.
- **Lieutenant Divya Sharma** (from Malviya Nagar, New Delhi), **Lieutenant Shubhangi Swaroop** (from Tilhar, Uttar Pradesh) and **Lieutenant Shivangi** (from Muzaffarpur, Bihar) are the three women pilots of the first batch.
- Lt Shivangi was the first to qualify as a naval pilot. Lt Divya Sharma and Lt Shivam Pandey were adjudged 'First in Flying' and 'First in Ground' subjects, respectively.
- The pilots had undergone basic flying training partly with the Indian Air Force and partly with the Navy prior to DOFT course. The course comprised one month of ground training phase conducted at various professional schools of SNC and eight months of flying training at the Dornier Squadron of SNC, **INAS 550**.

Indian Navy Missile Corvette INS Prabal launches anti-ship missile

- The **Indian Navy** shared a video showing an **anti-ship missile (AShM)** launched by its **Missile Corvette INS Prabal** landing home on with deadly accuracy at maximum range and sinking the target ship.
- The missile launched somewhere from the Arabian Sea homed in on its target - an old ship - and hit it with deadly accuracy at its maximum range.
- The targeted ship is a decommissioned Frigate.

Indian Navy successfully test fires missile INS Kora as part of military drill in Bay of Bengal

- The **Indian Navy** successfully test fired its **anti-ship missile (AshM)** in the **Bay of Bengal** from its **Guided Missile Corvette INS Kora** and hit the target at max range with “precise accuracy”.
- Last week, the Navy had released a video showing the anti-ship missile launched by its **Missile Corvette INS Prabal** hitting a ship and sinking it with “deadly accuracy”.
- The missile was launched as part of a mega drill involving aircraft carrier **INS Vikramaditya**, aircraft and a number of warships, attack helicopters and other assets of the Navy.

Important Science and Technology News

IIT-Madras, MIT to develop productive usage of agricultural, industrial by-products

- Researchers at the **Indian Institute of Technology-Madras** and **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** are working together to develop productive usage of **agricultural and industrial by-products** such as **biomass ash** that remain underutilised due to their complex physio-chemical characteristics. The project aims to address this challenge and contribute to a sustainable future.
- The researchers are developing a framework for high-volume usage of by-products in structural materials. Industrial by-products are generated in huge quantities across the world and are now going into waste. This will be a major step forward towards a sustainable future.
- They are combining the principles of materials chemistry, structural engineering and life-cycle analysis to develop load bearing, durable, sustainable, and economically viable cementitious binders based on industrial by-products in India, says a press release from IIT Madras.
- Some of the objectives of the project include mapping and characterisation of industrial by-products in India for assessing their availability and reactivity; exploring low-energy pathways for high volume utilisation of industrial by-products in cementitious binders; and evaluating environmental sustainability of novel cementitious binders using life-cycle assessment, the release stated.

Agnibaan rocket by Indian start-up to be test launched from Alaska, USA

- Indian aerospace start-up **AgniKul Cosmos** has signed a **memorandum of agreement** with **Alaska Aerospace Corporation** to test launch their **Indian-made Agnibaan rocket** from the **Pacific Spaceport Complex Alaska (PSCA)** on Kodiak Island in the **United States**. The launch from Alaska is expected to take place **from 2022 onwards**.
- They include US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) launch licensing, US export control, and will comply with export laws & regulations in India to receive necessary clearances from the Indian authorities as well.
- The aim is to define launch vehicle-spaceport interfaces, related procedures and conduct at least one test launch from PSCA.
- AgniKul Cosmos Private Limited is a Chennai, India-based start-up incubated at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.

National Institute of Nutrition Changes Average Weight, Height Measurements for Indian Men and Women

- The **National Institute of Nutrition (NIN)** has increased the **average body weight** for Indians by **5kg**. Accordingly, the average weight for Indian men has been increased from the **60kg** set in 2010 to **65kg** now, while that of Indian women has been changed from **50kg** from **10 years ago** to **55kg** at present.
- Along with the change in the average weight of men and women, the NIN has also revised the heights. Now, the average height for Indian men is 5.8 feet (177 cm), and that for women is 5.3 feet (162 cm). Earlier, the average heights for men and women were considered to be 5.6 feet (171cm) and 5 feet (152 cm), respectively.
- Now, this revised weight and height for both men and women will be taken into account for the calculation of normal body mass index (BMI).
- The decision to revise the average height and weight for Indians was taken due to the increased intake of nutritional food. In order to take this decision, data from the rural as well as the urban areas was taken into account, unlike 10 years ago, when only urban data was used, reports the Times of India.
- The 2020 panel derived the body weight and height values using data taken from all over India, including the National Family Health Survey 4 of 2015-2016, the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau of the same year, the WHO report of 2006 to 2007, and the Indian Academy of Paediatrics of 2015.
- The definition of a reference Indian adult with regard to age has also been changed to 19-39 years instead of 20-39 years.
- The ICMR expert committee has, for the first time, considered recommendations for fibre-based energy intake. They have mentioned about 40 grams per 2000 kilocalories of food consumption to be safe.
- Furthermore, the fat intake for individuals with sedentary, moderate, and heavy activities has been set at 25, 30, and 40 grams per day for men, and 20, 25, and 30 grams per day for women. Back in 2010, recommendations for fat intake for both men and women were common.
- As for dietary intake of carbohydrates, the expert team has suggested a requirement of **100 grams a day** for one-year-old and above, and up to **130 grams** per day.
- Meanwhile, the intake limit for common salt or iodine has remained the same at 5 grams per day, with the sodium intake limited to 2 grams a day. Lastly, an intake of 3,510 milligrams of potassium is recommended for an individual per day as part of his/her nutritional value to the body.

IIT Kharagpur Launches Telemedicine System iMediX for Corona Care

- **IIT Kharagpur** researchers have launched a telemedicine system '**iMediX**' to help patients receive assistance from doctors without having to go to hospitals or clinics. The system has been conceptualized and designed by researchers at IIT Kharagpur's Department of Computer Science and Engineering. The technology basically integrates **homecare with healthcare services** from the hospital.
- The system basically helps patients in need receive remote consultation with physicians from their residence. iMediX can be accessed by any standard internet browser and also from tablets, mobiles and laptops.
- The software was launched on 2 October 2020 on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti and will be integrated at the Dr. BC Roy Technology Hospital of the Institute which provides emergency healthcare services for the campus residents and employees, says IIT Kharagpur.

ICMR, Biological E develop purified equine antiserum

- **Indian Council of Medical Research** announced that it has, along with **Hyderabad-based Biological E**, developed **blood serum of horses** that contain antibodies **against covid-19** after conducting a study which highlighted it as.

- The bio-medical research agency stated that it could be a potential treatment and prevention of covid-19 and an alternative to convalescent plasma therapy, which is blood serum of humans who have recovered from the respiratory disease.
- Although, plasma recovered from patients experiencing covid-19 could serve similar purpose, the profile of antibodies, their efficacy and concentration keep varying from one patient to another and therefore make it an unreliable clinical tool for patient management, ICMR stated.
- Standardization achievable through equine sera-based treatment modality thus stands out as yet another remarkable public health initiative supported by ICMR in the time of covid-19.
- “**Equine hyper-immune serum** overcomes the challenge of limited availability of convalescent plasma from recovered patients. Monoclonal antibodies on the other hand are laborious and expensive to generate,” the study stated.
- Purified antibodies obtained from hyper-immune horse serum has been an effective and time- tested approach in various infections such as diphtheria, tetanus, rabies, as well as bites from snakes, scorpions and spiders. More recently, it has been used to treat infections such as the first SARS in 2003, MERS, Ebola and avian influenza virus.

IIM Kozhikode to launch e-learning hub for villagers

- The **Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode** will soon be launching an **e-learning hub** and library as a pilot project for villagers in Mavoor, one of the five villages adopted by the institute under **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan** (UBA).
- IIM Kozhikode is a partner institute for the UBA programme and has been actively playing a role in furthering the development agenda and fortifying institutional capacity and giving training relevant to national needs, especially those of rural India.
- Anubha Shekhar Sinha, Coordinator, UBA Cell, IIM Kozhikode stated that IIM Kozhikode has adopted five villages — Mavoor, Kuttikkattoor, Narikkuni, Puthur and Puthupadi — of Kozhikode under the UBA initiative. The baseline socio-economic survey and focus group discussions are being carried out with the involvement of faculties and PGP students of IIMK, to prepare the **Village Development Plan (VDP)** for each village. The intervention activities will be brought in action based on the VDP, she stated.

Indo-French satellites to trace illegal oil spillage

- The **constellation of maritime surveillance satellites** for the **Indian Ocean Region**, to be jointly launched by **India and France**, will be able to **trace illegal spillage of oil by ships**.
- **CNES and ISRO** committed to developing and building a constellation of satellites carrying telecommunications and radar and optical remote-sensing instruments, constituting the first space-based system in the world capable of tracking ships continuously.
- The main purpose of this is to trace illegal spillage of oil by ships. The Indian Ocean Region has several Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) and used by many ships every day.
- The satellites will be operated jointly by France and India to monitor ships in the Indian Ocean.
- Parts of the satellites will be built in both the countries and launched from India.
- CNES and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) are also operating a number of climate-monitoring satellites together.
- '**Trishna**', a highly precise **thermal infrared observer**, will also be part of the fleet of Indo-French satellites.

C-DAC to Commission India's Fastest HPC-AI Supercomputer PARAM Siddhi - AI with NVIDIA

- **NVIDIA** said that the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)** will commission **India's largest HPC-AI supercomputer**, '**PARAM Siddhi – AI**'.

- This initiative will put India among the top countries in global AI supercomputing research and innovation.
- The initiative has been spearheaded by **Abhishek Das**, Scientist and Program Director (HPC-AI Infrastructure Development) at C-DAC, who conceived the idea and designed the architecture for the largest HPC-AI infrastructure in India.
- It was approved by **Ravi Shankar Prasad**, Union minister of Electronics and IT and Law & Justice; Ajay Prakash Sawhney (Secretary, MeitY), Prof Ashutosh Sharma (Secretary, DST) and recommendation of National Supercomputing Mission (NSM – a government initiative) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) chaired by **Dr V K Saraswat, Member, Niti Aayog**.
- The supercomputer will have **210 AI Petaflops (6.5 Petaflops Peak DP)** and will be based on the NVIDIA DGX SuperPOD reference architecture comprising 42 NVIDIA DGX A100 systems, connected with NVIDIA Mellanox HDR InfiniBand networking along with indigenously developed HPC-AI engine, Software Frameworks, Cloud Platform by C-DAC.

IIT Guwahati Startup Sahara Develops mobile App For Offline To Online Biz Services

- **Sahara, a hyperlocal-tech startup** of the students of the **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati**, has developed a **mobile application** that lets **offline business owners** create **synergy with customers and potential business partners** on a global platform with the power of **digitalisation**.
- The features on this app will also guarantee accurate navigating experience, especially to travellers, in the form of local language translation service, security for travellers by providing assistance in establishing contact with respective traveller's embassy in case of emergency, emergency and SOS service especially for women etc.

IIT Kharagpur designs robotic system to identify diseases plaguing plants

- **IIT Kharagpur** has designed a **robotic system** capable of **identifying the diseases plaguing plants** through camera-captured image analysis.
- The robotic system consists of a tracked vehicle suitable for negotiating rough terrain field, a device mounted on the tracked vehicle capable of holding the camera and pesticide spraying nozzle, a pesticide spraying module, and camera-based vision module.
- The use of such a device instead of manual operation of spraying pesticide will protect the farmers from related probable health hazards.
- The developed robotic system is a **battery-driven** one and once fully charged, it will be able to perform its duty in the field for about two hours.
- The system has been designed under the project "Development of autonomous multipurpose agricultural robotic platform funded by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and run by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (**C-DAC**) **Kolkata** as the nodal implementing institute along with **IIT Kharagpur, BAU Ranchi and KCT Coimbatore**.

Nanosafe Solutions launch anti-fungal water storage container "AqCure"

- The **Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIT-D)**-incubated startup **Nanosafe Solutions** has developed a range of antimicrobial i.e., anti-viral, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal water storage container based on the inherent antimicrobial properties of copper.
- **AqCure** is a patented technology in which **active nanocopper** is released in a sustainable manner from a polymer matrix.

- The released copper makes the outer and inner surface of the container antimicrobial, reducing transmission of microbes upon direct contact, and making the stored water microbiologically safe.

Advanced version of Sayabot launched

- **Kochi-based** maker Village Startup **ASIMOV Robotics** has **modified its robot, Sayabot**, with add-on features like **checking body temperature of visitors/customers** and **dispensing sanitiser** at the same time.
- The powerful sensor will help the robot check the temperature with the right hand while dispensing sanitiser with the left hand.
- Moreover, if the visitor is not wearing a mask at all or not wearing it properly, the Sayabot will ask him to put on masks. It will also thank those who are wearing masks.
- If the robot sees anyone touching his/her face or nose in its presence, it will warn them.

Trial run of India's first hydrogen fuel cell car successfully conducted by CSIR, KPIT

- The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** and **KPIT** successfully ran trials of **India's first Hydrogen Fuel Cell (HFC)** prototype car running on an indigenously developed fuel cell stack at **CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory, Pune**. The fuel cell is a low temperature **PEM (Proton Exchange Membrane) type Fuel Cell** that operates at 65-75 degree centigrade, which is suitable for vehicular applications.
- CSIR and KPIT have successfully developed a 10 kWe automotive grade LT-PEMFC fuel cell stack based on CSIR's know-how. The heart of the PEM fuel cell technology includes the membrane electrode assembly, which is wholly a CSIR knowhow.
- KPIT brought in their expertise in stack engineering which included light-weight metal bipolar plate and gasket design, development of the balance of plant (BoP), system integration, control software and electric powertrain that enabled running the fuel cell vehicle.

Microsoft alerts Android users of new ransomware that could render smartphone useless

- **Microsoft** is responsible for locating and dealing with **potentially dangerous malwares** on their own Windows operating system. However, the tech company claims that they try to use their expertise to provide benefits to operating systems beyond their own. According to the company's cybersecurity blog, Android users should be aware of the new and evolving malwares that target the operating system.
- Microsoft claims that this new mobile ransomware was detected by **Microsoft Defender** for Endpoint as **AndroidOS/MalLocker.B**. This new malware is the latest variant of a ransomware family that's been in the wild for a while but has been evolving non-stop, according to the blog.
- The ransomware, according to Microsoft, masks itself as popular apps, cracked game or video players. It is known to be found on arbitrary websites which are circulated on online forums. The new malware is specially dangerous as the software company claims that despite being malicious in many ways, it was able to dodge the existing protections and showed a low detection rate against security solutions.

NASA to Launch Nano Satellite Developed by Three Tamil Nadu Students into Sub-orbit

- **An experimental satellite** by **three students from Tamil Nadu's Karur district** will be launched by the **National Aeronautics and Space Agency** into the sub orbit in June, next on NASA's sounding rocket 7.
- Their innovation, **India Sat**, which took more than two years of extensive research, has been deemed **world's smallest and lightest satellite**, made with reinforced graphene polymer is **3 cm in size and weighs 64 gm**.
- The satellite is equipped with its own solar cell, that will generate power for it and it has its own radio frequency that will send and receive data to and from between Earth and outer space.

- The photographic film of the satellite will also absorb and measure the cosmic radiation inside the rocket.
- The three students — M. Adnaan of Thanthorimalai, M. Kesavan of Nagampalli and V. Arun of Thennilai and the team was mentored by **Rifath Shaarook of Space Kids India**.

One American, two Russians blast off to International Space Station

- A Russian Soyuz spacecraft carrying a U.S. astronaut and two Russian cosmonauts blasted off from the Baikonur cosmodrome in **Kazakhstan** and successfully reached orbit, live footage broadcast by Russia's space agency Roscosmos.
- The crew members travelling to the International Space Station (ISS) are **Kate Rubins**, a NASA microbiologist who in 2016 became the first person to sequence DNA in space, and Russian cosmonauts **Sergey Ryzhikov and Sergey Kud-Sverchkov**.
- The mission is the last scheduled Russian flight carrying a U.S. crew member.

Science-Society-Setu webinar series initiated to strengthen S&T capacity of NGOs & Communities

- DST Secretary **Prof. Ashutosh Sharma** underlined the need to create knowledge that is relevant for different sections of our society at the **Science-Society-Setu for Aatmanirbhar Bharat (S34ANB)**, a web clinic series by **Science for Equity Empowerment and Development SEED Division**, Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- The discussions under web clinic to reach the unreached through '**vocal for local approach**' to strengthen the social infrastructure and technology-driven pillars of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' has been organized by DST in partnership with the Office of Principal Scientific Advisor, India Science Technology & Innovation Portal, WWF-India, AGNi, FICCI and HESCO. They will cover four broad sectors, namely: 'agriculture and allied sectors, MSME & economic sector, social infrastructure, and cross-sectoral areas'.
- The web clinic is aimed to bridge the systematic gaps in S&T absorption capacity of the community, enhancing the knowledge capacity and livelihood systems for sustainable development at a local level by strengthening the S&T capacity of NGOs and Communities.
- A panel discussion on emerging technologies was organised showcasing different technologies like Internet of Things (IoT) for water conservation, satellite technology for agriculture supply chain, and automation for small scale agriculture.

CSIR-CMERI develops Sustainable Municipal Solid Waste Processing Facility

- **Decentralised Waste Management** technology developed by **CSIR-CMERI** can result in drastic reduction of expenditure related to **Transportation Logistics** and can help reductions in **CO2 emissions**, by reducing fossil fuel usage. The Scientifically Decentralised Waste Processing Hubs will help multiply outreach for various locations and will also boost the manufacturing potential for the residents of the region.
- This **CSIR-CMERI MSW Technology** envisions a **Zero-Landfill and a Zero Waste City** in addition to developing Job-Creation opportunities. This technology will also help create a revived Green Energy reliant India".
- CSIR-CMERI has started an **innovative technology** of producing the Biogas from grass and weeds and Vermi-composting of Slurry of the plant process. A mechanized system has been developed to utilize saw dust, shredded leaves, biogas slurry and produces briquettes. The Smokeless Stove has also been developed to utilize these briquettes. Such stoves have the benefits of Reduction in import of LPG and reduction in pollution.

IIIT Hyderabad and NMDA Develop Rapid Visual Screening (RVS) Primer to Mitigate Earthquake Risks

- **International Institute of Information Technology Hyderabad (IIITH)** and **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** have developed a **Rapid Visual Screening (RVS)** Primer for better insight into structural safety in the wake of

earthquake risks. The primer will serve as a pioneering document to screen various kinds of buildings for their structural stability, and to assess and estimate the possible damage during an earthquake.

- The total number of buildings in India is well over **30.5 Crores**. Structural status of buildings before and after the earthquake will provide an effective checkpoint for government institutions, industries, private organisations and local bodies against the threats posed by earthquakes.
- While disaster management has hitherto followed a relief-centric approach, the RVS Primer will assist in a more mitigation- and preparedness-centric approach with continued focus on response, which is proactive, holistic and integrated as per the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

NASA's OSIRIS-REx Spacecraft Successfully Touches Asteroid

- In a historic event that unfolded nearly **321 million kilometers** away from the Earth, a Nasa spacecraft successfully touched the surface of an **asteroid** to collect pristine samples to return to the Earth. The **OsirisRex mission** performed a **first-of-its-kind Touch and Go (TAG)** manoeuvre to blast nitrogen to gather regolith (dust and minerals) from the surface of **asteroid Bennu**.
- The spacecraft began its descent out of the asteroid's orbit where it had been for nearly two years. After a four-hour descent at an altitude of approximately 410 feet, the spacecraft precisely targeted the sample collection site Nightingale extending the shoulder, then elbow, then wrist of its 11-foot sampling arm, known as the Touch-And-Go Sample Acquisition Mechanism (TAGSAM).
- It continued its descent coasting past a boulder the size of a two-story building, nicknamed "Mount Doom," to touch down in a clear spot in a crater on Bennu's northern hemisphere. The size of a small parking lot, the site Nightingale is one of the few relatively clear spots on this unexpectedly boulder-covered space rock.
- The mission's target is **Bennu**, a carbon-rich near-Earth asteroid that is also potentially hazardous to Earth.
- While the mission has been a success so far, it will take about a week for the OSIRIS-REx team to confirm how much samples the spacecraft collected. The goal is to gather at least 60 grams of alien surface material.

IIT Kharagpur's 'COVIRAP' - Novel Technology of COVID-19 Test Gets ICMR Certification

- '**COVIRAP**,' the diagnostic technology developed by **IIT Kharagpur researchers**, has been successfully validated for its efficacy in COVID-19 detection by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**.
- This COVID-19 Diagnostic Test has been designed to be fairly easy to conduct and affordable as well and can produce results **within one hour**.
- This new testing method implements a highly reliable and accurate molecular diagnostic procedure that can be conducted in an ultra-low-cost portable device unit developed by the IIT Kharagpur research team. The test results are rendered via a custom-made mobile application for dissemination without requiring manual interpretation.
- It costs only **Rs. 500 per test**.

DRDO successfully conducts final trial of Nag anti-tank guided missile in Pokhran range

- India successfully carried out the final trial of the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO)-developed Nag anti-tank guided missile with a warhead.
- The test was carried out at the Pokhran field firing ranges in Rajasthan. The trial of Nag anti-tank guided missile comes after the DRDO tested the helicopter launched Stand-off Anti-Tank Missile (SANT) with a range beyond 10 km from Balasore testing range in Odisha on 19th October.
- The Nag anti-tank missile is ready for induction in the Indian Army. It has completed 10 successful user trial as it finds the target and then hit it.

IIT in Partnership with TCS Sets New Trends in India's Advanced Manufacturing Sector

- IIT Kharagpur has developed **novel Industry 4.0 technology** for remotely **controlled factory operations** and real-time quality correction during industrial production, jointly with **TCS** to set a new trend in **India's advanced manufacturing sector**.
- At the time of pandemic when staffing has restrictions due to the hygiene and social distancing norms, cloud infrastructure, remote and real-time operations systems hold the key to maintain effective industrial operations. But the benefits of controlled operations have a bigger impact especially in the context of Atma Nirbhar Bharat in delivering quality output at low costs.
- The present innovation upgraded the industrial process of friction stir welding to a multi-sensory system of Industry 4.0. It has not only set the course for remotely controlled operations in the Indian industrial sector but has also enabled real-time quality check and correction during the production process.
- This will make possible for industrial houses to achieve standardized quality goals throughout the production process and reduce rejection hence lowering the cost of production.

Isro to launch earth observation, nine commercial satellites in November

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation** will launch an **Indian earth observation satellite** and **nine commercial satellites** in the afternoon of **November 7**. This will be the first launch of **2020** from India's only spaceport in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- "India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle in its 51st mission, will launch **EOS-01 as a primary satellite** along with nine international customer satellites from Satish Dhawan Space Centre. The launch is tentatively scheduled at 1502 hours IST on November 07, 2020, subject to weather conditions," a statement from the space agency stated.
- The only other Indian satellite launched this year was the heavy-communication satellite **GSAT 30**, which was launched from Kourou, French Guiana, by the commercial launcher Arianespace.
- A scheduled launch of an earth imaging satellite in March was postponed and did not take place because of the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The pandemic has hampered several big-ticket projects that were planned for 2020 and the next year. India was to launch its first solar mission in the first half of the year; a third lunar mission with just the lander and the rover was also to take place either in the end of 2020 or the first half of the next year.
- The human spaceflight programme, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his Independence day speech in 2018, was to attempt its first unmanned human-rated vehicle launch in December 2020.

MIT scientists design face mask that can inactivate coronavirus using heat

- Scientists at **MIT** have designed a **novel face mask** that can not only **filter out the SARS-CoV-2 virus**, which causes COVID-19, but also inactivate it using heat.
- The new mask incorporates a **heated copper mesh** and does not need to be decontaminated or thrown away after use, according to the researchers.
- As the person wearing the mask breathes in and out, air flows repeatedly across the mesh, and any viral particles in the air are slowed and inactivated by the mesh and high temperatures, the researchers stated.
- Such a mask could be useful for healthcare professionals, as well as members of the public in situations where social distancing would be difficult to achieve, such as a crowded bus, they stated.

- They decided to use copper mesh as the heating and capture element, and performed some mathematical modelling to determine the optimal temperature range needed to kill coronaviruses flowing inwards or outwards from natural breathing.
- They also showed that that temperature can be achieved by running an electrical current across a 0.1-millimetre thick copper mesh or thermoelectric heater, powered by a small battery.

Revision Points

Institutions/Persons	Things to be Discovered/Developed
IIT-Madras & Massachusetts Institute of Technology	To develop productive usage of agricultural, industrial by-products
IIT Kharagpur	Telemedicine System iMediX for Corona Care
ICMR & Biological E	To develop purified equine antiserum
IIM Kozhikode	To launch e-learning hub for villagers
Centre for Development of Advanced Computing	To Commission India's Fastest HPC-AI Supercomputer PARAM Siddhi - AI with NVIDIA
IIT Guwahati Startup Sahara	To develop mobile App For Offline To Online Biz Services
IIT Kharagpur	Robotic system to identify diseases plaguing plants
Nanosafe Solutions	Anti-fungal water storage container "AqCure
ASIMOV Robotics	Sayabot
Council of Scientific and Industrial Research & KPIT	Trial run of India's first hydrogen fuel cell car
NASA	Nano Satellite Developed by Three Tamil Nadu Students into Sub-orbit
CSIR-CMERI	To develop Sustainable Municipal Solid Waste Processing Facility
IIIT Hyderabad and NMDA	Rapid Visual Screening (RVS) Primer to Mitigate Earthquake Risks
IIT Kharagpur researchers	COVIRAP
IIT Kharagpur & TCS	New Trends in India's Advanced Manufacturing Sector
Indian Space Research Organisation	Indian earth observation satellite and nine commercial satellites
MIT scientists	Face mask that can inactivate coronavirus using heat

Important Environment News

NASA's SOFIA Discovers Water On Sunlit Surface Of Moon

- Two new studies published in **Nature Astronomy** suggest there could be **much more water** than previously thought, including **ice stored** in permanently shadowed "cold traps" at **lunar polar regions**.
- Previous research has found indications of water by scanning the surface -- but these were unable to distinguish between water (H₂O) and hydroxyl, a molecule made up of one hydrogen atom and one oxygen atom.
- But a new study provides further chemical proof that the Moon holds molecular water, even in sunlit areas.
- Using data from the **Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA)** Airborne Telescope, researchers scanned the lunar surface at a more precise wavelength than had been used before -- six microns instead of three.
- This allowed them to distinguish the spectral fingerprint of molecular water.

Rare fish family with lineage going back to Gondwanaland found in Kerala

- A fish believed to have a lineage going back to **Gondwanaland** has been discovered from paddy fields of Kerala. The bony freshwater fish is stated to have survived even after the parting away of the Asian and African continents which began some **120 million years** ago.
- "The researchers at the Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER), Pune, Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), Nirmalagiri College in Kerala, Natural History Museums in London and Berne, along with Senckenberg Natural History Collections, Germany, were part of the discovery of the fish family named **Aenigmachannidae**," stated.
- The team reached the conclusion that the fish is a '**living fossil**'. The research was carried using CT scans and detailed analysis of the specimen.
- The discovery, however, was made last year post-sunset along the paddy fields of Mallapuram district in north Kerala.
- Another distinct feature of the newly discovered fish family is that it remains subterranean.
- Even though about 10 enigmatic subterranean fish species are known to be present in Kerala, just how **Aenigmachannidae** was spotted here remains a mystery.

New perennial woody herb species spotted in Kerala

- A team of researchers have reported a new species of perennial woody herb of the genus **Lepidagathis** from the northern laterite plateaus of Kasaragod district in the State.
- Since this rare plant was spotted in the neighbourhood of the Ananthapura lake temple, it has been named '**Lepidagathis ananthapuramensis**' after the famed temple dedicated to **Ananthapadmanabha**.
- The plant was spotted during field explorations in the region, V.S. Anil Kumar stated. With its discovery, the number of species of the genus **Lepidagathis** (family **Acanthaceae**) found in India has risen to 34. "Plants of this species are locally called 'Paramullu'. As far as we know, **Lepidagathis ananthapuramensis** is endemic to the region," he stated.
- To date, eight species of the genus **Lepidagathis** and three varieties have been reported from Kerala, of which four are endemic to the Western Ghats.
- **Lepidagathis ananthapuramensis** is closely related to **Lepidagathis keralensis** reported from Madayippura in Kannur district. Detailed studies have established the former as a hitherto undescribed species, he stated.
- An erect woody herb that grows to a height of 50-100 cm, **Lepidagathis ananthapuramensis** is characterised by a hairy and branched stem, thick and woody rootstock, hairy leaf veins, and flowers clustered on one side of the inflorescence.

IMD launches impact-based cyclone warning system

- The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** has launched a dynamic, **impact-based cyclone warning system** aimed at **minimising economic losses** and **damage to property from cyclones** that hit the country's coasts every year.
- It is presented at the **World Space Week** celebrations organised by the Delhi chapter of the Indian Society of Remote Sensing recently.
- IMD has been giving a warning about the kind of damage that can be expected. But now it would issue district or location-specified/tailored warnings and factor in infrastructure, local population, settlements, land use as well as other elements.

Important Rankings and Indexes

Index	India's Rank	Top	Released By
Global Hunger Index 2020	94 th		Published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe
Inflow of Migrants to OECD Countries	2 nd	China	Revealed by OECD
Ookla Speedtest Global Index	131 st	Singapore	
Commitment to Reducing Inequality (CRI) Index	129 th	Norway	Released 'Oxfam International' in partnership with Development Finance International
Arton Capital's Passport Index	58 th	New Zealand	

Mumbai ranks 2nd after Delhi in crimes against women, reveals NCRB data

- According to the latest data released by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, **Mumbai** recorded 6,519 cases, after national capital **Delhi** at 12,902 cases during the year 2019. However, there has been a drop of 1.5 per cent in crimes in Maharashtra.
- In year 2019, the state recorded 3.41 lakh cases, down from 3.46 lakh in the previous year.
- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data has revealed that overall the crime cases against women in Mumbai in last two years have been 6,058 and 5,453 respectively.
- Sadly, the city has ranked first in cases of insult to women's modesty at 575 (Delhi is second at 456).
- Mumbai also has the highest number of sexual harassment incidents on public transport and recorded the highest number of cases for use of children in pornography.
- The financial capital also ranked third on the list of rape cases after Delhi and Jaipur.
- As for the cyber crimes, the NCRB data shows that Mumbai, for the third consecutive year, has stood second on the list after Bengaluru. **Bengaluru** is way ahead with 10,555 cases while **Mumbai** is at 2,527.

Sofia Vergara is Forbes' highest-paid actress of 2020, with Rs 315 crore earnings

- **Sofia Vergara** is the **highest-paid female actor in the world**, according to **Forbes' latest list**. She made \$43 million in a one-year period, which is the equivalent of **Rs 315 crore**.
- Also included in the top 10 are Angelina Jolie (\$35.5 million), Gal Gadot (\$31 million), Melissa McCarthy (25 million), Meryl Streep (\$24 million), Emily Blunt (\$22.5 million), Nicole Kidman (\$22 million), Ellen Pompeo (\$19 million), Elisabeth Moss (\$16 million) and Viola Davis (\$15.5 million).
- **Dwayne Johnson** topped the male list, with \$87.5 million. **Akshay Kumar** was the **only Indian actor on either list**.

Tamil Nadu tops in road accidents for third year

- With over **156 road accident cases per day**, **Tamil Nadu** ranks **first for the third year** according to data from the **NCRB**.
- **Tamil Nadu** recorded **57,228 road accidents in 2019**, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 51,641 and Uttar Pradesh 37,537.
- With regards to **deaths on National Highways**, **Tamil Nadu** stood **third** with 3,921 cases, **behind Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra**. TN, meanwhile, recorded the highest number of cases on State Highways with 19,279.
- Out of the 86,241 deaths due to overspeeding in 2019, Tamil Nadu has 8,832 deaths after Karnataka with 9,314 deaths. Under the mega cities, Chennai holds the second place in road accident deaths with 1,252 after Delhi.

Tabu, Taapsee Pannu, Anushka Sharma top McAfee's 'Most Dangerous Celebrity' list in India

- Bollywood stars **Tabu, Taapsee Pannu, Anushka Sharma** and **Sonakshi Sinha** are among the **top 10 personalities** generating the riskiest search results online in India, due to the malicious sites and viruses linked to their names, according to a list released by a **cybersecurity company**.
- But it was global football sensation **Cristiano Ronaldo** who claimed the **numero uno** spot on **McAfee's Most Dangerous Celebrity list 2020**.
- On number two is **Tabu**, who recently starred in Mira Nair's series adaptation of A Suitable Boy, followed by Thappad actor Pannu at three, actor-producer Sharma at four, and Sinha at five.
- The second half of the list is also ruled by the entertainment industry, with singer Armaan Malik in the sixth place, actor Sara Ali Khan coming seventh, soap star Divyanka Tripathi in eighth spot, Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan in the ninth place and playback singer Arijit Singh in the tenth position.
- With only Ronaldo representing sports, the 14th edition of the McAfee's Most Dangerous Celebrity list 2020 is dominated by the names from showbiz.

Forbes India Rich List 2020: Mukesh Ambani remains wealthiest Indian for 13th consecutive year

- **Forbes** has released this year's list of the **top 100 richest Indians**. **Mukesh Ambani** remains the **wealthiest Indian for the 13th year in a row**, adding \$37.3 billion to his net worth.
- It has also noted the entry of Pune-based Serum Institute of India, which is the world's largest vaccine producer by the number of doses produced, in top 10.

Here is the list of India's top 10 richest persons

- Mukesh Ambani (88.7 billion dollar)
- Gautam Adani (25.2 billion dollar)
- Shiv Nadar (20.4 billion dollar)
- Rafhakishan Damani (15.4 billion dollar)
- Hinduja brothers (12.8 billion dollar)

- Cyrus Poonawalla (11.5 billion dollar)
- Pallonji Mistry (11.4 billion dollar)
- Uday Kotak (11.3 billion dollar)
- Godrej Family (11 billion dollar)
- Lakshmi Mittal (10.3 billion dollar)

India to be third-largest economy in world by 2050

- **Indian economy** will become the **third-largest in the world by 2050** after the **United States and China**, a study published in the **Lancet journal**.
- **Currently, India is at fifth spot** followed by France and the United Kingdom.
- In 2017, India was the seventh-largest economy in the world. The study took that as the base year and calculated the growth of the country.
- As per the study, **India** will become the **fourth-largest economy** in the world by **2030** and subsequently moved to **third spot by 2050**.
- **India will overtake Japan** in the list which is currently at the fourth spot.

After Nearly 125 Years, Rare Day Flying Moth 'Achelura Bifasciata' Sighted in Uttarakhand

- Arun Gour, an enthusiastic lepidopterist who spotted a rare day flying moth named as '**Achelura bifasciata**' in **Devalsari of Tehri district in Uttarakhand**. This moth was spotted after 125 years it was last reported in the forest of Nainital.
- *Achelura bifasciata* is usually found in the Himalayan belt and its presence in Uttarakhand has been mentioned in old records from Nainital, reported by G F Hampson- a Briton, in a moth book that he wrote in 1893.
- Interestingly, many moths and butterflies are the same. However, there are a couple of striking differences between the both- butterflies typically have larger and colorful patterns on their wings whereas moths have drab colored and smaller wings.
- Secondly, butterflies fly during day time while various types of moths fly during night time. Though some species like '**Achelura bifasciata**' fly during day time like butterflies.

New Zealand passport most powerful, US ranked 21, India 58 in Global Passport Index by Arton Capital

- **New Zealand has knocked off Japan** for the **strongest passport in the world** according to the latest **Global Passport Index** compiled by global financial advisory firm **Arton Capital**.
- The **US passport ranked 21** and **India, 58**.
- The passport index lists the power of passports in terms of real-time, visa restrictions, factoring in legislative changes, and entry requirements.
- Earlier, New Zealand shared the top position with Japan. However, it has now secured a definitive top spot based on its 'mobility score', that is the number of countries the passport grants access to. Kiwi passport holders now get visa-free access to 129 countries.
- **Japan now holds the second position** along with Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Ireland, South Korea and Australia.

India recorded the third-highest number of disaster events over the past 20 years: UN Report

- **India** ranks **third** in the **highest number of disaster** events recorded over the **last 20 years** according to the latest report published by the **United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)**.

- The report “**The Human Cost of Disasters 2000-2019**” records disaster events across the globe along with its impact of human lives and the economy.
- The report has been produced with Belgium’s Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters at UC Louvain.
- According to the report, which compiles statistics from the Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT), maintained by the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), Asia has suffered the highest number of disaster events.
- Overall, the top three countries in terms of the highest number of events include “**China (577 events), the United States of America (467 events) and India (321 events)**”.
- These are disasters which have “killed ten or more people; affected 100 or more people; resulted in a declared state of emergency; or a call for international assistance.”
- “In total, between 2000 and 2019, there were **3,068 disaster events in Asia**, followed by the 1,756 events in the Americas and 1,192 events in Africa,” as per the report.

Chandigarh University bags first rank in India as stand-alone institution for filling highest number of patents in a year according to Government of India patent rankings

- **Chandigarh University Gharuan** has emerged as **Top Stand-Alone University in India** for filling highest number of patents in a year.
- The annual rankings for the year 2018-19 was recently released by Office of Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks, Government of India which comprises of Academic Institutions and Multinational Companies.
- As per the Intellectual Property India annual report released by Government of India, in the overall patents filing category, **27 Indian Institute of Technology (IIT's)** have collectively filed **557 patents** and are leading the table but with 336 patents filed in a year, **Chandigarh University Gharuan** has emerged as the leading stand-alone institution to file highest number of patents which is followed by **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** with 239 patent applications, **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** with 202 applications and **Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL)** with 173 applications.
- "In addition, with the filing of 148 patents **Chandigarh University** has also bagged third position in the Top 5 Indian Applicants for patents in the field of Information Technology and is just placed behind the top Indian IT Companies TCS and Wipro," the Chancellor stated.

Global Hunger Index 2020: India ranks 94 out of 107 countries, under 'serious' category

- India ranks **94** among **107 countries** in the **Global Hunger Index 2020**, the report released. According to the report, with a score of 27.2, India has a level of hunger that is “**serious**”. India’s rank was **102** out of **117 countries** last year.
- In the index, India features behind Nepal (73), Pakistan (88), Bangladesh (75), Indonesia (70) among others. Out of the total 107 countries, only 13 countries fare worse than India including countries like Rwanda (97), Nigeria (98), Afghanistan (99), Liberia (102), Mozambique (103), Chad (107) among others.
- According to the report, 14 per cent of India’s population is undernourished. It also says that the country recorded a child stunting rate of 37.4 per cent. Stunted children are those who have a “low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition”. In 2018, India ranked **103** among **119 countries** on the **global hunger index**.

India Fourth Most Powerful Country In Asia: Asia Power Index 2020

- **India** has become the **fourth most powerful country** in the **Asia-Pacific region**, according to the Sydney-based Lowy Institute's **Asia Power Index for 2020**, which ranks 26 nations and territories.

- India was on the **fourth spot in the index after Japan**. However, the economic growth potential India lost during a **pandemic** gave an **advantage to China**.
- Although the **US obtained the top position** as the most powerful country influencing the **Asia-Pacific**.
- Russia, Australia, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia round out the top 10.
- Lowy estimates India will reach 40 per cent of China's economic output by 2030, compared with the 50 per cent estimate a year ago.

India Ranks Second in Inflow of Migrants to OECD Countries, China Retains Top Spot

- **India ranked second** in terms of the “total” inflow of **new migrants to OECD countries** during the **year 2018** as well as in the **number of Indians obtaining citizenship of these countries**, a report by **OECD revealed**.
- Notably, **China** continued to retain the **top position** as the largest source country, India overtook Romania to emerge as the second-largest source country.
- Migration from India to OECD countries climbed significantly by 10% and hit 3.3 lakh and it accounted for about 5% of the overall migration to OECD countries.
- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is a forum where the governments of 36 member states with market economies work with each other, as well as with more than 70 non-member economies to foster economic growth and sustainable development.

UP Emerges As The Top Destination For Domestic Tourists In 2019, Secures Third Position In Attracting Foreign Tourists

- **Uttar Pradesh** has emerged at the **top position** for attracting the **highest number of domestic tourists** in 2019.
- **The Indian Tourism Statistics (ITS), 2020**, has announced that as many as 53.6 crore domestic tourists visited Uttar Pradesh in 2019 which was much higher as compared to 2018 when the state had got the second position after Tamil Nadu.
- Uttar Pradesh attracted the highest number of domestic tourists in the country in 2019 with a share of **23.1 per cent travellers** visiting the state.
- Tamil Nadu (21.3%) came second followed by Andhra Pradesh (10.2%).
- The **UP** has also secured the **third position in attracting foreign tourists** with a record footfall of nearly 47 lakh foreigners visiting last year.
- **Tamil Nadu** has **topped the list** with nearly 68 lakh **foreigners** visiting the state in 2019.

India recorded highest air pollution exposure globally in 2019

- **India recorded the highest air pollution exposure** annual average **PM 2.5 concentration exposure** in the **world** last year(2019), according to the **State of Global Air 2020 (SOGA 2020) report**.
- India was followed by Nepal, Niger, Qatar and Nigeria in high PM 2.5 exposures.
- Out of the 20 most populous countries, 14 have recorded a gradual improvement in air quality but India, Bangladesh, Niger, Pakistan and Japan are among those that have recorded a modest increase in air pollution levels.
- India is also among the top ten countries with **highest ozone (O3) exposure in 2019**. **Qatar recorded the highest O3 exposure** followed by **Nepal and India**.
- SOGA, released by US-based Health Effects Institute and Global Burden of Disease (GBD), uses both data from ground monitors and satellite to make their assessments.

Himachal Pradesh: Mandi district bags top position for implementation of PMGSY

- **Himachal Pradesh's Mandi district** has bagged top position among **30 districts** of the country in successful implementation of **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)**. Himachal Pradesh has also secured **second position** at the national level for construction of roads under PMGSY. Union Ministry of Rural Development has declared the list of top performing 30 districts in the country for implementing the PMGSY programme.
- Mandi district has received top position for constructing roads under PMGSY of maximum length in 2020-21. Six more districts of Himachal Pradesh have also secured position among top 30 best performing districts, which include Chamba, Shimla, Kangra, Una, Sirmour, Hamirpur and Solan.
- The state has also improved its performance under PMGSY programme by constructing 1104 Kilometres roads this year from April till date. PMGSY is a programme funded by the Union government to connect habitations having population of more than 250 in the state.

NTPC ranks first among Indian PSUs in Forbes' 'World's Best Employer 2020'

- NTPC stated it has featured on the top on the list of **Indian PSUs** under the '**World's Best Employer 2020**', published by Forbes.
- The recognition is testimony to NTPC's commitment towards inculcating best in class practices that are thoughtfully designed and robustly executed, the company stated in a statement.
- The modules have helped thousands of workers from NTPC to grow and think beyond the professional sphere.
- NTPC has successfully innovated and introduced people practices in the domain of hiring; engagement; diversity and inclusion; rewards and recognition; and performance management.
- In the recent past, the company has initiated an '**NTPC Series**' on success stories beyond official work, '**Ambition, Growth, Success Beyond Work**', a series on the achievements of employees beyond their official assignments.

Haryana tops Anemia Mukht Bharat Index in country

- **Haryana State** has the **best Anemia Mukht Bharat (AMB) Index with 46.7** among 29 states in the country.
- The **Anemia Mukht Bharat**, an initiative of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and UNICEF**, has been launched to reduce the prevalence of Anemia all over India.
- This information came to light during the **8th Governing Body Meeting of the State Health Society of the National Health Mission (NHM) in Chandigarh**.
- Further, in year 2019-20 the state had achieved 93 per cent of immunization.

India ranks 131 out of 138 in global mobile internet speed ranking: Ookla

- **India** has ranked **131 out of 138** in **global mobile internet speed rankings** in **September 2020**, according to Ookla Speedtest Global Index.
- **India's average** download speed stood at **12.07 Mbps** as opposed to the global average download speed of 35.96 Mbps.
- Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Nepal ranked higher on the list, compared to India, at 102, 116, and 117 respectively.
- **South Korea has topped the list** with an average mobile internet speed of **121.00 Mbps**.
- When it comes to **fixed line broadband Internet speeds**, **India** is placed **70th out of 175 nations** – well above most of its neighbouring countries – with an average download **speed** of **46.47Mbps**.
- **Singapore** has topped this index with the download speed of **226.60 Mbps**.
- The Speedtest Global Index compares internet speed data from around the world on a monthly basis. The data for the index comes from the hundreds of millions of tests taken by real people using Speedtest every month.

Samsung Beats Amazon, IBM to Top Forbes List of World's Best Employers

- **Korean tech major Samsung** has become the **best employer in the world this year**, according to the rankings by **US business magazine Forbes**.
- **Samsung beat** some of the most renowned companies including **Amazon, IBM and Microsoft** to rank No.1 in 2020, taking a giant leap from the previous **76th rank last year** and **106th rank in 2018** on a list of 750 MNCs(Multi National Corporations).
- From India, **HCL Technologies** is top industry in the list. It is placed at **30th rank globally**.
- In Banking sector, **HDFC Bank** is top from India. It is at **176th rank**.
- In addition to this, state-run power giant **NTPC Ltd.** has topped the list among Indian PSUs. Globally it is ranked at **261 rank**.
- This year, the ranking was based on a study based on the employers' COVID-19 response, talent acquisition, gender equality and so on.

UP govt secures first rank in disbursing loans under PM Swanidhi Scheme

- **Uttar Pradesh** government has secured the **first rank** in central government's one of the **most ambitious schemes** - the **PM Atmanirbhar Nidhi Scheme (SVANidhi Scheme)** by approving the highest number of loans under the scheme in the country
- State has ranked first in all the categories - Applications, Sanctions and Disbursements of the loans under the scheme. As many as 6,22,167 applications were received under the scheme in the state which is highest in the country, out of which sanctions were given to 3,46,150 applicants while the loans were disbursed to 2,26,728 beneficiaries.
- Seven cities of the state also find place in the list of top 10 cities of the country. Varanasi, Lucknow and Aligarh are the top three cities in the list even as other cities of the state include Allahabad, Gorakhpur, Ghaziabad and Kanpur. The scheme was launched on **June 1, 2020**, by the Central Government to help the street vendors resume their livelihood activities that were impacted by COVID-19.
- It aims at facilitating working capital loan up to **Rs. 10,000** at a subsidised rate of interest. The scheme aims at providing benefits to street vendors or hawkers in urban, pre-urban and rural areas.

DBS named Asia's Safest Bank for 12th consecutive year

- **DBS Bank** announced that it has been named the '**Safest Bank in Asia**' for the **12th consecutive year** by New York-based trade publication Global Finance.
- DBS' rankings as the **fourth-safest commercial bank** in the world and **14th safest bank** globally remain unchanged from 2019 and 2018.
- DBS Bank India also recently unveiled a new brand campaign around the importance of safety, featuring brand ambassador **Sachin Tendulkar**.
- Global Finance's annual ranking of the World's 50 Safest Banks has been the recognised and trusted standard of financial counterparty safety for a quarter-century. Winners were selected through an evaluation of long-term foreign currency ratings - from Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch - of the 500 largest banks worldwide.
- This year, DBS was also **Global Finance's pick for 'Best Bank in the World' 2020**. This follows a similar win in 2018. The bank was also named '**World's Best Bank**' by leading financial publication Euromoney in 2019, and '**Global Bank of the Year**' by Financial Times publication The Banker in 2018. The 2020 Global Finance title marks the third consecutive year that DBS has been honoured with a global Best Bank accolade.

Important Books and Authors

Authors/ Released by	Books
Manish Sisodia	Bapu - The unforgettable
Padampani Bora (Foreword by Amitabh Bachchan & Published by Penguin)	Discovering the Heritage of Assam
G.B.S. Sidhu	The Khalistan Conspiracy: A Former R&aw Officer Unravels The Path To 1984
Pradeep Goorha (1st book -'Survival Redux')	Mr Prime Minister, We Shrank the Dragon
Shashi Tharoor	Tharoorosaurus
Shashi Tharoor	The Battle Of Belonging: On Nationalism, Patriotism, And What It Means To Be Indian
N K Singh	PORTRAITS OF POWER: Half a Century of Being at Ringside
Sarbpreet Singh	Night of the Restless Spirits: Stories from 1984
Dr Pradeep Srivastava (Published by Vigyan Prasar)	Bye Bye Corona (World's first scientoon book) (Dr Nakul Parashar and Nimish Kapoor are the chief editor and editor of the book)

Important Peoples' in News

Yashaswini Singh Deswal wins gold in online shooting meet

- Indian Olympic quota winner **Yashaswini Singh Deswal** won the **10m air pistol** event in the 5th edition of the **International Online Shooting Championship (IOSC)**.
- Yashaswini, who had won a gold at last year's ISSF World Cup in Rio de Janeiro, shot the best qualification score of 577.
- She had previously won the gold in the fourth edition of IOSC held in May.
- The **second place** was grabbed by **Ahmed Nabil of Egypt** while his compatriot **Yehya Shams** took the **third place**.

Pakistan fast bowler Umar Gul retires from all forms of cricket at the age of 36

- Pakistan fast bowler Umar Gul** announced his retirement from **all formats of cricket**, bringing an end to a glorious international career which lasted nearly 13 years.
- Gul made his debut for Pakistan against Zimbabwe in an ODI match at Sharjah in April 2003 and went on to play 47 Tests, 130 ODIs and 60 T20Is till September 2016 which was the last time he turned up for the national team.

Important Mergers and Acquisitions

General Atlantic to invest Rs.3,675 crore in Reliance Retail for 0.84% stake

- General Atlantic**, a leading US-based global growth equity firm, will invest **Rs 3,675 crore for a 0.84percent stake in Reliance Retail**.
- This is the **second investment by General Atlantic** in a subsidiary of Reliance Industries. Earlier this year, General Atlantic had invested **Rs 6,598.38 crore in Jio Platforms**.
- This investment values Reliance Retail at a pre-money equity value of Rs 4.285 lakh crore.

Japan's Kyokuto Kaihatsu Kogyo acquires Bengaluru-based Satrac Engineering

- Japan's construction equipment manufacturer **Kyokuto Kaihatsu Kogyo** has acquired **Satrac Engineering**, a Bengaluru-based manufacturer of special-purpose vehicles such as truck tipper bodies, trailers, and tank trucks in India.
- The company that is a supplier to all leading truck OEMs, most major logistic companies and retail fleet owners in India is being valued at an enterprise value of around \$30 million (around Rs. 220 crore), sources stated.
- The **Nishinomiya, Japan** headquartered company has \$1.1 bn revenue and offers special purpose vehicles such as dump truck, sprinkler truck, Concrete boom pumps, Transit mixers, tailgate lifter, tank truck and pneumatic bulk carrier. The company has affiliate entities in Japan, China, India and Indonesia.
- **Satrac Engineering Private Limited (SEPL)** was incorporated in 1997 by M. C. Bantwal and Geetha Bantwal. SEPL is engaged in manufacturing of trailers, tippers, tractors and various other truck bodies for some of the major truck and engineering equipment manufacturers companies. Its manufacturing unit located at Dabaspeta, Bangalore.

Adani Green completes acquisition of 205 MW solar assets from Essel

- **Adani Group's green energy** firm **Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL)** has completed the acquisition of 205 MW operating solar assets from **Essel Green Energy Pvt Ltd (EGEPL)** and **Essel Infraprojects Ltd (EIL)**.
- The acquired assets will be held 100 per cent by Adani Renewable Energy Holding Ten Ltd, a **100 per cent** subsidiary of AGEL, the company stated. The assets are located in Punjab, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.
- All the assets have long term **Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)** with various State electricity distribution companies.
- The portfolio is relatively young with an average remaining PPA life of approximately 21 years, the statement added.
- The acquisition marks the first operational portfolio acquisition by AGEL. The company had announced the execution of definitive agreements for the acquisition of the Essel Portfolio on August 29, 2019.

CCI approves acquisition of solar projects by Adani Green Energy Twenty-Three Ltd

- **The Competition Commission of India (CCI)** has approved the **acquisition of solar energy generation** assets of **Adani Green Energy Ten Limited (AGE10L)** by **Adani Green Energy Twenty-Three Ltd (AGE23L)**. An official statement stated these approvals are under **Section 31(1)** of the Competition Act, 2002.
- AGE23L is a joint venture company, jointly controlled by Total Solar Singapore Limited and Adani Green Energy Limited. AGE23L (through its subsidiaries) is engaged in the business of solar power generation in the country.
- The assets proposed to be acquired consist of TN Urja Private Limited, Essel Urja Private Limited, PN Renewable Energy Limited, PN Clean Energy Limited, KN Indi Vijayapura Solar Energy Private Limited and KN Bijapura Solar Energy Private Limited.
- KN Muddebihal Solar Energy Private Limited, KN Sindagi Solar Energy Private Limited, Essel Bagalkot Solar Energy Private Limited and Essel Gulbarga Solar Power Private Limited are also in the list of companies to be acquired.
- Adani Green Energy Ten Limited (AGE10L) is the holding company of the companies that are being acquired, the statement added.

Infosys to acquire Blue Acorn iCi

- **Infosys** stated it has a definitive agreement to **acquire Blue Acorn iCi**, Adobe Platinum partner in the US, and a leader in digital customer experience, commerce and analytics.
- The move further strengthens Infosys' end-to-end customer experience offerings and demonstrates its continued commitment to helping clients navigate their digital transformation journey, a statement from the company stated.

- With services that include strategy, analytics, design, and engineering, Blue Acorn iCi elevates marquee global brands across industries from media, consumer goods and retail, to financial services, manufacturing and technology.
- Together with Infosys' earlier acquisition of **WongDoody** that offers creative and marketing services, **BlueAcorn iCi** brings complementary capabilities to help global CMOs and businesses thrive in a digital commerce world. This acquisition further deepens Infosys' capabilities in the Adobe, Magento, Salesforce Commerce and Shopify ecosystems.

Revision points

Company	Merging Company
Adani Green Energy Ltd	Essel Green Energy Pvt Ltd (EGEPL) and Essel Infraprojects Ltd (EIL)
Kyokuto Kaihatsu Kogyo (Japan)	Satrac Engineering (Bengaluru)
General Atlantic	Reliance Retail (0.84%)
Infosys	Blue Acorn iCi

Important Web Portals and Mobile Apps

A portal for mental healthcare from October 10

- To address the growing issue of mental illness during Covid, **Mental Health Foundation of India** has launched an exclusive **web portal** for mental healthcare. Called **MiHOPE**, the portal will be functional from October 10. People can access it for online consultations including with AIIMS doctors.
- The announcement was made during the ongoing **Mental Health Access Summit 2020**, which is taking place between October 4 and 11.
- The summit focuses on structural barriers to accessing treatment for mental health problems like lack of mental health professionals and inadequate recognition of mental healthcare.
- The portal is meant to help people overcome stress-related disorders and prevent emotional and mental health problems through diet, yoga, meditation and other lifestyle changes.

Govt Launches ARHC Portal Under PM Awas Yojana

- **Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri** launched **ARHC portal** arhc.mohua.gov.in, via a webinar.
- The initiative has been taken up to provide dignified and affordable living spaces to varied groups of urban migrants/ poor including industrial & construction workers, migrants working with market/trade associations, educational/health institutions, hospitality sector, long term tourists/ visitors, students etc.
- **National Report on ANGIKAAR** - a campaign for change management for PMAY (U) beneficiaries through a 3 C strategy- Community Engagement, Convergence and Communication was also launched by Shri Hardeep S. Puri. The report is a recollection of various activities under the campaign. A short movie '**ANGIKAAR 2019...a reminiscence**' that encapsulates the journey of the campaign so far, was also released.
- The goals and objectives of ANGIKAAR followed ethos of Gandhian philosophy on cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation.

Stellapps launches 'mooPay' for dairy farmers in Rajasthan

- Digital technology solutions provider **Stellapps** announced the launch of a first-of-its-kind, fully-automated direct payment platform — '**mooPay**' — for dairy farmers in Rajasthan.
- The platform is one of the fintech solutions the company has developed for **dairies and dairy farmers**. mooPay acts as a payment gateway for dairies to make payments to every registered farmer, removing the risks and costs of transferring money to hundreds of thousands of farmers in hundreds of villages.
- mooPay enables dairy officials to transfer milk payments digitally to member farmers from the dairies' existing bank account to farmers' savings bank account. **NDDB** launches '**Pashu Mitra**' call centre for dairy farmers
- The **IIT-Madras incubated dairy-tech startup** and **World Economic Forum's technology pioneer, Stellapps**, launched mooPay in Bhilwara district of Rajasthan on October 15 .
- mooPay systems will automatically fetch milk payment data from the IoT devices deployed at every village dairy cooperative society, which capture the milk pouring of every farmer. The company has also installed display units at the centres that will show the quality, quantity and price of the milk of individual farmers and incentivise production of quality milk.

Leather Sector Skill Council launches SCALE India android app

- The **Leather Sector Skill Council (LSSC)** announced the launch of **Skill Certification Assessment for Leather Employees (SCALE)** India android app. Operating under the aegis of the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**, LSSC is committed to strengthening its digital capabilities on quality assurance across training delivery, monitoring, assessments, verification and linkages to **ASEEM portal**.
- The services are accessible through the web and android application that virtually works on any smart handheld device, desktop/laptop, smartphones, tablets. Apart from providing end to end quality assurance across training, assessment, and certification services, the app will also help employers engage with other stakeholders seamlessly and provide a marketplace for human capital for the leather industry.
- SCALE will help candidates in the skilling ecosystem to get assessed and certified on their knowledge, skills and behaviour on a specific qualification pack. It also enables access to micro-learning modules for bridging the skill gaps that are identified and can be re-assessed and certified at the end of the learning on the specific qualification pack. It further assists the candidate to become a productive resource who is readily employable in the industry.

J&K L-G launches mobile app for Vaishno Devi devotees

- Lieutenant governor **Manoj Sinha**, who is also the chairman of **Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board**, launched a **mobile app** for the cave **shrine devotees** at the civil secretariat in Srinagar.
- This initiative has been taken by the shrine board with a view to maximise the use of available technology and digitisation for the larger facilitation of devotees.
- Initially, **five links** have been provided in the app including darshan, live aarti, yatra registration parchi, pooja prasad (home delivery) and donations.
- The facility of **booking of various services** like battery operated vehicles, helicopter services, accommodation, online havan, etc. will also be made available on the app shortly.

FSSAI's new food safety compliance platform to become operational across India from November

- Food regulator **FSSAI** stated its **Food Safety Compliance System (FoSCoS)** will become operational in the entire country **from November 1**.
- The system is operational in nine States/UTs -- Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Gujarat, Odisha, Chandigarh, Goa, Manipur, Puducherry and Ladakh since June.

- FSSAI is launching its cloud based, **upgraded new food safety compliance online platform** called FoSCoS(URL – <https://foscoss.fssai.gov.in>). It will replace the existing FLRS (URL – <https://foodlicensing.fssai.gov.in>).
- FoSCoS is conceptualized to provide one point stop for all engagement of a food business operator (FBO) with the department for any regulatory compliance transaction.

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launches 'Mo Bidyut' portal, app

- Chief Minister **Naveen Patnaik** launched an **electricity consumer service portal** "Mo Bidyut" and its mobile app to provide **efficient, time-bound and transparent online service** to the people of the State.
- **Electricity services** will now come **under Mo Sarkar**, people now need not run to various offices for new connections, bill payment or grievance redressal.
- Consumers will, henceforth, be able to avail services pertaining to new power connection up to 5 KW for domestic, general purpose and specified public purpose like irrigation, pumping and agriculture within 48 hours, energy bill payment and grievance redressal relating to the service
- The portal, **www.mobidyut.com**, is a bilingual online integrated platform covering all four power utilities of the State such as TPCODL, NESCO, WESCO and SOUTHCO.

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launches 'e-Dharti Geo portal'

- **Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri** has launched the '**e-Dharti Geo Portal**' that will integrate legacy drawings such as maps and lease plans in the management information system and make it **geographic information system (GIS)-enabled**, a statement stated.
- Puri stated the land & development office (L&DO) is dealing with around 60,000 properties that are commercial, residential, industrial as well as institutional.
- According to the ministry, the L&DO has devised a property certificate incorporating details and the outline map of the property which is available online on the portal.
- The statement stated the minister urged all organisations to undertake efforts to identify more activities that need to be automated and made free of human interface.
- The Union Minister stated the move will integrate legacy drawings such as maps and lease plans in the management information system (MIS), namely **e-Dharti**, and make it GIS enabled, it stated.

Delhi CM Kejriwal to launch 'Green Delhi' mobile app to check air pollution

- Amid deteriorating air quality in the national capital, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will launch "**Green Delhi**" mobile application, which will enable people to register complaints about violation of anti-pollution norms.
- The mobile app is a part of the Delhi government's "**Yudh Pradushan Ke Virudh**" campaign, announced by Kejriwal on October 6, to reduce pollution levels in the national capital.
- Through this photo-based complaint lodging app, people will be able to inform the government about the burning of waste, and industrial and dust pollution.
- There will be a time limit for redressal of the complaints received on the **Green Delhi app**, the Delhi government stated.
- The Delhi government stated that all the concerned departments will be connected with the app, and the complaints received will automatically reach them. If the complaint is not resolved in time, action will be taken against the concerned officials, it stated.

Army launches indigenous messaging application similar to WhatsApp, names it SAI

- **Indian Army** has developed and launched a secure messaging application named the "**Secure Application for the Internet (SAI)**" that supports an end-to-end secure voice, text and video calling services for Android platform over internet, the Ministry of Defence stated. "The model is similar to commercially available messaging applications like WhatsApp, Telegram, SAMVAD and GIMS and utilises end-to-end encryption messaging protocol. SAI scores over on security features with local in-house servers and coding, which can be tweaked as per requirements," the ministry stated.
- According to the statement, the application has been vetted by **CERT-in empaneled auditor and Army Cyber Group**, and the process for filing Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) hosting the infrastructure on NIC and working on iOS platform is currently in progress. "SAI will be utilised pan Army to facilitate secure messaging within the service. The Defence Minister after reviewing the functionalities of the app complimented Col Sai Shankar for his skill and ingenuity for developing the application," it added.

Assam CM launches Kisan Rath Mobile App to facilitate sale of agriculture products

- **Assam** chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the **Kisan Rath Mobile App** in order to facilitate timely sale of **agricultural products by promoting a buyer-seller network**.
- The mobile app is developed, designed and technically maintained by the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**, will be out to use by the **Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART)** which will impart training to farmers and other stakeholders on how to use the app.
- The release added that the app has several language options, including Assamese, English and Hindi.
- The Kisan Rath App interconnects over 10,000 farmers, 50 farmer producer organizations and 1,000 verified agricultural traders to an online platform.

Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal launches portal for online pension submission and tracking

- **Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal** launched a portal 'Kritagyata' an **online pension submission and tracking system**.
- With the help of the portal, the **retired government employee**, besides submitting pension related papers on line will get opportunity to check the status of his pension.
- The portal has been created in line with the '**Bhabhisya**' portal of Government of India.
- Though the portal has been launched as pilot project for the **teachers and employees** under Inspector of Schools of **Kamrup Metropolitan district**, it will be replicated to all government employees of the state in all districts in phases.

MSME Ministry introduces AI & ML for strengthening its single window system portal 'Champions'

- **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises- MSME Ministry** has introduced **Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning** for strengthening its single window system portal '**Champions**' to assist the MSMEs in the country. Champions Portal was launched by the Prime Minister in June this year.
- This multi-modal system also comprises technology equipped physical control rooms at around **69 locations** in the country.
- Appreciating the efforts made by the MSME Ministry, Minister Nitin Gadakari stated, the entire conceptualization and scope analysis has been done in the Ministry with the help of NIC and guidance provided by the team of Intel.
- Artificial Intelligence and Analytics technology help in understanding the issues on real-time basis based on widely available social media and online data.
- MSME Ministry is also aggressively working in the direction of **Industry 4.0** to give a boost to the MSME sector.

- Ministry is also helping the MSMEs for manufacturing the products like sensors, motors, computer displays and other animation technologies.

Revision Points

Applications/Web portals	Launched By/Developed By
MiHOPE	Mental Health Foundation of India
ARHC portal arhc.mohua.gov.in	Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri
mooPay	Stellapps
Pashu Mitra	NDDDB
Skill Certification Assessment for Leather Employees (SCALE) India android app	Leather Sector Skill Council
FoSCoS(URL – https://foscos.fssai.gov.in)	FSSAI
'Mo Bidyut' portal	Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik
e-Dharti Geo portal	Hardeep Singh Puri
Green Delhi	Delhi CM Kejriwal
Secure Application for the Internet	Indian Army
Kisan Rath Mobile App	Assam CM
Kritagyata	Assam CM
Champions	MSME Ministry

Important Sports News

Others

Sports Minister Riju launches new SAI logo

- Sports Minister Kiren Rijju** launched a **brand new logo** of the **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** and said it represents the **aspirations of Indian sportspersons** to touch new heights in global sports.
- A logo is the identity of an organisation. It reflects the thought process and the objectives of the organisation.
- The new logo signifies SAI's journey of metamorphosis from identifying and nurturing grassroot level sporting talent to creating sporting excellence in the country.
- The event was attended by **Sports Secretary Ravi Mital**, **Indian Olympic Association President Narinder Batra** and **Director General SAISandip Pradhan**, while many eminent athletes, coaches and other sports enthusiasts joined in from across the country through video conference.

Visnu Shivaraj Pandian wins gold in 10 meter air rifle event of International Online Shooting Championship

- India's **Visnu Shivaraj Pandian** won the **10m air rifle** event at the **fifth edition** of the **International Online Shooting Championship**. The 16-year-old Visnu shot 251.4 to win the title by a clear margin of two points.
- The second place was won by **world no. 27 Etienne Germond** of France while Olympic quota winner Martin Strempl of Austria took the third place.
- Shooters from 15 countries are participating in the two-day competition. The 10m air pistol event will be held. Leading India's challenge will be Olympic quota winner Yashaswini Singh Deswal.

French Open Tennis 2020

- **Rafael Nadal** scripted history by winning a record-extending **13th French Open title** as he lifted his **20th Grand Slam trophy** and equalled Roger Federer's record for most Major titles.
- It was held at the **Stade Roland Garros in Paris, France**.

Category	Winner	Runner
Men's Singles	Spain Rafael Nadal	Serbia Novak Djokovic
Women's Singles	Poland Iga Świątek	USA Sofia Kenin
Men's Doubles	Germany Kevin Krawietz / Germany Andreas Mies	Mate Pavić and Bruno Soares
Women's Doubles	Hungary Tímea Babos / France Kristina Mladenovic	Alexa Guarachi and Desirae Krawczyk

India's Nihal Sarin wins Junior Speed Chess Championship

- Young Indian player **Nihal Sarin** emerged **winner** in the **Chess.com's 2020 Junior Speed Online Chess Championship**, beating **Russia's** world junior No. 6 **Alexey Sarana** in the final.
- Past winners of the Speed Chess Championship include Magnus Carlsen (2017) and Hikaru Nakamura (2018, 2019).
- Sarin, a former world Under-10 champion, will join the Indian men's team that is taking part in the Asian Online Nations (Regions) Cup Team Championship.

Hamilton wins Eifel GP to equal Schumacher's F1 win record

- **Lewis Hamilton** equalled Michael Schumacher's record of **91 Formula One wins** at a **frantic Eifel Grand Prix**.
- **Red Bull's Max Verstappen** finished **second**, and took a bonus point for fastest lap, with **Australian Daniel Ricciardo** **third** for **Renault** in his first podium since 2018 when he was at Red Bull.

NBA finals 2020: Los Angeles Lakers beat Miami Heat to clinch title

- The **Los Angeles Lakers** captured a record-tying **17th NBA Championship** with a 106-93 victory over the **Miami Heat**.
- This also their first since 2010, after late Kobe Bryant's fifth and final title a decade ago.
- LeBron James of the Lakers' was named the NBA Finals Most Valuable Player (MVP) for the fourth time in his career

Odisha to sponsor national rugby teams till 2023

- **Odisha Government** would sponsor the **Indian national rugby team** for the **next three years (2023)** and facilitate high performance training and conditioning of the players.
- An agreement with **Indian Rugby Football Union (IRFU)** was inked here at **Kalinga Stadium**.
- The partnership is part of the State Government's mission to develop, promote and expand the sports ecosystem beyond hockey and football.
- The sponsorship will cover training, conditioning and incentivising the Indian national rugby teams (men and women) participating in international rugby events.

Tokyo to host international gymnastics event in November

- **Tokyo** will host an **international gymnastics tournament** on Nov. 8.
- The event is sanctioned by the **International Gymnastics Federation** and will feature 32 athletes from Japan, China, Russia and the United States.
- Other international sporting events scheduled to be held in Japan in the coming months, including the Judo Tokyo Grand Slam and the Tokyo Marathon, have been cancelled or postponed due to restrictions on travel.

Andrey Rublev wins St. Petersburg Open 2020

- **Russian** third seed **Andrey Rublev** won his **fourth ATP Tour title of the year** when he beat **Croatia's Borna Coric** 7-6(5) 6-4 to lift the **St Petersburg Open trophy**.
- Andrey Rublev tied with Novak Djokovic as a four-time title winner in 2020.
- He moves into top 10 of ATP rankings for 1st time.
- The Russian player won the Qatar and Adelaide titles in January and added the Hamburg title last month.

Sheikh Russel Championship: Elavenil wins gold, Shahu Mane bags silver

- World number one **Elavenil Valarivan of India** won **gold** and **Shahu Tushar Mane** bagged a **silver** at the **2020 Sheikh Russel International Air Rifle Championship** organised by **Bangladesh Shooting Sport Federation (BSSF)**.
- Seven countries including host Bangladesh are scheduled to compete in the online competition, and each country will have an ISSF jury member to monitor the event.
- As for Elavenil, she is currently world number one in women's 10m air rifle. Shahu Mane was selected on the basis of his national rankings as of March 18

Nozomi Okuhara clinches Women's Singles title at Denmark Open

- In Badminton, former World Champion **Nozomi Okuhara** clinched the **Denmark Open title** beating three-time world champion Carolina Marin in women's singles.
- In the men's singles final, world number seven **Anders Antonsen** of Denmark defeated his compatriot Rasmus Gemke. The win means Antonsen moves up to second in the world rankings with Gemke at number three.
- In the mixed doubles, fourth seeds **Mark Lamsfuss** and **Isabel Herttrich** became the first German mixed doubles players to win a Super Series event after defeating Chris and Gabby Adcock of England in the final.
- In an all-Japan women's doubles final, top seeds **Yuki Fukushima** and **Sayaka Hirota** downed second seeds Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara.
- **Marcus Ellis** and **Chris Langridge** of England defeated Russian pair Valdimir Ivanov and Ivan Sozonov, becoming the first England pair to clinch the title of men's doubles in the Denmark Open for 45 years.

Kokrak claims first-ever PGA Tour win at CJ Cup

- **American Jason Kokrak** won his **first-ever PGA Tour** victory at the **CJ Cup in Las Vegas, Nevada**, clinching his maiden title on the 233rd try.
- Four-time PGA Tour winner **Xander Schauffele**, who finished second.
- Elsewhere in the field, 29-year-old Briton Tyrrell Hatton (65) and three-time PGA Tour winner Russell Henley (70) finished tied at third.

Sporting activities to resume in SAI training centres across country from 1st of Nov: Sports Ministry

- Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has stated, with an eye on the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, sporting activities are being resumed in Sports Authority of India-SAI training centres across the country from 1st of November.
- In view of the prevailing Covid-19 situation and to protect athletes from exposure to the virus, SAI has decided to make transport arrangements for the athletes of NCOEs and SAI Training Centres who have to join their training facility.

Lewis Hamilton wins Portuguese GP to break Michael Schumacher's F1 record

- **Lewis Hamilton** to take a commanding victory in the **Portuguese Grand Prix** and **break Formula 1's all-time win record**.
- Hamilton dominated to take his **92nd career Grand Prix victory**.
- With this win **he has surpassed** the record of **91 wins** set by German great **Michael Schumacher**.

- **Valtteri Bottas** (Mercedes- Finland) came **second** followed by **Max Verstappen** (Red Bull – Netherlands) at **third spot**.

Alexander Zverev wins title in Cologne for 2nd week in a row

- **Alexander Zverev** made it back-to-back **ATP Tour titles** when he beat **Diego Schwartzman** in the final of the **Cologne Championship**.
- It's Zverev's **13th title overall**.
- It was held in Cologne, Germany.

Sabalenka beats sick Azarenka to win Ostrava Open

- **Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus** won the **Ostrava Open WTA tournament** after beating her visibly struggling compatriot **Victoria Azarenka**
- It was Sabalenka's second title this year after a win at the Qatar Open in February, before the coronavirus pandemic broke out.

Revision Points

Organization	Headquarters	Key Person
DBS Bank	Singapore	Piyush Gupta
IBM	Armonk	Arvind Krishna
Samsung	Suwon-si, South Korea	Kim, Ki Nam
HCL Technologies	Noida	C Vijayakumar
World Economic Forum	Cologny, Switzerland	Klaus Schwab
Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)	New Delhi	Thulani Dlamini
Financial Action Task Force (FATF)	Paris, France	Marcus Pleyer
National Company Law Appellate Tribunal	New Delhi	Justice BL Bhat
Federation of Indian Fantasy Sports	Gurugram	Bimal Julka
United Nations	New York, USA	António Guterres
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Washington D.C.	Kristalina Georgieva
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	Beijing, China	Jin Liqun
Competition Commission of India (CCI)	New Delhi	Ashok Kumar Gupta
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)	New Delhi	Rita Teatota
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
Power Finance Corporation	New Delhi	Ravinder Singh Dhillon
International Solar Alliance (ISA)	Gurugram	Uppendra Tripathy (Leader)
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
Indian Sign Language Research and Training Center	New Delhi	Prabodh Seth
Swiggy	Bangalore	Sriharsha Majety
National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)	New Delhi	Hrushikesh Senapaty
Tata Motors	Mumbai	Guenter Butschek
Mahindra & Mahindra	Mumbai	Anand Mahindra
National Real Estate Development Council	New Delhi	Rajeev Talwar
BSE	Mumbai	Ashishkumar Chauhan
Archaeological Survey of India	New Delhi	V. Vidyavathi
BEML Limited		
Central Board of Direct Taxes	New Delhi	Pramod Chandra Mody
Tata Consultancy Services	Mumbai	Rajesh Gopinathan
Uber	San Francisco	Dara Khosrowshahi
Microsoft	Redmond, Washington	Satya Nadella
Mastercard	Purchase, Harrison	Ajaypal Singh Banga
Tech Mahindra	Pune	C. P. Gurnani
Nokia	Espoo, Finland	Pekka Lundmark
PepsiCo	Purchase, Harrison	Ramon Laguarta
Indian Banks' Association	Mumbai	Rajkiran Rai G
Ubon	New Delhi	Mandeep Arora
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 Hou��rou

(IFC)	States	
Myntra	Bengaluru	Amar Nagaram
United Nations Development Programme	New York	Achim Steiner
European Investment Fund	Luxembourg	Alain Godard
Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)	Mumbai	D. Rajkumar
Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd	Bengaluru	R Madhavan
Hughes Communications India Private Limited	Gurgaon	Partho Banerjee
Bharat Broadband Nigam Limited	New Delhi	Sarvesh Singh
Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd	New Delhi	Rajiv Gupta (Director(Projects))
Infosys	Bengaluru	Salil Parekh
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)	Brussels, Belgium	Jens Stoltenberg
United Nations Environment Programme	Nairobi, Kenya	Inger Andersen
Indian Council of Social Science Research	New Delhi	Bhushan Patwardhan

Important Obituaries

Name	Field
M Gopalakrishnan	Former Indian Bank Chairman and Tamilnadu Yadava Mahasabai president
KC Sivasankar	Artist
Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Sabah	Kuwait's Emir (Dean of Arab diplomacy)
Pushpa Bhawe	Activist, Scholar, Rationalist
Dr A V Shetty	Cardiologist
Pradeep Maharathy	Former Odisha Minister
Haji Hussain Ansari	Jharkhand's minority welfare minister
Anant S Dave	Former acting Chief Justice of Gujarat HC
Mulayam Singh Yadav	Former MLC of Samajwadi Party
Najeeb Tarakai	Afghanistan top-order batsman
Eddie Van Halen	Guitarist
Prasanth Rajesh	Tamil Nadu Premier Leagueleg-spinner
Avinash Kharshikar	Marathi actor
Ram Vilas Paswan	Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public

	Distribution
Ashwani Kumar	Former chief of the Central Bureau of Investigation (served as Governor of Nagaland & Manipur)
Mario Molina	Mexican scientist (First winner of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1995)
K K Usha	Former Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court
Priscilla Jana	Indian-origin South African human rights lawyer
Savithri Vaithi	Philanthropist and social worker
Carlton Chapman	Former Indian football captain
CM Chang	Senior Nagaland minister, Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change and Justice and Law
Vinod Singh	Bihar Minister for Backward and Extremely Backward Classes Welfare
Carlie Moore	400-meter hurdles champion at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics
Vangapandu Prasada Rao	Revolutionary balladeer and lyricist
Dr Shobha Naidu	Kuchipudi dancer
Kaumudi Munshi	Singer, Nightingale of Gujarat
Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri	Malayalam poet & Jnanpith laureate
John Richard Reid	Former New Zealand Cricket all-rounder
Bhanu Athaiya	Costume designer (India's first Oscar winner)
Pradip Ghosh	Bengali elocutionist
PS Narayanaswamy	Carnatic vocalist (Padma Bhushan and Tamil Nadu government's Kalaimamani Award)
Dr. Jayanta Madhab	Economist (Served as the economic advisor (2003-2009) to the Government of Assam)
Vijayalakshmi Ramanan	First woman officer of the Indian Air Force
K J Mohammed Babu	Singer, Music Director and Actor
Jaya C Suvarna	Former president of Billawara Association, former chairman of Bharat Co-operative Bank (Mumbai) Limited
Lee Kun-hee	Samsung Electronics chairman
Mahesh Kanodia	Gujarati film musician, singer and former Lok Sabha MP from Patan constituency
Keshubhai Patel	Former Gujarat Chief Minister
Naresh Kanodia	Gujarati actor and ex-BJP MLA
Daniel Menaker (He was known for his collection The Old Left)	Author of fiction and nonfiction
Mesut Yilmaz	Former Turkish prime minister