

## Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – July 2020

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### Important Days

Date	Day	Theme/Others
July 1	National Doctor's Day (Birth & death anniversary of Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy)	Lessen the mortality of Covid-19
July 1	National Postal Worker Day	-
July 1	Chartered Accountants Day or CA Day	Transforming the Future: Enabling Excellence, Augmenting Trust
July 2	World UFO Day	Recognized by World UFO Day Organization in 2001.
July 2	World Sports Journalist Day	Marks the anniversary of International Sports Press Association
July 4	Independence Day USA	-
1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday of July	International Day of Cooperatives	Cooperatives For Climate Action
July 6	World Zoonoses Day	Louis Pasteur successfully administered the first vaccine against Rabies virus, a zoonotic disease
July 7	World Chocolate Day	-
July 10	National Fish Farmers Day	-
July 6-10	2nd Counter-Terrorism Week	Observed by United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
July 11	World Population Day (Established by UNDP in 1989)	Putting the brakes on COVID19:How to safeguard the health and rights of women and girls now
July 12	World Malala Day	In 2013 first "Malala Day: An Education for All Children" was celebrated
July 15	World Youth Skills Day	Skills for a Resilient Youth in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond
July 15	Educational Development Day of Tamil Nadu	117th birth anniversary of K. Kamaraj (Received Bharat Ratna award in 1976)
July 17	World Day for International Justice	Anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998
July 17	World Emoji Day	Celebrated since 2014
July 18	Nelson Mandela International Day	Declared by the United Nations in November 2009
July 20	International Chess Day	Teach someone how to play chess
July 22	Pi Approximation Day	-

July 23	National Broadcasting Day	Firstever broadcast tookplace in 1927
July 24	National Thermal Engineer Day	Founded by Advanced Thermal Solutions, Inc(ATS) in July 2014
July 24	Income Tax Day/Aaykar Diwas	Celebrated Since 2010
July 25	World IVF Day	-
July 26	21 <sup>st</sup> Kargil Vijay Diwas	-
July 27	82 <sup>nd</sup> CRPF Raising Day	Came into existence as the Crown Representative's Police on 27 July 1939
July 28	World Hepatitis Day	Hepatitis-free future
July 28	World Nature Conservation Day	-
July 26	International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem	Adopted by UNESCO in 2015
July 29	International Tiger Day	Created in 2010 at the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit
July 30	World day against trafficking in persons (Celebrated since 2013)	Committed To The Cause -Working On The Frontline To End Human Trafficking
July 30	International Day of Friendship	-
July 31	World Ranger Day	-
June 28 – July 4	2020 World Allergy Week	Allergy care does not stop with COVID - 19

## Important Banking News

### RBI

#### RBI launches inflation expectations survey; to gather responses over telephone amid pandemic

- The Reserve Bank of India has launched **the inflation expectationssurvey of households** and responses of the participants will be gathered over telephone in view of the coronavirus pandemic. The RBI has been regularly conducting the survey to elicit subjective views of the households on price movement across various cities of the country. The results of the survey are used as inputs for monetary policy.
- **The July 2020 round** of the Inflation Expectations Survey of Households has been launched. As per RBI release, Hansa Research Group, Mumbai has been engaged to conduct the survey of this round on behalf of the RBI over telephone instead of the regular personal interview mode in view of the pandemic.
- The survey aims at capturing subjective assessments on price movements and inflation, of **approximately 6,000 households**, based on their individual consumption baskets, **across 18 cities**.
- The cities that would be covered are Mumbai, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Patna, Raipur, Ranchi and Thiruvananthapuram. The survey would seek qualitative as well as quantitative responses from households on price changes, general prices as well as prices of specific product groups, for the three months ahead as well as in the one year ahead period.

#### RBI announces special liquidity scheme for NBFCs and HFCs through SPV

- The government of India has approved a scheme to improve the **liquidity position of NBFCs/HFCs through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** to avoid any potential systemic risks to the financial sector. To be eligible under the scheme, RBI laid out the conditions:
- The Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFCs), including Microfinance Institutions that are registered with the RBI, under **the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**, excluding those registered as Core Investment Companies.
- Housing Finance Companies that are registered under the **National Housing Bank Act, 1987**
- CRAR/CAR of NBFCs/HFCs should not be below the regulatory minimum, i.e., **15% and 12% respectively as on March 31, 2019**.
- The net non-performing assets should not be **more than 6% as on March 31, 2019**.
- They should have made net profit in at least one of the last two preceding financial years (i.e. 2017-18 and 2018-19).
- They should not have been reported under SMA-1 or SMA-2 category by any bank for their borrowings during last one year prior to **August 01, 2018**
- They should be rated investment grade by a SEBI registered rating agency
- They should comply with the requirement of the SPV for an appropriate level of collateral from the entity, which, however, would be optional and to be decided by the SPV.
- **SBICAP which is a subsidiary of the State Bank of India has set up a SPV (SLS Trust)** to manage this operation. The SPV will purchase the short-term papers from eligible NBFCs/HFCs, who shall utilise the proceeds under this scheme solely for the purpose of extinguishing existing liabilities. The instruments will be CPs and NCDs with a residual maturity of not more than three months and rated as investment grade.
- The facility will not be available for any paper issued after September 30, 2020 and the SPV would cease to make fresh purchases after September 30, 2020 and would recover all dues by December 31, 2020.

#### **RBI committee recommends multiple interoperable QR codes**

- A committee set up by the Reserve Bank of India to review the **Quick Response (QR) Code** has recommended that payment system providers should make these codes interoperable.
- According to the recommendations of the committee, there should be multiple interoperable QR codes to drive the acceptance infrastructure. The committee stated that there should be multiple **QR codes** like Bharat QR Code and UPI QR to enable faster on-boarding of all types of merchants for digital payments.
- Currently, there are **three types of QR codes** operating in the country. Bharat QR, Unified Payments Interface QR and proprietary QR codes.
- A potential example of an **interoperable QR system** could be Bharat Bill Payments System (BBPS) currently caters to all utility billers like electricity, telecom, gas, water and DTH, wherein the billers are offered a standardized platform for third party bill payments. A **separate interoperable BBPS QR** will augur well for billers to ensure faster onboarding using existing systems established with BBPS. It will offer an additional payment channel for the biller as well as the customer, the report stated.
- The committee therefore recommended phasing out of **closed loop QR** codes as it requires customers to manage separate apps. While closed loop systems make the customer experience more convenient, they also require customers to acquire and manage a payment app, it stated.
- The committee also said that the government and RBI should allow a controlled interchange instead of zero Merchant Discount Rate on QR code, UPI and RuPay Debit card transactions, as well as give tax incentives to merchants who accept payments through electronic mode. MDR is the margin earned by digital payments service providers on each

transaction. Whenever a customer makes a transaction at a point-of-sale ('PoS'), the merchant pays a fee to the payment gateway on every such transaction for transferring the money to the merchant's account.

- Currently, the government has removed the MDR on businesses with annual turnover of more than **Rs.50 crore** to promote digital payments across the country.

#### **RBI signs \$400 mn currency swap facility for Sri Lanka**

- The Reserve Bank of India has agreed to a **\$400 million** currency swap facility for Sri Lanka till **November 2022**, the Indian High Commission tweeted.
- **Currency swaps** are used to obtain foreign currency loans at a better interest rate than could be got by borrowing directly in a foreign market. The RBI's action follows a recent bilateral 'technical discussion' on rescheduling Colombo's outstanding debt repayment to India.
- The meeting, in which officials from the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and the EXIM Bank interacted with representatives of the Sri Lankan government, came five months after Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa had sought a loan moratorium, during his visit to New Delhi.
- Following the outbreak of COVID-19 in the region, India had proposed a virtual meeting to discuss the request. Sri Lanka **owes \$960 million** to India.
- Meanwhile, government and industry representatives from both countries participated in a webinar on 'Deepening Economic Collaboration between India and Sri Lanka', organised by the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry** (FICCI) in association with the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies recently.

#### **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**

#### **PFS secures Rs.300-cr term loan from SBI to fund biz plans**

- PTC India Financial Services Ltd (PFS) has secured a **Rs.300 crore** term loan from State Bank of India, to meet its business growth needs.
- The money will be utilised for further strengthening of the cash flow of the company and for onward funding to sustainable infrastructure finance projects.
- SBI has sanctioned us a **term loan - working capital** augmentation (TLWC) of **Rs.300 crore** with a door-to-door tenor of three years, including a moratorium of six months, with sub-limit of Rs.300 crore as investment limit for investment in commercial papers/non-convertible debentures/bonds within the overall TLWC limit.
- SBI has already given credit lines of **Rs.1,400 crore** to the company and now with current sanction their exposure will increase to **Rs.1,700 crore** and it will further diversify company's sources of borrowings.

- PFS proposes to have further alternate sources of financing like ECB, commercial paper, bonds, etc for which advance progress has already been made.

#### **SBI to invest up to Rs.1,760 crore in Yes Bank**

- State Bank of India will invest up to **Rs.1,760 crore** in troubled private sector lender **Yes Bank**, which is set to come out with a follow-on public offer.
- The decision was taken at a meeting of the Executive Committee of Central Board (ECCB) of SBI.
- The announcement comes a day after Yes Bank stated the Capital Raising Committee of its board has approved a proposal for capital raise through an FPO.
- SBI has been a knight in shining armour for the troubled lender. As part of the reconstruction scheme, SBI along with other domestic banks and financial institutions invested **Rs.10,000 crore** in Yes Bank. As on **March 31, 2020**, it owned **48.21 per cent stake** in the lender.
- Yes Bank is looking to raise between **Rs.10,000 crore and Rs.15,000 crore** through the FPO route and is understood to have filed the offer document with the Registrar of Companies.
- According to sources, Tilden Park Capital Management, which was also in the fray to invest in the lender, before it was put under the reconstitution scheme, may pick up a significant stake in the planned FPO and invest about **Rs.3,000 crore**.
- Another probable investor could be Life Insurance Corporation of India, which could put in about **Rs.1,500 crore**.
- YES Bank had recently restated its consolidated and standalone financial statements for the last three fiscals from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

#### **SBI providing USD 16 million liquidity support for local businesses in Maldives**

- The State Bank of India (SBI) is providing liquidity support of **USD 16.20 million** for local businesses and deferred loan repayment for **over 200 retail accounts Maldives**.
- **'India First' policy of Maldives and 'Neighbourhood First' policy of India** has set the foundation of the growing relationship.
- Assistance of **USD 400 million** through an extended currency swap arrangement has been made available already to tide over liquidity shortage.

### **AIIB**

#### **AIIB extends \$50 mn loan to L&T Infra Finance for Renewable Energy**

- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has released **\$50 million** in the first tranche of assistance to **L&T Infrastructure Finance Ltd** for funding Renewable Energy projects in the country.
- The Beijing-based a multilateral development bank, which invests in sustainable infrastructure, has sanctioned total **\$100 million loan** to unit of L&T Finance Holdings. This is AIIB's first loan to a non-banking financial company (NBFC) in India.
- The loan proceeds will be used to on-lend to large and mid-scale wind and solar power infrastructure projects in India.

#### **AIIB plans to approve loans worth \$3 billion over next 12 months for infra projects**

- **Beijing-based** multilateral funding agency **AIIB** is looking to provide loans worth **USD 3 billion** for various **large infrastructure projects**, including **Delhi and Meerut Rapid Rail, Mumbai Metro Rail and Chennai Peripheral Ring Road project**, over the next 12 months.
- India is the largest borrower, which accounts for 25 percent of the total lending by Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank(AIIB) so far.

- The projects being considered for financing are Delhi-Meerut rapid rail corridor (USD 500 million), Haryana Bypass Link Railway (USD 400 million), Mumbai Metro Line V (USD 350 million) and Mumbai Urban Transport Project (USD 500 million).
- In Maharashtra alone, three projects of about USD 1.2 billion are under consideration, adding three road projects of Tamil Nadu including Chennai Peripheral Ring Road project worth USD 1.1 billion are at different stages of approval.
- AIIB has approved two loans of USD 500 million and USD 750 million, respectively.
- USD500 was towards building a resilient health system that can effectively treat COVID-19 patients and prevent its spread.
- USD 750 million-loan was approved to India to help the government strengthen its battle against the adverse impact of COVID-19 on poor and vulnerable households.

## ADB

### ADB Becomes Observer Of Network For Greening The Financial System

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has joined the central banks and supervisors **Network for Greening the Financial System** (NGFS) as an observer.
- NGFS, launched at the Paris One Planet Summit on December 12, 2017, is a group of central banks and supervisors willing to share best practices and contribute to the development of environment and climate risk management in the financial sector while mobilising mainstream finance to support the transition toward a sustainable economy.
- **NGFS** is a valuable network to share ADB's approaches and experience in addressing climate risk management in the financial sector, stated ADB Chief Economist Yasuyuki Sawada.
- ADB joins the ranks of the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation, the International Monetary Fund, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development as NGFS observers.
- ADB's inclusion to the NGFS is aligned with the goals in its corporate strategy, the Strategy 2030, particularly in tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability; fostering regional cooperation and integration; and strengthening governance and institutional capacity.

### ADB, IEA Renew Pact To Collaborate On Energy Sector Sustainability And Resilience

- The **Asian Development Bank** (ADB) has renewed a memorandum of understanding with the **International Energy Agency** (IEA) to scale up collaboration and advance progress on sustainability with an increased focus on **energy sector resilience** in Asia and the Pacific.
- The energy sector is a key driver of growth and human development, especially during recovery from the impacts of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, stated ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa.
- Under the three-year agreement, the two organisations will share knowledge and best practice in energy sector data and analysis, on-the-ground engagement, capacity building, technology and innovation among other areas.
- This will help to overcome critical knowledge and experience gaps blocking the development of sustainable energy systems in ADB's developing member countries and enhance IEA's data collection and capacity building efforts in Asia and the Pacific.
- ADB first signed **a three-year MoU with IEA in March 2017** to facilitate knowledge and analytical work to advance clean energy development in ADB's developing member countries. As part of this, ADB worked with IEA to study power system flexibility in India to integrate more solar and wind energy in the grids.



- The renewal agreement was signed on the occasion of IEA's Clean Energy Transitions Summit where Asakawa gave a speech at the plenary session to an audience of over 50 energy ministers and energy sector leaders.
- Last month, IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol delivered the keynote address at ADB's 15th Asia Clean Energy Forum 2020. IEA is a knowledge partner of ADB's leading annual energy forum.

#### ADB approves \$3 million grant to India to combat COVID-19

- The grant, which is financed by the Japanese government, will be used to procure thermal scanners and essential commodities
- Multilateral funding agency ADB stated it has approved **\$3 million** (about Rs.22 crore) grant to India from its Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund to further support the government's emergency response to COVID-19 pandemic.
- The grant, which is financed by the Japanese government, will be used to procure thermal scanners and essential commodities to strengthen the India's COVID-19 response, Asian Development Bank (ADB) stated.
- The new grant complements ADB's ongoing support to the Government of India in strengthening its COVID-19 response. This support will enhance disease surveillance and help in early detection, contact tracing, and treatment. This will be further supplemented by other public health measures, it stated.

#### World Bank

#### World Bank approves \$750 mn emergency response fund for India's MSME sector

- The World Bank approved a **\$750 million loan** to support increased flow of finance into the hands of India's micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), severely impacted by the Covid-19 crisis.
- The World Bank's MSME Emergency Response program will aim to address the immediate liquidity and credit needs of some **1.5 million** viable MSMEs to help them withstand the impact of the current shock and protect millions of jobs.
- This takes the World Bank's total commitment to **\$2.75 billion** to support India's emergency Covid-19 response.
- The **first \$1 billion** emergency support was announced in April this year for immediate support to India's health sector. Another \$1 billion project was approved in May to increase cash transfers and food benefits to the poor and vulnerable, including a more consolidated delivery platform – accessible to both rural and urban populations across state boundaries.

#### World Bank approves US \$500 mn budgetary support for Pak to tackle Covid-19

- The World Bank (WB) has approved **US \$500 million** in budgetary support for Pakistan to address the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The money will help Pakistan strengthen fiscal management, promote transparency and private sector growth, and undertake foundational reforms in the energy sector to transition to low-carbon energy.
- The money support for Pakistan has been approved under the "Resilient Institutions for Sustainable Economy" program.
- The project will be financed by a **US \$250 million** credit from the International Development Association and a US \$250 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

#### Gol, World Bank ink 750 million US dollar agreement for MSME Emergency Response Programme

- The Government and the World Bank have signed a **750 million US dollar** agreement for the **MSME Emergency Response Programme**. It aims at supporting increased flow of finance to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) which are severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.
- The World Bank's MSME Emergency Response Programme will address the immediate liquidity and credit needs of some 1.5 million viable MSMEs to help them withstand the impact of the current shock and protect millions of jobs.



- The Ministry of Finance stated, this is the first step among a broader set of reforms that are needed to propel the MSME sector over time.

### Other Banking News

#### HDFC Bank launches instant auto loan product

- **HDFC Bank** announced its plans to offer instant auto loans called ZipDrive to its customers in 1,000 cities.
- The offering is now being extended to Tier 2 and 3 cities, such as **Bhimavaram in Andhra Pradesh, Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh, Thalassery in Kerala, and Balasore in Odisha** among other places, across India.
- The move comes amidst demand for entry-level cars as people try to avoid public transport.
- Under the scheme, HDFC Bank customers are given pre-approved loan offers using the bank's proprietary algorithm and analytics.

#### ICICI Bank launches instant loan facility against mutual funds

- **ICICI Bank** has launched a facility that enables retail customers to get loan of up to **Rs.1 crore** instantaneously by pledging their holdings in both debt and equity mutual funds.
- The fully digital and paperless facility empowers the customers to avail this loan as an overdraft (OD) in a matter of few minutes, without visiting a branch and submitting physical documents.
- ICICI Bank has launched '**Insta Loans against Mutual Funds**' in partnership with '**Computer Age Management Services (CAMS)**'. 'Insta Loans against Mutual Funds' is an extension of the Insta LAS, an instant loan facility against equity.

#### Salient features of 'Insta Loans against Mutual Funds'

- **Instant access to funds:** The customers get access to instant liquidity by leveraging their existing mutual fund portfolio, without selling them.
- **Flexibility of mutual funds:** The loan can be availed against a wide range of debt and equity schemes of mutual funds serviced by CAMS and approved by the Bank
- **Wide range of loan amount:** Minimum loan amount is **Rs. 50,000 for both** debt and equity schemes of MFs. Maximum loan amount is **Rs. 1 crore for debt schemes** of MFs and **Rs. 20 lakh for equity schemes of MFs**
- **Competitive margin:** Minimum **20% for debt and 50% for equity** MFs
- **Advantage of OD; No fixed EMI:** Since the loan is available as an OD, the customers do not have to pay fixed EMI. They only need to pay interest on the limit utilised and for the number of the days it was utilised
- **No foreclosure charges:** The customers have the flexibility to repay the principal as and when they choose to, without any foreclosure charges.

#### Kotak Mahindra Bank, Innoviti tie up to offer EMIs

- **Kotak Mahindra Bank and Innoviti Payment Solutions** announced that they have collaborated to offer equated monthly instalments (EMI) billing options on Kotak debit cards swiped on Innoviti POS terminals.
- The facility will allow over **1 crore Kotak customers** to pay for their purchases in instalments by using the EMIs on debit cards facility at over 70,000 Innoviti POS terminals across more than 1,000 cities.
- Importantly, with over half of Innoviti's POS terminals installed in 350 smaller cities and towns in India with a population of **less than 20 lakh**, this arrangement will help consumers particularly in tier 2 and 3 cities access credit conveniently through their Kotak debit cards, Kotak Mahindra Bank stated.

#### Equitas Small Finance Bank Limited launches Video KYC Account

- **Equitas Small Finance Bank Limited**, the largest small finance bank in India in terms of number of banking outlets as of March 31, 2019 becomes one of the leading banks in the country to launch video KYC account.
- This is a web application designed to conduct a remote verification process through a video call. The video call has to be triggered from the Relationship Executive's domain and the recording for the video call will be stored as well. The customer has to submit their Aadhaar and pan details on the video call for bank to verify.
- The Bank has revamped its mobile bank app to deliver most of the services over the app itself. Further work is on to roll in remaining services also over the app.
- With this, any person anywhere in the country can open a savings account with Equitas Small Finance Bank, complete the full KYC through video with the Bank employee and start enjoying the benefit of high quality Do It Yourself (DIY) service as well as the better interest rates offered by Equitas on its Savings Account balances.

#### **Irdai committee to examine Surety Bonds for road contracts**

- Insurance regulator Irdai has formed a panel under **G Srinivasan**, director, National Insurance Academy, to assess the suitability of the Indian insurance industry or any other sector to offer Surety Bonds for road contracts in the country.
- Currently, **Surety Bond** for contractors is not being offered by insurance companies in the market to guarantee satisfactory completion of a project by a contractor and provide performance security to various government agencies.
- Some other members of the panel are: Hitesh Kotak, CEO, Munich Re, India; Shankar Garigiparthi, CEO, Lloyd's India; Neelesh Garg, CEO, Tata AIG General Insurance; Roopam Asthana, CEO, Liberty General Insurance and SN Jayasimhan, general manager, Investment Department, Irdai.

#### **About Surety Bond**

- Surety Bond is a three-party agreement that legally binds together a principal who needs the bond, an obligee who requires the bond and a surety company that sells the bond. Surety bonds provide financial guarantee that contracts will be completed according to pre-defined and mutual terms. When a principal breaks a bond's terms, the harmed party can make a claim on the bond to recover losses.

#### **Public, Private Sectors banks sanctioned loans worth over Rs 1.10 lakh cr under Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme**

- Public and Private Sectors banks have sanctioned loans worth over **one lakh ten thousand crore** rupees so far under Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme.
- Out of which, more than 52 thousand 200 crore rupees have already been disbursed. The scheme was launched by the government to provide relief to the MSME sector by incentivizing member lending institutions to provide additional credit of up to three lakh crore at low interest to enable MSMEs to meet their operational requirements during the COVID-19 crisis.
- The Finance Ministry stated, the interventions by government for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, MSMEs, have been gaining rapid traction. The top lenders under the Scheme are SBI, HDFC Bank, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank and Canara Bank.
- The Ministry stated, this has helped nearly 35 lakh MSMEs and other enterprises restart their businesses post the lockdown.

#### **NPCI to set up Rs.500-crore data centre to handle digital transactions**

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) will set up a '**Smart Datacentre**' in Hyderabad with an investment of **Rs.500 crore**.
- Telangana Information Technology and Industries Minister **KT Rama Rao** laid the foundation stone for the **Tier-IV data centre** at Narsingi here.

- To be constructed by L&T, the centre will protect the systems from natural calamities, ensuring smooth processing of data. It will have an eight-layer security, conforming to top global standards of data centres.
- The data centre will host data related to a number of Digital India initiatives. It will make Hyderabad one of the major hubs for processing payments. The total value of transactions is pegged at **Rs.15 lakh crore** and the number of transactions at **4,000 millions a month**.
- The Telangana Government has announced a **Data Centre Policy** to make Hyderabad a hub for data centres.

#### **Union Bank revamps Insurance distribution channels post amalgamation**

- Public sector lender **Union Bank of India** has revamped its distribution network for insurance products after amalgamation and expanded the number of insurers whose policies it would sell to nine.
- The outlets of bank will offer Insurance products of **three life insurers; four general insurers and two standalone health insurers**. Expansion of insurance distribution channel will help the bank increase insurance penetration.
- Bank executives stated Reliance General Insurance is no longer part of tie-up under new arrangement. The lender earned about **Rs 128 crore** through sale of **Third Party products** on standalone basis, predominantly insurance policies (life, health and general) in 2019-20.
- The business plan for current financial year (FY21) is being finalised to reflect integrated branch network and push for higher penetration, they added.
- **Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank** amalgamated with **Union Bank** with effect from April 01, 2020, a network of more than 9500 branches.
- Prior to amalgamation the Bank was distributing Life Insurance products of SUD Life Insurance Co Ltd, General Insurance products of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, New India Assurance Co Ltd and Chola MS General Insurance Co Ltd and Health Insurance products of Religare Health Insurance Co Ltd under Corporate Agency tie-up agreements.
- Post-amalgamation, Bank has decided to continue corporate agency agreement with India First Life Insurance Company Limited and LIC of India under Life Insurance segment. It will have tie-up with public insurer United India Insurance under General Insurance segment and Manipal Cigna Health Insurance under Health Insurance Segment.
- The continuation of the above Corporate Agency tie-ups will facilitate uninterrupted post sales services to the policy holders customers of erstwhile Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank.

#### **IndiaFirst Life to Offer Exclusive COVID-19 and Hospital Cash Cover to Bank of Baroda Credit Cardholders**

- **IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company Limited** (IndiaFirst Life), promoted by **Bank of Baroda and Union Bank of India**, has associated with BOB Financial Services Limited (BOB Financial), a wholly owned subsidiary of Bank of Baroda, to offer a unique group insurance covering that provides financial support upon hospitalisation or on COVID-19 diagnosis.
- BOB Financial has a range of credit card customers who will be able to opt for this insurance benefit by IndiaFirst Life, at the click of a button.
- We are excited to connect with and offer our services to Bank of Baroda Credit Cardholders. Through this alliance, customers who opt for IndiaFirst Life Insurance Hospi Care plan can avail the benefits, in case of COVID-19 positive diagnosis as well as hospitalisation due to any other reason for more than 24 hours. In line with our #CustomerFirst philosophy, we have ensured that individuals can have a seamless end-to-end digital onboarding experience as they opt for Ghar Baithe Insurance on our website, stated Rushabh Gandhi, Deputy CEO, IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company Limited.

#### **Karur Vysya Bank partners with Star Health Insurance**

- The **Karur Vysya Bank (KVB)** has entered into a tie-up with **Star Health and Allied Insurance** to provide health insurance products to its customers.
- By the agreement, all the health insurance products of Star Health & Allied Insurance will be made available through all 780 branches of the KVB bank.
- This would help the bank provide cost effective insurance products and quick settlement of claims to its customers.

#### **SBM Bank India partners with Mastercard to facilitate cross-border transactions, remittances**

- Government of Mauritius-promoted **SBM Bank India** and global payments technology major **Mastercard** have joined hands to facilitate **cross-border payments and remittances services**.
- The SBM Bank India customers will be able to make real-time domestic business-to-consumer transfers quickly and efficiently using '**Mastercard Send**'.
- SBM Bank India is the first bank to receive a universal banking licence from the RBI to set up and operate as a scheduled commercial bank through the wholly-owned subsidiary mode.
- The bank has a network of **six branches** located in Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Ramachandrapuram.
- The Bank has been leading the collaboration narrative to access the best-in-class solutions with its switching partner, **YAP**.
- **YAP** is a API (application programme interface) infrastructure company. The company works with banks and financial institutions as product providers.

#### **Karur Vysya Bank in corporate agency pact with Bajaj Allianz Life**

- **Karur Vysya Bank**, an old private sector bank, has signed up a corporate agency partnership with **Bajaj Allianz Life** to offer life insurance solutions to its customers.
- Under the deal, KVB will provide **Bajaj Allianz Life's life insurance solutions** to its customers, while the insurance company will empower the Bank's customers to avail the living benefits of life insurance, according to a statement.
- Bajaj Allianz's products will be available at the Bank's **780 branch offices** spread across India.
- Our partnership will help in making value-packed and affordable life insurance solutions accessible to a large number of people, **Tarun Chugh**, MD & CEO, Bajaj Allianz Life stated.
- Under this partnership, all retail and group products of Bajaj Allianz Life will be made available to the Bank's customers, including savings, retirement, investment, protection and critical illness life insurance products.

#### **YES Bank launches instant loan disbursement facility**

- Private sector lender **YES Bank** has launched a solution for instant disbursement of retail loans for the bank's pre-approved liability account holders.
- Called **Loan in Seconds**, the algorithm assesses a loan application in real-time and eliminates the need for documentation.
- Eligible customers under '**Loan in Seconds**' will receive communication from the bank with the link to apply for the loan. All that a customer needs to do is verify and accept the final offer, the lender stated.

#### **Fino Payments Bank launches 'Bhavishya' savings account for minors**

- **Fino Payments Bank Limited** announced the launch of a savings account scheme for minors aged between **10-18 years**.
- **Bhavishya**, a subscription-based savings account, can be opened by paying a nominal amount.
- The bank will initially introduce the Bhavishya savings account in **UP, Bihar, and MP** and gradually in other states.

- The Bhavishya savings account can be used to get benefits of various government schemes for children such as scholarship and DBT (direct benefit transfer) subsidy amount.
- Benefits of Bhavishya savings account includes, no minimum account balance requirement and a free debit card, which can be used at ATMs only to withdraw cash with Aadhaar authentication.
- For security reasons minor should have a mobile number that is different from the parent's number.
- Further, on attaining 18 years of age, the **Bhavishya savings account** will be upgraded to regular savings account on submission of Re-KYC with updated information.

#### **Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund launches voice-based services via Google Assistant**

- **Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund** (ABSLMF) has launched voice-based services for its investors with Google Assistant.
- The voice assistant acts as a 24X7 interface for investors to interact with the fund house, to address their various service requests such as portfolio valuations, account statement, capital gains statement etc.
- The Google voice assistant uses the latest in **AI and NLP** to provide a simple conversational experience and provide the relevant solution. The fund house also has plans to be soon available on other voice assistant platforms such as Amazon's Alexa and Apple's Siri.

#### **BSE partners with LIC Mutual Fund for BSE eKYC services**

- **BSE** has now partnered with **LIC Mutual Fund** to power its eKYC services on **BSE StAR MF**, the market leading MF platform.
- The digital KYC process will facilitate our Members to ensure zero contact, hassle-free customer on boarding process, especially during this COVID situation.
- The entire process is very user friendly and simplifies the user experience to perform the entire KYC process seamlessly.
- BSE had launched its eKYC platform during lock down period as a service for IFAs, DFIs, Mutual funds and stock brokers to add new investors in their customers list without physically going to meet the investors.

#### **Karur Vysya Bank partners with Tata Motors to offer car loans at attractive terms**

- **Karur Vysya Bank** has entered into an arrangement with **Tata Motors** to fund buyers of Tata passenger vehicles.
- The Bank informed the exchanges that both existing and new customers will be eligible to avail loans from KVB.
- KVB is offering a special product for buyers of Tata Motor passenger vehicles under which **100% on-road finance** with a 6 month holiday period is provided at attractive interest rates. The scheme is applicable only for 3 models, viz., Tata Tiago, Tata Nexon and Tata Altroz. The loans are available to both the salaried and self-employed.
- Loans are offered for both salaried and self-employed persons and repayment period is upto **60 months** with attractive rates of interest.

#### **IRDAI forms panel on 'Indian Pandemic Risk Pool'**

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has formed a working group to examine the feasibility of '**Pandemic Risk Pool**'.
- **Suresh Mathur**, Executive Director, Irdai, will be the Chairman for the 9-member working group with industry representatives as members.
- Apart from studying the need for such as pool, the group will also recommend the **structure and operating model**.
- The Covid-19 pandemic, which started as a public health crisis, has led to a significant disruption in the economic activity mainly due to measures taken to stop the spread of the disease.

#### **SEBI rejigs advisory committee on mutual funds**

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has revamped its committee that advises the capital markets regulator on matters related to **regulation and development of mutual fund** industry.
- The **20-member** advisory committee on mutual funds is headed by **Usha Thorat**, former deputy governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), a latest Sebi update showed.
- Earlier in 2013, the panel **had 15 members** and was headed by **Janki Ballabh**, former Chairman of SBI.
- The members of the committee include officials of various fund houses like Franklin Templeton Asset Management (India) Pvt Ltd President Sanjay Sapre, Kotak Mahindra AMC MD Nilesh Shah and Canara Robeco AMC CEO Rajnish Narula, SBI Mutual Fund Independent Trustee Sunil Gulati and Motilal Oswal Mutual Fund Independent Trustee Director Brij Gopal Daga.
- Moreover, the committee comprises representatives from the government, media and a SEBI official.
- The advisory committee is mandated to **advise the regulator on issues** related to regulation and development of mutual fund industry.
- It can advise the regulator on disclosure requirements and measures required for a change in the legal framework to introduce simplification and transparency in mutual fund regulations.

#### **NSE launches new gold standard for delivery**

- The National Stock Exchange has announced **NSE Refiner Standards (NRS)** for **BIS-Standard gold** to be delivered for settlement of the gold futures contracts traded on its platform.
- Currently, the NSE accepts serial-numbered gold bars produced by London Bullion Market Association-approved refiners for settlement of the gold contracts traded on the commodity derivatives segment of the exchange.
- NSE will now empanel refiners producing gold bars as per Bureau of Indian Standards for delivery.
- This initiative is in line with the government's efforts towards **Atmanirbhar Bharat** and **'Make in India'** programme. It will facilitate more participation by domestic market players in the exchange traded deliverable bullion commodity derivatives.
- **Ravi Varanasi**, Chief Business Development Officer, NSE, stated the new guidelines offers a fair chance to Indian refiners adhering to the BIS notified standards to be a part of the exchange settlement framework.
- The NSE has also laid down detailed guidelines for empanelment of refiners (both quantitative and qualitative), compliance requirements, technical evaluation, process and sourcing audits including a fallback mechanism.

#### **IRDAI gives its nod to Insurance companies to launch corona Kavach Health Insurance Policies PIC**

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India, IRDAI, has allowed **30 general and health insurers** to launch short-term **'Corona Kavach'** health insurance policies. The policy will cover medical expenses occurred due to coronavirus disease.
- The insurance regulator stated that it has designed a standard Covid specific product addressing basic health insurance needs of insuring public with common policy wordings across the industry. The **sum insured amount** of the policy ranges between **fifty thousand rupees to five lakh rupees**.
- This policy can be availed by persons between the age of **18 to 65 years**. People can avail the Corona Kavach policy for Self, spouse, parents, parents-in-law and dependent children up to **25 years of age**.
- The IRDAI has stated that the policy will also provide for any co-morbid condition triggered due to Covid-19 during the period of hospitalization.
- The authority had issued clearance to **30 General and Health Insurance companies** to market this Corona Kavach Policy.
- Following the IRDAI order, several insurers have already announced the launch of the 'Corona Kavach' policies **for three - and-a-half months; six-and-a-half months; and nine-and-a-half months**.



- Home care expenses benefit up to a period of **14 days** will also be covered in the policy for those seeking treatment within the comfort of their own homes, on the advice of a medical practitioner.

#### **HDFC ERGO Launches Corona Kavach Policy**

- HDFC ERGO, the country's third-largest non-life insurance provider in the private sector, announced the launch of '**Corona Kavach**' policy.
- This new indemnity health policy will offer cover against medical expenses incurred due to hospitalization of individuals seeking treatment for COVID-19, on positive diagnosis for the virus in a government authorized diagnostic centre.
- In addition, the policy will also cover expenses incurred on the treatment of co-morbidity along with the treatment for COVID-19.
- The policy will also cover road ambulance expenses, in case the service is opted for the purpose of hospitalization due to COVID-19. **Home Care Expenses benefit** (up to a period of 14 days) will also be covered in the policy for those seeking treatment within the comfort of their own homes, on the advice of a medical practitioner.
- Additionally, expenses incurred for inpatient care treatment taken under **Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy** (AYUSH) systems of medicines will also be covered under the policy.
- Policyholders will also be liable for Hospital daily cash, which will be 0.5 per cent of sum insured per day for **a maximum of up to 15 days**, during a policy period.
- The Corona Kavach policy by HDFC ERGO will enable customers to experience superior customer service whereby they can reach out to the company through various digital platforms that are easily accessible.

#### **HSBC India rolls out digital payment products for retail customers**

- **HSBC India** announced the launch of a comprehensive range of digital payment products for its retail customers.
- HSBC is now part of **e-NACH** (Electronic National Automated Clearing House), which will allow its customers to easily automate recurring payments with standing instructions for specific amounts, date and time of payment, without having to submit paper mandates, the lender stated.
- It has also launched real-time bill payments powered by **Bharat Bill Payments system** (BBPS) on its net banking and mobile application.
- The bank's customers can now use their internet banking to pay directly at over **2 lakh merchant websites**.

#### **Visa partners with Federal Bank for rolling out Visa Secure for e-commerce**

- **Visa**, a global leader in payments technology, has entered into a partnership with **Federal Bank** to roll out Visa Secure to the bank's cardholders.
- Visa Secure is a global authentication program that uses the latest standards of the **EMV 3DS (3D Secure) protocol**. Besides providing additional layers of authentication for issuers and merchants to combat online frauds, the upgraded technology provides a quicker and frictionless checkout experience to consumers.
- Merchants and issuers have started deployment of **Visa Secure globally**. Visa will continue to work with clients and partners in India to support EMV 3DS-based solutions, with a focus on delivering better payment experience, the payments technology company stated.
- **Visa Secure** enables smoother and more consistent user experiences across multiple payment channels, including mobile, web, in-app, and connected devices. It also allows merchants to better integrate the authentication process into the shopping experience, while providing cardholders with a fast, simple, secure and convenient authentication. The enhanced Visa Secure platform is enriched with additional transaction attributes that makes authentication seamless.

#### **Income Tax Department launches tool for Banks to ascertain TDS applicability rates on cash withdrawals**



- The **Income Tax Department** has facilitated a new functionality for Banks and Post offices through which they can ascertain the **TDS applicability rates** on cash withdrawals.
- Under it, the Banks and Post Offices can ascertain the TDS applicability rates on cash withdrawals of above **20 lakh rupees** in case of a non-filer of the income-tax return and that of above one crore rupees in case of a filer of the income-tax return. Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) stated, so far, more than 53 thousand verification requests have been executed successfully on this facility.
- Explaining the details of this facility, CBDT stated that now the **Bank and Post Office** has to **only enter the PAN of the person** who is withdrawing cash for ascertaining the applicable rate of TDS. On entering PAN, a message will be instantly displayed on the departmental utility.
- It stated, TDS is deductible at the rate of **2 per cent** if cash withdrawal exceeds one crore rupees if the person withdrawing cash is a filer of the income-tax return. It stated, TDS is deductible at the **rate 2 per cent** if cash withdrawal exceeds **20 lakh rupees** and at the **rate of 5 per cent** if it exceeds one crore rupees in case the person is a non-filer of the income-tax return.
- CBDT stated that the data on cash withdrawal indicated that huge amount of cash is being withdrawn by the persons who have never filed income-tax returns. To ensure filing of return by these persons and to keep track on cash withdrawals by the non-filers, and to curb black money, the Finance Act, 2020 further amended Income-tax Act from 1st of this month to lower threshold of cash withdrawal to 20 lakh rupees for the applicability of this TDS for the non-filers. It also mandated TDS at the higher rate of **5 per cent on cash withdrawal** exceeding **one crore rupees** by the non-filers.

#### **Nabard announces Rs.5,000-crore concessional refinance facility**

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard), announced a concessional refinance facility to the tune of **Rs.5,000 crore for banks** and financial institutions for on-lending to beneficiaries in its **2,150 watershed development projects**.
- The rural development financial institutions also announced earmarking of **Rs.5,000 crore** during FY21 for turning Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) into multi-service centres (one-stop shops for meeting the varied needs of the farmers).
- Nabard, in a statement, stated its watershed development projects cover 23.04 lakh hectares of rain-fed area watershed and tribal development project areas.
- "The concessional line of assistance will be available for **three years from FY21 to FY23**."
- "The scheme will help the reverse migrants, who have returned to their villages from urban areas following the Covid-19 crisis, take up new occupations," it added.
- Nabard has launched a **Rs.5,000-crore** grant-based scheme for computerisation of **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)** to enable these ground-level entities provide seamless credit services to their farmer members.
- Under this initiative, assistance will be extended to each State, which will have to contribute a matching amount, to kick-start the process of computerization of PACS. These societies are the building blocks of India's cooperative banking structure.
- As many as 5,000 PACS will be upgraded this year followed by 15,000 PACS each in FY22 and FY23.
- "Moreover, the recent reforms in APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) Act, Essential Commodities Act, Contract Farming Act also favour such a transformation of PACS."
- Chintala observed that these upgraded PACS can be vehicles for creating investment opportunities for rural youth in agriculture, including those impacted by reverse migration in the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

### NHB provides Rs.25,000 crore to housing fin cos as refinance assistance in last 4 months

- The National Housing Bank (NHB) has in the **last four months** (March to June 30, 2020) provided a total refinance assistance of **over Rs.25,000 crore** to the housing finance companies (HFCs) alone.
- Total refinance disbursements during July-June 2020 grew **24 per cent** year -on-year to touch **Rs.31,250 crore** under its various refinance schemes.
- Under the Aatmanirbhar Package announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the NHB was provided a **Special Liquidity Facility of Rs.10,000 crore** by the Reserve Bank of India to address the pandemic related liquidity issues of housing finance sector.
- Of this Rs.10,000 crore, as much as **Rs.9,992 crore** has been sanctioned to **53 housing finance companies**/regional rural banks/small finance banks. The amount disbursed under this window stood at **Rs.9,537 crore** as of June 30.

### 2% interest subvention on Shishu loans operationalised via SIDBI

- The Department of Financial Services (DFS) stated that **SIDBI** will provide funds to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) upfront under the government-approved **2 per cent interest subvention for SHISHU loans**.
- It may be recalled that Union Cabinet in June approved a scheme for interest subvention of **2 per cent to Shishu loan** category borrowers under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana outstanding as on March 31, **for a period of 12 months** to eligible borrowers.
- The move to allow **SIDBI** to provide amount to MLIs upfront would benefit 9.37 crore small loan accounts, the DFS tweeted.
- Mudra loans are designed to bring enterprises into the formal financial system. They are available to non-farm micro or small enterprises engaged in income generation through manufacturing, trading and services. Shishu loans are loans that are up to **Rs.50,000 per borrower**.

### HSBC to set up IFSC Banking Unit at GIFT City

- Global banking major **Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited** (HSBC) has received an in-principle approval from the GIFT SEZ Authority to set up an IFSC Banking Unit (IBU) at **GIFT- International Financial Services Centre** (IFSC).
- The approval is subject to other regulatory approvals, informed the banking major.
- So far, **13 banks** have set up their IBUs in GIFT IFSC. The cumulative business in banking vertical have **crossed \$28 billion**.
- The proposed commencement of the IBU by HSBC marks a landmark for India's IFSC business and establishes GIFT City as a globally competitive international financial centre.
- **GIFT IFSC Banking Units** have played a pivotal role in the development of IFSC in India by providing dollar financing to Indian corporates.

### PSBs to purchase NBFC Bonds/CPs worth Rs 14,667 cr under extended PCGS: FM Nirmala Sitharaman

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has stated that the Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme, PCGS was revamped under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Package to support the liability side of Non Banking Financial Companies, NBFCs. It provides a **20 per cent portfolio** guarantee to Public Sector Banks for the purchase of Bonds or Commercial Papers rated AA and below which are issued by NBFCs.
- Ms Sitharaman stated, under the extended PCGS, Public Sector Banks have approved the purchase Bonds or Commercial Papers issued by **67 NBFCs** amounting to **14 thousand 6 hundred 67 crore rupees**.

- Of these 6 thousand 8 hundred 45 crore rupees is for Bonds or Commercial Papers rated below AA, providing liquidity support to NBFCs with lower rated Bonds or Commercial Papers.
- She stated, further, the purchase of Bonds or Commercial Papers of **6 thousand 1 hundred 25 crore rupees**, including 5 thousand 5 hundred 50 crore rupees of Bonds or Commercial Papers rated below AA, is currently under various stages of approval or at negotiation stage.

#### IndusInd Bank Adopts Agile Technology Platform For Deeper Customer Engagement

- **IndusInd Bank** announced successful integration with a leading enterprise solution provider which will simplify the process of customer on-boarding, introduce new products and meet customer demands by automating and customising processes to fit the modern-day financial requirements.
- The **CRMNEXT platform** will empower IndusInd Bank with an intelligence-driven customer action centre which will provide complete information on customers acquired from multiple sources, and make it available on a single intuitive screen.
- This will give the bank a holistic view of customer relationships across product offerings, thereby enabling the bank officials to build smarter relationship programmes and also initiate activities for faster sales and service fulfilment," it stated.
- The platform will be implemented across IndusInd Bank's wide network of nearly **2,000 branches**, call centres and processing units for sales and service operations.
- It will also integrate and power all digital and physical banking touchpoints including ATMs, WhatsApp banking platform, email, SMS and mobile apps as well as over **150 integration touchpoints** including core banking, loan systems, credit card system, Aadhaar, credit bureaus among others.

#### Bank of Maharashtra launches OD facility against fixed deposits

- **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** has launched an **overdraft facility (OD)** against fixed deposits (FDs) for its individual customers holding a savings bank account.
- Under this facility, up to **90 per cent of the FD value** can be availed as OD. The interest rate on this facility will be **2 percentage** points over and above the FD rate.
- The bank has also decided not to charge any processing fee. Additional documentation is not required to avail this facility.
- The OD facility can be availed from the comfort of home in three simple steps using Bank of **Maharashtra's Mahamobile App**.

#### NABARD sanctions ₹95 cr to re-construct infra damaged by cyclone in Bengal

- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned **₹95 crore** for reconstructing infrastructure damaged by cyclone Amphan that ripped through **West Bengal** in May.
- The state government had sought **₹1,028 crore from NABARD** for repairing impaired embankments under **Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF)**.
- The amount of **₹795 crore** was sanctioned following the appeal of the government.
- NABARD has already provided **₹45 crore** under RIDF to the state as special liquidity support for boosting rural infrastructure in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Dr. Harsh Vardhan launches Punjab National Bank's Nation-wide CSR campaign for Distribution of Mask and Sanitizer to prevent Spread of COVID-19

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare launched Punjab National Bank's (PNB) campaign to distribute face masks and sanitizers to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- The Punjab National Bank has begun distributing masks and sanitisers **across 662 districts** in the country.

- The senior officials of PNB presented the Health Minister a COVID kit of masks and sanitizers, a book on the glorious history of the bank and other memorabilia.

#### **Banks sanction over Rs 1.27 lakh cr loans under Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme**

- There is an increase of over **4,237 crore rupees** in the cumulative amount of loans sanctioned and over 9,301 crore rupees in the cumulative amount of loans disbursed by both public and private sector banks till now as compared to 15th of July.
- As of 20th of July, the total amount sanctioned under the **100 percent Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)** by the banks stands at over 1.27 lakh crore, of which over 77,613 crore rupees have already been disbursed.
- Finance Ministry stated under the **100 percent ECLGS**, the loan amounts sanctioned by Public Sector Banks increased to over 70,894 crore rupees of which over 45,797 crore rupees have been disbursed.

#### **LIC-UBI announce corporate agency pact**

- **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** and **Union Bank of India**, after its amalgamation with **Corporation Bank and Andhra Bank**, have announced a corporate agency agreement to distribute LIC policies.
- Union Bank of India can act as a financial supermarket by offering a **basket of products** to its account holders, whereby they can select products according to their choice, stated **K Kadiresan, Zonal Manager, LIC of India**, in a statement.
- The bank will market LIC products of term insurance, pension, plan, children plan, ULIPs, and endowment schemes.
- It is a very good opportunity for the bank to serve the needy customers, which will benefit by taking LIC products as those policies are having a sovereign guarantee. With an array of different products and superior customer service, the tie-up with LIC of India will be a successful association, stated **MH Padmanabhan, Field General Manager, Union Bank of India**.

#### **Bank of Baroda rolls out 'Insta Click Savings Account'**

- The self-assisted online savings account can be activated in real-time and offers customers a wide range of digital channels
- Bank of Baroda (BoB) stated it has launched '**Insta Click Savings Account**', a **100 percent paperless digital self-assisted online savings account**.
- India's third-largest public sector bank, stated the Insta Click Savings Account uses a new form of digital KYC (know-your-customer) and Aadhaar-based OTP (one-time personal identification number) authentication of the customer, which can be operated from the bank's website, through mobile phone, iPad, laptop, and PC.
- The account is activated in real-time, which means the customer can start transacting, using the **Baroda M Connect Plus application** with the MPIN received on the mobile number, immediately, it added.
- The product also offers customers the option to subscribe to a wide range of digital channels like mobile banking, Internet banking, UPI (unified payments interface), and debit card.
- Sanjiv Chadha, MD and CEO, Bank of Baroda, stated, "We are working on digitisation of all our process and intend to be **100 per cent paperless by 2023**."
- The only way to ensure our customers can have a safe and secure banking experience without having the need to step out of their homes is with adoption of digital products and services.

#### **NPCI launches UPI Autopay**

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) launched **UPI Autopay**, a facility that would allow recurring payments at regular intervals. "With this new facility introduced **under UPI 2.0**, customers can now enable recurring e-mandate using any UPI application for recurring payments such as mobile bills, electricity bills, EMI payments, entertainment and OTT subscriptions, insurance, mutual funds and loan payments, paying for transit, metro payments among others of **up to**

**Rs.2,000**, NPCI stated, adding that if the **amount exceeds Rs.2,000**, customers have to execute every mandate with UPI PIN.

- The facility was launched at the **Global Fintech Fest**.
- According to the NPCI statement, some of the banks, merchants and aggregators that have already gone live with UPI AutoPay include Axis Bank, Bank of Baroda, HDFC Bank, HSBC Bank, ICICI Bank, IDFC Bank, IndusInd Bank, Paytm Payments Bank, AutoPe-Delhi Metro, AutoPe-Dish TV, CAMS Pay, Furlenco, Growfitter, Policy Bazaar, Paytm, PayU, RazorPay.
- Meanwhile, Jio Payments Bank, State Bank of India and Yes Bank will soon go live with the facility.
- Any UPI-enabled application would also have a '**Mandate**' section, through which customers can create, approve, modify, pause as well as revoke auto debit mandate, NPCI further stated.

#### **PhonePe, ICICI Lombard team up to offer Hospital Cash cover**

- Digital payments platform **PhonePe** announced the launch of its Hospital Daily Cash benefit under Group Safeguard Insurance in partnership with private insurer **ICICI Lombard**.
- It is a customised hospitalisation policy that allows **PhonePe users** to get an assured amount if they are hospitalised due to injury or illnesses including Covid-19, the company explained.
- As part of this policy, a Discharge Certificate would be sufficient in most cases for processing claims without hospital bills.
- The cover can be availed of in less than two minutes, the company stated. Customers can view their policy documents instantly on the app. PhonePe users aged **18-65** can get this policy without prior medical tests.
- However, only hospitalisations for a minimum of **48 hours qualify for claims**. All government and private hospitals come under the insurance cover. ICU-admitted patients will qualify for double the insurance cover.
- Customers who already have mediclaim policies, employer health insurance, self-funded means of paying hospital bills would also be eligible for the claim payout benefit, it stated.
- PhonePe users can buy the insurance through the app, from the "**My Money**" section. They can then select 'Hospital Cash' under the Insurance section, fill up the details of the insured and make the payment.

#### **Bharti AXA General Insurance receives Rs.800 crore worth crop insurance mandate from Maharashtra, Karnataka under PMFBY**

- Bharti AXA General Insurance, had received **Rs.800 crore worth crop insurance** mandate from the governments of **Maharashtra and Karnataka** to insure their farmers under the **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)**.
- The company has secured authorisation for **a period of three years** from both the state governments to implement the PMFBY in **six districts of Maharashtra and three districts of Karnataka**.
- Farmers in the districts of Ahmednagar, Nashik, Chandrapur, Solapur, Jalgaon and Satara in Maharashtra and Dharwad, Mysuru and Kodagu in Karnataka can insure their Kharif crops till July 31 through their respective banks or authorized representatives of the company.
- The PMFBY offers insurance cover to farmers against losses of crops during the entire cycle from preparation of sowing to harvesting and post-harvest, due to poor yield.
- It offers insurance cover for all stages of the crop cycle including pre-sowing to harvesting and post-harvest risks.

#### **SBM Bank collaborates with EnKash and Yap to launch co-branded Business Credit Card on RuPay network for MSMEs and start-ups**

- **SBM Bank India**, EnKash, YAP and RuPay joined hands to launch India's most comprehensive business credit card, the SBM EnKash RuPay Business Card.



- This corporate credit card would utilise the RuPay network and will be available upon immediate issuance through digital and paperless on-boarding for SMEs, MSMEs and Start-ups at any SBM Bank touch point.
- The **SBM EnKash RuPay Business Card** is designed to streamline business expenditure and finances, through a blend of expense tracking and a **30-day credit period** on business purchases, bill payments, travel expenses, automated GST, rental payments, payments to suppliers, online purchase of software, cloud bills payments, utility bills payments, online purchase of inventories among others.
- **SBM EnKash RuPay Business Card**, with the launch of the **RuPay Commercial card portfolio**. Apart from providing the ultimate shopping experience to retail customers with RuPay Debit, Credit and Prepaid versions, RuPay is in the journey of providing a seamless corporate payments experience to businesses.

#### **Muthoot Fincorp launches mentoring portal for MSMEs**

- Muthoot Fincorp, has launched a portal **Restartindia**, a free mentoring platform to help the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector to restart businesses across the country.
- The portal is designed to address the needs of the MSME sector, particularly nano and micro enterprises, and offer solutions for problems faced by a large number of women entrepreneurs.
- The website, accessible at **www.restartindia.in**, also provides details of MSME-focused governmental, institutional support and resources on how to run or set up a sustainable business venture.
- The portal was inaugurated by Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Minister of Shipping and Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
- Restartindia was conceptualised jointly by **Muthoot Fincorp and INKtalks**, a free and open platform for advisory support.

#### **Special Liquidity Scheme for NBFCs/HFCs: FinMin sanctions 5 proposals for Rs.3,090 crore**

- The Finance Ministry stated that five proposals involving an amount of **Rs.3,090 crore** had been sanctioned under the **Rs.30,000 crore Special Liquidity Scheme** for NBFCs and HFCs.
- Also, 35 more applications seeking financing up to **Rs.13,775 crore** are under process in this scheme, which was announced as part of the Aatma Nirbhar package announced by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on May 13, an official release stated.
- The scheme has been launched to improve the liquidity position of NBFCs/HFCs through a **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** to avoid any potential systemic risks to the financial sector.
- The scheme is being implemented by **SLS Trust**, the SPV set up by **SBI Capital Markets Limited (SBICAP)**. Any NBFC including Microfinance Institutions registered with RBI under the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934** (excluding those registered as Core Investment Companies) and any HFC registered with the National Housing Bank (NHB) under the National Housing Bank Act, 1987 which is complying with certain specified conditions are eligible to raise funding from this facility.
- The scheme will remain open for three months for making subscriptions by the Trust. The Scheme permits both primary and secondary market purchases of debt and seeks to address the short-term liquidity issues of NBFCs/HFCs. Therefore, those market participants who are looking to exit their standard investments with a **residual maturity of 90 days** may also approach the SLS Trust, the release added.

#### **Adani Ports signs up for Science-Based Targets initiative**

- **Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ)** has signed up for the Science-Based Targets initiative (SBTi) becoming the first Indian port to commit to set science-based emissions reduction targets — across their entire value chain — that are consistent with keeping global warming to **1.5°C above** pre-industrial levels.

- Companies signing a commitment letter to **SBTi have 24 months** to have their targets approved and published by the SBTi, a collaboration between CDP, the **United Nations Global Compact, World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)**.
- Science-based targets are greenhouse gas emissions pruning targets that are in line with the level of decarbonization required to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement – to limit global warming to well-below **2°C above pre-industrial levels** and pursue efforts to **limit warming to 1.5°C**.
- The SBTi defines and promotes best practices in science-based target setting and independently assesses companies' targets. Over 800 companies have committed to set science-based emissions reduction targets.
- **APSEZ** is among **43 Indian companies** who have signed a commitment letter to SBTi.
- APSEZ has also signed commitment as a supporter to the **Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosure (TCFD)**, which develops voluntary, consistent climate-related financial risk disclosures for use by companies in providing information to investors, lenders, insurers, and other stakeholders. 16 Indian companies are supporting the TCFD out of which two are Adani Group's subsidiaries.

#### **Microsoft, NBA team up to put virtual fans in basketball arenas**

- When the **National Basketball Association** restarts its coronavirus-interrupted season on July 30 in its "bubble" in Orlando, Florida, the stands could have more than 300 fans - none of whom will actually be in the arena.
- **Microsoft Corp and the NBA** stated they have joined forces to put "virtual" fans in the stands of each game using Microsoft's Teams app and giant screens.
- The two will equip each game court with **17-foot-tall (5.2 m) LED screens** that wrap three sides of the arena. The virtual stands will be filled with fans who use the Teams app to log in and sit alongside each other using a new feature of the app called "Together mode" meant to simulate a group of people sitting in a room.
- The NBA suspended its season in March after a player for the **Utah Jazz tested positive for the novel coronavirus**. The league plans to restart the season in a so-called bubble at Walt Disney World Resort where players, staff and media will be tested and quarantined in an effort to keep everyone inside safe from contracting the virus.
- NBA officials also stated they were revamping their approach to televising the games, with cameras positioned closer to the players to emulate the vantage point of fans sitting in seats near the court. But for player-safety reasons, "the majority of our cameras near the court will be robotic for the first time," Sara Zuckert, head of next-generation telecasts at the NBA, told a news conference.

#### **African Development Bank commits \$98 million to Rwanda for multisector COVID-19 response**

- The **African Development Bank** approved a concessional loan of **\$97.675 million to Rwanda** to strengthen its national budget as it works to mitigate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The funding will take the form of an **African Development Fund loan**, which the Bank is providing the under its COVID-19 Response Facility.

#### **Tata AIA Life Insurance launches express claims service that promises payouts in 4 hours**

- Private sector Tata AIA Life Insurance has announced a new facility that promises to process life insurance claim pay-outs within **four hours of registering** them.

#### **About express claims service**

- Tata AIA Life's Express Claims within four hours is the fastest claims pay-out by any life insurer in the country.
- Additionally, the insurer's representatives offer customers services at their doorstep and assist with the necessary documentation so that the nominees do not need to visit the Tata AIA Life branch to register their claim.



### **Bharti AXA General Insurance Launches 'Bohot Zaroori Hai' Campaign For Farmers**

- Bharti AXA General Insurance, one of the world's largest insurance companies, has launched its crop insurance campaign - **'Bohot Zaroori Hai'** - for farmers in **Maharashtra and Karnataka** to encourage them about their yield protection and financial security.
- The company has secured the mandate to insure **Rs 800 crore worth insurance to the farmers in Maharashtra and Karnataka for a period of three years under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY)**, which provides them protection for the losses occurring owing to uncertainty and unfavourable weather vagaries resulting in yield deprivation on the field.
- The campaign **'Bohot Zaroori Hai'** is aimed at making the farming communities aware about the relevance and significance of crop insurance that mitigates the rural distress caused by crop failure or damage due to factors like unseasonal rains, monsoon failure, storms, floods, pests and diseases.

### **SBI Card, IRCTC launch co-branded contactless credit card on RuPay platform**

- **SBI Card** in collaboration with **Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation**, launched the **IRCTC SBI Card**.
- The card offers travellers on Indian railways maximum savings proposition on their travel, together with superior benefits on retail, dining and entertainment, besides transaction fee waivers.
- The card is equipped with **Near Field Communication technology**, which enables customers to tap and pay. It is released by National Payments Corporation of India.
- It also offers **a 1 per cent transaction fee waiver and 350 bonus reward points** upon card activation. Reward points accumulated on the card can be redeemed against free tickets on the IRCTC website.

### **Bank of Maharashtra, Uniken partner for Omni-channel security**

- For securing its internet banking channels as well as the mobile, card, call centres and ATMs, among others, from cyber fraud, the state-owned **Bank of Maharashtra has teamed-up with Uniken**, a pioneer in the field of digital security in India. As a part of this partnership, the bank will use Uniken's REL-ID technology for Omni-channel security.
- One of the leading cyber security companies in India - Uniken -has been chosen by the state-owned Bank of Maharashtra for its innovative and unique **REL-ID technology** to secure not just their internet banking channels but also mobile, card, call centres, ATM etc. using **REL-ID's Omni-channel verification mechanism**. The REL-ID technology by Uniken has been modelled for defence-in-depth functions that will help secure banks mobile apps by protecting it against phishing, pharming and malware attacks.
- The launch of **MahaSecure by Bank of Maharashtra** and making it mandatory for all its customers who perform Internet banking activities clearly indicates its efforts towards ensuring data security and keeping cyber fraud at bay for their customers. **MahaSecure**, secured by REL-ID, is a next generation secure digital banking app for all your online banking needs. It provides the convenience, security and uniform experience across all devices including desktops, laptops, smartphones and tablets through the apps medium to deliver services.

### **Banks sanctions about Rs 90,000 crore concessional credit to 1.1 crore Kisan Credit Card holders**

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated banks have sanctioned **Rs 89,810 crore** to about 1.1 crore Kisan Credit Card (KCC)holders to help farmers meet finances for kharif sowing and allied activities.
- As part of the Rs 20.97 lakh crore stimulus package, the government had announced **Rs 2 lakh crore of concessional credit through KCC** to 2.5 crore farmers, including fishermen and those involved in animal husbandry.

- As on 24.07.2020, 111.98 lakh Kisan Credit Cards have been sanctioned with credit limit of Rs 89,810 crore out of Rs 2 lakh crore concessional credit under the **#AatmanirbharBharat package**. This will benefit 2.5 crore farmers, including fishermen & dairy farmers, the Finance Minister stated.
- This marks an increase of Rs 26,940 crore over Rs 62,870 crore sanctioned to 70.32 lakh KCC holders as on June 30, she stated.

#### **Axis Bank launches AI-powered conversational voice BOT for IVR**

- Private sector lender **Axis Bank** unveiled as **Automated Voice Assistant 'AXAA'**, which is an artificial intelligence-powered conversational voice BOT.
- **AXAA** operates like a humanoid and has power to change the paradigm of customer experience from conventional **Interactive Voice Response (IVR)** system to a new era of call steering and precise response with very high degree of accuracy and consistency, it stated, adding that it will assist customers to traverse through the IVR and address their queries and requests, without the need for any human intervention in most cases.
- It can converse in **English, Hindi and Hinglish** and is capable of handling one lakh customer queries and requests per day.

#### **Sundaram Mutual launches 'Any-day SIP'**

- **Sundaram Mutual** has given investors the freedom to select a date on which their **systematic investment plan (SIP)** needs to be deducted from bank account rather than choosing from the six different dates usually fixed by the fund houses.
- The **'Any-day SIP'**, which is available in all open-ended schemes, will be available for transactions made through the Sundaram Mutual website starting July 29. Investors can also choose to modify their existing SIP date on the Sundaram Mutual platform.
- Quarterly SIPs can also be scheduled for any day of the quarter beginning January, April, July, and October.
- **Sunil Subramaniam**, Managing Director, Sundaram Mutual, stated SIP investments were hitherto restricted to certain specific dates in a month. The fund is now enhancing the flexibility and convenience available to investors as they can now choose SIP dates that suit their individual needs. This is another endeavour to strengthen and grow core retail franchise, he added.

#### **MobiKwik launches personal UPI payment link mpay.me**

- FinTech company **MobiKwik** launched **mpay.me**- a UPI payment link service to send and receive money from any UPI payment app.
- Through mpay.me, users and merchants can set up a link using their mobile number to start receiving money.
- This single link created using **mpay.me** can be shared anywhere to send and receive money and will work seamlessly on mobile as well as desktop.
- mpay.me users will be able to generate their own mini personal payment gateways using their phone numbers and share it with anyone over chat, SMS, email etc. to collect payments. Payments can be made using this link through any UPI app - MobiKwik, GooglePay, PhonePe, Paytm etc

#### **Craft Silicon, PayU announce strategic tie-up to advance digital loan repayment**

- **Craft Silicon**, a global financial software solution provider, announces a strategic association with **PayU**, India's online payment solutions provider.
- The strategic partnership aims at innovating and accelerating digital loan repayment solutions for small finance banks, micro-lending institutions and NBFCs.
- The joint official release mentioned that NBFCs, MFIs, and small finance institutions can now offer their customers easy loan repayment solutions on their own mobile applications or through consumer apps of their choice.

- Craft Silicon has enabled loan repayment in a safe and convenient manner for retail consumers. This has been achieved through **Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS)** and payment gateway integration with PayU, as per the official release.
- The companies mentioned that the partnership focuses on redefining a secured digital payment platform. It also explores the hybrid possibilities of supporting both cash and cashless loan repayments.
- The companies noted that the association offers a consolidated settlement across multiple apps and payment gateway.

#### Revision Points

Name of the Organization	Headquarters	Head of the Organization
Reserve Bank of India	Mumbai	Shaktikanta Das
Bharti AXA General Insurance	Mumbai	Sanjeev Srinivasan
Karnataka Bank	Mangalore	Mahabaleshwara MS
NABARD	Mumbai	Govinda Rajulu Chintala
Bank of Maharashtra	Pune	AS Rajeev
Securities and Exchange Board of India	Mumbai	Ajay Tyagi
Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India	Hyderabad	Subash Chandra Khuntia
National Payments Corporation of India	Mumbai	Dilip Asbe
HDFC Bank	Mumbai	Aditya Puri
IndusInd Bank	Pune	Sumant Kathpalia
Axis Bank	Mumbai	Rakesh Makhija
State Bank of India	Mumbai	Rajnish Kumar
ICICI Lombard	Mumbai	Bhargav Dasgupta
ICICI Bank	Mumbai	Sandeep Bakshi
Federal Bank	Aluva	Shyam Srinivasan
PhonePe	Bengaluru	Sameer Nigam
HSBC Bank	London	CEO - Noel Quinn India CEO - Surendra Rosha
Karur Vysya Bank	Karur	Ramesh Babu
Punjab National Bank	New Delhi	S.S Mallikarjuna Rao
Tata AIG General Insurance	Mumbai	Neelesh Garg
Bank of Baroda	Vadodara	Hasmukh Adhia
YES Bank	Mumbai	Prashant Kumar
DBS Bank	Singapore	Piyush Gupta
Master Card	New York	Ajaypal Singh Banga
EXIM Bank	Mumbai	David Rasquinha
HDFC Ergo	Mumbai	Ritesh Kumar

Bombay Stock Exchange	Mumbai	Vikramajit Sen
National Housing Bank	New Delhi	Sriram Kalyanaraman
Kotak Mahindra Bank	Mumbai	Uday Kotak
Small Industries Development Bank of India	Lucknow	Mohammad Mustafa
Microsoft	Washington	Satya Nadella
Visa	San Francisco	Alfred F Kelly Jr
National Stock Exchange	Mumbai	Vikram Limaye
Sundaram Mutual Fund	Chennai	Sunil Subramaniam
Muthoot Fincorp	Kochi	MG George Muthoot
IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company	Mumbai	RM Vishakha
Equitas Small Finance Bank	Chennai	Vasudevan P N
Andhra Bank	Hyderabad	J Packirisamy
Corporation Bank	Mangalore	PV Bharathi
Life Insurance Corporation of India	Mumbai	MR Kumar
Union Bank of India	Mumbai	Rajkiran Rai
Fino Payments Bank	Mumbai	Rishi Gupta
Indian Overseas Bank	Chennai	ParthaPratim Sengupta (New CEO)
Airtel Payments Bank	New Delhi	Anubrata Biswas

### Important Financial & Economy Affairs

Organization	GDP Rate (2020 – 21(FY21))
Fitch	8% (FY 2022)
Care Ratings	-6.4%
Citigroup Inc	-6%
Bank of America Securities	-4%
FICCI Survey	-4.5%
India Ratings	7.6% ( Fiscal Deficit FY 21)
Nomura	-6.1%
DBS	-6%

#### Fitch slashes India's growth projection from 9.5% to 8% for FY22

- Fitch Ratings cut India's growth forecast for 2021-22 fiscal to **8 per cent from 9.5 per cent** projected last month. It retained its projection of Indian economy contracting by 5 per cent in the current fiscal.
- Indian economic growth stood at an estimated **4.2 per cent in 2019-20**. In its June update of Global Economic Outlook, Fitch projected Indian economy to grow 5.5 per cent in 2022-23.

- In India, where authorities imposed one of the most stringent lockdowns globally to try to halt the spread of the virus, measures are being relaxed only very gradually; with a limited policy easing response and ongoing financial sector fragilities, we have pared our 2021 forecast to **8 per cent from 9.5 per cent** in the previous GEO, Fitch stated.
- In May update to the outlook, Fitch had predicted **9.5 per cent growth in 2021-22**.
- S&P has forecast a **5 per cent** contraction in the fiscal year starting April, and the growth to recover to 8.5 per cent next fiscal.
- Moody's expects India's real GDP to contract by **4 per cent in fiscal 2020** due to the shock from the coronavirus pandemic and related lockdown measures, followed by **8.7 per cent** growth in fiscal 2021 and closer to 6 per cent thereafter.

#### India's GDP may contract by 6.4% in FY21: Care Ratings

- Care Ratings revised India's GDP growth forecast for the current financial year to **(-) 6.4 percent** as economic activity continues to be under restriction. The rating agency, in May, had projected a decline in GDP growth of **1.5-1.6 percent in FY21**.
- Under these assumptions our forecast for GDP growth is now **(-) 6.4 percent for FY21** with GVA (de)growth estimated to be around **(-) 6.1 percent**, Care Ratings stated in a report.
- The sharper fall in real GDP also means that the nominal GDP for the year will also decline assuming inflation of 5 percent which in turn will affect the projected fiscal deficit number of the central government which will be in the region of 8 percent for FY21, it stated.
- In FY20, the country's economy grew at an estimated **4.2 percent**, almost a decade low.
- It, however, stated the positive growth will come from only agriculture and the government sector.
- The agency's May estimate for a decline in GDP growth of **1.5-1.6 percent** was based on the assumption that the lockdown would be ending by the month-end and that the recovery process will be gradual and be calibrated across sectors with the second half being closer to normal.

#### India growth forecast cut again at Citi as coronavirus cases surge

- Citigroup Inc. sharply lowered its forecast for India's economy as the coronavirus pandemic shows no sign of slowing.
- The nation's gross domestic product will contract **6% in** the fiscal year to March 2021, steeper than Citi's previous estimate for a **3.5% decline**, its analysts led by Samiran Chakraborty, chief India economist in Mumbai. The revision is largely due to a cut to the fiscal first-quarter forecast -- with the economy seen slumping **21%** during the period against **16%** estimated earlier.
- Citi's estimate is more severe than the International Monetary Fund's forecast for a **4.5%** decline this year and Goldman Sachs Group Inc.'s prediction for a **5% contraction**.
- Consumer and business sentiment is likely to remain low in the second quarter, the Citi economists stated. Return of economic activity to pre-pandemic levels is likely to happen in the third quarter, but sustained return to earlier economic growth rates may take much longer.

#### Global economy to contract by 5.2 pc in 2020: Report

- The global economy is likely to contract by **5.2 per cent in 2020** with the coronavirus still spreading and the economic prospects of countries across the world looking muted, says a report.
- According to Dun and Bradstreet's Country Risk and Global Outlook Report, that covered 132 countries, the wider global context remains sombre and the global economy will not reach pre-pandemic levels of activity again before **2022**.

- D&B is currently forecasting that the global economy will contract by **5.2 per cent in 2020** - the biggest decline since the Second World War and a far stronger contraction than the 1.7 per cent recorded in 2009 during the global financial crisis, the report stated.
- Dun & Bradstreet's Country Risk Indicator provides a comparative, cross-border assessment of the risk of doing business in a country. The risk indicator is divided into seven bands, ranging from DB1 to DB7, with DB1 being lowest risk. Each band is subdivided into quartiles (a-d), with 'a' representing slightly less risk than 'b' (and so on). Only the DB7 indicator is not divided into quartiles.

#### Indian GDP to contract 7.5 per cent if COVID vaccine is delayed, 4 per cent in base case: Report

- A longer wait for a vaccine against COVID-19 virus may lead to a contraction of up to **7.5 per cent** in the Indian GDP in FY21, a foreign brokerage stated.
- Economists at Bank of America Securities also revised down their base case estimates on the real GDP within a week, and now expect it to contract by **4 per cent** because of a drop in economic activity.
- It can be noted that multiple efforts to find a vaccine against the dreaded virus are on both globally as well domestically, but no timelines have been announced yet.
- Many analysts are expecting the Indian economy to contract by **5 per cent in FY21** as a result of the nationwide lockdowns, with some also estimating a contraction of up to **7.2 per cent in the GDP**.
- India's real GDP will likely contract by **7.5 per cent** if the global economy has to wait for a vaccine discovery for a year, the BofA analysts stated, calling this as the "bear case".
- In response, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will cut rates by another **2 percentage** points in FY21, they stated.
- Citing movement on a proprietary indicator on economic activity, it said the indicator fell 20.6 per cent in May after **the 29.7 per cent** fall in April.
- Industrial production contracted by **34.7 per cent in May**, atop April's 57.6 per cent, it said, estimating the Q1 GDP to contract to 18 per cent.
- As a result, we now expect FY21 GDP to contract by another 1 per cent to **4 per cent**, they said. The RBI is estimated to cut rates by **0.75 per cent** more in the current fiscal as a base case, the Centre's fiscal deficit will come at 6.85 per cent of GDP as against the budgeted **3.5 per cent** and the overall fiscal deficit will be at **10.7 per cent**, it stated.

#### Google to invest \$10 billion in India over 5-7 years

- Internet giant Google launched the Google for India Digitization Fund with a commitment to invest **Rs.75,000 crore** (approximately \$10 billion) over the next 5-7 years towards digitizing the Indian economy.
- The fund will be deployed to accelerate Google's efforts through a mix of equity investments, partnerships, operations, infrastructure, and ecosystem investments.
- The fund will focus on enabling affordable access to the internet and information for Indians in their own language, building new products and services relevant to India's unique needs, empowering small and medium businesses in their digital transformation, and leveraging technology and artificial intelligence (AI) for social good, including digital literacy, outbreak predictions, and support for rural economies.

#### RIL first company in India to surpass Rs 12 lakh crore market cap

- Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) became the first Indian company to cross the **Rs12 lakh crore** in market capitalisation as the stock soared to a record high. Shares of the company, controlled by billionaire Mukesh Ambani, have doubled in value since mid-March.



- The surge in market cap comes ahead of RIL's annual general meeting .The RIL stock settled at Rs 1,934.30 apiece, up 3% from its previous close on the BSE; achieving a market cap of **Rs 12.26 lakh crore**. The stock had touched a low of Rs 867.82 on BSE on March 23, and since then it has risen over 120%.
- Qualcomm Ventures, the investment arm of Qualcomm Inc., stated it will invest **Rs 730 crore** for a 0.15% stake in Jio Platforms; becoming the 12th investor in about three months.

#### India's GDP likely to contract 4.5% in FY21: FICCI survey

- Industry body FICCI's latest Economic Outlook Survey has pegged India's growth for 2020-21 at **(-) 4.5 per cent** as the country continues to see a gradual rise in financial stress.
- Data shows that while overall growth estimates stand at -4.5 per cent, the GDP estimated for the first quarter of the year is abysmal at **(-) 14.2 per cent**. The official growth numbers for the first quarter are expected to be released by the end of August 2020.
- FICCI puts India's minimum growth estimate at **(-) 6.4%** and maximum growth at **1.5%** for the year 2020-21.
- The Indian economy was already reeling under economic pressure when the lockdown was announced at the end of March. It may be noted that the Covid-19 lockdown has sharply accelerated economic stress in the country.
- The current round of the survey was conducted in the month of June 2020 and drew responses from leading economists representing industry, banking, and financial services sector.

#### Fiscal deficit to shoot up to 7.6% in FY21; twice budget estimate: Ind-Ra

- The Centre's fiscal deficit is expected to touch **7.6 per cent in 2020-21**, more than double the Budget Estimate, as the country spends extra to minimise the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic while facing a shortfall in revenues, a report stated.
- At a combined level, the fiscal deficit of the Centre and states together will come at **12.1 per cent**, with the states contributing 4.5 per cent, India Ratings and Research stated in the report. It also stated the government has already announced a stimulus package damaging the fiscal math by **1.1 per cent**.
- The agency stated India's gross domestic product (GDP) will contract by **5.3 per cent**, while states like Assam, Goa, Gujarat and Sikkim are expected to witness a double-digit contraction, it stated.
- With the growth and revenues going down, the obvious impact will be on the fiscal deficit, which is considered an important macroeconomic health indicator.
- The aggregate central and state fiscal deficit in FY21 will increase to **12.1 per cent** of GDP (Centre: 7.6 per cent, states: 4.5 per cent), mainly due to the expected shortfall in revenue collections rather than increased expenditure, it stated.

#### India's GDP to contract 6.1% in FY21: Nomura

- Economic activity continues to remain weak and will lead to a **6.1% contraction** in India's GDP in the current fiscal, a foreign brokerage stated.
- The Reserve Bank is likely to pause at the upcoming policy review in August and cut rates by 25 basis points each in the October and December reviews, Japanese brokerage Nomura stated in a report.
- All the analysts expect a contraction in the GDP due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has impacted both supply and demand forces in the economy since March. Official data also suggests a surge in inflation, which will further drag down the GDP in real terms.
- Nomura stated the June quarter will be the 'nadir' from a growth perspective and the economy will contract by **15.2%** and the GDP will never come into the positive territory in the remaining part of this fiscal.

#### India's GDP to contract 6% in FY21, says DBS

- Singaporean brokerage DBS forecast deeper distress for the country which will lead to a **6%** growth contraction in FY21.



- In its earlier forecast, the brokerage had penciled in a minus 4.8% growth for the current fiscal.
- According to the report, just **7%** of the districts in economically key states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, accounting for **30.5%** of the national economic output, and in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh account for as much as **70% of the caseload**.
- This will prolong the recovery and the pandemic is set to take a deeper economic bite, it stated.
- The yet to be stabilised infection curve reflects a deeper double-digit contraction in Q1 of FY21 and a shallower pickup in Q2 and a return to growth in Q3.
- Our granular analysis shows that about **7%** of the districts account for **70%** of the total infection tally in economically key states like Maharashtra (14% of national GDP), Tamil Nadu (8.5%), Gujarat (8%), and Karnataka and Andhra contributing significantly to the national economic output, stated.

### Important Business News

#### Fever Network launches 'Happiness Partner' initiative to help SMEs amid pandemic

- **Fever Network**, house to the country's most popular radio stations, **Fever FM, Radio Nasha and Radio One** has recently gone live with its latest campaign – '**Your Happiness Partner**'.
- The initiative aims to support the pandemic-affected small and medium enterprises and help them bounce back faster with the right promotion plan, targeting the right audience.
- With the '**Happiness Partner**' initiative, Fever Network hopes to fast-track their road to recovery using the brand's expertise of reaching out to the relevant set of listeners with a targeted marketing plan.
- The campaign is live on **Fever FM, Radio Nasha and Radio One channels**. The on-air listeners simply have to give a missed call on 01141193322 to partner with the network. Fever team will call back and help in planning and executing an end to end marketing plan.

#### SERB launches 'Accelerate Vigyan' scheme to strengthen scientific research mechanism

- The Science and Engineering Research Board has launched a new scheme called '**Accelerate Vigyan**' to provide a single platform for research internships, capacity building programs and workshops across the country.
- The primary objective of this inter-ministerial scheme is to encourage high-end scientific research and prepare scientific manpower, which can lead towards research careers and knowledge-based economy.
- **Accelerate Vigyan** will initiate and strengthen mechanisms for identifying research potential, mentoring, training and hands-on workshop on a national scale.

#### CBSE partners with Facebook for curriculum on digital safety, augmented reality

- The Central Board of Secondary Education (**CBSE**) and **Facebook** have partnered to launch curriculum on "**digital safety and online well-being**" and "**Augmented Reality**" for students and educators.
- Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank has appreciated the initiative launched by **CBSE and Facebook**.
- The comprehensive curriculum is aimed at ensuring online well-being of students and preparing them for the future of work.
- The curriculum is now available on the **CBSE website**. This partnership is led by **Facebook for Education**, a global initiative by Facebook, to build diverse learning communities and bring the world closer together.
- The module has been designed to guide students become responsible digital users, identify and report threats and harassment as well as report misinformation.

- At least 10,000 students will be covered in the training which will be imparted by the **Centre for Social Research (CSR)**.

#### **Ola in pact with PhonePe for digital payments on ride-hailing app**

- India-based mobility platform **Ola** announced that it has entered into a strategic partnership with digital payments platform PhonePe.
- The partnership will help the mobility platform enable better digital payments experience on its **Ola app**, the company stated.
- Ola customers across the country can now pay for their ride using **PhonePe**. It will also benefit the digital payments platform in order to help it expand its user base.
- Ola's customers can use all of PhonePe's payment options, including the PhonePe wallet, to make payments in addition to UPI, it stated.
- Ola had recently launched **its Ride Safe India** encouraging customers to opt for digital payment channels amid Covid-19 to minimise the risk of exposure and avoid physical contact.
- Ola has rolled out the feature on Android and will soon make it available on iOS as well, it stated.

#### **Deutsche Bank, Google in multi-year partnership for cloud services**

- **Deutsche Bank** stated it has agreed a strategic, multi-year partnership with **Google** to give the German lender access to cloud services and drive innovation in technology-based financial products for clients.
- A source familiar with the matter told Reuters that **Deutsche Bank** expects the partnership to generate more than 1 billion euros (\$1.13 billion) in accumulated earnings before income and tax (EBIT) over the next ten years.
- Both parties have signed a letter of intent and plan to sign a multi-year contract within the next few months, the bank stated.
- The partnership with **Google Cloud** will be an important driver of our strategic transformation, stated Deutsche Bank Chief Executive Christian Sewing.

#### **Maruti Suzuki Partners With Axis Bank For Easy Car Loan Schemes**

- India's largest car maker **Maruti Suzuki India Ltd.** has collaborated with private lender **Axis Bank Ltd.** to offer easy vehicle financing for car buyers.
- Under the partnership, **Axis Bank** will offer a variety of options to customers, including **100 per cent** on-road funding for salaried customers for **eight years**, step-up EMI scheme starting at **Rs 1,250 per lakh** and **balloon EMI scheme** with final EMI being **25 per cent of loan amount**.
- Customers can also choose low equated monthly installment (EMI) scheme for first three months starting with **Rs 899**.

#### **NSDC and Microsoft collaborate to train over 1 lakh youths**

- The **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** and **Microsoft** have announced a strategic partnership that aims to impart digital skills to more than one lakh youths in India by next year.
- Microsoft will collaborate with **NSDC's eSkill India portal** to provide free access to learning resources. The tech giant will also conduct digital skilling awareness drives, equipping the next generation of learners with the skills they need to thrive in a digital economy.
- As part of the partnership, Microsoft's learning resource center, **Microsoft Learn**, will be integrated with the **eSkill India digital platform** to provide access to personalised learning paths and resources that are in-demand in today's economy.
- The learning paths will cover a broad range of skills, from entry-level digital literacy to advanced product-based skilling in critical technologies. This includes AI and cloud computing, providing numerous opportunities for people to reskill and upskill, placing roles that are in-demand within reach of job seekers.

- The partnership **with NSDC is an extension of Microsoft's global skilling initiative** to help **25 million people** worldwide acquire new digital skills needed for the Covid economy.
- The integration of Microsoft Learn on the eSkill India platform will provide learners with customised content and resources, accessible anytime, anywhere.
- **eSkill India and Microsoft** will co-host e-skilling events, webinars, and virtual sessions across the country to support students, training partners, and higher-education trainees enrolled under NSDC's skill training programs.

#### Google Rebrands Social Network Google Plus As Google Currents

- Tech giant **Google's social media network Google Plus** has officially gone almost a year after the company had shut down its personal accounts.
- Google recently announced that it is replacing the social network meant for enterprise users with a new tool called the **Google Currents**.
- **Google Currents** is designed specifically to enhance communications within organisations and enterprises. It allows users to discuss through posts and comments.

#### Mastercard to invest Rs.250 cr to help Indian SMEs amid COVID-19 crisis

- Global leader in payment technology **Mastercard** announced an additional **Rs.250-crore** investment to help small businesses in the country, amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The investment, which is over and above **the USD 1 billion** committed for the Indian market till 2025, will be focussed on helping small businesses go digital, making access to credit easier and also supporting women entrepreneurs.
- For women entrepreneurs, it will focus on increasing their business acumen, offering marketing know-how and introducing their work to buyers.

#### Signature Global to invest Rs 225 cr in affordable housing project in Gurugram

- Realty firm Signature Global will invest **Rs 225 crore** over the next four years to develop a new affordable housing project in Gurugram, Haryana.
- The project, **comprising 852 units**, will be developed under the **Haryana government's affordable housing policy**.
- In the last five years, the company has launched around **20 affordable housing projects** in **Gurugram, Sohna and Karnal** (Haryana).
- It has also launched commercial projects, including a shopping mall, **in Vaishali** and Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh), comprising over 7.5 lakh square feet area.
- The government is promoting affordable housing in a big way by charging only 1 per cent GST and interest subvention under the **Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS)**.

#### BSE, IIT Alumni Council ink pact for listing of start-ups

- The **BSE** has signed a memorandum of understanding with **IIT Alumni Council** to encourage listing of start-ups and develop '**high investor depth**' in its start-ups platform.
- The alliance will ensure entity transparency, improvement in governance, market discovery of share price, provide liquidity for private equity investors and enable retail participation.
- **IIT Alumni Council** is the largest global body of alumni, students and faculty across all the **23 IITs** with over 100 city chapters globally.
- **Ravi Sharma**, President, IIT Alumni Council, stated to enhance the efficiency of the listing process and increase access to investors pool for start-ups, the Council proposes to use artificial intelligence and other automation tools to reduce time, cost and efforts involved in the listing process.

- Further, associated and volunteer managed funds will be encouraged to underwrite, act as anchor investors and market makers for the IPOs, he added.
- The entry of big ticket investors like **Mega Fund** into the start-up listing space will lead to a paradigm change in the start-up ecosystem and its ability to access capital, stated Sharma.
- The alliance will help reduce listing time, complexity and cost for SMEs and start-ups by streamlining, automating and standardising the documentation processes. Besides, Category-I merchant banks will be empanelled to help automate the listing process to reduce time and cost of listing on the start-up platform of the exchange.

#### **Motilal Oswal AMC launches Multi Asset Fund**

- **Motilal Oswal Asset Management** Company has launched a **Multi Asset Fund** that will invest in equity, international equity index funds/ equity Exchange Traded Funds Debt and Money Market Instruments and Gold ETF.
- The fund will open for subscription from July 15. Investors can invest through lumpsum or minimum SIP of **Rs.500** during NFO and ongoing period.
- The open ended fund targets to generate long-term capital appreciation by investing in a diversified portfolio in four different asset class. Having a right asset allocation is the key to navigate such volatile periods.
- Asset allocation tries to balance the risk by dividing assets among investment vehicles. Low correlation among different asset classes provide the portfolio with an effective hedge lowering the volatility of the portfolio.
- The fund will invest 10-50 per cent in equity, international equity index funds and equity ETFs, 40-80 per cent in debt, money market instruments and **10-20 per cent in Gold ETF**.
- Lower correlations among assets help reduce portfolio volatility while investments in gold and international equities will provide a hedge against inflation and diversification. Debt and money market instruments will be in AAA papers with a **3-5 year average maturity**, stated the fund house.

#### **BuyUcoin Becomes The First Indian Cryptocurrency Exchange To List XinFin Utility Token**

- Singapore based Hybrid **Blockchain** firm **XinFin** has partnered with **BuyUcoin**, one of India's leading cryptocurrency exchanges, to introduce its **Native Token XDC** to the Indian market.
- **XinFin chose BuyUcoin** as their partner because of their vision and reliability, to expand its user-base in India. XinFin has committed itself to play a major role in the mass adoption of blockchain technology in the Indian economy.
- Aftermath the legalization of cryptocurrency trading in India, various international companies look up to expand their user base/presence in the country, and **BuyUcoin** with its host of advanced products and services serves as the befitting gateway for them to reach Indian masses.
- Recently, **BuyUcoin got its license from Estonia**. It will be starting its global operation in the next quarter to reach a more global user base and becoming aggressive to cater to the worldwide market.
- BuyUcoin with all its partnerships and users reach has become an attractive gateway for Global Blockchain companies to enter into the Indian Market with its partnership with MobiKwik which is close to 107 million users to bring mainstream cryptocurrency and blockchain adoption in India.

#### **PayU Introduces QR Enabled EFT Solution For Real Time Monitoring Of Bank Transactions**

- **PayU**, India's leading online payment solutions provider, introduced the **QR enabled EFT payment option** that allows businesses and customers to track the status of **high value EFT payment** transactions (Rs 5 lakh and above) in real time.
- It ensures that customers and businesses don't have to spend time and effort chasing customer care centres of banks or merchants to understand the status of their payment or refund.

- PayU had introduced **EFT payment option** recently which allowed offline to online transactions - customers or businesses could use the **NEFT/RTGS option** listed on the merchant's checkout page to generate a one-time use challan to initiate a transaction and then complete the payment at a bank branch.
- The new **QR code feature** solves the commonly faced problem of uncertainty around payments by informing customers about the status of payments - whether it is with acquiring/partner or not, whether it has been accepted etc. With this feature, **PayU** aims to provide a seamless transaction experience to its merchant base of over 3.5 lakh, as well as their customers, providing greater control over their payments.
- With the **EFT payment option**, merchants now have a solution to cater to demand from tier two and tier three towns. The QR enabled option further enhances the solution by appealing to people who are reluctant to engage in digital transactions.

#### **NSRCEL Partners With Capgemini To Support Social Startups**

- **NSRCEL**, the startup hub at **Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIM-B)**, has partnered with **Capgemini** in India to support social impact startups in the country's growing startup ecosystem.
- Of the 28 start-ups that made the pitch, **four startups** have been selected for the programme which will start in the first week of August.
- The selected startups are **Blink Research and Services, Econut Coconut Producer Company, Learning Matters and Prosoc Innovators**.
- The selected ventures will receive from Capgemini an entrepreneurial grant of **Rs 75 lakh** each across three years based on their progress and milestone.
- From **NSRCEL at IIMB**, they will gain access to domain mentors and networks that will help them scale. The mentors will address specific challenges and provide assistance wherever required.
- **NSRCEL** brings together start-ups, industry mentors, eminent academicians from its parent institution Indian Institute of Management Bangalore and researchers who thrive on continuous interaction of theory and practice.
- Capgemini is a global leader in consulting, digital transformation, technology and engineering services.

#### **ICRA Sees India Real GDP Contract By Almost Double Digits In FY21**

- Rating agency **ICRA** sharply revised its forecast for the contraction in the Indian economy to **9.5% in the 2020-'21** financial year from its earlier estimate of 5%. The rating agency cited rising coronavirus cases and the localised lockdown to rein in the pandemic for the downward revision.
- The Indian economy had started to recover from the troughs experienced in April 2020, when the lockdown was at its severest, and many sectors seemed to be adjusting to a new normal, stated Aditi Nayar, principal economist at ICRA.
- ICRA, however, expect the rural economy to partly counter the slowdown in the urban economy. "The monsoon rainfall recorded a timely onset, and the rains covered the entire country well ahead of the normal date," it stated.
- Benefitting from favourable moisture conditions, seasonally high reservoir levels, and returnee labourers at least in some parts of the country, kharif sowing was **44.1%** higher than the year-ago level, as on July 10, 2020, and more than half of the 2019 kharif acreage had been covered. "We continue to expect agricultural GVA [gross value added] to rise by **3.5-4.0% in FY 21**," it stated.

#### **KVIC opens footwear training centre for leather artisans in Delhi**

- A first-of-its-kind footwear training centre for the marginalised community was inaugurated in Delhi by the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** with **Central Footwear Training Institute (CFTI), Agra**.
- It will provide a comprehensive two-month training programme to leather artisans for making high-quality footwear.

- The training centre will also provide logistics support to the artisans in starting their own shoe-making business once their two-month training is completed. The artisans will also be provided a tool kit worth **Rs 5,000 for carrying out their activities in future**.
- The centre is equipped with advanced tool kits and the machinery has been set up in a record time of less than two months.
- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission is also setting up a similar footwear training centre in **Varanasi**.

#### **Ola rolls out enterprise solution 'Ola Corporate' to global customers**

- India-based mobility platform **Ola** is rolling out its enterprise mobility solution '**Ola Corporate**' across global markets.
- It will be rolling out the enterprise offering to customers across **Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom**.
- The solution had first been introduced in the Indian market and had garnered **10,000 corporate users** in the country.
- Ola Corporate will also offer a range of safety features under its **Ride Safe initiative** and will follow in-class hygiene and sanitisation protocols for safer mobility amid the pandemic.

#### **FCC, NPCI to host world's largest virtual fintech event**

- The **Fintech Convergence Council (FCC)**, the fintech committee of Internet and Mobile Association of India, in collaboration with the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** and **Payments Council of India**, will be hosting a virtual fintech event
- Called **Global Fintech Fest**, the event will bring together fintech and BFSI ecosystems from across the globe on a single platform.
- The two-day event themed '**Fintech: With and Beyond Covid**' will be held on July 22-23 with over over 100 speakers. It will have more than 10,000 participants from 50 countries.
- The keynote speakers for GFF include Amitabh Kant, CEO, Niti Aayog; Nandan Nilekani, Co-founder and Non-Executive Chairman of the Board, Infosys; Uday Kotak, Managing Director and CEO, Kotak Mahindra Bank; V Vaidyanathan, MD and CEO, IDFC First Bank; and Alderman William Russell, The Rt Hon Lord Mayor, City of London.
- Chief executives from major fintech companies, including PhonePe, Navi and PayPal, will also share their insights at the event.
- The event is centred around the role of BFSI and fintech sector in the post-pandemic world. Subjects for discussion at the event will include digital payments, digital lending, digital insurance, data management, financial inclusion, digital transformation and blockchain.

#### **Shikhar Dhawan signs marketing and management agreement with IMG Reliance**

- Ace cricketer **Shikhar Dhawan** has signed an exclusive worldwide marketing and management agreement with **IMG Reliance**, which specialises in talent management, sports sponsorship and marketing.
- Since the launch of the Talent Management division in **2016**, IMG Reliance has been associated with cricketers Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Hardik Pandya, Krunal Pandya and Shreyas Iyer.
- In a statement, Nikhil Bardia, Head-Talent & Sponsorship, **IMG Reliance**, stated, Shikhar possesses enormous talent and character, a unique combination that along with cricket will help us build a brand. It is our absolute delight to be representing a talent like Shikhar who ranks amongst the best cricketers India has produced.

#### **FamPay launches India's First Numberless Card**

- **FamPay**, India's first Neobank for teenagers, launched country's first numberless card – **FamCard**.
- FamCard is just like a debit card that can be used by the teenagers in making payments independently, relieving parents of the trouble of giving them physical cash or their debit/credit card.



- With **FamPay and its numberless card**, minors can make online (UPI & P2P) and offline payments without the need to open up a bank account. Every transaction made through the card is protected with device locks such as **fingerprint, Face ID, pattern lock or PIN**.
- As FamCard has no numbers and all its details are saved on the **FamPay app**. There is no need to refer to the physical card to furnish the details during online transactions. The company assures in its communiqué that there's no fear of card information getting disclosed in case it gets stolen or lost and the card can be paused, blocked and managed at fingertips on the app.

#### **GoAir launches GoMore scheme to book adjacent seat for social distancing**

- GoAir launched **GoMore scheme**, which will allow passengers to book adjacent seat on the same PNR in order to maintain social distancing amid the pandemic.
- The airline also announced the launch '**Online Doctor Consultation**' facility in association with MFine, an on-demand healthcare platform.
- The Wadia Group-promoted **GoAir is the third domestic carrier** after Vistara and IndiGo to come out with such an offer, wherein the passenger will have to shell out additional cost for a safe air travel.

#### **NTPC floats tender to acquire 1 GW solar projects**

- State-run power giant **NTPC** has floated a tender to acquire **1 GW** operational solar projects, which entails an investment of around **Rs.5,000 crore**.
- NTPC has invited bids from the promoters or lenders, authorised financial intermediaries of power generation companies, independent power producers or developers for offering operational solar-based assets located in India.
- The document stated that in line with its long-term corporate plan, NTPC is taking various steps to make its energy portfolio greener by adding significant capacities of renewable energy (RE) sources. By 2032, the company plans to have a minimum of **32 GW capacity** through RE sources constituting nearly 25 per cent of its overall power generation capacity.
- The RE portfolio of NTPC has ongoing capacity addition projects with around 2,298 MW projects under construction.
- The company is also contemplating to increase its renewable generation capacity through acquisition of operation solar-based power assets located in India for a minimum capacity of **1 GW**, it stated in the RFP. The company can increase its power generation capacity instantly by going for inorganic growth or acquiring existing operational projects.
- Setting up a solar project takes up to two years as per industry standards. The company has a capital expenditure plan of **Rs.21,000 crore** for the current fiscal year, and most of it would be spent on adding new power generation capacities, it stated.
- For acquiring **about 1 GW of operational solar power capacity**, the company would have to shell out around Rs.5,000 crore as per back-of-the-envelope calculations.
- NTPC, formerly known as **National Thermal Power Corporation**, plans to be a **130 GW**-company by **2032** with diversified fuel mix.

#### **Wibmo launches video-based customer identification process for banks**

- **Wibmo Inc**, a global provider of payer authentication services and card payment security solutions, announced the launch of **Wibmo Video-KYC**, its video-based KYC solution to enable banks to digitally onboard their customers.
- Wibmo Video-KYC serves as a one-on-one digital interaction platform between banks and their customers.
- Wibmo believes that with Indian regulators opening up digital channels for KYC compliance, banks are looking at faster and more cost-effective ways to onboard customers, especially during the current Covid-19 pandemic.



### India's e-commerce penetration may double, become \$99 bn market by 2024: Goldman Sachs

- India's e-commerce penetration is expected to more than double to nearly **11% by 2024** from **4.7% in 2019**, and the industry is likely to reach \$99 billion in size. This is according to Goldman Sachs's review of global e-commerce markets.
- India would overtake that of developed economies like the **US, UK, China, Europe and Brazil**.
- While the e-commerce growth rate for the current year is expected to be 18%, estimates suggest growth rates of over **33% and 28% respectively** in **2021 and 2022** respectively.

### Flipkart launches hyperlocal delivery service in Bengaluru

- Walmart-owned **Flipkart** has launched a hyperlocal **90-minute delivery service** called **Flipkart Quick** in **Bengaluru** across categories including grocery, mobiles, electronics and home accessories.
- With this launch, the company has also forayed into fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as meats and milk on its platform. These new business verticals will also be operated through partnerships, for instance, for fresh fruits and vegetables, the company has partnered with Ninjacart.

### Sembcorp completes 800MW of SECI wind power projects

- Sembcorp Energy India Limited (SEIL)**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Singapore-based Sembcorp Industries, announced the completion of its **800MW wind power projects** awarded by the **Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI)**. With this, the private sector power generator's renewable energy capacity in India touched 1730MW.
- With the full commissioning of its 300MW SECI 3 wind project, Sembcorp became the first independent power producer to fully commission its projects awarded in the first three wind power auctions held by the SECI.
- This is also the largest operational wind capacity with any developer to date from SECI auctions, the company stated at a virtual ceremony. Under the first SECI auction, Sembcorp installed 250 MW of wind power capacity in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu and a further 250 MW and 300 MW under subsequent auctions in Bhuj, Gujarat. The company stated its total wind farm area covers 2,606 sq km, more than one and a half times the size of Delhi and supplies power to seven states.
- Sembcorp's SECI 3 project is the first in the country to install 2.1MW G122-127m wind turbines which are designed to work efficiently even at low wind speeds. The wind turbine generators used in Sembcorp's SECI 1 and 2 projects are also of 2.1MW capacity and are well suited to a variety of climatic conditions.

## Important State Wise News

### List of Festivals

Festivals	Place	Inaugurated by /Others
Ashadhi Ekadashi	Maharashtra	-

## Andaman and Nicobar Islands

### CIDC initiates skill Development Programme in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

- Construction Industry Development Council (CIDC)** established by the **NITI Aayog** has initiated a skill Development Programme in **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** to provide 'Employment oriented training and Skill development for the marginalized section.
- The **NHIDCL**, Port Blair in partnership with Construction Industry Development Council (CIDC) has planned a **3 months course** from 01 Aug 2020 to 31 Oct 2020 for Mason trade for the local youth/ school dropouts (10th Pass) at Mayabunder.

#### **A&N Islands: NABARD launches development projects worth Rs 44 lakhs**

- In Andaman and Nicobar Islands, **NABARD** has launched development projects worth rupees **44 lakhs** in order to strengthen the concept of **Atmanirbhar Bharat through rural entrepreneurship**.
- NABARD has recently launched development projects worth 44 lakh rupees for Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It includes the formation and development of Self-Help Groups, SHGs. Skill development of SHGs members will be taken up to promote rural entrepreneurship at micro level.
- NABARD will conduct **385 village-level programmes** and provide training to leaders of newly formed SHGs with a sum of more than 10 lakh rupees. Women attached to SHGs in Little Andaman will be trained for Mushroom Cultivation and Bamboo Handicrafts making. A four -month long training programme for tour and travel agents in Swaraj Dweep is also listed in the schedule.
- In addition to this, a yearly **Micro-Entrepreneurship Development Programme** will be carried out for **150 members of various SHGs in Mayabunder in Middle Andaman**. NABARD has also tied up with Centre of Agriculture Research Institute, CARI for conducting agricultural programmes with an amount of **20 lakh rupees**.
- To make Atmanirbhar Bharat a reality, the Bank is also providing a platform for sales of local products by financing Rural Haats in Gram Panchayats. Total 7.6 lakhs rupees have been released to establish one such Haat in Namunaghar Panchayat of South Andaman.

#### **Andhra Pradesh**

#### **Andhra Pradesh CM inaugurates cancer care centre at GGH in Guntur**

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy remotely inaugurated a comprehensive cancer care centre jointly set up by the State government and the **NATCO Trust** at the **Government General Hospital (GGH) in Guntur**, from his camp office.
- On the occasion, Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy complimented **NATCO Trust chairman Nannapaneni Venkaiah Chowdary** for collaborating with the government in providing **free cancer treatment to the poor**.
- The cancer centre, which has the approval of the **Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)**, would render medical, surgical and radiological services. Another such centre was being established in Kurnool, and it was targeted to be completed in a year.

#### **Andhra Pradesh celebrates Farmers' Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy**

- To commemorate the birth anniversary of Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy, the **14th chief minister of Andhra Pradesh** who served from 2004 to 2009, the state of Andhra Pradesh, July 8, is celebrating **Rythu Dinotsavam** (Farmers' Day).
- Late YSR's son Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government in Andhra Pradesh, last year, designated July 8 as the Farmer's Day in the state. As against the last year's celebrations on the day, this year, the celebrations would be low, in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic.

#### **Andhra Pradesh Government brings Covid-19 treatment under Dr YSR Aarogyasri, State's free healthcare scheme**

- In a significant move, the Andhra Pradesh Government has brought Covid-19 treatment under the purview of Dr YSR Aarogyasri, the flagship **free healthcare scheme** of the State.
- With this the treatment cost of Covid-19 patients will be borne by the State government. This facility also covers empanelled private hospitals.
- Detailed guidelines including the permissible cost of treatment under different categories has been released by the Government.

- The private hospitals have been categorised into **three types**. While the first category of hospitals caters entirely to Covid-19 treatment, the second type will be treating **both coronavirus and non-Covid-19 patients**. The hospitals which will treat non-Covid-19 cases have been placed in the third category.
- The Chief Executive Officer of Dr YSR Aarogyasri Trust has been entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the smooth implementation of the scheme and relief to patients by Jawahar Reddy, Special Chief Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Department.

#### Andhra Pradesh to reorganise its 13 districts into 25 for optimal use of resources

- The Andhra Pradesh cabinet decided to reorganise its **13 districts into 25 districts** by March 31 in such a way that each of the **25 parliamentary constituencies** will represent a new district.
- Chief minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy's cabinet which met at Amaravati, approved the decision to form a committee to look into reorganisation of existing **13 districts into 25**.
- The committee headed by the chief secretary comprises chief commissioner of land administration (CCLA), secretary (services) of general administration department, secretary of planning department and an official from the chief minister's office as members. Principal secretary (finance) will be its convener.
- The committee will look into various issues concerning the reorganisation of districts, including controlling the **administrative expenditure**. The committee has been asked to submit the report at the earliest. The whole objective of the reorganisation of districts was to make optimum and effective **utilisation of human resources and infrastructure facilities**. The cabinet felt that the existing districts are very large with huge population making them difficult for administration.
- It was decided that the geographical boundary of each district would cover each parliamentary constituency. As such, there would be one district for each of **25 parliamentary constituencies** in the state.
- The cabinet also decided to extend monthly pensions to the extent of **Rs 3,000 per month** to **physically challenged women** as well under YSR Cheyutha programme.
- The cabinet also approved the decision to set up a **mega 10,000 MW solar power plant** and also renewable energy export policy to encourage the private sector in the generation of non-conventional energy. The cabinet decided that long-term power purchase agreements would be signed to ensure that the cost of power would be affordable and the burden on the government would be lesser.
- The cabinet further approved the creation of a special purpose vehicle in the name of Andhra Pradesh Rayalaseema Drought Mitigation Projects Development Corporation (APRSDMPCL) with an **outlay of Rs 40,000 crore**. The SPV is aimed at raising funds for enhancement of the capacity of Rayalaseema projects and expansion of the existing canals.

#### Andhra Pradesh announces Renewable Energy Export Policy

- The Andhra Pradesh government has notified a renewable export policy that permits sale of power to other States.
- In a Government Order, the **Andhra Pradesh Renewable Energy Export Policy** states it is applicable to solar/wind/ wind-solar hybrid projects.
- Recognising the State's potential for renewable energy and the huge untapped potential, the State Government has notified the new policy that allows export of power outside the State without any obligation for discoms to procure power.
- The objective is to facilitate largescale development of renewable energy projects and facilitate **lease of 5 lakh acres** of potential land in Andhra Pradesh to renewable energy export project developers. In case of supply of this power within the State under Open Access, they will have to comply with prevailing regulations.
- The Green Energy Development Charges will be levied at **Rs.1 lakh/MW of installed capacity/ year** – for entire life of the project starting from the date of commissioning of first phase of the project.

- The Government intends to promote renewable energy manufacturing that can contribute towards economic development of the State and create employment. The new manufacturing facilities will get exemption from payment of the Electricity Duty for a period of 10 years from date of commencement of manufacturing activities.
- The **NREDCAP (New and Renewable Energy Development Corporation of A.P. Ltd)** shall act as a Nodal Agency under this new policy.

#### **AP, AMUL sign up to help self-help groups, boost milk cooperatives**

- Andhra Pradesh Government has signed an MoU with the milk cooperative giant **AMUL (Anand Milk Union Limited)** to provide fillip to the empowerment of women self-help groups and by encouraging the milk cooperatives in government sector.
- Terming Andhra Pradesh as the gateway to the South, State Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, stated, AMUL will help the women groups and give dairy farming in cooperative sector an opportunity and exposure to world class infrastructure, technology and marketing opportunities which would improve their standard of living and in self-reliance of women.
- The MoU was signed by Special Chief Secretary Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development Poonam Malkondaiah and AMUL Chennai Zonal Head Rajan on behalf of AMUL.
- The Chief Minister stated that IRMA (Institute of Rural Management) should be started in the State and Pulivendula has all the facilities that can host the unit for research and training, he stated.
- Sodi stated the State has been producing **4 crore litres of milk per day** and appreciated the State Government initiatives towards women self-reliance. The MoU will be mutually beneficial.
- Though the State stands fourth in milk production, only 24 per cent was going to the organised sector. The partnership with AMUL is seen to help farmers and SHGs get good price.
- Under **YSR Cheyutha** and **YSR Aasara**, the State is providing 90 lakh women SHGs Rs.**11,000 crore per year**.
- The State sees itself as a gateway to the South with Ananthapur, Chittoor, Visakhapatnam being closer to the neighbouring States and Telangana being close, it has the potential of being a marketing hub.

### **Assam**

#### **Assam's Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary to get national park status**

- The state government has decided to upgrade the **Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary** into a national park.
- The national park status will guarantee better management and protection of the flora and fauna of Dehing Patkai which forms the largest stretch of lowland rainforest in the country. The flow of more funds is expected to boost its infrastructure.
- A section of conservationists and lawyers had fought a long battle demanding its upgradation into a national park.
- Last month, the National Board of Wildlife's move to grant coal mining at an elephant reserve near the sanctuary had triggered a row.
- Dehing Patkai will be **the 6th national park in Assam**. The other five are Kaziranga, Nameri, Manas, Orang and Dibru-Saikhowa.

#### **Poba Reserve Forest in Assam's Dhemaji to be upgraded to wildlife sanctuary**

- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal announced that Poba Reserve Forest in **Dhemaji district would be upgraded to a wildlife sanctuary**.
- Poba Reserve Forest, declared in **1924** with an area of 10,522 hectares, is home to large number of flora and fauna.
- Recently, Assam's Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary to be upgraded into national park.

### Centre to release over 300 crore rupees as first installment under Flood Management Programme to Assam

- In order to effectively manage the relief and rehabilitation works in flood-hit Assam, Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat assured to release an amount of **346 crore rupees** immediately from his Ministry to Assam as the **first installment under Flood Management Programme (FMP)**. The Union Minister conveyed it to Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.
- The Chief Minister had appealed to the Union Minister to allocate funds to the State Government to strengthen **5,000 kms of embankments built since 1951 in the state**, which would now be turned into road cum embankments.
- In response to the request made by the Chief Minister to take up the matter of flood waters from Bhutan inundating a large area in lower Assam every year, Mr. Shekhawat assured that the Centre would soon hold discussions with the Bhutan Government.

### Assam government deploys drone and anti-depredation quick response vehicle to guard forest areas

- Assam deployed a **Surveillance Quadcopter** (Drone) and an anti-depredation quick response vehicle.
- The inauguration of the vehicle an intensified 24X7 surveillance would be made possible over the forest cover of the state helping to rein in the increasing incidents of human-animal conflict.
- Under this new initiative, the Forest Department introduces three numbers of **Special Surveillance Quadcopter** and an **Antidepradation Quick Response Vehicle** in the state.

### 'BANDICOOT': Guwahati gets Northeast's first manhole cleaning robot

- Northeast got its first-ever manhole cleaning robot to end manual scavenging.
- Manholes in Guwahati will now be cleaned by robots. Named '**BANDICOOT**', the robot has been procured by Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC).
- **BANDICOOT** was developed by a Start-up India company called **Genrobotics**.
- The robot was developed under the **Make in India initiative**. It was funded by CSR of Indian Oil Corporation Limited.
- Guwahati is India's third city to procure this innovative technology to clean manholes. Earlier, Gurugram and Coimbatore had procured BANDICOOT robots.

## Bihar

### Bihar govt to provide food grains under mid day meal scheme

- Bihar government has taken the decision to provide food grains under mid day meal scheme and cash to over two crore children of primary and middle schools across the state during lockdown and summer vacation period. Every enrolled student will get the benefit of this scheme.
- **Eight kg foodgrains and rupees 358** will be given to each student of upto class five for the month of May, June and July. Similarly students upto class eight will get 12 kg food grains and rupees 536.
- Additional Chief Secretary R K Mahajan stated all DMs and concerned officials have been instructed in this regard. Foodgrains will be provided to the guardian of the student while cash amount will be transferred into their account through DBT.

## Chhattisgarh

### Chhattisgarh government to buy cow-dung at Rs 1.5 per kg, scheme begins from July 20

- The Chhattisgarh government will procure cow-dung at **Rs 1.5 per kilogram** from July 20 under the scheme 'Gaudhan Nyay Yojana' launched on June 25.

- The committee decided to procure cow-dung at **Rs 1.5 kg** with the aim of preserving and improving cow shedding, promoting the production of vermicompost and improving the rural economy.
- The cow dung will be collected **door-to-door by Gaudhan Samiti**.
- The purpose of this scheme is to promote cattle rearing in the state and to benefit the cattle owners, who are mostly farmers.
- The government tried to strengthen the rural economy of the state through the '**Narva, Garuva, Ghuruwa, Badi**' scheme in which we have developed cowsheds in 2,200 villages of the state.
- Chhattisgarh government also launched the '**Roka-Chheka Abhiyan**' in all the villages in the state, which seeks to revive traditional agricultural methods and to save kharif crops from open grazing by stray cattle.

#### Chhattisgarh organises India's first e-Lok Adalat

- Amid the restricted judicial functioning owing to Covid-19 outbreak, an **e-Lok Adalat** is being held in Chhattisgarh to ensure the administration of justice continues where the virtual hearings are to be conducted through video conferencing.
- **The e-Lok Adalat** intended to swiftly settle pendent cases is cited as the first such attempt in the country.
- Over 3 thousand cases will be heard in more than **200 benches of various districts** across the state including the high court in Bilaspur. There will be live streaming of an **e-Lok Adalat** to be inaugurated by the high court Chief Justice P R Ramchandra Menon", stated Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra, executive chairman of the Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority
- In the wake of the financial crisis faced by the people and the lawyers owing to the coronavirus pandemic, the high court and Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority decided to organise e-Lok Adalat for resolving the pending cases.
- Cases related to money like settlements, accident claims, bouncing of cheques besides family disputes among others are usually resolved by Lok Adalat, Justice Mishra said.
- In case the parties and lawyers face difficulty in connecting through video-conferencing, they can present their cases even through WhatsApp video call, he stated and further added that if the first time experiment to hold e-lok Adalat emerges successful, it will be continued further.

#### Chhattisgarh govt launches 'Mukhyamantri Suposhan Yojana' to combat malnutrition in state

- Chhattisgarh was tagged among those states which have high levels of malnutrition and anaemia among children and women in the **National Health Family Survey (NHFS) - 4 (2015-16)**.
- Bhupesh Baghel-led Chhattisgarh government to launch a crusade — the 'Mukhyamantri Suposhan Yojana' — on October 2, 2019, on the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- The campaign turned out to be a big success, as till March this year, within six months since the scheme was launched.
- Chhattisgarh government claimed that the number of malnourished children decreased by **13.79 per cent** in the state.
- Malnutrition refers to the condition of deficiencies or imbalances owing to unhealthy eating habits or lack of nutrition in the diet.
- The children from **6 to 54 months** were considered as '**earmarked**' as per the WHO recommendation so that the child growth standards could be effectively measured under the age of 5 years.

#### Godhan Nyay Yojana' begins in Chhattisgarh

- In **Chhattisgarh**, first of its kind scheme of the country- **Godhan Nyay Yojana** has been commenced.
- On the occasion of the traditional festival of Hareli, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel inaugurated the scheme by symbolically procuring cowdung.



- Under the **Godhan Nyay scheme**, the Chhattisgarh government will procure cowdung at **Rs 2 per kilogram** from livestock owners and use it to prepare organic fertilizers.
- Women self-help groups will prepare Vermi-compost using the cowdung procured under the scheme. This **Vermi-compost** will be sold at the rate of **Rs 8 per kg**.
- The state government will construct cowsheds in all 20 thousand villages in phases. These cowsheds are being developed as day care center for cattle.
- The Godhan Nyay Yojana will be implemented through these cowsheds only. Chief Minister stated that this scheme will prove to be a boon for farms and cattle ranchers and an elixir for the rural economy.
- Shri Baghel stated that in this time of crisis, **Godhan Nyay Yojana** will not only help the cattle ranchers to earn extra income, but will also end the problem of open grazing of cattle.

#### **NTPC's 1,600 MW Lara Power Project in Chhattisgarh fully operational**

- NTPC 's **1,600 MW** Lara super thermal power station in Chhattisgarh has been fully operational after 800 MW Unit-2 of the project was made fully functional.
- Earlier in September, the **800 MW Unit-1** of the project was made commercially operational.
- 800 MW, Unit-2 of Lara Super Thermal Power Project, has been added to Installed Capacity of the NTPC on successful completion of trial operation. With this, the total installed capacity of NTPC and NTPC group has become **51,155 MW** and **62,910 MW** respectively.

### **Delhi**

#### **Delhi government launches Paudhe lagao, Paryavaran Bachao**

- The campaign **Paudhe lagao, Paryavaran Bachao** is launched with an aim to reduce air pollution by increasing green cover in the national capital Delhi.
- It has been planned that during the campaign, in 17 days, 31 lakh of tree saplings will be planted under the campaign.
- The campaign will be launched near **ITO on National Highway 20 (NH 20)**.
- Out of the 31 lakh saplings, 20 lakh saplings will be of big trees and the remaining 11 lakh saplings will be of shrubs that will be planted on both sides of the road.

#### **Delhi LG Anil Bajjal inaugurates world's largest COVID Care Centre at Radha Soami Satsang Beas**

- The Indo-Tibetan Border Police, ITBP started the operations at **Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre, Radha Soami Satsang Beas in Chhatarpur**. Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Anil Bajjal inaugurated this Centre, which is the largest of its kind in the world with over **ten thousand beds**.
- Adequate arrangements have been made by the ITBP at the centre including security, reception, call centre, nursing stations, command control stores and maintenance staff. Over one thousand doctors, nurses and paramedic staff of ITBP and other CAPFs have been deployed at the facility to operate it smoothly.
- More than **75 Ambulances will also be deployed** at the Centre. A group of first patients are expected at the centre this afternoon.
- On the occasion, Anil Bajjal reviewed with agencies concerned, the availability of facilities like beds, oxygen cylinders, concentrators, ventilators, ICU and medical staff.

#### **Delhi government to set up a COVID-19 war room to monitor the situation in the national capital**

- The Delhi government will set up a '**COVID-19 War Room**', which will 24x7 monitor the city's fight against the novel coronavirus, and suggest measures to effectively deal with the prevailing situation.

- The '**COVID-19 War Room**', which is being set up at the **Delhi Secretariat**, will be manned by around 25 experts. It is expected to become operational in the next few days.
- The new strategic facility will cover all aspects such as testing, bed strength, medical equipment, ambulance infrastructure and containment zones.
- "The '**COVID-19 War Room**' will closely monitor measures being taken by the authorities. It will also project the future requirements of medical infrastructure to deal with surging coronavirus cases.

#### Delhi Government launches LEAD portal to make online learning easy

- Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has recently an education portal, **Learning through E-resources** made accessible for Delhi (LEAD), as a product of Delhi Government. With this portal, students would easily be able to access study material from sources like CBSE and NCERT online.
- **LEAD** would be including **digital QR code textbook**, login outcome, explanatory videos, practice papers, rating, etc as one of the components.
- According to the Delhi Education Minister Manish Sisodia, teachers prepare the syllabus from not only the textbooks but also the supplementary books for every subject.
- This project will be under the leadership of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) team with **25 core members**.
- LEAD is going to be an integral part of the education system in the near future, he added.

#### Delhi govt decides to provide free ration to PDS cardholders till November 2020

- Delhi Government has decided to provide free ration to **Public Distribution System (PDS) cardholders till November 2020**.
- Delhi government stated that distribution of food grains for July is scheduled to start in a phased manner. It stated, the government will continue to provide foodgrains free of cost to the **National Food Security (NFS)** beneficiaries in Delhi to mitigate the economic hardship caused by the COVID19 pandemic.
- Now it will be providing **PDS ration to NFS beneficiaries** for the next 5 months from July to November, free of cost. In Delhi, more than 17.54 lakh households get ration under public distribution system covered by the National Food Security Act.

#### Manish Sisodia inaugurates first electric vehicle charging station in East Delhi

- Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia inaugurated the **first public e-vehicle charging station in East Delhi**.
- The e-vehicle charging-station is set-up under a partnership between power discom **BYPL** and **EV Motors India Private Limited**.
- The station can charge four vehicles at a time, in **45 to 90 minutes**, depending on the vehicle type.
- The initial charge for this facility will be **Rs 10.50 per unit for a limited period**, which is the lowest among the current EV tariff rates (for public) in Delhi.
- The charging station, branded '**PlugNgo**', is enabled with the state-of-the-art central management system. This will help oversee operations of the EV charger and provide on-site and on-demand customer support.
- The station is equipped with two types of chargers - **DC 50 kW with three guns** which can charge Hyundai Kona, MG ZS EV and Tata Nexon, and **DC 30 kW with two guns (Both GB/T)** which can charge Mahindra e-Verito and Tata Tigor. Two electric vehicles can be charged simultaneously from each charger.

#### Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal approves 'Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana'; doorstep delivery of ration

- Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced that his government has **approved 'Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana'**.

- The scheme will help the beneficiaries avail **doorstep delivery of ration**.
- The people who take ration from the government-owned ration shops can get the food items delivered to their residences.

#### Delhi government launches website for job seekers, employers

- Delhi government started portal for employers and the job seekers.
- CM Kejriwal launched the website <http://jobs.delhi.gov.in>, named as '**Rozgar Bazar**', a sort of marketplace for job seekers and the people recruiters.
- Recruiters can go to the website and update their requirement. Job seekers can also go there and update their qualification, experience and requirement.

### Gujarat

#### Gujarat extends Solar Power Policy period till December 2020

- The Gujarat government has announced a nine-month extension for its **Gujarat Solar Power Policy -2015, till December 2020**.
- With the extension of the policy, which was due to end in March 2020, entrepreneurs and solar power project developers will get an extended window of **nine months** to set up projects and avail the benefits under the policy. Under the extended window, State will be able to achieve **8000 Mw of solar capacities target**
- State Energy Minister Saurabh Patel stated the decision is part of the Gujarat Atmanirbhar Package to revive the State's economy, and will help it achieve the target of setting up **8,000 MW of solar power generation capacities by 2022**. This will provide a further boost to the Clean and Green Energy call given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he added.
- The policy, announced in **August 2015**, was seen as a step to decentralise solar power generation and aimed at encouraging investors to set up megawatt-scale solar projects under solar photovoltaic and solar thermal technologies. The policy — the second after the one announced in 2009 — also aimed at encouraging smaller generation units, mainly kilowatt (KW)-scale solar projects in the form of solar rooftop systems. The minimum size of a MW-scale project was fixed at **1 MW and that for a KW-scale project was kept at 1 KW**.
- Patel also stated the State has emerged among the top players in the solar power generation in the country and achieved an installed renewable energy capacities of 3,057 MW, against the target of **10,711 MW**.

#### Gujarat govt constitutes a five-member commission to protect rights of tribal

- Gujarat Government has constituted a **five-member commission** to decide rightful beneficiaries of Rabari, Bharwad and Charan castes residing in the Ness areas of Gir, Barda, and Aalech forests. This decision was taken in a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Vijay Rupani in Gandhinagar.
- The State Tribal Development Minister **Ganpatsinh Vasava** stated that a five-member commission would consist of a retired High Court Judge, two retired District Court Judges, a retired Forest Department official and a retired Additional Collector. He stated that the aim to set up this commission is to protect the Constitutional rights of rightful tribal and to prevent the wrong person from taking benefits of the tribal.
- The State Government has expressed its determination to protect the rights of the tribal. The decision to constitute the commission has been taken after the Chief Minister Vijay Rupani's recent meeting with the leaders of **Rabari, Charan and Bharwad communities**.

#### Gujarat: India's first honey testing laboratory set up at NDDB in Anand district

- In Gujarat, India's first honey testing laboratory has been set up **at the National Dairy Development Board in Anand district**. Inaugurating the facility through electronic mode, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar stated the new

lab will test honey as per the norms specified by the food safety regulator FSSAI. The purity of honey, adulteration, chemical substances, residues, heavy metals or antibodies can be checked.

- Mr Tomar stated that quality honey will boost exports and ensure better rates to farmers. The Minister stated that the government is encouraging beekeeping as part of its aim to double the income of farmers.
- He added that more infrastructure will be developed as the government has set aside **500 crore rupees** to promote beekeeping businesses. This is part of the **Rs 20 lakh crore** economic package for those affected by COVID-19 lockdown.

#### **Ahmedabad Railway Division successfully introduces unique concept of Baggage Sanitization**

- In Gujarat, **Ahmedabad Railway Division** has successfully introduced a unique concept of Baggage Sanitization and Wrapping at **Ahmedabad Railway Station**. It is a first of its kind across the Indian Railways. Considering the momentum in transport and travel services after Unlock-1, the Division has come up with baggage sanitization and wrapping machine to ensure safe travel amid the pandemic.
- The baggage sanitization and wrapping machine ensure **360 degree sanitization** of the luggage by using ultra violet radiation. The machine has been installed by a private enterprise.
- Ahmedabad Divisional Railway Manager **Deepak Kumar Jha** stated there are no harmful effects of UV rays on tiffins, food, vegetables or water kept in the baggage.
- This is an ideal solution for the passengers travelling by the Railways amid the pandemic. He stated the machine has been set up on **around 69 sq meters space on Ahmedabad Railway Station** which will help Ahmedabad Division to earn additional revenue of six lakh rupees. This service will be voluntary for passengers for which they will have to pay charge upto **80 rupees** depending upon the size and weight of the luggage.

#### **Goa**

#### **Goa govt allots land to 49 MSME units to set up India's first maritime cluster**

- The **Goa government** has allotted land to a consortium of 49 Goan MSME units for setting up a maritime cluster aimed at creating world class facilities for ship building.
- Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant handed over **14,380 square metres of land** for the project to set up its Common Facility Centre.
- The project, which is first maritime cluster of India, has been supported by the **Union shipping ministry**, Directorate General of Shipping, and Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
- The cluster aims at creating world class facilities for ship designers, ship and boat builders, ship repairers and marine equipment manufacturers.
- He also stated that Goa has been building ships from time immemorial, and its strategic location on West coast of India, proximity to major shipping routes, major resources, and its positive-minded inhabitants have made a natural progression in coastal shipping.
- Ships built in **Goa** serve the entire coastline of India, and are even exported to European and Asia- Pacific regions.
- Goa holds one of the largest and most competent force in terms of skill, manpower and experience in maritime field, in the form of **150 strong enterprises** spread over two generations, Dialani stated.
- The allotment of land for the common facility center is a major step towards commissioning of the cluster.

#### **Haryana**

#### **Haryana To Get Rs 1,500 Cr Central Aid For Crop Diversification, Ponds Rejuvenation**

- **Haryana** is to get a financial aid of **Rs 1,500 crore** from the Centre to expand its crop diversification scheme and rejuvenate ponds in the state.
- The state will get **Rs 500 crore from the Centre** in recognition of the Manohar Lal Khattar-led government's bid for water conservation through 'Mera Pani Meri Virasat' scheme and another sum of Rs 1,000 crore for rejuvenation of ponds and treating water
- The statement was issued after Chief Minister Khattar met Union Minister of Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in New Delhi.
- Under the '**Mera Pani Meri Virasat**' scheme, farmers are being encouraged to grow alternative crops other than paddy.
- Though the target area for the cultivation of alternative crops other than paddy was initially fixed to be one lakh hectares under the scheme, it is now being implemented in areas beyond the set target.
- Haryana will get a financial aid of **Rs 500 crore** from the central government for expansion of crop diversification. The Centre has also lauded Haryana's efforts aimed at swiftly achieving the target of providing drinking water to all rural households by **2022** under the ambitious '**Jal Jeevan Mission**'.
- The Centre would give an aid of **Rs 1,000 crore** as a matching grant to Haryana for the restoration of ponds and treatment of water. Notably, a scheme for rejuvenation of **14,000 ponds** is being implemented in the state in a phased manner.

#### **Haryana launches e-Sachivalaya portal for online appointments**

- Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar launched **e-Sachivalaya portal**, a digital platform to help people to take online appointments for virtual meetings with the chief minister, deputy CM, ministers and heads of various departments.
- The portal was launched to provide citizen-centric services to the people in a transparent and seamless manner by making the maximum use of the information technology.
- **e-Sachivalaya** any person seeking an appointment for meeting with ministers and officers at their offices in the Haryana Civil Secretariat do not have to appear physically, rather he can simply book the appointment online.
- After taking the appointment, the person will be given a time slot for the virtual meeting within **24 hours**.
- **Haryana Udhyaam Memorandum portal** was launched to facilitate MSMEs. Similarly, online education has been made available through the learning management system software.
- Similarly, portals were launched for the convenience of farmers, shopkeepers, labourers, employees during the COVID-19 period.
- The chief minister also launched a web portal for plasma donation.
- People who have recovered from COVID-19 will receive an SMS on their mobile phones and will be requested to donate plasma.
- **Plasma banks** have been opened in **Gurgaon, Faridabad, Rohtak and Panchkula**.

### **Himachal Pradesh**

#### **Himachal Pradesh to provide tap connections to all rural households by 2022**

- Union Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat discussed the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in Himachal Pradesh with Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur through video conferencing.
- Drinking water supply is a service delivery, wherein the quantity, quality of water supplied and periodicity of water supply has to be ensured for which **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** is under implementation.
- The objective of the Mission is universal coverage and emphasis is on the principle of 'equity and inclusiveness' i.e. every family in the village gets tap water connection in their household and none is left behind.

- Himachal Pradesh is planning **100% coverage by August 2022**, ahead of national goal by 2024.
- By doing so, Himachal Pradesh will be one of the leading states to accomplish the ambitious target of providing tap connection to each rural household. In this context, the central Minister had a discussion with the State CM and the CM assured of faster execution of rural drinking water supply works in the State so as to achieve the target in time-bound manner.
- All villages have to prepare a **Village Action Plan (VAP)** which essentially will comprise of the development augmentation of drinking water sources, water supply, grey-water management and operation and maintenance component.
- Since Himachal Pradesh has been allocated **Rs. 429 Crore under 15th Finance Commission** Grants to PRIs and **50% of it is to be used for water supply and sanitation**, Central minister requested the CM to plan for utilizing this fund for rural water supply, grey-water treatment and reuse and most importantly for ensuring long-term operation and maintenance of water supply schemes.

#### Himachal first state with LPG gas connections in 100 percent households

- **Himachal Pradesh** has become the first state in the country where **100 percent households** have LPG connections.
- Under the central government's '**Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana**', gas connections were provided free of cost to women of rural areas, he said, adding that 1.36 lakh families of the state were benefited under the scheme.
- The state government had launched '**Himachal Grihini Suvidha Yojana**' to cover the left out families in the state, who were not covered under the Centre's scheme.

#### Himachal Pradesh: Nadaun Police Station ranked as one of best Police Stations of India

- **Nadaun Police Station of Hamirpur district** in Himachal Pradesh has been ranked as one of the best Police Stations of the country.
- Certificate of Excellence was provided to this Police Station by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.
- Director General of Police Sanjay Kundu presented this Certificate of Excellence received by him from Union Home Minister to the Chief Minister in Shimla.
- Chief Minister **Jai Ram Thakur** congratulated the State Police in general and Nadaun Police Station of district Hamirpur in particular for being ranked as **one of the best Police Stations** of the country and the best Police Station of the State.
- The ranking of police stations is carried out by **Ministry of Home Affairs**, Government of India and the same was released by the Union Home Minister in a ceremony during DGPs Conference, recently.

#### Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh

#### UT Ladakh Admn launches Ladakh Food Security Scheme

- The Administration of UT of Ladakh launched the **Ladakh Food Security Scheme (LFSS)**, with effect from July 1, 2020 in the Union Territory of Ladakh. With the implementation of the LFSS, the Mufti Mohammad Sayeed Food Entitlement Scheme (MMSFES) of the erstwhile State of J&K is discontinued, officials said.
- The introduction of this revamped scheme will benefit **6101 AAY families** of Ladakh in addition to 43,916 PHH and NPHH families, which were already covered under the MMSFES, they added.
- Under this scheme, **AAY rationees** shall be provided 5kg of food grains per soul over and above the NFSA entitled scale of **35 Kgs per family**, subject to the maximum of **50 Kgs (NFSA+LFSS) per family** and PHH & NPHH rationees having family size of **01 soul to 9 souls** shall be provided 5kgs of food grains per soul over and above NFSA scale subject to the maximum of **50 Kgs (NFSA+LFSS) per family**.

#### Raksha Mantri inaugurates six new bridges in Jammu and Kashmir



- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated **six bridges in border areas of Jammu and Kashmir**, and asserted that development of remote areas in the region will continue to be a key priority for the NDA government.
- The defence minister dedicated the bridges through video conferencing in presence of Chief of the Army Staff Gen M.M. Naravane, Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar, Director General of Border Roads Organisation Lt Gen Harpal Singh among others.
- **Four bridges** were constructed on the **Akhnoor-Pallanwala road in Akhnoor**, while two bridges were built on the **Tarnah Nallah in Kathua district**, the Defence Ministry stated. The total cost of construction of the bridges was **Rs.43 crore**.
- The inauguration of the bridges, built by the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** comes at a time when India and China are engaged in a border row in **eastern Ladakh**.
- According to the ministry, the annual budget of the **BRO ranged from Rs.3,300 crore to Rs.4,600 crore** during 2008 to 2016. However, the allocation was hiked to Rs.8,050 crore in 2019-2020.
- The budget for the BRO for **2020-2021 is likely to be Rs.11,800 crore**, the ministry stated, adding the higher allocation will expedite the construction of strategic roads, bridges and tunnels along our northern borders.

#### **J&K UT: Advisor to LG Baseer Ahmad Khan e-launches NeFMS at Civil Secretariat in Srinagar**

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, **Baseer Ahmad Khan** e-launched **National Electronic Fund Management System (NeFMS)** at Civil Secretariat in Srinagar.
- While launching the **NeFMS**, the Advisor stated, this will go a long way in addressing the grievances of the workers associated with the various centrally sponsored schemes.
- He further stated that it will pave the way for direct and faster release of wages under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)** and other schemes.

#### **J-K Announces Launch Of 'Macadamisation Program' For Improvement Of Roads**

- Lieutenant Governor Girish Chandra Murmu announced the launch of a '**Macadamisation Program**' for the improvement of roads across Jammu and Kashmir.
- Murmu has approved a program for **100 percent macadamisation** of all roads in the Union Territory including **11,000 km of fair-weather roads**.
- A Committee comprising of the Financial Commissioner (Finance), Principal Secretary (PW(R&B)), Secretary (Planning) and Secretary (Rural Development) has been constituted, which will prepare a roadmap and a financing plan for ensuring this program in a time-bound manner.

#### **Green J&K Drive-2020 begins in Ramnagar Wildlife Sanctuary of Jammu**

- In Jammu and Kashmir, the **Wildlife Protection Wing of Forest Department** kick-started **Green J&K Drive-2020** at Ramnagar Wildlife Sanctuary in order to mark 72nd Van-Mahotsav and setting the ball rolling for monsoon plantation in Jammu Region.
- The department has set the target of planting about five lakh plants in various Wildlife Areas of Jammu region during the monsoon season. The plants being planted are fruit, fodder and shelter trees, shrubs, herbs/grasses, soil binders etc. The focus of the plantation activity is towards habitat improvement for wild animals.
- Chief Wildlife Warden Suresh K. Gupta launched the drive by planting sapling of fruit bearing species suitable for Wildlife Protected Areas and appealed to contribute towards conservation of forests, environment and wildlife by planting plants on all the available spaces.

### Jharkhand launches immunization drive for 44K kids of migrant workers

- The Jharkhand Health Department identified the children during an intensive **door-to-door survey**.
- The children between age group of **zero to five** who stayed with their parents at their workplace in different states were deprived of immunization due to ignorance or time crunch due to work pressure.
- The survey had three objectives such as identifying people suffering with respiratory problems, cough or fever for Covid-19 test, people **above 40 years of age suffering from various diseases which increases vulnerability to Covid-19**. The third objective of the survey was to know the status of immunization among children of migrant workers who returned to Jharkhand
- The Jharkhand health department has now launched a major campaign to immunize these deprived children. A senior official in the state health department, who monitors immunization stated they have set a target to immunize 8.30 lakh children between the age group of zero to five this year.

## Karnataka

### Karnataka govt launches portal to connect job seekers and employers

- Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa launched '**Skill Connect Forum**', a portal that connects job seekers with employers on a common platform.
- An unemployed person will be imparted a skill and then enabled to get a job," **the Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood department** stated in a statement.
- The initiative comes even as the state continues to reel under the economic uncertainty and acute fund crunch due to the covid-19 induced lockdown that has resulted in job losses across the state and country.
- The state government has been trying to introduce amendments to key industrial and labour laws as part of its efforts to improve ease of doing business and attract investors in the hope that it would generate employment.
- The **Skill Connect Forum portal** provides information on available jobs.
- Any individual can register on the portal by uploading details of their qualification, skill sets and other details. Similarly, employers would also register on the portal which then tries to match the requirement and availability.

### Karnataka CM Yediyurappa launches Weavers Sammaan Yojana

- Karnataka Chief Minister **B.S.Yediyurappa** launched **Weavers Sammaan Yojana**. Under this scheme, **19,744 handloom weavers** in the state will get annual financial assistance of **two thousand rupees** through **Direct Benefit Transfer**.
- The State Government has allocated **10.96 crore rupees** under the programme. There are 40,634 handloom weavers registered with Seva Sindhu software. Out of them 37,314 applications for financial assistance have been approved. Chief Minister stated that all the eligible handloom weavers will be given financial assistance under Weavers Sammaan Yojana.
- The Chief Minister stated that out of 1.25 lakh workers in this sector, one time financial assistance of two thousand rupees is approved for 8,897 workers.

### Karnataka: NABARD extends grant assistance of Rs 221.89 cr to support 298 watershed projects

- In Karnataka, **NABARD** has extended a grant assistance of **221.89 crore rupees** to support 298 watershed projects in over three lakh hectares benefitting 66,500 families. The State has about **75 percent of rainfed area**.
- According to NABARD the projects have resulted in improving the crop productivity, diversification, soil and water conservation and socio-economic condition of the beneficiaries.

- To mitigate the COVID 19 impact on rural population, NABARD has released **2200 crore rupees** in the state to the Co-operative and Regional Rural Banks under a special line of credit over and above the normal limits. **NABARD in Karnataka** observed its 39th Foundation Day.

#### **Karnataka government tweaks three laws, approves labour ordinance**

- The Karnataka state cabinet deemed the amendments to the Factories Act, Industrial Disputes Act and Contract Labour Act a necessity to ensure '**ease of doing business**'.
- The Karnataka cabinet approved an ordinance allowing factories or industries with less than 300 employees to shut down without the government's approval with an amendment to **Section 25K of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947**.
- The '**Industrial Disputes and Certain Other Laws (Karnataka Amendment) Ordinance**' will increase the threshold of employees as mandated in the Industries Disputes Act up to which a firm can be exempted from seeking the government's approval before shutting down or laying off labour from **100 to 300**.

The Karnataka cabinet also amended the Contract Labour Act via an ordinance to increase the worker threshold.

- This will allow factories that hire less than **20 contract workers** for electrified units and less than **50 contract workers for non-electrified works** to function without government nod or inspections.
- In another amendment to the Factories Act, the cabinet has increased the limit on overtime per quarter to **125 hours instead of the existing 75 hours**.

### **Kerala**

#### **"Dream Kerala project" announced for rehabilitation of Keralites returning from abroad**

- **Kerala** has announced "**Dream Kerala project**" for rehabilitation of the Keralites returning from abroad and for the overall development of the State.
- The project aims, not only, the rehabilitation of returnees but also, using their skill and knowledge for reviving the State.
- The various departments under the State Govt will be coordinating the project. Through the **Dream Kerala project**, ideas and suggestions from public will be invited.
- Steering committee headed by Chief Minister is entrusted with the task of making the final decision on ideas selected.
- **Stipulated time frame** has been fixed for early implementation of projects.

#### **Kerala announces new Entrepreneurship Development Programme**

- The **Kerala government** announced a new **Entrepreneurship Development Programme** to address the issues of shortage of working capital and availability of credit faced by startups and small entrepreneurs in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The "**Chief Minister's Entrepreneurship Development Programme**" aims to identify **2,000 entrepreneurs per year** and plans to launch **1,000 new small and medium** ventures every year for the next five years, creating **5,000 new ventures**.
- The programme will be implemented through the Kerala Financial Corporation (KFC), which will provide loans up to **90 per cent** of the project cost subject to a maximum of **rs 50 lakh at 10 per cent interest**.
- The government will give three per cent interest as subsidy thereby; the net interest rate will be seven per cent.
- Working capital loans up to **Rs 10 crore** will be sanctioned as per the purchase order.
- Seed loans of up to Rs one crore would be given to enterprises providing socially relevant products or services.
- Working capital of up to **Rs 10 crore** will be available to IT companies subject to their valuation by SEBI accredited VC funds.
- The government will provide two per cent for these three schemes

### Kerala plans to provide tap connections to all rural households by 2023

- Kerala govt has planned to provide **tap connections** to every rural household by **2023**. Out of total 67.15 lakh rural households, the state is making efforts to achieve the target of 21.42 lakh FHTCs in 2020-21. In 2019-20, against a target of 10.10 lakh rural households, state could provide tap connections to only 85,476 households.
- Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat held discussion with Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan regarding implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in the state through video conferencing .
- The flagship programme aims to provide household tap connections in rural areas of the country with focus on improving the lives of people. Potable water in adequate quantity and of prescribed quality to be provided to every rural household on regular and long-term basis, for which the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is under implementation in partnership with States.
- Kerala CM was requested to launch a 'special campaign' to provide tap connection to every such household in next 3-4 months, so that 'no one is left out'.

### Madhya Pradesh

#### MP: 'Intzaar Aap Ka' campaign started in order to attract tourists

- In Madhya Pradesh, in order to attract tourists to the tourist places of the state; '**Intzaar Aap Ka**' means waiting for you campaign has started on social media platforms.
- The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has been inviting tourists by describing the characteristics of **each tourist destination** in an attractive way with that tagline on social media platforms.
- Madhya Pradesh Tourism board is inviting tourists for safe outing during the monsoon season at various religious, natural and archaeological tourist places of the state like **Mahakaleshwar, Pachmarhi, Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Amarkantak** and other tourist places.
- At the same time, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation has started food home delivery services in the capital Bhopal, Gwalior and Jabalpur of the state. **Food App** for these Services has also been launched.

#### PM Modi to unveil Asia's largest solar plant in MP

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate to the nation Asia's largest **750 MW Rewa Ultra-Mega Solar plants in Madhya Pradesh** via video conferencing on 10th of July.
- The Rewa **Ultra Mega Solar** is established in the **Rewa district of Vindhya region of Madhya Pradesh**, with a total solar installed capacity of **750 MW**. It is one of the largest single-site solar power plants in Asia.

#### MP government begins 'Mera Ghar Mera Vidyalaya' scheme to facilitate students

- The Madhya Pradesh government has started **Mera Ghar Mera Vidyalaya Scheme**.
- Under the Mera Ghar-Mera Vidyalaya Scheme, children can now sit for classes in their homes.

The scheme aims to provide students with a school-like atmosphere at home. After the launch of the scheme, several teachers and staffers of the schools were seen delivering books and study material to the children.

- Utensils would play the role of the school bell signalling the start and end of the classes. The children have been told to study from **10 am to 1 pm** and parents have been asked to not give them any household chores during that time. Between **4pm to 5 pm** is dedicated for sports, while from **7pm to 8 pm**, they have to listen to moral stories.

#### MP government to run 'Roko -Toko' campaign for those who do not wear masks

- In Madhya Pradesh, the government will now run a **Roko -Toko** means stop and campaign for those who do not wear masks. As the Use of masks is mandatory in all public places in the state. Now selected voluntary organizations will

provide masks to the people who do not wear masks in public places and will charge an amount of **Rs 20 per mask** from the concerned.

- In the guidelines issued by the state government, it has been stated that the collector will select voluntary organizations in the district for this work. The number of persons available, credibility and efficiency of the organization will be taken into consideration while making the selection. Collectors will make available suitable places to these organizations for the distribution of masks. The selected organizations will be provided 100 masks created under 'Jeevan Shakti Yojana' on credit.
- On sale of the mask, the organizations will pay the concerned urban body at the rate of **Rs 11 per mask**.

#### **MP government approves proposal to provide monthly financial assistance of Rs 5,000 to acid attack victims**

- In Madhya Pradesh, the government approved a proposal to provide monthly financial assistance of **Rs 5,000** to the acid attack victims in the state. Prem Singh Patel, who has taken charge as the Minister for Social Justice, Divyang Welfare and Animal Husbandry, cleared the proposal during a meeting held with officials.
- The Minister informed that he has given approval to a proposal to give **Rs 5,000 per month financial assistance** to the victims of acid attack in the State so that they can lead their lives with dignity.
- The beneficiaries would start getting the aid soon. According to the 'Sparsh' portal of the government, the number of acid attack victims in the State is **17**. As per the official information, all divyang persons, including the acid attack victims, in the State currently get **Rs 600 per month** pension. The scope of divyangta in the State has been widened with the number of categories being increased to 21 from the earlier seven.

#### **Indian Railways installs automatic lighting systems at three railways stations in Madhya Pradesh**

- In a unique step towards energy conservation, the **Indian Railways** has recently installed **automatic lighting systems** at **three railways stations** in **Madhya Pradesh**. Officials informed that the Railways plan to scale up the project to cover more stations on its network.
- Railways have installed these automatic lighting systems at **Jabalpur, Narsinghpur and Bhopal railways stations** of Madhya Pradesh, which fall under the West Central Railway zone.
- Chief Public Relations Officer of West Central Railway Priyanka Dixit informed that the automatic lighting system at railways stations is controlling the lighting at these stations in tandem with the arrival and departure of trains.
- As soon as trains will arrive at the railway station, the lights of the platform will light up automatically at 100 percent capacity and as soon as the train leaves, 50 percent lights on the stations will turn off. Due to this, more than 100 units of electricity are being saved daily at big stations like Bhopal and Jabalpur, which will lead to money-saving.

### **Maharashtra**

#### **Capgemini partners with Maharashtra govt, BMC to support their fight against Covid-19**

- **Capgemini**, a French multinational corporation, announced that as part of its global Social Response Unit activities, it would extend its support to the Government of Maharashtra and the **Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) efforts**.
- The collaboration aims to overcome the unprecedented coronavirus pandemic and provide critical care to those affected.
- Capgemini signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM), to provide **65 fully equipped Intensive Care Unit (ICU)** beds to the following hospitals: (KEM) King Edward Memorial Hospital Mumbai (25 ICU Beds), (LTMGH) Lokmanya Tilak Municipal General Hospital (20 ICU Beds), and B. Y. L. Nair Charitable Hospital (20 ICU Beds) in Mumbai.



- These ICU beds will be fully equipped with ventilators, (ECG) Electrocardiography monitors, and other critical ICU patient monitoring devices used to treat critical Covid-19 patients, as per the official announcement.

#### **Maharashtra gives banking mandate to IDBI Bank, district co-op banks**

- The Maharashtra State Cabinet decided to give its banking mandate to IDBI Bank, regional rural bank and **15 district central cooperative banks** in the state. The mandate is only for the partial handling of certain funds.
- The Chief Minister's Office stated the decision to give the mandate to **IDBI Bank** was taken keeping in mind the fact that the **Government of India and Life Insurance Corporation of India** held 97.46 per cent of the share capital of the bank.
- IDBI Bank will handle excess funds of State Government public undertakings and corporations. It will not handle State Government employee salaries and pensions, the statement stated.
- Feedback was sought from the Maharashtra Department of Co-operation, Textiles and Marketing on District Central Cooperative Banks that are financially viable and are run professionally.
- Accordingly, approval was given to **15 District Central Co-operative Banks** to conduct government banking transactions (excluding salaries and pensions of government employees).

#### **Maharashtra govt, SBI to set up stress fund for stuck slum rehabilitation projects**

- The government of Maharashtra along with the **State Bank of India** is setting up a stress fund to restart stuck slum rehabilitation projects in the **Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR)** and other urban areas of the state.
- The government will infuse **Rs 700 crore to Rs 1,000 crore** in this fund aimed at providing financial support to revive such projects.
- SBI will bring in a much larger amount and also be responsible for managing the fund. Slum Rehabilitation Authority will act as a certifying agency.
- Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) is the nodal agency under the Housing Ministry to implement the slum redevelopment schemes.
- It has so far issued approvals to total **1,856 such projects** aimed at providing over **5 lakh homes to slum dwellers**. Around 540 projects of these have been completed, while 370 are stuck for various reasons including financial difficulties.
- The approvals of files will be scrutinized at **3 levels** now compared to 6 levels earlier thereby reducing the timeline by **50%** at all stages.
- The series of measures undertaken by SRA has also capped the rental amount structure, during the rehabilitation phase to **Rs 12,000 and Rs 10,000 per month** in the city and suburb zones respectively. While for the extended suburbs which come under the MMR region the government has capped rental structure to Rs 8000 per month.

#### **Asia's Largest Data Centre With 210MW Overall Capacity Inaugurated Near Mumbai**

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray e-inaugurated **Asia's largest certified tier IV data centre near Mumbai**. Located in Panvel, the Yotta NM1 data centre building, is the largest of its kind in India, as well as the second largest in the world.
- The private facility is owned by the **Hiranandani Group**, via its fully owned subsidiary, the Yotta Infrastructure Group. The **Yotta data centre** is aimed at catering for engineering and real estate businesses. Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad was also present for the virtual inauguration.
- Located in the **600-acre Hiranandani Fortune City in Panvel**, the Yotta NM1 is the first of five data centre buildings coming up at the Integrated Yotta Data Center Park, the Hiranandani Group stated in a statement. Once fully built, the group says that the Park will have an overall capacity of **30,000 racks and 210MW power**.



- Yotta NM1 data centre building, the group stated that it sprawls across 8.2 lakh sq. ft, and features **7,200 racks, 50MW power capacity** and **four redundant self-owned fiber paths** connecting the Centre to national highways.
- According to the Hiranandani Group, Yotta NM1 itself offers a highly scalable data centre infrastructure, capable of hosting global cloud, content and OTT operators, besides mission-critical applications of enterprises and governments.

### Manipur

#### Manipur CM N Biren Singh launches web portal to share COVID-19 related stories, activities

- Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh launched a website ([www.manipurcovidstories.org](http://www.manipurcovidstories.org)) to share COVID-19 related stories and information in the state.
- The web portal will also work as a tool to **monitor volunteering activities in the state** by different stakeholders and acknowledge the people's involvement in the fight against the pandemic.
- The website, which is managed by the **department of health and family welfare** and conceptualised and designed by Fluorescence Communications, will have sections of stories in the form of texts, photo features and videos.

### Mizoram

#### Harsimrat Kaur Badal Inaugurates Mega Food Park In Mizoram

- Food Processing Minister **Harsimrat Kaur Badal** inaugurated a mega food park in Mizoram that has been set up at a cost of **Rs 75 crore** and will benefit **25,000 farmers** as well as generate **5,000 job opportunities**.
- The **55-acre food park, located at village-Khamrang in Kolasib District**, Mizoram, is promoted by **Zoram Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd**. This is the first mega food park operationalized in the state.
- Zoram Mega Food Park will provide direct and indirect employment to 5,000 persons and benefit about **25,000 farmers in the CPC (Core Processing Centre) and PPC (primary processing Centre) catchment areas**.
- The Park will leverage an additional investment of about **Rs 250 crore in about 30 food processing units** in the park and would eventually lead to a turnover of about Rs 450-500 crore annually.
- The state-of-the-art food park would boost the food processing infrastructure of **Mizoram**, which is full of unique varieties of fruits, vegetables and spices.
- Under the Mega Food Park Scheme, the government provides financial assistance up to **Rs 50 crore per Mega Food Park project**. Presently, **18 mega food park projects** are under implementation in various states and **19 parks** have already become functional in states.

### Odisha

#### Odisha Launches 'Balaram' Yojana To Provide Crop Loan To Landless Farmers

- Odisha government launched '**Balaram Yojana**' to provide crop loans to landless farmers. Under the new scheme the landless cultivators will get loans through joint liability groups (JLGs).
- Under the '**Balaram**' scheme, the government has set a target to provide farm loans to **7 lakh landless farmers in next two years**. It has set aside **Rs 1,040 crore** for the purpose.
- IMAGE and Agricultural Technology Management Agencies (ATMA) will coordinate the implementation of the yojana at the State and the district levels, respectively.
- In rural and small towns, around **7,000 branches** of several banks and Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies will coordinate the implementation.
- These branches have been directed to provide loans to at least 10 JLGs this year, which means 70,000 groups will get farm loan under the new yojana.
- Each JLG will get a maximum of Rs 1.60 lakh loan.

### Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launches eight web solutions for public services under 5T initiatives

- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched **eight technology driven solutions under 5T initiatives for Home and General Administration** departments and extended the deadline for online delivery of public services to October 2 from August 15 in view of the pandemic.
- The **5T model of governance** along with Mo Sarkar has improved the quality of governance and eased delivery of public services.
- Odisha is the first State in the country to have put in place an advanced system which uses space technology and artificial intelligence to safeguard Government land in the Capital city and ensure planned development.
- The technology solutions for public services launched include **Bhubaneswar Land Use Intelligence System (BLUIS)**, which has been developed to monitor changes in all government land in the Capital city by leveraging high resolution satellite imagery.
- **E-Pravesh** is a web and mobile based application with facial recognition technology to ease and authenticate entry of visitors to Lok Seva, Rajiv Bhavan and Kharavela Bhavan.
- **E-Bhawan** is an online system designed to provide government officials, public representatives and citizens easier access to booking rooms and other facilities provided by Bhawans in other states.

### Odisha partners with Coursera to upskill 50,000 unemployed youth

- The **Odisha Skills Development Authority** has partnered with online learning platform Coursera to train **50,000 unemployed youth** during the Covid-19 crisis.
- Launched on the World Youth Skills Day, the partnership is part of the global rollout of Coursera's **Workforce Recovery Initiative**, where any state and country can provide unemployed workers with free access to online learning, the company mentioned in its official release.
- The government of Odisha aims to solve the problem of unemployment in the State by improving employability among its youth.
- The programme aims to build in-demand skills like **data science, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things**. These courses will also offer professional certificates like the Google IT Support Professional Certificate, designed to train people with no tech background for high-demand jobs.
- The workforce initiative is **part of the Coursera for Government offering launched in 2017** to equip government employees and citizens with in-demand skills. With this launch, Odisha joins many US states and countries around the world that are using Coursera to offer job-relevant online learning to unemployed workers, the company stated.
- Learners can enroll in the courses offered through the initiative by **September 30, 2020**, and will have access until the end of the year to complete the courses.

### Transgender Community In Odisha To Receive Pension Under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana

- The **Odisha Government** included transgender community under **Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY)**, a social security scheme which provides financial assistance to poor elderly, differently-abled persons and widows in the state.
- Under MBPY scheme, nearly **5,000 transgenders** will receive **Rs 500, Rs 700 and 900 per month** as pension under various categories depending on their age.
- The beneficiaries are required to have a certificate issued under **Section 6 of the Transgender Persons Act 2019**. The scheme applies to those individuals whose annual income is less than **Rs 40,000**, who is not a member paying income tax or working as a government servant.

### Punjab Police to hire civilian domain experts to deal with complex probes

- The **Punjab council of ministers** gave the go-ahead for the state police department to recruit civilian domain experts in the areas of information technology (IT), legal forensics and finance to deal with complex investigations.
- Punjab will be **India's first state to recruit civilians** as domain experts in its police force.
- **At least 798 specialists** will be hired directly as plainclothes support staff in the department's Bureau of Investigation (BoI) which will get a qualitative edge with the induction of a total of 4,251 personnel across different ranks as part of a restructuring of the police department.
- The decision was taken in a cabinet meeting chaired by **chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh** through a video-conference. This will bring about a qualitative change in the investigation process, especially in the drug cases, the spokesperson claimed.
- The BoI will mainly deal with five types of criminal cases of serious nature — homicide and forensic, crimes against women and children, narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, special crimes and economic offences and cyber crimes. These constitute around **14-15% of the total crimes** committed in the state.
- The restructuring will enable the BoI to make direct recruitments of sub-inspectors (SIs), head constables and constables "in a revenue-neutral manner by abolishing 4,849 existing posts" so that there is no additional financial burden on the state exchequer, the spokesperson added.
- As per the provisional plan, direct recruitment of 1,481 cops (297 SIs, 811 head constables and 373 constables) will be made.

### Punjab govt signs MoU with IIT Ropar for skill development

- The **Punjab government** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar**, in the area of skill development.
- The MoU provides for the IIT's technical education department to become an academic mentor for the state's engineering colleges at Gurdaspur and Ferozepur, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Skill Institute at Chamkaur Sahib, five government polytechnics and 10 government ITIs.
- The institute will also help the state in developing a model **ITI and a model polytechnic**.

## Rajasthan

### Jaipur to get world's 3rd largest cricket stadium, With capacity of 75,000

- One of the world's largest cricket stadiums with a seating capacity of 75,000 and costing a whopping Rs350 crore will soon come up on the outskirts of Jaipur.
- Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA) secretary Mahendra Sharma stated the stadium will be spread over 100 acres. He stated the land has been finalised in Chonp village, 25 km from Jaipur on the Jaipur-Delhi highway. He stated construction is expected to begin in the next four months.
- He stated this will be the third largest stadium after the Motera stadium in Ahmedabad and the Melbourne cricket stadium, Motera has a seating capacity of 1.10 lakh while the Melbourne stadium can host 1.02 lakh people.
- Sharma stated apart from cricket, the stadium will have facilities for indoor games, sports training academies, a club house and parking for 4000 vehicles.
- Regarding the financing, Sharma stated BCCI owes Rs90 crore to RCA while the association will seek a grant of Rs.100 crore from BCCI. Rs 100 crore will be taken as loan and Rs.60 crore will be amassed by selling corporate boxes in the stadium.

- The stadium is proposed to be built in two phases. In the first phase, seating capacity of 45,000 spectators will be built and in the second phase, another 75,000 seats will be added. The stadium will be built within two years of construction being started, stated Sharma.

#### **Rajasthan launches campaign to ensure purity of milk, dairy products**

- A week-long campaign has been launched in Rajasthan to ensure purity of milk and its products.
- Samples of milk and dairy products will be collected under the campaign "Pure for Sure" from July 8-July 14.
- Information related to samples will be provided by the food safety officers on the FSSAI app. Food Testing Laboratory available at the divisional level will be utilized for this campaign.
- Food safety officers have been directed to send the campaign report to the headquarters on daily basis

#### **One-stop' scheme to fast-track investments**

- A "one-stop shop" scheme approved in Rajasthan is set to fast-track investments and help revive industries in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic by giving as many as 98 types of clearances under one roof to the potential investors through the Bureau of Investment Promotion (BIP).
- The new scheme will expedite all the processes for investment proposals above Rs.10 crore.
- The Cabinet approved amendments to the Rajasthan Enterprises Single Window Enabling and Clearance Act, 2011, and gave a go-ahead to the constitution of a Board of Investment. All industries, including the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), will receive due facilitation.
- While the MSME (Facilitation of Establishment and Operation) Act, 2019, exempted small industries from the necessity of securing the State government's clearances for initial three years, the one-stop shop scheme will make the process easier for all investment proposals above Rs.10 crore.
- The Board of Investment will be headed by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.
- Confederation of Indian Industry-Rajasthan chairman Vishal Baid stated the decision would motivate investors to come to the State. He stated the CII had earlier requested the State government to make the BIP a single window and post the nodal officers there to give all approvals at one place.

### **Tamil Nadu**

#### **TN CM orders Rs 3,000 stipend for junior lawyers**

- Tamil Nadu chief minister K Palaniswami announced a monthly stipend of Rs 3,000 to newly enrolled junior lawyers for two years to help them overcome financial difficulties in pursuit of their profession.
- The announcement fulfills a long pending demand of the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.
- M G Ramachandran first launched a welfare initiative for the advocates as far back as in 1987, providing financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh to the families of lawyers in the event of their death. In 2012, Amma (late CM J Jayalalithaa) enhanced the sum to Rs 5.25 lakhs. On January 30, 2018, Current CM had ordered increasing the sum further to Rs 7 lakh.

#### **Tamil Nadu tops market borrowings among States so far, in 2020-21**

- Tamil Nadu has so far raised Rs.30,500 crore in the fiscal 2020-21 and has topped market borrowings among States in the country. Tamil Nadu has accounted for 17% of the borrowings done through the issue of bonds, known as state development loans, according to data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- With borrowings of Rs.25,500 crore, Maharashtra accounted for 14%, followed by Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh at 17% each, as per the data.

- On July 7, Tamil Nadu borrowed an additional amount of Rs.500 crore rather than the Rs.2,000 crore originally planned. The State had planned to raise Rs.2,000 crore through the issue of bonds of Rs.1,000 each with tenures of 35 years and 3 years respectively. Tamil Nadu had an option to raise a further Rs.250 crore in each of these securities, through what is known as the 'green shoe' option.
- Tamil Nadu raised Rs.1,250 crore at the interest rate of 6.63% for the 35-year bonds and Rs.1,250 crore at the rate of 4.54% for the three-year bonds in the auction conducted by RBI on July 7.
- The State has been borrowing additional amounts due to the drop in rates. On June 23, the State raised Rs.1,250 crore through the issue of 30-year bonds at 6.7%.
- Tamil Nadu has also preferred the market borrowing route for raising funds to meet the increased expenditure and falling revenue situation amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Tamil Nadu launches television-based learning programme for 10th standard students**

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy has launched a television-based learning programme for the Tenth standard students.
- The state run Kalvi television channel will initially air two-and-a-half hours of teaching programmes for the students during the week days.
- The move is aimed at helping students to continue their studies through the alternative method until the schools reopen.
- Kalvi, meaning education, is a television channel promoted by the Tamil Nadu state education department to support the teaching and learning activities. Now it has evolved as an important tool for the Tenth standard students education, in the absence of physical classrooms.
- In another development, the department has prepared video lessons for the Twelfth-class students. It may be noted that the 11th and 12th students in Government schools are being given free laptops in the state for long. Using the laptops, the students are allowed to download the video lessons from their school computers.

#### **TN govt inks 8 MoUs, attracts over Rs 10,000 cr investments**

- Tamil Nadu government inked MoUs with eight companies involving an investment of more than Rs 10,000 crore and creating more than 13,000 jobs.
- The MoUs were signed at the State Secretariat in the presence of Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami.
- The new projects to come up in Kanchipuram, Coimbatore, Ranipet, Villupuram, Chengalpet and Erode districts involved a total investment of Rs 10,399 crores and would create 13,507 new jobs.
- 17 MoUs with companies from Germany, Finland, Taiwan, France, South Korea, Japan, China, USA, Australia, the United Kingdom and The Netherlands attracting Rs 15,128 crore investments and 47,150 new jobs.
- The MoUs include Solar Cells and Modules manufacturing facility by Vikram Solar (Rs 5,423 investment, 7,542 jobs) at Orgadam in Kanchipuram district; Industrial park by CGD Sathrai (Rs 250 crore investment, 1550 jobs) at Wallajahbad in Kanchipuram; Ductile Iron Foundry by Aquasab (Rs 200 crore investment, 400 jobs) at Coimbatore; Industrial Park in a 125 acre area by NDR Infrastructure at Ranipet (Rs 200 crore investment, 400 jobs); a cashewnut processing centre by GI Agro Tech at Marakkanam area in Villupuram district (Rs 36 crore investment, 465 jobs); Data Information Centre at Singaperumalkovil in Chengalpet district by Yotta of Hiranandani Group (RS 4,000 crore investment, 2,500 jobs); Air Compressor manufacturing facility at Coimbatore by Elgi Equipments (Rs 250 crore investment, 600 jobs); and foundry expansion project by JS Auto Cast at Sipcot Perunthurai Industrial Park in Erode district (Rs 40 crore investment).

#### **Tamil Nadu govt launches web portal for unorganised sector workers**

- Tamil Nadu Government has announced that the unorganized sector workers can now join the state-run welfare boards through a dedicated web portal. As there are travel restrictions due to the prevailing pandemic, the move is expected to help thousands of the workers.
- The Tamil Nadu Government is running seventeen different welfare boards for the unorganised sector workers. The boards are offering educational scholarships, marriage assistance and skill training to the wards of the members, health facilities and insurance.
- During the prevailing pandemic situation, those who want to get membership and to apply for benefits find it difficult due to the travel restrictions. Keeping this in mind, the government has formed a secured web portal 'labour.tn.gov.in' through which the services could be availed easily.

#### **Tamil Nadu CM launches free mask plan for ration card holders**

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Palaniswami launched a free mask distribution scheme to benefit over 69 lakh families in the first phase, as part of measures to help fight COVID-19.
- Palaniswami gave away the masks to five people at the Secretariat marking the inauguration of the first phase of the scheme, which would witness distribution to beneficiaries through ration shops.
- The Chief Minister had recently announced distribution of quality reusable masks to all ration card holders in the state as part of measures to fight the pandemic.

#### **Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami lays foundation for Rs 2,368 worth projects**

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami has laid the foundation stone for the construction work on eight new industrial projects that would come up in the state for an investment of Rs 2,368 crore,. Besides, he inaugurated 11 completed projects which fetched Rs 3,185 crore investment.
- The projects for which the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone included International Tech Park Chennai (ITPC) promoted by the CapitalLand group-a Rs 1,500 crore project and TATA Chemicals' silica manufacturing unit in Cuddalore SIPCOT Industrial Park with an investment of Rs 350 crore.
- The companies have committed a total investment of Rs 2,368 crore and will create employment for 24,870 people. Further, the 12 completed projects in various sectors, including automobiles, would usher in Rs 3,185 crore of investment and job opportunities to 6,966 persons. As many as six of the eight projects for which the foundation stones were laid were signed in the Global Investors Meet held in 2019.

### **Telangana**

#### **Telangana Police Launch 'CybHER' Campaign To Tackle Cybercrime Against Women, Children**

- Telangana Police launched a month-long virtual awareness campaign 'CybHER' in the wake of cybercrime against the women and children in the state.
- Women Safety Wing, Telangana Police has launched 'CybHER' campaign, to make cyberspace safe for women and children.
- SHE teams are constituted to handle eve-teasing cases and 'Bharosa' is the centre for assisting women to deal with legal matters and to provide shelter to victims of trafficking.
- This virtual awareness campaign covers a multitude of themes pertaining to cyber safety and aims to create awareness and offer proactive measures.

#### **IT industry, Cyberabad cops to launch Sanghamitras**



- The Society for **Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC)** and **Cyberabad Police** will launch **Sanghamitra**. A friend of community, each of the Sanghamitras will lend a helping hand to those in the distress and provide them with immediate help.
- “Sangamitra as the name suggests is a trusted friend and guide to ensure a safer community,” VC Sajjanar, Commissioner of Police of Cyberabad, has stated in a statement.
- The SCSC is a collaborative effort with Cyberabad police and other stakeholders in the IT hub area to ensure smooth functioning of the IT industry. The SCSC, with representatives from all the stakeholders, provides a platform to exchange of views and sharing info on roadblocks so that a quick solution is found.
- The friends of communities are equipped with information and knowledge of law. They can provide information on how to seek and get professional help,” Krishna Yedula, General Secretary of SCSC, has stated.
- “He or she is a readily available person who can be contacted in times of distress. They will act as the bridge between the community members and the police. They will have info on helplines, contacts of shelter homes and counselors,” he stated.

### Tripura

#### Tripura: Wildlife researchers rediscover ‘Ypthima watsoni’ butterfly after 61 years

- In Tripura, a team of wildlife researchers has rediscovered ‘Ypthima watsoni’ butterfly commonly known as ‘Looped three-ring’ after 61 years near a village called Phuldungsei in Jampui Hills under the North Tripura district.
- These researchers constantly survey the butterflies in North-East India to document current populations, distributions, and status of butterflies for the past five years.
- As part of the long-term monitoring and diversity inventory program, Suman Bhowmik conducted preliminary surveys at different locations of Jampui Hills from 5-7 August 2019, there the species was sighted near Phuldungsei village.
- Mr. Bhowmik stated Looped Three-ring Ypthima watsoni, 1893 belonging to subfamily Styrene and family Nymphalidae of insect order Lepidoptera has not been recorded for approximately 61 years since its last deion from India.He stated the species was last seen in the year 1958 in Manipur.
- Bhowmik stated this rediscovery is also important in the context of updating the status and distribution of the butterfly fauna for Tripura.

### Uttarakhand

#### Char Dham Yatra 2020 begins in Uttarakhand

- Char Dham Yatra 2020 began in Uttarakhand.The four sacred Char Dham sites - Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri and Yamunotri - shall open for the devotees.
- Only residents of Uttarakhand will get the E-passes that will be valid only for the darshan at the temple during the visit to the shrine. Therefore, before heading to the temple for the darshan, devotees must visit <https://badrinath-kedarnath.gov.in/> to obtain the E-pass.
- The Char Dham Yatra is an annual pilgrimage made by devotees, and it is believed that those who complete the Yatra attain Moksha from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

#### Pawan Hans Launches First UDAN-RCS Service In Uttarakhand

- Flagging off the first helicopter service by **Pawan Hans** in Uttarakhand under the **UDAN-RCS scheme**, Hardeep Singh Puri, MoS, I/C, Civil Aviation stated that launch of the heli service and opening of these new routes will bring people of the state closer and support tourism in the region.

- This service will enable connectivity between Dehradun, New Tehri, Srinagar and Gauchar. Pradeep Singh Kharola, Secretary, MoCA; Usha Padhee, Joint Secretary, MoCA; Sanjeev Razdan, CMD, Pawan Hans were present during the virtual flag-off ceremony in New Delhi. The route was simultaneously inaugurated by Trivendra Singh Rawat, Chief Minister of Uttarakhand from the state.
- Commencement of the new heli services will enhance the aerial connectivity between hilly regions in Uttarakhand and bring down the average travel time to 20-25 minutes. This will also assist the Chaar Dhaam Yatra pilgrims.
- Two more networks connecting Dehradun to Ramnagar, Pantnagar, Nainital, Almora, Pithoragarh, and Dehradun to Mussoorie will also be operationalized soon by Pawan Hans Ltd.

### Uttar Pradesh

#### UP CM Yogi Adityanath launches piped water project "Har Ghar Jal" for Bundelkhand region

- Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath launched the ambitious piped water project "Har Ghar Jal" that means water to every house for Bundelkhand region.
- The 12 projects for which the foundation stone was laid by the Chief Minister in Jhansi are part of the "Jal Jeevan Mission" Har Ghar Jal, started by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Under the first phase of project which costs 2185 crores the 3 districts of Bundelkhand region will be covered.
- Surface water and underground water will be used to provide drinking water through taps in every household of the region.

#### Yogi launches employment scheme for SCs

- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched "Navin Rojgar Chhatri Yojana" for an all round development of the Scheduled Castes.
- He transferred a financial assistance of 17.42 crore online to 3,484 people under the "Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Swaroggar Yojana" and interacted with some beneficiaries from Rae Bareilly, Gorakhpur, Basti, Meerut, Azamgarh and Moradabad districts through video conferencing.
- The beneficiaries of the scheme will use the money for setting up general merchant shops, laundry and dry cleaning, cybercafe and tent house.

### West Bengal

#### Mamata Banerjee launches West Bengal's 'Self Scan' app

- In the backdrop of the central government imposing a ban on as many as 59 Chinese mobile phone apps, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched a mobile app, indigenously developed by state information technology department, for documents scanning. The app is named - 'Self Scan'.
- The application will be made available on the app store and will be free and completely safe.
- Self Scan is a completely safe and a protected app. No data is saved on the server. Documents can be edited too on the application besides the scanning feature.

### 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	Satya Pal Malik
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 Koshyari
Manipur	Imphal	N Biren Singh	Najma Heptulla
Meghalaya	Shillong	Conrad Sangma	Tathagata Roy
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

Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment launches Nasha Mukh Bharat

- “Nasha Mukht Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21) for 272 Most Affected Districts’ was e-launched by Shri Rattan Lal Kataria, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment on the occasion of “International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking”
- The Action Plan has the following components: Awareness generation programmes; Focus on Higher Educational institutions, University Campuses and Schools; Community outreach and identification of dependent population; Focus on Treatment facilities in Hospital settings; and Capacity Building Programmes for Service Provider.
- The funds for this programme in the year 2017-18 was Rs 49 crores and now in the year 2019-20 it was Rs 110 crores and in the year 2020-21, the fund has been increased to Rs 260 crores, i.e. more than 5 times.
- Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment could not conduct the presentation of the National Awards for outstanding Services in the field of Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse

#### **HRD Minister launches World's first ever online B.Sc. degree in Programming & Data Science**

- Human Resources and Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank virtually launched World's first ever online B.Sc. degree in Programming and Data Science.
- The programme has been prepared and offered by the Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Madras.
- Data Science is one of the fastest growing sectors that is predicted to create 11.5 million jobs by 2026.
- Online education is a trend being rapidly embraced for high quality education on a large scale.
- This programme is open to anyone who has passed Class 12th, with English and Maths at the Class 10th level, and enrolled in any on-campus UG course.
- Mr Pokhriyal informed that the current batch of students who are completing their Class 12th in 2020 are eligible to apply. He stated, Graduates and working professionals can also take up this programme.
- Mr Pokhriyal added that this unique offering removes all barriers of age, discipline or geographic location and provides access to a world-class curriculum in data science which is in huge demand for skilled professionals.
- The Minister stated, the students who are currently enrolled in a different on-campus program anywhere in the country can pursue this degree program without needing to switch careers or courses.

#### **Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurates Continuous Galvanized Rebar Production Facility in Punjab**

- Union Minister of Steel Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated Continuous Galvanized Rebar Production Facility at Mandi Gobindgarh in Punjab.
- Mr Pradhan stated, steel in general, and galvanized steel in particular, is a material of strength which is environment-friendly and cost-effective.
- He stated, with our focus on large-scale expansion in infrastructure sectors and driving steel intensity, the demand for galvanized steel is set to rise.
- The Continuous Galvanized Rebar production facility will support the much awaited need of supplying galvanized rebar to the construction industry.
- The facility inaugurated is a step in the right direction towards making of an Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- Mr Pradhan also talked about several steps being taken by the Ministry including setting up of steel clusters, steel scrap policy and steps taken to ensure raw material security to make the sector more vibrant and self-reliant.

#### **46 million girls went missing in India, says UNFPA report**

- One in three girls missing globally due to sex selection, both pre- and post-natal, is from India — 46 million out of the total 142 million, according to the UNFPA's State of the World Population 2020 report released.

- The figure shows that the number of missing women has more than doubled over the past 50 years, who were at 61 million in 1970.
- The report examines the issue of missing women by studying sex ratio imbalances at birth as a result of gender-biased sex selection as well as excess female mortality due to deliberate neglect of girls because of a culture of son preference. Excess female mortality is the difference between observed and expected mortality of the girl child or avoidable death of girls during childhood.
- The report cites a 2014 study to state that India has the highest rate of excess female deaths at 13.5 per 1,000 female births or one in nine deaths of females below the age of 5 due to postnatal sex selection. The same study shows that in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan excess female mortality of girls below 5 years of age was under 3 per cent.
- However, the advent of technology and increased access to ultrasound imaging ensured that parents didn't have to wait for the birth of their girl child to kill her but could terminate a foetus upon knowing its gender. This resulted in the number of girls missing due to female foeticide exceeding those that were missing because of postnatal sex selection.
- According to estimates averaged over a five year period (2013-17), annually, there were 1.2 million missing female births, at a global level. India had about 4,60,000 girls 'missing' at birth each year.

#### **Union Minister, Shri Giriraj Singh launches the first edition of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Newsletter "Matsya Sampada"**

- Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Shri Giriraj Singh launched the first edition of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Newsletter "MATSYA SAMPADA" published by the Department of Fisheries, Ministry for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India and the Operational Guidelines of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). Shri Pratap Chandra Sarangi, Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying. Dr. Rajeev Ranjan, Secretary, Department of Fisheries, Government of India and senior officers of the Department of Fisheries were present.
- The Newsletter "MATSYA SAMPADA" is an outcome of the endeavours of the Department of Fisheries to reach out to the stakeholders especially fishers and fish farmers through various means of communication, and to inform and educate them about the latest developments in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. It would be published on a quarterly basis starting from the first quarter of the year 2020-21.
- The Government of India in May, 2020 launched a new Flagship Scheme i.e. the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) for sustainable and responsible development of fisheries sector at an investment of Rs. 20050 crore. The PMMSY with an array of 100 diverse activities is by far the largest ever investment in fisheries sector.
- Achieving the ambitious targets under PMMSY of an additional 70 lakh tons fish production, rupees one lakh crores fisheries exports, generation of 55 lakh employment over next five years, etc. require multipronged strategies along with collaborative and concerted efforts between the government and the stakeholders.
- The Newsletter "MATSYA SAMPADA" is likely to serve as an effective tool and platform in disseminating the intent and initiatives of PMMSY for crystalizing public opinion in the collective effort towards reaching the envisaged goals. It would also enable to showcase the best practices in fisheries and aquaculture undertaken by the fishers, fish farmers and entrepreneurs including the latest developments and success stories.

#### **MoRTH prepares blueprint for scheme of cashless treatment of motor accident victims**

- The Road Transport and Highways Ministry has prepared a blueprint for implementing the scheme of cashless treatment of motor accident victims. The scheme also includes creation of a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund.
- The Ministry has asked the States and Union Territories to share their views by the 10th of this month. The National Health Authority with over 21 thousand hospitals on board has been entrusted to implement the scheme.

- It has been envisaged in the scheme to provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in the country. The fund would be utilized for treatment of road accident victims and for payment of compensation to the injured or to the family of person losing life in hit and run cases.

#### **Private Train Operations Likely To Begin By April 2023**

- Private train operations in the country will begin by April 2023, and the ticket fares in these trains will be competitive with airfares on similar routes.
- The improvement in technology will also mean that the coaches that now require maintenance after running 4,000 km, will need maintenance after every 40,000-km, that is either once or twice a month.
- Private participation in passenger train operations will only be five per cent of the existing 2800 Mail/Express trains over IR.
- The private entity has to ensure 95 per cent punctuality and record not more than one failure per lakh kilometre of travel.

#### **Govt clears Defence acquisition worth Rs 38,900 Cr**

- Defence Acquisition Council ( DAC) in its meeting accorded approval for Capital acquisitions of various platforms and equipment required by the Indian Armed Forces. Proposals for an approximate cost of 38900 Crore rupees were approved. The meeting chaired by Defence minister Rajnath Singh focused on indigenous design and development. These approvals include acquisitions from Indian Industry amounting to 31130 Crore rupees.
- The equipments are to be manufactured in India involving Indian Defence Industry with participation of several MSMEs as prime tier vendors. The Indigenous content in some of these projects is up to 80 per cent of the project cost.
- A large number of these projects have been made possible due to Transfer of Technology by DRDO to the Indigenous Industry. These include Pinaka ammunitions, BMP armament upgrades and Software Defined Radios for the Army, Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile Systems and Astra Missiles for Navy and Air Force. The cost of these Design and Development proposals is in the range of 20400 crore rupees.
- Further, addressing the long felt need of the Indian Air Force to increase its fighter squadrons, the DAC also approved the proposal for procurement of 21 MIG-29. It also approved upgradation of existing 59 Mig-29 aircraft and procurement of 12 Su-30 MKI aircraft.

#### **Drug Discovery Hackathon jointly launched by Union Ministers Dr Harsh Vardhan and Ramesh Pokhriyal**

- Human Resources and Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan jointly launched the Drug Discovery Hackathon 2020. It is an online competition and anybody from anywhere in the country or world can participate.
- Mr Pokhriyal stated, Drug Discovery Hackathon is first of its kind national initiative for supporting drug discovery process. He stated, to attract international talent, the hackathon will be open to participation from across the globe from professionals, faculty, researchers and students.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan emphasized the need to establish the culture of computational drug discovery in the country. In this initiative, HRD Innovation cell and AICTE will focus on identifying potential drug molecules through the Hackathon while CSIR will take these identified molecules forward for synthesis and laboratory testing.
- He stated, the objective of this Hackathon is to identify drug candidates against SARS-CoV-2 by in-silico drug discovery through the hackathon and follow up by chemical synthesis and biological testing.

#### **Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri announces a new category of awards titled 'Prerak Dauur Samman' as part of Swachh Survekshan 2021**

- Puri announced a new category of awards titled 'Prerak Dauur Samman' as part of Swachh Survekshan 2021.



- The Prerak Dauur Samman has a total of five additional sub- categories -Divya (Platinum), Anupam (Gold), Ujjwal (Silver), Udit (Bronze), Aarohi (Aspiring) – with the top three cities being recognized in each. In a departure from the present criteria of evaluating cities on 'population category', this new category will categorize cities on the basis of six select indicator wise performance criteria which are as follows:

Segregation of waste into Wet, Dry and Hazard categories

- Processing capacity against wet waste generated
- Processing and recycling of wet and dry waste
- Construction & Demolition (C&D) waste processing
- Percentage of waste going to landfills
- Sanitation status of cities

#### **Govt sanctions Rs 4,000 cr under Atma nirbhar programme to improve infrastructure for Food Parks in K'taka**

- Karnataka Agriculture Minister B C Patil informed that Central Government has sanctioned 4,000 crore rupees under Atma nirbhar programme to improve infrastructure for the Food Parks in the state.
- Infrastructure will be improved in four Food Parks developed in the state and plans will be afoot to set up more. Food Parks will help the economic stability of farmers.
- Agri start-ups will be encouraged in the state to set up units in the Food Parks. Malur, Bagalkote, Hiriyuru and Jewargi have Food Parks. Food Karnataka Limited is a special purpose vehicle appointed to manage these parks.

#### **AIR to broadcast its first-ever 'News Magazine' programme in Sanskrit**

- The All India Radio (AIR) will broadcast its first- ever 'News Magazine' programme in Sanskrit which will have news from the world of Sanskrit and prominent developments of the week, a statement stated.
- The programme titled, 'Sanskrit Saptahiki', will air from Saturday onwards and will be of 20 minutes duration. It can be heard on All India Radio FM News Channel (100.1 MHz frequency) every Saturday with a repeat broadcast on Sundays.
- The weekly programme will have elements from the prominent developments of the week, news from the world of Sanskrit, explaining the humane values enshrined in Sanskrit literature, philosophy, history, art, culture and tradition, it stated.
- It will give voices to the children and the youth and their feelings about the great Indian tradition and culture, it added.
- Its components will be Sukti, Prasang, Saptahiki, Sanskrit Darshan, Gyan Vigyan, Bal Vallari, Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat and Anvikshiki.
- Prasang will tell the story of the week from the field of art, culture, tradition, history and epics like the Ramayana, the Mahabharat, Upanishads, Vedas, etc.

#### **India to add 60 GW renewable energy capacity in 5 yrs**

- India is expected to add only 60GW of renewable energy capacity in the next 5 years, according to Bridge To India's India Renewable Energy CEO survey report 2020.
- This is very low, at 12GW per annum. The government wants to achieve 175GW by 2022 and 450GW by 2030, stated Vinay Rustagi, Managing Director of the renewable energy consultancy firm.
- India's utility scale solar capacity was 32.2GW and wind capacity was 37.6GW as on 31 March 2020.
- It stated 58% of the respondents are against the idea of imposing import duty on cell and module imports. The survey observed that 50% of the respondents believe the auctions market is quite aggressive.
- A large majority of respondents report a challenging policy environment. Uncertain policy environment was voted as one of the biggest challenges in the sector in 2019, indicating little improvement on this front, it stated.

### **Housing and Urban Affairs Minister launches toolkit for Swachh Survekshan 2021**

- Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched the toolkit for Swachh Survekshan-2021, the sixth edition of the annual cleanliness survey of urban India conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. Mr Puri stated, every year, the Swachh Survekshan is redesigned innovatively, to ensure that the process becomes more robust, with focus on sustaining the behaviour change.
- Mr Puri announced a new category of awards titled Prerak Dauur Samman as part of Swachh Survekshan-2021. The Prerak Daur Samman has a total of five additional sub- categories -Divya (Platinum), Anupam (Gold), Ujjwal (Silver), Udit (Bronze), Aarohi (Aspiring) - with top three cities being recognized in each.
- In a departure from the present criteria of evaluating cities on population category, this new category will categorize cities on the basis of six select indicator-wise performance criteria. These are segregation of waste into Wet, Dry and Hazardous categories, processing capacity against wet waste generated, processing and recycling of wet and dry waste, construction and demolition waste processing, percentage of waste going to landfills and sanitation status of cities. The Minister also touched upon how Swachh Survekshan has become a tool for citizen engagement in the spirit of a true Jan Andolan.
- The virtual event also saw the signing of the Engagement and Coordination Arrangement between the Ministry and the USTATED which is a continuation of the Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation in the field of WASH that was signed between Government of India and USTATED in 2015. It was followed by a webinar on 'Segregation at Source: Key to Solid Waste Management' which was attended by over 1,000 State and Urban Local Body officials and other stakeholders.

### **Centre Approves Rs 574 Crore Annual Plan For National Highway In Jammu And Kashmir**

- The central government has approved an annual plan worth Rs 574.16 crore for national highway works in Jammu and Kashmir for 2020-21.
- The major works incorporated in the approved annual plan included construction of 3.23 km three fly-overs in Srinagar on NH-44 (Jammu-Srinagar highway) at Bemina, Sanatnagar and Nowgam with Rs 220.68 crore.
- The other works incorporated in the approved annual plan included expressway, four laning, construction of 6 km 3rd bypass on NH-444 Shopian bypass with Rs 120 crore, and construction of 13.60 km bypasses in Pulwama and Kulgam with Rs 62.98 crore.

### **Indian Railways to transform itself as 'Net Zero' Carbon Emission Mass Transportation Network by 2030**

- Indian Railways is taking decisive steps to transform itself as a 'Net Zero' Carbon Emission Mass Transportation Network by 2030. It is endeavouring to be self reliant for its energy needs by utilising its vacant land for renewable energy projects.
- Railways is committed to utilize solar energy for meeting its traction power requirements and become a complete 'Green mode of transformation. The Railways Ministry has decided to install solar power plants on its vacant unused lands on mega scale. The use of solar power will accelerate Rail Minister Piyush Goyal's mission to achieve conversion of Indian Railways to 'Net Zero' Carbon Emission Railway.
- The present demand of Railways would be fulfilled by the solar projects being deployed, making it the first transport organization to be energy self-sufficient. This would help in making Railways green as well as Atma Nirbhar.
- Railways has started energy procurement from various solar projects like 3 MWp solar plant set up at MCF, Raebareli in Uttar Pradesh. Besides, one project of 1.7 MWp at Bina in Madhya Pradesh which shall be connected directly to the Overhead Traction System has already been installed and is presently under extensive testing.

- It is likely to be commissioned within 15 days. Railway Energy Management Company Ltd. is working to proliferate the use of solar energy on mega scale. It has already floated tenders for 2 GW of solar projects for Indian Railways to be installed on unutilized railway lands.

#### **Kolkata Port starts new Shipping service from Kolkata to Bangladesh's Chattogram port**

- A new shipping service to augment Indo-Bangla trade was inaugurated between SMP (Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port) Kolkata and Chattogram Port at Kolkata Dock
- new regular service connection between Kolkata Dock system and Chattogram has been started from Kolkata Dock System (KDS) of SMP Kolkata by Zim Integrated Services in Association with Bengal Tiger Lines.
- The maiden voyage the vessel 'M.V Asiatic Moon" (Singapore Flag) is expected to carry around 300 containers of Indian exports to Bangladesh. Primary goods that are exported include ferro metal alloys and garments.
- So far, this is the biggest vessel by size to ply between Kolkata and Chattogram. Earlier, only small barges with a capacity of 80-100 containers were operational on this route.
- Vinit Kumar, Chairman, SMP, Kolkata stated, Another similar service is scheduled to start from Kolkata Dock to Chattogram. The vessel MV Xpress Godavari operated by Xpress Feeders shall commence the voyage to Chattogram Port in the second week of July.
- With Global shipping players venturing into direct Bangladesh calls from Kolkata Port, it is expected that this tradeline shall be strengthened and Kolkata Port is poised to be the hub for Bangladesh Trade, he added.

#### **NHRC sets up panel to assess Covid-19 impact on human rights**

- The National Human Rights Commission has constituted an 11-member expert committee to study impact of Covid-19 on human rights and future response of the government.
- The expert panel would be headed by Dr K S Reddy, president of Public Health Foundation of India. The expert committee would assess the impact of Covid-19 on human rights of people, especially marginalised and vulnerable sections of the society, including migrant labourers.
- The expert panel would also suggest the future policy for the Centre and state governments. The committee has public health experts and members of civil society who have vast experience in social sector and human rights
- The expert panel would study in detail the migrant crisis that had unfolded at the beginning of pandemic from the public health perspective and how it was addressed by the states. Best practices being followed abroad and even in India would also be studied in detail and woven in policy recommendations to the government.
- NHRC would also seek views of different ministries including health and family welfare, labour, women and child development, food and public distribution, agriculture, social justice and empowerment and tribal affairs. According to sources, NHRC would issue an advisory to the state governments and the Centre making the findings of the expert panel as the basis.

#### **USTATED, MNRE Announce New Partnership To Expand Clean Energy Development**

- In a step toward increasing US-India collaboration for clean energy development, the US Agency for International Development (USTATED) and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) have announced the launch of a partnership between the USTATED-supported South Asia Group for Energy (SAGE) and MNRE's national technical institutions.
- SAGE is a US government consortium that will provide advanced technical knowledge on clean energy development embedded in the US Department of Energy's National Laboratories to MNRE's National Technical Institutions and other public institutes under this new partnership.

- MNRE Secretary Indu Shekhar Chaturvedi and USTATED Deputy Assistant Administrator for Asia Javier Piedra launched the partnership on the sidelines of the ongoing US-India Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP) meetings.
- SAGE will contribute significantly towards achieving the goals of US government's Asia Enhancing Growth and Development through Energy (Asia EDGE) Initiative, a primary pillar of the US government's Indo-Pacific vision in South Asia, and the US-India Strategic Energy Partnership.
- To maximise the impact of this partnership, the SAGE consortium in discussion with MNRE and its technical institutions, the National Institute of Wind Energy and the National Institute of Biomass Energy has identified several key topics.
- The SAGE is a consortium consisting of USTATED, the US Department of Energy and three of the Department of Energy's National Laboratories -- Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, National Renewable Energy Laboratory and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

### **Cabinet Approves Rs 1 Lakh Crore Fund For Agriculture Infrastructure**

- The Union Cabinet gave its approval to Agriculture Infrastructure Fund of Rs 1 lakh crore, a new pan-India central government scheme, to provide a medium to long term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and financial support.
- Union Cabinet, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar stated under the Scheme, Rs 1 lakh crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans to Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), marketing cooperative societies, Farmer Producers Organisations (FPOs), self-help groups (SHGs), farmers, joint liability groups (JLG), multi-purpose cooperative societies, agri-entrepreneurs, start-ups, aggregation infrastructure providers and central/state agency or local body sponsored public-private partnership projects.
- Loans will be disbursed in four years starting with the sanction of Rs 10,000 crore in the current year and Rs 30,000 crore each in the next three financial years.
- All loans under this financing facility will have interest subvention of 3 per cent per annum up to a limit of Rs 2 crore.

This subvention will be available for a maximum period of seven years.

- Credit guarantee coverage will be available for eligible borrowers from this financing facility under the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) scheme for a loan up to Rs 2 crore. The fee for this coverage will be paid by the government.
- In case of FPOs, the credit guarantee may be availed from the facility created under FPO promotion scheme of Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DACFW)
- The total outflow as budgetary support from the central government will be Rs 10,736 crore.
- The agri infra fund will be managed and monitored through an online Management Information System (MIS) platform.
- National, state and district-level monitoring committees will be set up to ensure real-time monitoring and effective feedback.
- The duration of the scheme will be for 10 years from the financial year 2020 to FY 2029.

### **Centre to release postal stamp of former PM PV Narasimha Rao to mark centenary**

- A commemorative stamp would be released soon by the Centre in honour of former Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao on his 100th birth anniversary.
- The Telangana state cabinet and Legislature would pass resolutions requesting a Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour, for the former Prime Minister.

### **PM Modi to inaugurate 3-day India Global Week 2020**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver the inaugural address on the first day of India Global Week-2020 .The theme of the three-day virtual conference is Be The Revival: India and a Better New World. India Global Week- 2020 will have 5,000 global participants from 30 nations. In all, 250 global speakers will address the virtual conference in 75 sessions.
- Other high profile speakers participating at the event will include External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar, Minister of Railways, Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir G C Murmu, Isha Foundation Founder Sadhguru, Spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar along with UK's Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab and Home Secretary Priti Patel, US Ambassador to India Ken Juster and others.
- It will also feature a never seen before performance 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' by Madhu Nataraj and a special 100th birth anniversary concert in tribute to the sitar maestro Ravi Shankar by three of his most eminent students.

#### **Union Cabinet extends Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Anna Yojana till November; 80 crore people to be benefitted**

- The Union Cabinet has given approval for extending Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana for five more months. Union Minister Prakash Javadekar stated that under the scheme, five kilogram of Wheat or Rice will be given to every member of the beneficiary family and one kilogram of Chana will be given to each family for five more months. Mr. Javadekar stated, the scheme will benefit more than 80 crore people in the country.
- The Cabinet also gave its approval to a new pan India Central Sector Scheme- Agriculture Infrastructure Fund. The scheme will provide a medium and long term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for post-harvest management Infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and financial support.
- The Government has extended the time limit for availing three free gas cylinders by beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. Union Minister Prakash Javadekar stated that the beneficiaries can avail the free cylinders till September this year. Earlier, the beneficiaries were able to avail the free cylinders only up till June.
- The Cabinet has also approved development of Affordable Rental Housing Complexes for urban migrants and poor as a sub-scheme under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Under the scheme, 1 lakh eight thousand single bedroom flats will be given to nearly 3 lakh 50 thousand people.
- In another major announcement, the Cabinet approved extension of the Employee Provident Fund contribution of 24 per cent for another three months from June to August this year. The scheme entails an expenditure of 4 thousand 860 crore and will benefit over 72 lakh employees in the country. The government will credit the contributions both for the employee and the employer.

#### **Cabinet approves 12 thousand 450 crore rupees investment in three public sector general insurance companies**

- The Union Cabinet has also approved capital infusion in three Public Sector General Insurance Companies.
- Mr. Javadekar informed that under it, 12 thousand 450 crore rupees will be invested in Oriental Insurance Company Limited, National Insurance Company Limited and United India Insurance Company Limited.

#### **Ministry of Culture to reprint 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur under NMM**

- The Ministry of Culture has taken up the project of reprinting of 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur under the National Mission for Manus, NMM.
- The first set of five volumes of Mongolian Kanjur published under the NMM was presented to the President Ram Nath Kovind on the occasion of Guru Purnima, also known as Dharma Chakra Day, on 4th July.
- A set was then handed over to Mr. Gonching Ganbold, Ambassador of Mongolia to India by Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel.

- The National Mission for Manus was launched in February 2003 by the Government of India with the mandate of documenting, conserving and disseminating the knowledge preserved in the manus.
- One of the objectives of the mission is to publish rare and unpublished manus so that the knowledge enshrined in them is spread to researchers, scholars and general public at large.
- It is expected that all the 108 volumes of the Mongolian Kanjur will be published by March, 2022.
- Mongolian Kanjur, is considered to be the most important religious text in Mongolia. In the Mongolian language 'Kanjur' means 'Concise Orders'- the words of Lord Buddha.

#### **18th meeting of high-level Group of Ministers on COVID-19 held in New Delhi**

- The 18th meeting of the high-level Group of Ministers, GoM on COVID-19 was held in New Delhi through video conferencing under the chairpersonship of Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan.
- The GoM was briefed on the current status of COVID-19 in India. The global comparison between the five most affected countries clearly depicted that India has one of the lowest cases per million which is 538 and deaths per million which is 15 compared the global average of 1453 and 68.7.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan stated that as we move forward, the focus shall be on the management of COVID-19 through strict containment measures and surveillance; utilizing full testing capacity and focus on monitoring of co-morbid and elderly population.
- He pointed out that the aim is to reduce the Case Fatality Rate low by early identification and effective clinical management.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan was joined by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep S. Puri, Minister of State for Health Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State for Shipping and Chemical and Fertilizers Mansukh Mandaviya, Member Health in NITI Aayog Dr. Vinod Paul joined the meeting through video conference link.

#### **MSDE launches ASEEM portal to help skilled people find livelihood opportunities**

- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) on Friday launched 'Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping' (ASEEM) portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- The initiative aims to accelerate India's journey towards recovery by mapping skilled workforce and connecting them with relevant livelihood opportunities in their local communities, especially in the post Covid era.
- The Artificial Intelligence-based ASEEM will provide employers a platform to assess the availability of skilled workforce and formulate their hiring plans. ASEEM refers to all the data, trends and analytics which describe the workforce market and will map demand of skilled workforce to supply.
- ASEEM also available as an APP, is developed and managed by NSDC in collaboration with Bengaluru-based company Betterplace specialising in blue collar employee management.
- Database of labour migrants in Indian states and overseas citizens who returned to India under the Vande Bharat Mission and filled SWADES Skill Card has been integrated with the ASEEM portal.

#### **Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Facebook host webinar for sensitization of MPs on GOAL project**

- Ministry of Tribal Affairs hosted a Webinar along with Facebook India in New Delhi for sensitization of Members of Parliament from Scheduled Tribe (ST) Constituencies on Going Online As Leaders (GOAL) Project.
- Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda, Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Renuka Singh Saruta, many Members of Parliament and senior officers from Tribal Affairs Ministry, MyGov and Facebook India participated in the Webinar.



- Mr Munda stated that Going Online As Leaders (GOAL) is a digital skilling and mentorship initiative that will engage renowned leaders and experts in their domains-from business, education, health, politics, arts and entrepreneurship among others, to personally mentor scheduled tribe youths across India through digital mechanisms.
- He stated, this programme will empower and enable scheduled tribe youths to become change makers of tomorrow. The initiative primarily targets at capacity building of youths living in tribal areas which will inspire, guide and encourage them to boost their confidence level and ignite higher aspirations among them.
- The core areas of mentorship programme are Digital Literacy, life Skills and Leadership and Entrepreneurship. He called upon tribal youths to use their Mobile phone as a tool to achieve their goals in life.

#### **Shipping Ministry issues draft 'Aids to Navigation Bill 2020' for public consultation**

- The Shipping Ministry has issued a draft of 'Aids to Navigation Bill, 2020' for suggestions from the stakeholders and public. Suggestions and opinions can be sent by 24th of July.
- The draft bill is proposed to replace the Lighthouse Act, 1927 to incorporate the best global practices, technological developments and India's International obligations in the field of Aids to Marine Navigation.

Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandaviya stated, this initiative is part of the proactive approach adopted by the Ministry by repealing colonial laws and replacing them with modern and contemporary needs of the maritime industry. He stated, the bill aims to regulate state-of-the-art technologies of marine navigation.

#### **NITI Aayog Atal Innovation Mission Launches App Development Module For School Students**

- The Atal Innovation Mission of Centre's think-tank, NITI Aayog, has launched a free online app development course for school students across the country.
- Named, 'ATL App Development Module', the online course intends to make mobile application-developers of school students under Atal Tinkering Lab initiative of AIM.
- The online course will comprise six project-based learning modules and online mentoring sessions.
- The course has been jointly developed by NITI Aayog's AIM and Indian startup, Plezmo.

#### **NTPC's Singrauli Unit 1 emerges top-performing plant in Q1**

- National Thermal Power Corporation, NTPC's Singrauli Unit 1 has emerged as the top-performing unit in the country in the first quarter of the financial year, as per the data released by Central Electricity Authority. NTPC, Singrauli is the oldest Unit and a flagship power station of NTPC Limited. The first unit of the station started generating on 13th February, 1982 and continues to serve the country with exceptional performance.
- NTPC, Singrauli has an installed capacity of 2,000 Mega Watt with five units of 200 Mega Watt each and two units of 500 Mega Watt each. Three units of 200 Mega Watt have achieved Plant Load Factor PLF of 101.96 per cent, 101.85 per cent and 100.35 per cent in First Quarter of Financial Year 20-21 among the Coal-fired Units, in the country.
- With a total installed capacity of 62 thousand 110 Mega Watt, NTPC Group has 70 Power stations comprising of 24 Coal, seven combined cycle Gas or Liquid Fuel, one Hydro, 13 Renewables along with 25 Subsidiary and Joint Venture Power Stations.

#### **NITI Aayog presents India's second Voluntary National Review at UN, titled 'Decade of Action: Taking SDGs From Global to Local'**

- NITI Aayog presented India's second Voluntary National Review (VNR) at United Nations High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, 2020.
- The HLPF is the foremost international platform for follow-up and review of progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, presented the VNR.

- The India VNR 2020 report titled Decade of Action: Taking SDGs from Global to Local was released by Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, Dr V.K Paul, Member, NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, and Sanyukta Samaddar, Adviser (SDGs), NITI Aayog.
- At the HLPF this year, which is being hosted virtually in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, 47 Member States are set to present their VNRs between 10th-16th July 2020.
- The HLPF meets annually in July for eight days under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN. The VNRs presented by Member States at the HLPF are a critical component of the review of progress and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The reviews are voluntary and state-led and are aimed at facilitating the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned.
- The process of preparation of a country's VNR provides a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of various relevant stakeholders. NITI Aayog prepared and presented India's first VNR in 2017.
- India presented its VNR along with other second time presenters like Bangladesh, Georgia, Kenya, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria and Uganda. The presentation also included a short film which encapsulated the processual aspects of the second VNR and captured some of India's major progress areas on the SDGs.

#### **Govt aims to increase public health expenditure to 2.5% of GDP by 2025**

- The Union Health Ministry has pushed for an increased expenditure on public health. In a meeting with the 15th Finance Commission, the Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan, highlighted that the government aims at gradually increasing the public health expenditure to 2.5 per cent of the nation's GDP by the year 2025.
- The Minister asserted that the outlay for primary health expenditure will also be made nearly two third of the total public health expenditure in the country. Reiterating the government's target of the National Health Policy 2017, Dr. Vardhan emphasized on the importance of increasing the state's health sector spending to nearly 8 per cent of their total budget.
- The Health Ministry apprised the Finance Commission of the need to further strengthen the public health sector, surveillance and public health management, preventive and promotive health care system in the country.
- The Health Ministry has also revised its requirement of around 4.9 lakh crores to 6.04 lakh crores in view of the COVID pandemic. It has asked for additional resources for the States which would be utilized for achievement of the National Health Policy targets.

#### **Govt approves Rs 107 cr for fire-fighting facilities at Haldia Dock**

- The government has approved Rs 107 crore for modern fire-fighting facilities at Haldia Dock Complex of Kolkata Port to ensure safe cargo operations, especially petro-chemical goods.
- Kolkata Port is one of the top 12 major ports in the country.
- It was approved by Union Minister of State (I/C) for Shipping Shri Mansukh Mandaviya.
- The modern fire-fighting facility will enable Haldia Dock Complex in safe handling of the movement of petro-chemical products.
- The existing fire-fighting facility does not support the handling the LPG and other petroleum products as per the guideline of Oil Industry Safety Directorate (OISD) of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

#### **Indian Railways on mission mode of becoming 'Green Railway' by 2030**

- The Ministry of Railways is on a mission mode with the goal of transforming Indian Railways into Green Railways by 2030 and has taken a number of major initiatives towards mitigation of global warming and combating climate change.

- Railway Electrification, improving the energy efficiency of locomotives and trains and fixed installations, green certification for installations/stations, fitting bio-toilets in coaches and switching to renewable sources of energy are parts of its strategy of achieving net-zero carbon emission.
- Indian Railways has completed electrification of more than 40,000 Route km (RKM) (63 per cent of Broad Gauge routes) in which 18,605 km electrification work has been done during 2014-20. Previously, only 3,835 km electrification work was completed during the period 2009-14. Indian Railways has fixed a target of electrification of 7000 RKM for the year 2020-21.
- All routes on Broad Gauge (BG) network have been planned to be electrified by December 2023.
- Indian Railways has also taken a number of initiatives to promote solar energy. Indian Railways is working to harness the potential of 500 Mega Watt (MW) energy through rooftop Solar panels (Developer model). Already awarded for 245 MW and target for completion of these plants is December 2022.
- One project of 1.7 MW at Bina (Madhya Pradesh) in collaboration with Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has already been installed and is presently under extensive testing. This is First of its kind of solar project in the world.
- In the wind energy sector, 103 MW wind-based power plants have already been commissioned. Among them, 26 MW is in Rajasthan (Jaisalmer), 21 MW is in Tamil Nadu and 56.4 MW is in Maharashtra (Sangli). Indian Railways has also planned to set up 200 MW wind energy plants in next 2 years in Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Karnataka.
- In the field of Green Initiatives, a total of 69,000 coaches have been fitted with more than 2,44,000 bio-toilets in Indian Railways.

#### **Indian Railways creates Post Covid Coach for passenger safety**

- Indian Railways has created Post Covid Coach to ensure safer journey of passengers.
- This Post Covid Coach has design improvements in the coach like handsfree amenities, copper-coated handrails & latches, plasma air purification and titanium di-oxide coating for Covid free passenger journey.
- Post Covid Coach has handsfree amenities like foot operated water tap & soap dispenser, foot operated lavatory door (outside), foot operated flush valve, foot operated latches in lavatory door, outside washbasin with foot operated water tap and soap dispenser and forearm operated handle on compartment door.
- It is equipped with copper-coated handrails & latches because copper degrades the virus landed on it within few hours. Copper has anti microbial properties. When virus lands on copper, Ion blasts pathogen and destroy the DNA and RNA inside the virus.
- It has of plasma air equipment in AC duct. This plasma air equipment will sterilize the air and surfaces inside the AC coach using ionised air to make the coach Covid-19 and particulate matter resistant. This provision will also improve the ion concentration from 100 ions/cm<sup>3</sup> to more than 6000 ions/cm.
- TiO<sub>2</sub> is considered to be a safe substance and is harmless to humans. This Titanium Di-oxide coating applied on washbasins, lavatory, seats & berths, snack table, glass window, floor, virtually every surface that comes in human contact. Effective life of this coating is 12 months.

#### **On United Nations' 75th Anniversary, PM Modi to virtually address ECOSOC on July 17AIR**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually address the valedictory of high-level segment of United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- This will be Prime Minister Modi's first speech at the United Nations after India reinstated it's place as a non permanent member in the Security Council earlier this year.

- ECOSOC serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues and formulating policy recommendations addressed to member states of the United Nations. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Council since its formation in 1945.

#### **Ministry of Tourism presents 41st webinar titled 'NadiVigyan: A complete solution for spinal disorders' under Dekho Apna Desh series**

- To enlighten about the ancient form of health science- NadiVigyan and its fruitful benefits in curing various spinal disorders, Ministry of Tourism presented a webinar on 'NadiVigyan: A complete solution for spinal disorders' under Dekho Apna Desh webinar series.
- This unusual topic is a part of our culture and heritage and tourism plays a major role in showcasing these traits of a country. The ancient form of health science- Nadi Vigyan clearly highlights how incredible our country is in various aspects apart from travel destinations.
- The 41st session of the Dekho Apna Desh webinar series on 11th July, 2020 was moderated by Ms Rupinder Brar, Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism and was presented by Dr. Laxminarayan Joshi, Dean, Student Welfare, Founder and Faculty Head of Dept. of Yogic Science, Uttarakhand Sanskrit University.
- Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat and it is continuously spreading spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat through virtual platform.

#### **HRD minister Ramesh Pokhriyal releases PRAGYATA guidelines on digital education**

- Union HRD Ministry released the guidelines for Digital Education.
- The ministry has recommended a cap on the screen time for students. As per the guidelines, online classes for pre-primary students should not be for more than 30 minutes. It further mentions that two online sessions of up to 30-45 minutes each should be conducted for classes 1 to 8 and four sessions for classes 9 to 12.
- The HRD minister informed that PRAGYATA guidelines have been developed from the perspective of learners, with a focus on online/blended/digital education for students who are presently at home due to lockdown.
- The PRAGYATA guidelines include eight steps of online education that is, Plan, Review, Arrange, Guide, Yak(talk), Assign, Track, and Appreciate.
- The guidelines outline suggestions for administrators, school heads, teachers, parents, and students in the following areas: 1. Need assessment; 2. Concerns while planning online and digital education like duration, screen time, inclusiveness, balanced online and offline activities, etc level-wise; 3. Modalities of intervention including resource curation, level-wise delivery, etc.; 4. Physical, mental health, and wellbeing during digital education; 5. Cyber safety and ethical practices including precautions and measures for maintaining cyber safety and 6. Collaboration and convergence with various initiatives.

#### **Indian Railways' 1st cable-stayed rail bridge, Anji Khad bridge**

- The country's "first cable-stayed" Indian Railways bridge – the magnificent Anji Khad Bridge will soon connect Katra and Reasi in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The country's first cable-stayed railway bridge is being developed by Konkan Railway Corporation Limited, which is a Government of India undertaking. The cable-stayed railway bridge is a part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project.
- The Anji Khad Bridge has a single pylon, standing at a height of 331 metres above the river bed. The total length of the Anji Khad Bridge is 473.25 metres. The length of the viaduct is 120 metres and the central embankment has a length of

94.25 metres. It has support of 96 cables. The Anji Khad Bridge has been designed to handle heavy storms of strong winds.

- Also, Pump Concreting System arrangement was used to increase efficiency, providing higher safety for workers and saved the construction time by about 30 per cent. The Anji Khad Bridge will have an integrated monitoring system by means of numerous sensors installed at various locations on the bridge.
- The USBRL project also involves the Chenab river bridge. The Chenab bridge, once completed, will become the world's highest rail bridge.

#### **Coal Ministry plans to link mining plan portal with PARIVESH website**

- The coal ministry plans to link the mining plan portal with Parivesh website.
- PARIVESH is a single-window hub for online submission, monitoring, and management of proposals submitted to the Environment Ministry by project proponents to seek various types of clearances.
- Auction of coal mines for commercial mining organised by Ficci.
- The government may go for an investment of Rs.50,000 crore in eastern part of the country in the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha to ramp up coal evacuation.
- Last month, the government launched the auction process for 41 coal blocks for commercial mining, a move that opens India's coal sector for private players, and termed it a major step in the direction of India achieving self-reliance.

#### **Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Minister e-inaugurates NSTI, Extension Centre in Imphal**

- Union Minister of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey, e-inaugurated a National Skill Training Institute (NSTI), Extension Centre located at the campus of Government ITI in Imphal through a Video conference.
- The inaugural was held during the Digital Conclave held on the occasion of the World Youth Skills Day and the fifth anniversary of 'Skill India' mission, organised by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India.
- The NSTI, Extension Centre, Manipur, at the campus of Govt. ITI, Takyel will facilitate training of Trainers in the Crafts Instructor Training Scheme (CITS) trades of Motor Mechanic Vehicle, Carpentry and Electrician initially by making use of existing infrastructure & Equipment in the ITI for the benefit of ITI Passed outs in the Northeast Region.
- The NSTI, Extension Centre, Manipur was e-inaugurated in the presence of the Minister of State for Power, New & Renewable Energy (Independent Charge) and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, R. K. Singh, Manipur State Labour & Employment Minister, Dr. Thokchom Radheshyam and other top officials of New NSTI meet future demand to the existing 21,768 CITS trained instructors of 17,683 & 4,085 in both Engineering & Non Engineering trades respectively in the North Eastern region of 7 states.

#### **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, Hyderabad observes Swachhata Pakhwada**

- The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad is a globally recognized autonomous institution under Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt. of India.
- The Centre provides free dedicated ocean information services to the Nation, using state-of-the-art technology and research, for increasing Safety and Profit. The three primary services provided are the Tsunami Early Warning Service, Ocean State Forecast Service and Potential Fishing Zone Advisory Service.
- Swachhata Pakhwada was held at the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services till 15 July. Several activities were conducted towards awareness generation of the mission objectives to eradicate open defecation, efficient

management of solid and liquid waste, encourage cost effective and appropriate technologies for ecologically safe and sustainable sanitation, overall cleanliness etc.

- These included plantation of trees at ITCO ocean campus (saplings arranged from the Govt. of Telangana under Haritha Haram mission ), awareness campaign and distribution of personal hygiene materials to INCOIS outsourced (housekeeping, gardening, security, electrical etc.) staff, single-use plastic avoidance pledge and campus sanitization.

#### **HRD Minister Launches First Online NISHTHA Programme For 1,200 Key Resources Persons Of Andhra**

- Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank launched virtually the first online National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) programme for 1,200 key resources persons of Andhra Pradesh, in New Delhi.
- NISHTHA is organised at the elementary stage under Samagra Shiksha, a Centrally sponsored flagship programme of MHRD to improve learning outcomes.
- Thereafter, 33 states and union territories launched this programme in collaboration under Samagra Shiksha.
- Andhra Pradesh is the first state for which the government is launching the online NISHTHA programme for 1,200 key resources persons through the NISHTHA portal. These resource persons will help in the mentoring of teachers of Andhra Pradesh, who will take online NISHTHA training on DIKSHA later on.
- The modules developed under NISHTHA focus on the holistic development of children and hence include curriculum and inclusive education health and well-being, personal social qualities, art integrated learning, initiatives in school education, subject-specific pedagogies, ICT in teaching-learning, leadership, pre-school education and pre-vocational education. All the modules are centered around learning outcomes and learner-centered pedagogy.
- These modules are made interactive with reflective and engaging activities for teachers providing space to educational games and quizzes for joyful learning by the teachers and school heads, which in turn will motivate teachers to implement this in their classroom for enhancing students' learning outcomes.

#### **Govt announces 'Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund' of Rs 15,000 crore**

- The government announced an 'Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund' worth Rs 15,000 crore to support private investment in dairy processing, value addition and cattle feed infrastructure.
- It aims to incentivise investment by individual entrepreneurs, private companies, MSMEs, Farmers Producers Organisation (FPOs) and Section 8 companies to establish dairy and meat processing and value addition infrastructure as well as animal feed plants.
- As per the guidelines, the project under AHIDF would be eligible for loan up to 90 per cent of estimated cost from scheduled banks. The Centre will provide 3 per cent interest subsidy on these loans.
- AHIDF has been set up as MSMEs and private companies also need to be promoted and incentivised for their involvement in processing and value addition infrastructure.
- The eligible beneficiaries under the scheme would be FPOs, MSMEs, Section 8 companies, private companies and individual entrepreneurs with minimum 10 per cent margin money contribution by them. The balance 90 per cent would be the loan component to be made available by scheduled banks.
- The Centre will provide 3 per cent interest subvention to eligible beneficiaries. There will be 2-year moratorium for principal loan amount and 6-year repayment period thereafter.
- The central government would also set up Credit Guarantee Fund of Rs 750 crore to be managed by NABARD. Credit guarantee would be provided to those sanctioned projects which are covered under MSME defined ceilings



- The beneficiaries intending to invest for establishing dairy and meat processing and value addition infrastructure or strengthening of the existing infrastructure can apply for loan in the scheduled bank through “Udyami Mitra” portal of SIDBI.
- As much as Rs 10,000 crore will be provided for fishermen through Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). For promoting herbal cultivation, Rs 4,000 crore National Medicinal Plants Fund will be started to help 10 lakh hectares to be covered under herbal cultivation.
- Also, Operation Greens will be extended from tomato, onion and potato to all fruit and vegetables by providing 50 per cent subsidy on transportation and storage of these commodities

#### **Ministry of Finance releases Rs 15,187 crore as grants-in-aid to 2.63 lakh Rural Local Bodies**

- Ministry of Finance has released an amount of over 15 thousand and 187 crore rupees as grants-in-aid to 2.63 lakh Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) spread in 28 States of the country.
- The amount was released upon the recommendation of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Jal Shakti Ministry. This grants-in-aid forms part of the Tied Grant as recommended by the 15th Finance Commission for the Financial Year 2020-21.
- It will be used by RLBs to facilitate taking up of various developmental work concerning supply of drinking water, rain water harvesting, water recycling, sanitation and maintenance of Open Defecation Free status which are national priorities.
- Union Minister of Panchayati Raj, Narendra Singh Tomar stated that the release of this fund to the Rural Local Bodies signifies the most appropriate timing when they are fighting the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic situation.
- He stated, availability of the fund with the RLBs will boost their effectiveness in delivery of basic services to the rural citizens. Mr Tomar stated it would also empower them in providing gainful employment to migrant laborers who have returned to their native places owing to COVID-19 pandemic situation as well as in augmenting rural infrastructure in a constructive way.

#### **India lifted 271 mn people out of poverty between FY06-16, says UN report**

- About 273 million Indians moved out of multidimensional poverty between 2005-6 and 2015-16, according to a UN report, which noted that India has recorded the largest reduction in the number of people living in this category.
- The data, released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), shows that 65 out of 75 countries studied significantly reduced their multidimensional poverty levels between 2000 and 2019.
- Multidimensional poverty encompasses the various deprivations experienced by poor people in their daily lives such as poor health, lack of education, inadequate living standards, poor quality of work, the threat of violence, and living in areas that are environmentally hazardous, among others.
- Of the 65 countries that reduced their Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) value, 50 also reduced the number of people living in poverty.
- The largest reduction was in India, where approximately 273 million people moved out of multidimensional poverty over 10 years, the report stated.
- The report stated that four countries - Armenia (2010/2015/2016), India (2005/2006/2015/2016), Nicaragua (2001/2011/2012) and North Macedonia (2005/2006/2011) halved their global MPIT value and did so in 5.5-10.5 years.
- MPIT is the Multidimensional Poverty Index estimate that is based on harmonized indicator definitions for strict comparability over time.

### **Shripad Naik inaugurates Conference on Aerospace and Defence Manufacturing Technologies**

- Union Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik has stated that Indian Defence and Aerospace industry is on the threshold of transformation, under the several initiatives of Government to promote 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' Abhiyaan.
- Mr Naik was delivering his inaugural address at the Fifth Edition of the Conference on Aerospace and Defence Manufacturing Technologies in New Delhi. The theme of the conference was Empowering India with 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Mission'.
- Mr Naik exhorted that the Indian Aerospace and Defence Industry has to rise to the occasion to shoulder greater responsibility in making the nation self-reliant in Defence Production and achieve 26 billion US Dollar domestic production by 2025. The target is the stated objective of the Defence Production Policy. He stated, in recent years, the defence sector has grown extensively.
- It has increased at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 9.7 per cent from 2008 to 2016, reaching current levels of 42.83 billion US dollars in the year 2017-18. He further stated, the Aerospace and Defence industry in India is estimated to reach around 70 billion dollar by 2030.
- The webinar was jointly organized by Tamil Nadu Technology Development and Promotion Centre, Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers and the Confederation of Indian Industry.

### **Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh launches the revamped Scheme for PM's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration 2020**

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh launched the revamped PM's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration and the web portal [www.pmawards.gov.in](http://www.pmawards.gov.in)
- The Scheme has been revamped in tune with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's governance model of citizen participation.
- Dr. Jitendra Singh acknowledged the extraordinary work done by District Collectors in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Scheme Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration 2020, has been revamped to recognize the performance of the District Collectors towards outcome indicators, economic development, peoples' participation and redressal of public grievances.
- The Innovations category of the Scheme has been broad-based to provide separate award categories for innovations at National, State and District level. The period of consideration for the awards is 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2020. In all 15 Awards would be conferred under the Scheme in 2020.
- Online applications shall be invited from 17th July till 15th August 2020 through the portal [www.pmawards.gov.in](http://www.pmawards.gov.in) from Districts / Implementing Units / Organizations under the various categories in the prescribed format detailing out the achievements highlighting any path-breaking innovation undertaken by any functionary/organization.

### **Income Tax Department rolls out new Form 26AS**

- Income Tax Department has rolled out new Form 26AS with an aim to assist Tax payers in filing quick and correct Income Tax Return (ITR). The new form will carry some additional details on taxpayers financial transactions as specified in the Statement of Financial Transactions (SFTs) in various categories.
- The additional details will facilitate voluntary compliance, tax accountability and ease of e-filing of returns. In a media statement, the Central Board of Direct Taxes has stated that these SFTs will handhold the taxpayers while filing their ITR.

- It stated, the new form will also calculate the correct tax liability based on these entries. The new Form 26AS is expected to bring in further transparency and accountability in the tax administration.

#### **India establishes bilateral air bubbles with US, France and Germany**

- India has established bilateral Air bubbles with the United States of America, France and Germany. The Civil Aviation Ministry stated talks with the United Kingdom are in an advanced stage and similar arrangement in place with UAE till 26th July of this month.
- Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri stated that bilateral Air Bubbles will be the way to resume international travel amid the Covid-19 pandemic with certain conditions. Mr Puri stated the government's negotiations with three countries are at an advanced stage for establishing bilateral air bubble mechanisms.
- He informed that Air France will operate 28 flights from 18th July to 1st of August between Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Paris. He stated, in case of the United States, there is an agreement with United Airlines to operate 18 flights between India and US between 17th to 31st July but this is an interim one. He stated we have also received a request from Germany and an agreement with Lufthansa is almost done.

#### **Civil Aviation Ministry set up Investment Clearance Cell for assistance, clearance of proposals**

- Civil Aviation Ministry has set up an Investment Clearance Cell, ICC for prompt assistance and clearance of proposals. The ten-member cell will be headed by a Joint Secretary in the Ministry. It will serve as a single-window system for attracting investments.
- The ICC will bring projects that require special incentive, policy interventions, expeditious clearances, and systemic reforms to the Empowered Group of Secretaries. It will maintain active contact with investors and work with states.
- The committee will also identify policy and regulatory issues that come in the way of investments. The Ministry has urged interested investors to contact the officers of the cell.

#### **Govt to start e-campaign on Voluntary Income Tax Compliance**

- The Income Tax Department is all set to start an e-Campaign on voluntary compliance of Income Tax for the convenience of the taxpayers. The 11-day campaign will focus on the assessee or taxpayers who are either non-filers or have discrepancies in their returns for the financial year 2018-19.
- The objective of the e-campaign is to facilitate taxpayers to online validate their tax and financial transaction information available with the I-T Department and promote voluntary compliance, especially for the assessee for 2018-19 so that they do not need to get into notice and scrutiny process.
- This e-campaign is being run for the benefit of the taxpayers. Under this e-campaign the Income Tax Department will send email and SMS to identified taxpayers to verify their financial transactions related information received by the I-T department from various sources such as Statement of Financial Transactions, Tax Deduction at Source, Tax Collection at Source and Foreign Remittances.
- Data analysis has identified certain taxpayers with high value transactions who have not filed returns for Assessment Year 2019-20. In addition to the non-filers, another set of return filers have also been identified wherein the high value transactions do not appear to be in line with their Income Tax Return.
- Under the e-campaign the taxpayers will be able to access details of their high value transaction related information on the designated portal. There would be no need to visit any Income Tax office, as the response has to be submitted online. The last date for filing as well as revising the Income Tax Return for Assessment Year 2019-20 is 31st of this month.

#### **Centre issues norms for Rs.1-lakh crore Agri Infra Fund scheme**

- UP gets the highest allocation of Rs.12,831 crore, followed by Rajasthan at Rs.9,015 crore

- The Centre has issued guidelines for financing under the recently announced Rs.1-lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) scheme, that seeks to facilitate creation and strengthening of post-harvest management and marketing infrastructure across the country.
- Under the scheme, Rs.1-lakh crore will be provided as loan by banks and financial institutions to farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), Primary Agriculture Co-operative Societies, agri-entrepreneurs, start-ups, and marketing co-operatives, among others, to set up agriculture infrastructure, such as supply chain services, including e-marketing platform, primary processing centres, warehouses, silos, pack houses, assaying units, sorting and grading units, cold chains, logistics facilities and ripening chambers.
- The scheme will be operational from the current financial year till 2029-30. Disbursements will be made in the first four years — Rs.10,000 crore in the current fiscal, and Rs.30,000 crore each over the next three years. The moratorium for repayment under this scheme may vary from six months to two years, an Agriculture Ministry note stated.
- All loans under this financing facility will have an interest subvention of 3 per cent per annum up to a limit of Rs.2 crore. This subvention will be available for a maximum period of seven years. For loans above Rs.2 crore, the subvention will be limited to Rs.2 crore, the Ministry stated.
- The extent and percentage of funding to private entrepreneurs out of the total financing facility may be fixed by a national-level monitoring committee consisting of officials from the Agriculture Ministry, states and NABARD, that will steer, guide and implement the project.
- All scheduled commercial banks, scheduled co-operative banks, regional rural banks, small finance banks, NBFCs, and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) may participate in this financing facility after signing an MoU with NABARD/Department of Agriculture.
- Tentatively six states — Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and West Bengal, are being allocated over half of this Rs.1-lakh crore fund. The state-wise allocation has been worked out on the basis of the total value of agriculture and allied sectors of the states.
- Allocation for UP has been pegged at Rs.12,831 crore, Rajasthan – Rs.9,015 crore, Maharashtra – Rs.8,460 crore, Madhya Pradesh – Rs.7,440 crore, Gujarat – Rs.7,282 crore and West Bengal – Rs.7,260 crore.
- Other states receiving major allocation include Andhra Pradesh – Rs.6,540 crore, Tamil Nadu – Rs.5,990 crore, Punjab – Rs.4,713 crore, Karnataka – Rs.4,525 crore, Bihar – Rs.3,980 crore, Haryana – Rs.3,900 crore and Telangana Rs.3,075 crore.
- The Agri Infra Fund will be managed and monitored through an online MIS platform, and 24 per cent of the total grant-in-aid under the scheme should be utilised for SC/ST entrepreneurs, it stated.

#### **One Nation One Ration Card scheme now enabled in 20 States/UTs**

- The One Nation One Ration Card facility was started as inter-State portability of ration cards in 4 States w.e.f. August 2019. Since then, a total of 20 States/UT have been integrated together into a seamless national portability cluster w.e.f. June 2020. Thus, this facility is currently enabled for NFSA card holders in 20 States/UTs.
- These States/UTs are Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Sikkim, Mizoram, Telangana, Kerala, Punjab, Tripura, Bihar, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.
- Now, trial and testing in 4 more States/UTs of Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Nagaland and Uttarakhand have been completed for enabling national portability features under One Nation One Ration Card in these states very shortly.

Besides, the required web-services for inter-State transactions and their monitoring through Central Dashboards have also been activated for these States/UTs. All other States/UTs are targeted to be integrated before March 2021.

- The One Nation One Ration Card facility is an ambitious plan and endeavour of Department of Food & Public Distribution to ensure the delivery of food security entitlements to all beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, irrespective of their physical location anywhere in the country, by implementing nation-wide portability of ration cards under the ongoing central sector scheme on 'Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS)' in association with all States/UTs.
- Through this system, the migratory NFSA beneficiaries, who frequently change their place of dwelling in search of temporary employments, etc. are now enabled with an option to lift their entitled quota of foodgrains from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) of their choice anywhere in the country by using their same/existing ration card with biometric/Aadhaar based authentication on an electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) device installed at the FPSs.
- Thus, installation of ePoS devices at the FPSs and Aadhaar seeding of beneficiaries for biometric/ Aadhaar authentication are the main enablers of this system, which can be accessed by beneficiaries by quoting either their ration card number or the Aadhaar number to any FPS dealer across the country.
- Anyone in the family, who have seeded Aadhaar in the ration card can undergo authentication and lift the ration. There is no need to share or carry the ration card or Aadhaar card with ration dealer to avail the benefit. Beneficiaries can undergo Aadhaar authentication by using their finger prints or iris based identification.

#### **HRD Minister to launch Manodarpan initiative to provide psychosocial support to students@**

- Union Human Resource Development Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal will launch the Manodarpan initiative of the HRD Ministry. The initiative under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, aims to provide psychosocial support to students for their mental health and well-being.
- Minister of State for HRD, Secretaries of the Department of Higher Education and the School Education and Literacy, and senior officials of the ministry will also be present on the occasion.
- Mr. Pokhriyal informed that during the COVID pandemic, the HRD Ministry felt the need to focus on continuing education on the academic front and the mental well-being of the students.
- He further informed that the Ministry has, therefore, taken up an initiative, named, 'MANODARPAN' covering a wide range of activities to provide Psychosocial Support to students for their Mental Health & Well-being during the COVID outbreak and beyond.
- The HRD Ministry also stated that the 'Manodarpan' initiative has been included in the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, as a part of strengthening human capital and increasing productivity.

#### **Consumer Protection Act, 2019 comes into force**

- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 came into force. Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan stated that this new Act will empower consumers and help them in protecting their rights through its various notified Rules and provisions.
- He stated the Act includes establishment of the Central Consumer Protection Authority, CCPA to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers. The CCPA will be empowered to conduct investigations into violations of consumer rights and institute complaints or prosecution, order recall of unsafe goods and services, order discontinuance of unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements, impose penalties on manufacturers or endorsers or publishers of misleading advertisements.

- Mr Paswan stated, the rules for prevention of unfair trade practice by e-commerce platforms will also be covered under this Act. The gazette notification for establishment of the Central Consumer Protection Authority and rules for prevention of unfair trade practice in e-commerce are under publication.

#### **Ministry of Tourism holds webinar titled 'The Mystical Triangle- Maheshwar, Mandu & Omkareshwar' under Dekho Apna Desh Series**

- The Ministry of Tourism's Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series titled, "The Mystical Triangle- Maheshwar, Mandu& Omkareshwar" was organized on 18th of July.
- The webinar showcased the richness of the destinations covered under the mystical triangle in Madhya Pradesh namely Maheshwar, Mandu and Omkareshwar. Dekho Apna Desh Webinar series is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under 'Ek Bharat- Shreshtha Bharat' and it is continuously spreading the spirit of 'Ek Bharat- Shreshtha Bharat' through virtual platforms.
- Maheshwar or Mahishmati is one of serene destinations with historical significance which is 90 kilometres away from Indore city. The city got its name after Lord Shiva known as Maheshwara. It also finds a mention in the epics Ramayana and Mahabharatha.
- Omkareshwar has 33 deities and 108 impressive shivling and this is the only Jyotirlinga which is situated on the north bank of Narmada.
- Mandu is mainly known for the love story of Sultan Baz Bahadur and Rani Roopmati. Baz Bahadur's palace built in the 16th-century is famous for its large courtyards encompassed by large halls and high terraces

#### **Power Minister launches programme to improve indoor air quality**

- Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of public sector undertakings, has launched a national programme to improve indoor air quality.
- The initiative is called the Retrofit of Air-conditioning to improve Indoor Air Quality for Safety and Efficiency (RAISE) national programme.
- Poor air quality has been a concern in India for quite some time and has become more important in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. As people return to their offices and public spaces, maintaining good indoor air quality is essential for occupant comfort, well-being, productivity and the overall public health, the statement stated.
- Launching the programme, Minister for Power, New & Renewable Energy, RK Singh, stated, I believe the RAISE initiative can potentially alleviate the issue of bad air quality in workspaces across the nation and pioneer ways to make them healthier and greener.
- The statement stated that EESL has undertaken a retrofit of its office air-conditioning and ventilation system. This is a part of the larger initiative to RAISE developed for healthy and energy efficient buildings, in partnership with US Agency for International Development's (USTATED) MAITREE programme. The pilot focuses on improving indoor air quality (IAQ), thermal comfort, and energy efficiency (EE) in EESL office's air conditioning system.

#### **Employees' Welfare Scheme Launched In Arun Jaitley's Name In Rajya Sabha**

- The Rajya Sabha secretariat has launched an Employees' Welfare Scheme in the name of former Union finance minister Arun Jaitley, who was also the Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha.
- The scheme has been formulated and approved based on the decision of Sangeeta Jaitley, wife of the senior leader who passed away in August last year.
- "Shri Arun Jaitley Financial Assistance for Group C Employees" scheme seeks to benefit group "C" employees of the secretariat by awarding their children three scholarships for higher technical and professional education.



- The employees will be extended financial support in case of death and medical emergency.

#### **Home Minister Amit Shah to launch Vriksharopan Abhiyan in New Delhi**

- Home Minister Amit Shah will launch Vriksharopan Abhiyan in New Delhi in the presence of Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi. During the launch event, Mr Shah will inaugurate and lay the Foundation stone of 6 Ecoparks and Tourism sites. The event will take place through Video Conferencing across more than 130 locations spread in 38 Districts of 10 coal and lignite bearing States.
- Vriksharopan Abhiyan will be organized by the Ministry of Coal involving all Coal and Lignite PSUs during which large scale plantations would be carried out in mines, colonies, offices and other suitable areas of Coal and Lignite PSUs. Seedlings will be distributed in the nearby areas for promoting plantation by the society.
- The eco-parks and tourism sites would provide avenues for recreation, adventure, water sport, bird watching etc. for the people residing in nearby areas and may also be integrated to form part of the tourism circuit. These sites are being planned to generate revenue for self-sustenance and to create employment potential for local people.
- Going Green is the key thrust area of the coal sector involving maximization of green cover through ecological reclamation of mined out areas and overburden dumps, plantation in and around mines and avenue plantation at suitable places.
- The ministry's Going Green initiative will kick start through active participation of coal and lignite PSUs as well as private miners. This year, three coal and lignite PSUs, Coal India Limited, NLC India Limited and Singareni Collieries Company Limited have set an ambitious target to cover 1,789 Hectares of area in and around the coalfields under bio-reclamation and plantation, creation of grass land, hi-tech cultivation and bamboo plantation.

#### **22 million children in South Asia missed out on early education due to Covid-19, says UNICEF**

- As many as 22 million children from South Asian countries, including India, have missed out on early childhood education in their critical pre-school year due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, reveals new research by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).
- It zeroed in on the predicament of childcare and early childhood education globally. It analysed the impact of widespread Covid-19 closure of vital family services.
- In the South Asia region, UNICEF covered Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka for the research.
- Raising concerns over the disruption of early education, UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia, Jean Gough, stated: "Children are among the hardest hit by the Covid-19 pandemic in South Asia. Prolonged school closure and limited access to distant learning have deprived children of their universal right to education."
- The research further noted that lockdown has been a setback for innumerable families as they try to balance childcare and paid employment. This gets tougher for women, on average, as they spend more than three times longer on care and housework than men.
- At least 40 million children worldwide, of which nearly 22 million are from South Asia, have missed out on early childhood, UNICEF added in its research.
- More than 9 in 10 women in Africa and nearly 7 in 10 in Asia and the Pacific work in the informal sector and have limited to no access to any form of social protection. Many parents become trapped in this unreliable, poorly paid employment, contributing to intergenerational cycles of poverty, it stated.
- UNICEF also suggested social protection systems, including cash transfers, that reach families working in non-formal employment.

#### **Prime Minister lays foundation stone for Rs.3,054-crore Manipur water supply project**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the Rs.3,054-crore “Manipur Water Supply Project” in Imphal.
- There will be no shortage of potable water once this project is commissioned.
- The project is an important component of the efforts of the state government to achieve the goal of ‘Har Ghar Jal’ by 2024. The project outlay is about Rs 3054.58 crore with a loan component funded by the New Development Bank.
- The programme also implements source sustainability measures as mandatory elements, such as recharge and reuse through greywater management, water conservation, rainwater harvesting.

#### **Prakash Javadekar virtually launches piloting of National Transit Pass System**

- Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar virtually launched piloting of the National Transit Pass System at Indira Paryavaran Bhawan in Delhi.
- Mr Javadekar stated the National Pass System enhances seamless movement of forest produce. The Minister stated Prime Minister Narendra Modi has laid a lot of stress on the Ease of Movement.
- He stated now, people can apply for Passes from their mobile phones as well as receive e passes in their mobile phones. He stated it is another step which furthers the Digital India Movement.

#### **First ever container cargo from Kolkata via Chittagong port reaches Agartala**

- The first ever container cargo from Kolkata via Chittagong port has reached Agartala.
- External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava stated that this is another historic milestone in India-Bangladesh connectivity and economic partnership. He stated this will help in further development of the north eastern region.
- Under the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade, in addition to the six existing Ports of Call, five more in each country have been added recently, the Ministry of Shipping stated in a statement.
- A Port of Call is a place where a ship stops during a voyage to enable the loading and unloading of cargo.
- Dredging of inland waterway routes is ongoing under a pact signed by the two countries on development of fairway in selected stretches of Bangladesh waterways, with the Government of India bearing 80 per cent of the project expenditure and the balance being borne by the neighbouring country, it stated.
- Cruise services have also commenced between the two countries, promoting tourism and people-to-people contacts, it stated.

#### **Government sanctions Rs.8,700 cr to help complete construction of 60,000 houses**

- The Finance Ministry announced that over Rs.8,700 crore has been approved under a special scheme, ‘SWAMIH’, to ensure completion of about 60,000 houses.
- ‘SWAMIH’ (Special Window for Affordable and Mid Income Housing) scheme aims to complete construction of stalled, brownfield, RERA-registered residential developments that are in the affordable housing/mid-income category. Conditions here are that the projects should be networth positive and requires last mile funding to complete construction. There is a fund to assist this scheme which started with target corpus of Rs.12,500 crore with a green shoe option of Rs.12,500 crore.
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman reviewed the performance of this scheme with government officials and senior management team of the State Bank of India, SBI Capital Markets Limited and SBICAPS Ventures Limited (SVL). The fund has so far approved 81 projects with an investment of Rs.8,767 crore.
- These projects are spread across a mix of markets including large cities such as National Capital Region, Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune and also tier II locations including Karnal, Panipat, Lucknow, Surat,

Dehradun, Kota, Nagpur, Jaipur, Nashik, Vizag, Chandigarh etc. Amongst these projects, investments in 18 projects have been given the final clearance and disbursement is at various stages across 7 residential projects.

- The recent initiative by the fund to reduce the cost of capital to 12 per cent has resulted in an increase in the number of projects that meet the funding criteria laid out under the Special Window. While acknowledging the steps taken by the Special Window to expedite participation from existing lenders, Sitharaman suggested that both private and public sector banks, NBFCs and HFCs should see the Special Window as a stakeholder and increase support to early completion of stressed projects.

#### **India Conducts The First Test Under 'Study In India' Programme Online**

- The Indian Scholastic Assessment Test, or Ind-SAT, in its first, has been under the 'Study in India' Programme.
- Ind-SAT 2020 was held in remote-proctored mode and was administered by the National Testing Agency, or NTA. Around five thousand students from Nepal, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Sri-Lanka, Kenya, Zambia, Indonesia and Mauritius took Ind-SAT 2020.
- Ind-SAT is an eligibility test for granting scholarships and admissions to foreign students to study in selected Indian universities under the Study in India programme. Ind-SAT is designed to measure the scholastic capabilities of students seeking admission in educational institutes in India. The scores obtained in Ind-SAT will serve as a criterion to shortlist the students for the allocation of scholarships in the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
- The Ministry of HRD [Human Resource Development] conducted the first ever Indian Scholastic Assessment (Ind-SAT) Test 2020 under its 'Study in India' programme.

#### **Indian Railways to cover all wagons under RFID for tracking by 2022**

- The Indian Railways will use radio-frequency identification tags (RFID) for tracking of all wagons by 2022.
- A total of 23,000 wagons have been covered under the RFID project so far and the target is to cover all wagons by December 2022.
- Using RFID devices, it would be easier for the railways to know the exact position of wagons, locomotives and coaches.
- By using RFID, each moving wagon can be identified and its movement tracked.
- While the RFID tag will be fitted in the rolling stock, trackside readers will be installed at stations and key points along the tracks to read the tag from a distance of about two meters and transmit the wagon identity over a network to a central computer.

#### **India will be looking at a demand drop in electricity between 7-17 percent by 2025: TERI**

- Demand for electricity in India will be lower by 7 to 17% due to covid-19 by 2025, a new report by TERI has found. All 10 of India's largest power-consuming states will see a demand drop between 5 to 15%.
- The report, titled 'Bending the Curve: 2025 Forecasts for Electricity Demand by Sector and State in the Light of the COVID Epidemic', also suggests policy-makers, developers, distribution companies, and investors need to be better prepared for the future, if the decline in demand growth persists.
- In particular, the financial health of Discoms and the sustainability of the prevailing cross-subsidy may be even more pressing issues in a mid-term scenario of sustained muted growth in commercial and industrial demand.

#### **Indian Railways constructing world's first electrified tunnel to run double-stack containers**

- Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd (DFCCIL) has recently conducted a tunnel-breaking ceremony was held on the completion of caving work for the one-kilometre long tunnel of Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC) through Aravalli mountain range, near Sohna in Haryana.

- The tunnel connects Mewat & Gurugram district of Haryana and negotiates a steep gradient on the uphill and downhill slope of the Aravalli range.

#### **About Tunnel:**

- The D-shaped tunnel has a cross-sectional area of 150 square metres to accommodate double line with higher OHE (Over Head Equipment) to enable double stack container movement on WDFC.
- This will be the world's first electrified rail tunnel fit to run double-stack containers. The last blasting of the tunnel, which is situated on the Rewari-Dadri section. This work has been completed in less than a year's time.
- Double line electrified track for double stacks train movement, the dimension of tunnel 14.5 meter and 10.5 meter height in straight portion and 15 meter wide and 12.5 mtr. Height meter to provide extra clearance while negotiating the curve.

#### **29 animal reported dead at Kaziranga National Park, Tiger Reserve**

- A total of 129 animal casualties have been reported at Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in Bokakhat here due to drowning and other reasons.
- The animals which have been rescued include 14 rhinos, five wild buffaloes, eight wild boars, two swamp deer, 95 hog deer, a sambar, three porcupines, and a Python.

#### **Deadline For Mandatory Hallmarking Of Gold Jewellery Extended Till June 1 Next Year**

- The government has extended deadline for mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts by over four months till June 1, 2021, in the wake of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
- Gold hallmarking is a purity certification of the precious metal and is voluntary in nature at present. The Centre, in November last year, had announced that hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts would be made mandatory across the country from Jan. 15, 2021.
- From June 1 next year, jewellers will be allowed to sell only 14, 18 and 22 carats of gold.

#### **Government launched four schemes for setting up of Bulk Drugs & Medical Devices Parks**

- Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister Sadananda Gowda launched four schemes of Department of Pharmaceuticals for promotion of domestic manufacturing of bulk drugs and medical devices parks in the country.
- The government has approved four schemes, two each for Bulk Drugs and Medical Devices parks.
- This opens the door for critical API production and manufacturing of high end medical devices.

#### **Centre to convert ravines of Chambal region into arable land with World Bank help**

- The Centre, in collaboration with the World Bank, has decided to convert monumental dwelling of ravines in Gwalior-Chambal belt of Madhya Pradesh into arable land.
- The decision was made through a virtual meeting with Adarsh Kumar, representative of the World Bank and Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- Around 3 lakh hectares land of this region are non-cultivable, this conversion will improve and support the integrated development of the Bihad area in the region of Gwalior-Chambal.

#### **Govt notifies changes in FDI norms on civil aviation; permits NRIs to own 100% stake of Air India**

- The government has notified changes in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) norms on civil aviation. It will permit non-resident Indian nationals to own 100 per cent stake of Air India.
- Last month, the government for the third time extended the deadline to bid for Air India. The deadline was extended by two months till August 31st. The divestment process for the national carrier was initiated on January 27th

#### **HRD Minister launches India Report on Digital Education, 2020**

- Human Resources and Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank launched India Report on Digital Education, 2020. The report elaborates on the innovative methods adopted by Ministry of HRD, Education Departments of States and Union Territories for ensuring accessible and inclusive education to children at home and reducing learning gaps. School Education is envisaged as a comprehensive and convergent programme committed to universalize digital education across the wide spectrum of schools from pre-nursery to higher secondary classes.
- The quality digital education has acquired a new urgency in the present context of globalization. The Ministry stated, it has initiated many projects to assist teachers, scholars and students in their pursuit of learning like DIKSHA platform, Swayam Prabha TV Channel, On Air - Shiksha Vani, e-PathShala and telecast through TV channels.
- To ensure inclusive learning in remote areas where internet connectivity and electricity is poor, States and UTs have also distributed textbooks at children's doorsteps. Digital education initiatives are also enabling enhanced support for students preparing for competitive exams.

#### **The Centre would develop Leh and Kargil as smart cities in newly-formed UT of Ladakh**

- The ministry of housing and urban affairs has formed a five-member central team under Smart Cities director Rahul Kapoor to handhold the union territory in formulating detailed projects reports for both the cities.
- This initiative is a part of the Centre's initiative to develop Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh – the newly formed union territories after the state was bifurcated in October 2019.

The ministry started work on this after a letter from home secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla proposing that Leh and Kargil be developed as smart cities.

- While the ministry is likely to push urban infrastructure like street lighting, smart garbage collection, water supply projects in Leh, it is considering projects to enhance tourism potential of Kargil.
- The Smart City mission was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2015. The ministry selected 100 cities for the mission through a competitive process, which involved presenting an urban infrastructure upgrade plan.

#### **Namami Gange project included in 'Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration'**

- This year, the Namami Gange project has been included in the prestigious 'Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration'.
- National Mission for Clean Ganga, NMCG, DG Rajiv Ranjan Mishra instructed District Magistrates and other officials associated with the District Ganga Committees to submit their nominations for this year's prestigious award.
- Mr Mishra stated, objective of National Mission for Clean Ganga is not limited only to the nirmalta and aviralta of the Ganga, but to develop a sustainable socioeconomic zone around the holy river and its tributaries, which will give a boost to the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Campaign.

#### **Cabinet approves MoU signed between India & Zimbabwe on Traditional Systems of Medicine**

- The Union Cabinet gave ex-post facto approval to Memorandum of Understanding signed between India and Zimbabwe on Cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy.
- The MoU was signed on 3rd November, 2018. It will provide a frame work for the cooperation between the two countries for the promotion of traditional systems of medicine and homeopathy and will mutually benefit the two countries in the field of Traditional Medicine.
- The main objective of the MoU is to strengthen, promote and develop co-operation in the field of traditional systems of medicine between the two countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

#### **Govt Unveils Amended Draft Acquisition Procedure for Defence Products**

- The government issued an amended draft Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP), wherein it elaborated on how to use "leasing" method to get various defence products and on procedure to procure information and communication technology (ICT) systems for the armed forces.
- The first draft of the DAP, which was then called Defence Procurement Procedure, was issued on March 20 this year. In a statement, the Defence Ministry stated it received suggestions from various stakeholders running into more than 10,000 pages on the first draft.
- Therefore, after analysing those suggestions and holding meetings with stakeholders, the ministry stated, the amended DAP was issued.
- The ministry stated there are four new chapters in the amended DAP -- leasing; simplified capital expenditure procedure; acquisition of systems products and ICT systems; procurement from DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation), DPSUs (Defence Public Sector Units) and OFB (Ordnance Factory Board).
- The amended second draft (known as DAP) has since been finalised by the review committee driven by tenets of defence reforms announced as part of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' and has been placed in the public domain, the ministry stated.
- The stakeholders can send their comments on the amended draft by August 10, 2020.

#### **Govt Releases Guidelines For Schemes To Boost Domestic Manufacturing Of Bulk Drugs, Med Devices**

- Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers Sadananda Gowda outlined plans to boost local manufacturing in bulk drugs and medical device industries to reduce the country's reliance on imports, particularly from China.
- India has a robust \$40 billion pharmaceutical sector that is seen as a reliable supplier of generic drugs. But it is reliant on China for about 70% of active pharmaceutical ingredients, or raw materials, which are often cheaper to import than make.
- Some of them are very critical as they are used in production of essential medicines," Mr. Gowda tweeted. About 86% of materials used to make medical devices are imported, he added.
- The pandemic has exposed weaknesses in global supply chains and posed a "threat to the health security of the country. "These parks will be based on plug and play model with prior regulatory approvals, state of art infrastructure, excellent connectivity, affordable land, competitive utility charges, and strong R&D ecosystem," he stated, adding these would begin operating in "about 2 or 3 years".

#### **HRD Ministry renamed as Ministry of Education**

- Ministry of **Human Resource Development** has been **renamed** as **Ministry of Education**.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the change in the name of the ministry. The HRD Ministry is currently headed by Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the draft **New Education Policy (NEP 2020)**, which aims to revamp of all aspects of Indian education structure.
- The education policy was released in the year 1986, as for 34 years there were no changes in the education policy.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi had reviewed the NEP- 2020, for which draft was prepared by a panel of experts led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) **chief K Kasturirangan**.
- Under the new system, **flexibility will be given** to students both in choosing the subjects for education as well as in the **entry and exit in college degree** programmes.
- Any student can exit a degree programme from the first year onwards if he/she wants only a certificate. Once two years are completed, a diploma will be awarded and post the completion of the three-year or four-year curriculum, the degree will be awarded.



- The National Education Policy will put a thrust on use of **mother tongue as medium of instruction till the fifth grade**. Further, subjects wouldn't be restricted to students purely based on their educational background.
- Further, **M.Phil programme will be discontinued**. Students can also do a four-year degree programme, one-year Masters and then directly go to the doctoral programme.
- School students will also get an opportunity to do **vocational education programmes** under the new policy from the sixth grade.
- Instead of having different regulatory bodies like All India Council for Technical Education, University Grants Commission and other local niche entities, there will be **one single higher education regulator**.
- Use of schools/ school complexes beyond school hours and public library spaces for adult education courses which will be ICT-equipped when possible and for other community engagement and enrichment activities.
- NIOS will develop **high-quality modules** to teach **Indian Sign Language**, and to teach other basic subjects using Indian Sign Language.
- **Pre-school sections** covering at least one year of early childhood care and education will be added to Kendriya Vidyalayas and other primary schools around the nation, particularly in disadvantaged areas.
- **NCCwings** in secondary and higher secondary schools **under Ministry of Defence**
- **Free boarding facilities will be built** - matching the standard of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas particularly for students who from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds
- National Scholarship portal for SC, ST, OBC, SEDGs students to be expanded.
- By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree.
- Education sector to get **6% of GDP**, earlier it was 1.7%
- **Bagless days will be encouraged** throughout the year for various types of enrichment activities involving arts, quizzes, sports, and vocational crafts.
- The **three-language learned by children** will be the choices of States, regions, and of the students, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India.
- Nutrition and health cards, regular health check-ups for school students.
- National Mission on Foundation Literacy and Numeracy to be set up by MHRD.
- Tech- based option for adult learning through apps, TV channels etc.
- The **National Testing Agency (NTA)** will offer a **high-quality common aptitude test**, as well as specialized common subject exams in the sciences, humanities, languages, arts, and vocational subjects, at least twice every year for university entrance exams.
- Students will get **360 degree holistic report card**, which will not only inform about the marks obtained by them in subjects, but also their skills and other important points.
- Coding to be taught from class 6 onwards.
- National Curricular and pedagogical framework to be developed by NCERT.
- Financial Autonomy to be given to 45K affiliated colleges
- An **Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)** shall be established which would digitally store the academic credits earned.
- NEP aims at setting up at least one large multidisciplinary institution in or near every district by the year 2030.
- IITs to become multidisciplinary institution, opening doors for humanities students.
- International Students Office at each institution hosting foreign students
- National Research Foundation (NRF) to be established.

- The new academic session will begin in **September-October** – the delay is due to the unprecedented coronavirus disease (Covid-19) outbreak – and the government aims to introduce the policy before the new session begins.
- This includes legal education and medical education as well. There will be an independent board of governors and a graded autonomy system will be launched.

#### **Ayush Minister launches dedicated Web-Portal for National AYUSH Mission**

- **Ayush Minister Shripad Yesso Naik** reviewed the centrally- sponsored scheme of **National Ayush Mission** and operationalization of AYUSH Health and Wellness Centers during a webinar of Health and Ayush Ministers of all states.
- Mr Naik requested Health and Ayush Ministers to give due focus to the early establishment and operationalization of AYUSH Health and Wellness Centers to strengthen the primary Healthcare delivery system in real-terms and to extend the AYUSH health care to the needy. He emphasized the need to speed up the pace of work sanctioned under National AYUSH Mission and AYUSH Health and Wellness Centers, so that the benefit may reach to the common people.
- On this occasion, Mr Naik launched a dedicated **Web-Portal** for **National AYUSH Mission** for submission of State Annual Action Plans, Utilization Certificates, Physical and Financial Progress report, and other informations related to the Ministry. The Minister also released 4 publications including Operational Guidelines for establishment of **AYUSH Health and Wellness Centers**.

#### **MoD with MyGov conducts quiz competition on 'Atmanirbhar Bharat – Swatantra Bharat'**

- An online quiz competition on '**Atmanirbhar Bharat - Swatantra Bharat**' is being conducted by **Ministry of Defence** in coordination with **MyGov** in order to create patriotic feeling among youth and masses.
- There will be 10 cash prizes. First, second, third and seven consolation ones. The first prize will be a sum of 25 thousand rupees, the second prize winner will get 15 thousand rupees and third prize winner will get 10 thousand rupees.
- Seven consolation prizes of 5 thousand rupees will be given. Indian citizens aged 14 years and above can participate in the quiz and win the exciting prizes. The quiz is available in **MyGov portal**

#### **Piyush Goyal inaugurates CII National Digital conference on Ease of Doing Business for Atmanirbhar Bharat**

- Commerce Minister **Piyush Goyal** stated the government is aiming to cover the nation's length and breadth in optic fibres within the next two years. Mr Goyal stated digital is the way forward.
- Inaugurating **CII National Digital conference on Ease of Doing Business** for Atmanirbhar Bharat, the Minister emphasized that slowly but surely a single window concept will be achieved. He urged both industry and government to work as partners and industry will have to play a proactive role in helping the government identify the tax evaders.
- The Minister stated that he is dedicated to policy simplification and asked for industry's feedback in areas where policy stability is possible.
- The Minister stated that business is bouncing back in the country and restrictions were temporary and are now being eased. He highlighted that during Covid situation, the country's services sector continued to serve global clients. Mr Goyal emphasized that covid is the wake up call for understanding the importance of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Digital India.

#### **ITBP to get Khadi commission products**

- The **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** signed an agreement with **The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** to get supplies from the Commission.
- The ITBP has become the first force among the **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)** to sign such an agreement to promote Swadeshi products. Home Minister Amit Shah has already stated that all CAPFs will buy only Swadeshi products made in India.

- It was decided during a meeting held at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of the Directors General of the CAPFs in October 2019 that the use of Terry Khadi Uniform and other items of swadeshi origin should be made available to the CAPFs, ITBP stated.
- The ITBP had suggested that durrie, blankets, towel, mustard oil, yoga kit, hospital bed sheets, pickles can be purchased for jawans of the force through KVIC.
- The procurement of three items in the first phase was identified that were durrie, towel, and blanket. The process of procuring these items is also on. For cotton durries, the ITBP has been identified as the nodal agency to procure it for CAPFs. ITBP will procure about 2.5 lakh durries for the CAPFs at a cost of Rs 17 crore, the ITBP stated.

#### 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	Ram Vilas Paswan	NA
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	Harsimrat Kaur Badal	Bathinda
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	Smriti Zubin Irani	Amethi

Development & Ministry of Textiles		
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	Pralhad 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 form 50:50 Joint Venture Company for LPG business in Bangladesh

- India and Bangladesh signed an agreement for the formation of a 50:50 Joint Venture Company (JVC) for LPG business in Bangladesh.
- The agreement was signed between the IOC Middle East FZE, Dubai, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and RR Holdings Ltd., Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, the holding company of Beximco LPG of Bangladesh.
- The new Joint venture company set up takes further the 'neighbourhood first' policy of the government of India.
- The energy cooperation between India and Bangladesh has made big strides in the recent times.
- The new Joint venture is another step in the same direction. The Joint Venture Company will help reduce the cost of import of LPG and make it more affordable for the consumers in Bangladesh.
- The LPG market in Bangladesh is fast expanding and the new project will draw upon the strengths of the Indian oil and Beximco in their respective areas.
- The company plans to diversify into LPG export to the north eastern states of India from Bangladesh which will prove to be a win win situation for both the countries.

#### Germany to become first major economy to phase out coal, nuclear power

- German lawmakers have finalized the country's long-awaited phase-out of coal as an energy source, backing a plan that environmental groups say isn't ambitious enough and free marketers criticise as a waste of taxpayers' money.
- Bills approved by both houses of parliament envision shutting down the last coal-fired power plant by 2038 and spending some 40 billion euros (\$45 billion) to help affected regions cope with the transition.

- The plan is part of Germany's 'energy transition' - an effort to wean Europe's biggest economy off planet-warming fossil fuels and generate all of the country's considerable energy needs from renewable sources. Achieving that goal is made harder than in comparable countries such as France and Britain because of Germany's existing commitment to also phase out nuclear power by the end of 2022.
- Germany, the country that burns the greatest amount of lignite coal worldwide, will burden the next generation with 18 more years of carbon dioxide, Greenpeace Germany's executive director Martin Kaiser told The Associated Press.
- Kaiser, who was part of a government-appointed expert commission, accused Chancellor Angela Merkel of making a historic mistake, saying an end date for coal of 2030 would have sent a strong signal for European and global climate policy. Merkel has stated she wants Europe to be the first continent to end its greenhouse gas emissions, by 2050.
- Germany closed its last black coal mine in 2018, but it continues to import the fuel and extract its own reserves of lignite, a brownish coal that is abundant in the west and east of the country.
- Schulze, the environment minister, stated there would be regular government reviews to examine whether the end date for coal can be brought forward. She noted that by the end of 2022, eight of the country's most polluting coal-fired plants will have already been closed.

#### **Indian Coast Guard & Indonesia Coast Guard sign MoU to boost maritime relations**

- In a significant step towards bolstering the comprehensive strategic partnership between India and Indonesia, a MoU has been signed between the Indian Coast Guard and Indonesia Coast Guard.
- This will enhance collaborative and cooperative engagements in the domains of maritime law enforcement, maritime search and rescue and marine pollution response.
- This is likely to entail exchange of information towards combating transnational maritime crimes, facilitation of coordinated search and rescue operations at sea and conduct of capacity and capability building activities.

#### **World food price index rises in June, first increase in 2020: UN**

- World food prices rose in June to post their first increase of 2020 and mark a slight rebound after the sharp falls triggered by the coronavirus pandemic, the United Nations food agency stated.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) food price index, which measures monthly changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar, averaged 93.2 points last month, up 2.4 per cent on May.
- FAO stated it had rebased all its indices, shifting the base period to 2014-16 from a previous 2002-04.
- Amid continued market uncertainty, the prices of vegetable oils, sugar and dairy products rebounded to multi-month highs following sharp declines in May, while in the cereals and meat indices, most prices remained under downward pressure.
- FAO also revised up its forecast for the 2020 cereal season by some 9.3 million tonnes, foreseeing global output of almost 2.790 billion tonnes — a 3.0 per cent increase on 2019's record harvest.
- The bulk of the monthly increase reflected an upward revision to Australia's wheat production estimates.

#### **U.S. to formally withdraw from WHO in 2021**

- The U.S. has sent a letter officially notifying the United Nations that it is leaving the World Health Organization, starting the formal process of withdrawal that President Trump first started in April when he halted funding to WHO.
- The Trump administration has notified Congress and the United Nations that the United States is formally withdrawing from the World Health Organization.
- The United States' notice of withdrawal, effective July 6, 2021, has been submitted to the UN Secretary-General, as per sources.

- The spokesperson for Secretary-General António Guterres stated he had received the notice and "is in the process of verifying with the World Health Organization whether all the conditions for such withdrawal are met." Those conditions "include giving a one-year notice and fully meeting the payment of assessed financial obligations."
- President Donald Trump stated he was halting funding to the organisation in mid-April and announced his intention to withdraw from the WHO in May.
- Trump consistently accused the organization of aiding China in allegedly covering up the origins of the virus and allowing its spread.

#### **India funded new school infrastructure inaugurated in Nepal**

- A new four-storey school building built with Indian assistance of Rs 1.94 crore for students pursuing both vedic and modern education was inaugurated in Nepal's Ilam district, according to the Indian embassy.
- The new building of Shri Saptmai Gurukul Sanskrit Vidyalaya, which was setup in 2009 and has unique qualification of imparting vedic as well as modern education including Sanskrit, was inaugurated through video conferencing that was attended by Nepalese officials, school management committee and members of the Indian Embassy, a statement issued by the Indian mission here stated.
- The new school building was built at a cost of Nepali Rupees 31.13 million (INR 1.94 crore).
- The new school infrastructure has ten class rooms, hostel block with nine dormitories for residential students, four study rooms, warden office, one living room and one conference hall, the statement stated.
- India has provided financial assistance to Nepal for the construction of several such schools with an aim to upgrade the education for the Nepalese students, especially after most of the educational infrastructures suffered damage in the massive 2015 earthquake, killing 9,000 people in various parts of the Himalayan nation.

#### **Maldives, Sri Lanka eliminate measles & rubella ahead of 2023 target**

- Maldives and Sri Lanka have become the first two countries in the South-East Asia region to eliminate both measles and rubella ahead of the 2023 target. The announcement was made by WHO South-East Asia's Regional Director, Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh after the fifth meeting of the regional verification commission for measles and rubella elimination, held virtually.
- Dr. Singh stated protecting all children against these killer and debilitating diseases is an important step in endeavour to achieve healthier population and health for all. The Regional Director commended Member countries' efforts to deliver life-saving vaccines to children even while battling the COVID pandemic.
- A country is verified as having eliminated measles and rubella when there is no evidence of endemic transmission for over three years by a well-performing surveillance system.
- Maldives reported its last endemic case of measles in 2009 and of rubella in October 2015, while Sri Lanka reported last endemic case of measles in May 2016 and of rubella in March 2017.
- Member countries of WHO South-East Asia region had set 2023 as the target for elimination of measles and rubella. Bhutan, DPR Korea and Timor-Leste are other countries in the region who have eliminated measles.

#### **WHO to set up independent panel to review handling of COVID-19 pandemic**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) was setting up an independent panel to review its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the response by governments.
- Former New Zealand prime minister Helen Clark and former Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf have agreed to head the panel.



- The announcement follows strong criticism by U.S. President Donald Trump's administration of the global agency's role in the crisis.
- The panel will provide an interim report to an annual meeting of health ministers in November and present a "substantive report" next May.

#### **Bangladesh govt launches 'Digital Haat' for sacrificial animals before Eid-UI-Azha**

- The government of Bangladesh has launched a 'Digital Haat' for online sale and purchase of sacrificial animals ahead of the festival of Eid-UI-Azha.
- The initiative has been taken to save the cattle farmers and traders from financial loss amid the Corona pandemic and also to stop further transmission of the infection in the country.
- The government is going to promote this haat through its website and social networking sites at its own cost. The site is free for use by the interested people.
- The government has also decided to transport sacrificial animals from the north and west of the country to Dhaka and Chattogram through the rail route.

#### **US approves \$620 mn missile upgrade package for Taiwan**

- The United States has approved a possible \$620 million upgrade package for Patriot surface-to-air missiles to Taiwan.
- The United States, like most countries, has no official diplomatic ties with Taiwan but is bound by law to provide the democratic island with the means to defend itself.
- China, which claims the democratically-ruled island as its own territory, routinely denounces U.S. arms sales to Taiwan.

#### **United Nations organised 2020 Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week from 6-10 July 2020**

- The Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week will be held from 6-10 July and convened under the overarching theme of "Strategic and Practical Challenges of Countering Terrorism in a Global Pandemic Environment".
- The event will be launched on 6 July 2020 at 10:00 am (New York time) with an opening two-hour high-level session titled "Post COVID-19 World: Contours and Pivot Points and Benefits of Multilateral Collaboration."
- Thereafter, the Week will include nine additional webinars and interactive discussions focusing on priorities such as bio and cyber terrorism, high-risk threats and trends, addressing the plight of victims of terrorism, flagship UN counter-terrorism programmes, human rights and counter-terrorism, countering the financing of terrorism, youth-led initiatives to build resilient societies, and civil society and media perspectives to prevent violent extremism, among others.
- The event will provide an opportunity to bring Member States, United Nations entities, thought leaders, civil society representatives and other stakeholders together to exchange views, through strategic and expert-level online events, on what the new circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic mean for the counter-terrorism landscape.

#### **India joined Chile and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO) to co-host the High-Level Political Forum side-event 'On the road to the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021**

- Sustainable agriculture is fundamental to food security, India has stated at a high-level UN session, and emphasised the need to bring seed diversity back as shift by farmers from local varieties to genetically uniform, high-yielding breeds has reduced the ability of crops to survive when faced with challenges.
- India joined Chile and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO) to co-host the High-Level Political Forum side-event 'On the road to the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021: Highlighting health and nutritional benefits through sustainable production and consumption of fruits and vegetables'.

- Emphasising the importance of seed diversity, Naidu stated 75 per cent of the world's plant genetic diversity has been lost since the 1900s, as farmers have shifted from local varieties to genetically uniform, high-yielding crop breeds, thereby reducing the ability of crops to survive when faced with challenges.
- He stated GM crops also have significant socio-economic impacts. Because the seeds are proprietary, farmers have to pay royalties to use them and purchase new seeds every season, facing rising costs, and often increasing debt.
- India, with just 2.4 per cent of the world's land area, is the second-largest producer of fruits with an annual production of 98 million tonnes, accounting for about 10.9 per cent of the world production. India also produces 187 million tons of vegetables annually, accounting for 8.6 per cent of world production. The area under cultivation under fruits and vegetables has increased by about 11 per cent between 2013-14 and 2017-18.
- India has also deployed ICT to revolutionise agriculture, with the government launching an online platform for trading agricultural commodities (E-NAM). The platform helps farmers, traders and buyers in better price discovery and marketing of their produce all over India.

#### **India-Bhutan Open New Trade Route To Facilitate Connectivity Between Two Countries**

- India and Bhutan have opened a new trade route between Jaigaon in West Bengal and Pasakha in Bhutan.
- This link between Jaigaon and Ahlay, Pasakha will facilitate connectivities between our two countries in these COVID 19 times, further strengthening our special relationship. A step forward!" Ambassador of India to Bhutan, Ruchira Kamboj stated.
- Indian Embassy in Thimpu stated an additional Land Customs station has been opened at Ahllay, Pasakha by the Government of India on July 15.
- This new land route for movement of industrial raw materials and goods destined for Pasakha Industrial Estate will boost bilateral trade and commerce and lead to decongestion of vehicular traffic along the Jaigaon-Phuentsholing route, the release stated.

#### **Boeing receives \$916 mn deal to support International Space Station for 4 years**

- Boeing announced that it has won an almost one billion dollar contract to support the operations of the International Space Station (ISS) through to 2024.
- Boeing, NASA's (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) lead industry partner for the ISS since 1993, will continue supporting the celebrated orbiting laboratory through September of 2024 under a \$916 million contract extension awarded, the release stated.
- Under the terms of the contract, Boeing will provide engineering support services, resources and personnel for activities aboard the ISS and manage many of the station's systems, the release stated.
- Work will be done at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in Houston; the John F. Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral, Florida; and Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, as well as other locations around the world, the release added.
- Congress, NASA and its international partners have agreed to extend ISS operations to at least 2024. Recent structural analysis shows that the spacecraft continues to be safe and mission-capable.

#### **Pakistan and China signed for the 700 MW Azad Pattan hydel power project**

- Pakistan and China signed an agreement for the 700 MW Azad Pattan hydel power project on the Jhelum river in Sudhoti district of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK).

- The \$ 1.5-billion project is the second power project under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), for which an agreement has been signed in the last two months. The first agreement, for the 1,100 MW Kohala project, was signed on June 23. That project, worth \$ 2.3 billion, too will come up on the Jhelum near Muzaffarabad.
- The project is a run-of-the-river scheme with a reservoir located near Muslimabad village, 7 km upstream from the Azad Pattan bridge, in district Sudhnoti, one of the eight districts of PoK.
- The Azad Pattan project is one of five hydropower schemes on the Jhelum. Upstream from Azad Pattan are the Mahl, Kohala, and Chakothi Hattian projects; Karot is downstream. Like Kohala and Azad Pattan, Karot too, is being developed under the CPEC framework.
- India has protested the construction of dams and other infrastructure in PoK and Gilgit Baltistan, which are territories claimed by it as part of Jammu & Kashmir.

#### **UAE launches its first space mission to Mars from Japan**

- UAE's historic journey to Mars has been successfully started from the Tanegashima Space Center in Japan. The spacecraft Hope Probe took off in an early morning launch.
- H2A, the rocket carrying the Hope Probe to space, was launched from the Tanegashima Space Centre in Japan. It is the Arab world's first interplanetary landmark mission, putting UAE firmly ahead of all the countries in the Middle East in the area of space and technology.
- Hope Probe Spacecraft is expected to reach the Red Planet by February 2021, to coincide with UAE's 50th anniversary of its formation.
- The orbiter Hope is expected to take images and send back data of the distant Red Planet

#### **India-US announce new areas of research on transformational power generation**

- India and the US have announced new areas of research on transformational power generation based on supercritical CO<sub>2</sub> (sCO<sub>2</sub>) power cycles and advanced coal technologies, including carbon capture, utilisation, and storage (CCUS), the Ministry of Science and Technology stated.
- This emerged at a virtual ministerial meeting of the US-India Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP) to review progress, highlight major accomplishments, and prioritise new areas for cooperation.
- The meeting was co-chaired by Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan and US Secretary of Energy Dan Brouillette.
- Besides Pradhan and Brouillette, the virtual meeting was attended by US Ambassador to India Kenneth I Juster, Indian Ambassador to the United States Taranjit Singh Sandhu, and Secretary of Department of Science and Technology (DST) Professor Ashutosh Sharma along with other concerned officials.
- Sharma stated the collaboration between India and the United States has grown over the years under the Programme for Accelerating Clean Energy – Research (PACE-R).
- The ongoing collaboration on smart grids and energy storage is being implemented by a consortium comprising 30 Indian and US entities with an investment of USD 7.5 million each by India's DST and US Department of Energy (DoE), with matching amounts provided by the consortium, he stated.
- Sharma stated this project addresses essential issues related to the adoption and deployment of smart grid concepts along with Distributed Energy Resources (DERs), including storage in the distribution network for its efficient and reliable operation.
- It will also provide policy directions for societal acceptance, impact and value of the integrative solutions and emerging role of utilities as Distributed System Operators.

### **India, Maldives sign agreement for establishment of 'Emergency Medical Services' in Male**

- India and Maldives have signed an agreement for establishment of 'Emergency Medical Services' in capital Male.
- It is one of the several small and medium projects that are being financed by India under a grant assistance of around 20 million US dollars for the neighboring country.
- The emergency medical service unit will enhance timely access to quality emergency care.
- It will increase collaboration between healthcare facilities and disaster response agencies, especially during critical times of need.

### **EU approves biggest green stimulus in history with \$572-billion plan**

- The plan is part of Europe's bid to become the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050
- European governments approved the most ambitious climate change plan to date, agreeing to pour more than €500 billion (\$572 billion) into everything from electric cars to renewable energy and agriculture.
- At a marathon five-day summit in Brussels, heads of government reached a deal on an unprecedented economic rescue plan and seven-year budget for the region worth €1.8 trillion (\$2 trillion). Almost a third of that is earmarked for climate action, offering the bloc's 27 nations a chance to develop clean energy resources, stimulate the market for emissions-free cars, invest in budding technologies, and promote energy efficiency.
- The plan is part of Europe's bid to become the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050, putting it ahead of other major emitters such as the US, China, and India in the global fight against unstoppable temperature rise. The proportion of the European package earmarked for climate projects illustrates that contrast dramatically.
- Only \$54 billion of the trillions of dollars of recovery funds pledged globally will be channelled into green policies, while \$697 billion has been allocated for carbon-intensive sectors such as air travel and fossil fuel extraction, according to a Bloomberg NEF report released prior to the EUs stimulus deal.
- Germany's recovery plans are among the greenest so far, with about a third of the €130 billion (\$145 billion) recovery budget going into areas such as public transport and development of green hydrogen.
- The UK's plan has fallen short of previous climate-related promises and is far behind its European neighbours. The country has so far announced £5.4 billion (\$6.8 billion) in measures such as boosting green homes and supporting carbon capture technology.
- China will invest 10 billion yuan (\$1.4 billion) in electric vehicle chargers and will support new renewable energy plants, though it has also cleared the way for new coal projects.

### **Turkmenistan gets observer status in World Trade Organization**

- Turkmenistan has been granted Observer status by the World Trade Organization (WTO ) General Council. Turkmenistan has become the last former Soviet republic to establish formal ties with the trade body, a WTO Spokesperson stated.
- The Central Asian country filed a request for Observer status in May and expressed willingness to trigger the talks on accession to the WTO within five years.
- Neighbouring Central Asian countries -- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Afghanistan -- have acceded to the WTO, while Uzbekistan has been in on-and-off negotiations on WTO accession since 1994.

### **India revives initiative with South African Customs Union for the Preferential Trade Agreement**

- The discussions between India and the South African Customs Union (South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho) have been revived to achieve a Preferential Trade Agreement. The two sides had a virtual meeting last week to discuss the various aspects of PTA.

- The Indian side of the dialogue was led by the Joint Secretary of Department of Commerce, Srikar Reddy while South African Customs Union side was led by Executive Director of Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development, Namibia, Steve Katjiuanjo.
- India has been committed to and supporting the manufacturing and industry in Namibia in areas such as irrigation, agriculture, ICT, renewables, pharma, and medical supplies. Both sides reviewed the progress and discussed steps to move forward on PTA.
- Srikar Reddy highlighted India's historically close ties with South Africa and the country's steadfast commitment to deepen the economic engagement with this region.
- He added that in 2019-20, the trade between India and Africa stood at \$66.7 billion, out of which India-SACU trade was \$10.9 billion which has an immense potential to expand further.
- Steve Katjiuanjo called India as a strategic partner for the South African Customs Union (SACU). He added that the trade is currently in SACU's favour which shows that the region is benefitting from access to the vast Indian market.
- The High Commissioner of India to Namibia, Prashant Aggarwal mentioned in the current times of COVID-19 pandemic including its economic challenges, economies of the South African region, including Namibia, could majorly benefit by the enhanced trade and commercial links with India's \$2.9 trillion economy.

#### **Nicaragua latest country to sign International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement**

- Nicaragua has become the latest country to join the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement, an initiative led by India to promote sustainable energy.
- Nicaragua's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Jaime Hermida Castillo signed the agreement at the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations. The Central American country is the 87th country to sign the agreement.
- The International Solar Alliance was jointly launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former French President Francois Hollande at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in November 2015.

#### **High Commissioner Riva Ganguly Das inaugurates school building in Bangladesh**

- High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das and Information Minister of Bangladesh Dr. Hasan Mahmud jointly inaugurated the Science block building of Alipur Rahmania School and College, Chattogram.
- High Commissioner Riva Ganguly Das stated that India-Bangladesh relations have reached new heights. She stated that besides interaction at the government level, India is also undertaking various capacity building projects covering social and human development aspects which are of direct benefit to local communities in Bangladesh.
- The MoU for the construction of the ground floor of the 5-storied Science Block Building of Rahmania School and College, Hathazri, Chittagong was signed in 2017. The Taka 52 lakh project is funded by the Government of India under the High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) Scheme.
- In the past, Government of India has also supported several projects including the renovation and upgradation of Theatre Institute Chittagong (TIC) Auditorium; installation of deep tube wells in Banskali Upazila; construction of an Academic Building at Farakkabad Degree College Chandpur and Singhara Ram Kanai High School, Anowara, in the Chittagong region.

#### **India, Israel jointly develop ultra rapid testing kit for COVID-19; results within 30 sec**

- India and Israel have jointly developed an ultra rapid testing kit for COVID-19.
- The testing kit which has proven its efficacy in lab results will now be subjected to broader trials.

- Principal Scientific Adviser to Government of India, Professor K VijayRaghavan informed that Indian DRDO scientists along with Defence Research Wing of Israel have been conjointly working on the COVID testing kit.
- He stated, the kit has been developed by integration of many novel technologies which includes artificial intelligence based online voice test, breathalyser test, isothermal testing and testing using polyamino acids.
- India and Israel are also the members of the world consortium of scientists working on COVID Vaccine.

#### **India, UK affirm shared commitment towards FTA between both countries**

- India and the United Kingdom have affirmed their shared commitment towards Free Trade Agreement between both the countries. The two sides will engage into early harvest schemes or limited trade agreements in a staged manner marking preparatory steps towards the free trade agreement.
- The declaration was announced during the 14th Joint Economic and Trade Committee meeting which was held virtually. Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and UK Secretary of State for International Trade, Ms Elizabeth Truss co-chaired the meeting. Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Hardeep Singh Puri and his UK counterpart, Minister of State for International Trade, Mr Ranil Jayawardena were also present during the meet.
- It was decided in the meeting that a deliberation led by Mr Goyal and Ms Truss will be held in Autumn 2020 in New Delhi to carry forward the dialogue.
- Mr Puri and Mr Jayawardena will have monthly meetings to intensify the dialogue. Both sides also resolved to cooperate in the health sector especially in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **WHO launches Covid-19 Law Lab to aggregate legal info from over 190 countries**

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) launched its Covid-19 Law Lab to gather and share pandemic-related legal documents from over 190 countries across the world.
- The initiative is meant to help countries “establish and implement strong legal frameworks to manage the pandemic”.
- “The goal is to ensure that laws protect the health and well-being of individuals and communities and that they adhere to international human rights standards,” reads an official press release.
- It is a joint project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), WHO, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University.
- Poorly-designed laws can prove harmful to global Covid-19 efforts, according to the stakeholders.
- The Covid-19 Law Lab is essentially a database that aggregates documents related to laws implemented by countries in response to the pandemic.
- It includes state of emergency declarations, quarantine measures, disease surveillance, legal measures relating to mask-wearing, social distancing, and access to medication and vaccines. The database will continue to grow as more countries and themes are added, the health agency stated.
- The law lab will also include research on such legal frameworks, along with its implications, with a focus on the human rights impact of public health laws. This is meant to further aid socio-economic recovery in post-pandemic times.

#### **India extends medical assistance worth about USD 1 million to North Korea**

- India has extended medical assistance worth about USD 1 million to North Korea in response to a request received from the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Ministry of External Affairs stated.
- India is sensitive to the shortage of medical supply situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and decided to grant a humanitarian assistance of USD 1 million in the form of anti-tuberculosis medicines, the MEA stated.
- The medical assistance is under the aegis of an ongoing WHO anti-tuberculosis programme in DPRK, it stated.



- The consignment of medicines was handed over to DPRK authorities by Indian Ambassador to DPRK Atul Malhari Gotsurve in the presence of a WHO representative.

#### **DST launches Rs. 15 crore fund to support India-Russia collaboration joint R&D and cross-country tech adaptation**

- The Department of Science and Technology has launched the India-Russia Joint Technology Assessment and Accelerated Commercialization Programme in partnership with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Foundation for Assistance to Small Innovative Enterprises (FASIE) of the Russian Federation.
- The programme will connect Indian, and Russian Science & Technology (S&T) led SMEs and Start-ups for joint R&D for technology development and for cross-country technology adaptation.
- The launch of the India-Russia Joint Technology Assessment and Accelerated Commercialization Programme is another step towards strengthening the Science, Technology and Innovation ties between the two countries. This initiative is very timely, wherein we can leverage joint intellectual and financial resources to develop technologies that would provide the solutions for tomorrow.
- The programme will run through two annual cycles with up to five projects to be funded under each cycle. Projects are being sought on leading S&T focus areas, including but not limited to, IT & ICT (including AI, AR, VR), Medicine & Pharmaceuticals, Renewable Energy, Aerospace, Alternative Technologies, Environment, New Materials, Biotechnologies, Robotics and Drones. On behalf of DST, FICCI will implement the program in India.
- Over a period of two years, the Department of Science and Technology will fund up to INR 15 Crores to ten Indian SMEs/Start-ups and FASIE will provide similar funding to the Russian projects.
- The programme will provide access to partial public funding for jointly selected projects with the participation of at least one start-up/SME from India and one SME from Russia. The selected projects will be required to bear partial funding as well, either through own funds or alternate sources of funding. In addition to the financial support, the teams will also be supported through capacity building, mentorship and business development.

#### **India hands over 10 broad gauge locomotives to Bangladesh**

- India handed over 10 broad-gauge (BG) locomotives to Bangladesh, aiming to help handle the increasing volume of passenger and freight train operations in the neighbouring country.
- The locomotives were flagged off virtually by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Railways Minister Piyush Goyal and were received by Bangladesh's Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen and Railway Minister Nurul Islam Sujan.
- The 10 locomotives handed over and are designed for a speed of 120 mph, and are suitable for hauling freight and passenger trains.

#### **IMF approves \$4.3 bn to South Africa in biggest COVID-19 loan**

- The IMF has decided to grant South Africa \$4.3 billion in emergency funding, the largest amount given to any country yet to fight the coronavirus pandemic.
- The funds "support the authorities' efforts in addressing the challenging health situation and economic impact of the COVID-19 shock".
- South Africa is the worst-hit country in the continent with over 4,50,000 cases.

#### **India, Indonesia Defence Ministers' Dialogue held in New Delhi**

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh led the Indian delegation while the Indonesian delegation was led by their Defence Minister General Prabowo Subianto. Defence Ministers' Dialogue between India and Indonesia was held in New Delhi.
- The dignitary is in India for strengthening the ties between the two maritime neighbours.

- During the talks, Mr Rajnath Singh reiterated the long history of mutually beneficial interactions between the two countries with a tradition of close political dialogue, economic and trade linkages as well as cultural and people to people interactions.
- Conveying satisfaction on the military to military interactions, the Minister indicated that the defence cooperation between India and Indonesia has witnessed an upswing in the recent years.

#### **India and EU renew Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation for next 5 yrs till 2025**

- India and European Union have renewed its Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation for the next five years till 2025.
- This will expand the cooperation in scientific and technological research and strengthen the conduct of cooperative activities in areas of common interest and application of the results of such cooperation to their economic and social benefit.
- The Agreement was initially signed on 23rd November in 2001 and renewed two times in 2007 and 2015.
- In the last five years, the level of co-investment on India-EU Research Technology Development Projects for addressing societal challenges such as affordable health care, water, energy, food and nutrition. The cooperation has been focused on water, green transport, e-mobility, clean energy, bio-economy, health, and ICT.

#### **India begins reconstruction of 300-year-old Sree Sree Joy Kali Matar Temple in Bangladesh**

- India began the reconstruction a 300-year-old temple Sree Sree Joy Kali Matar Temple in Bangladesh's northern Natore district.
- The reconstruction is happening with Indian grant assistance of Bangladeshi Taka 97 lakhs and a total cost of Bangladeshi Taka of 1.33 Crores under the High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) scheme of India.
- Sree Sree JoyKali Matar Temple is one of the oldest temples situated in Natore and was built at the beginning of 18th century by Dayaram Roy, Dewan of Queen Bhahani of Natore and the founder of Dighapatia Royal Family. The compound of the temple also houses a Lord Shiva temple.

#### **India hands over 10 broad-gauge diesel locomotives to Bangladesh**

- India handed over ten broad-gauge diesel locomotives to Bangladesh. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar flagged them off online in presence of Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and several dignitaries from across the border.
- These locomotives will help handle the increasing volume of passenger and freight train operations in Bangladesh, stated Ministry of Railways.
- The handing over of these locomotives, under grant assistance from the Government of India, fulfills an important commitment made during the visit of Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina to India, in October, 2019. In keeping with the requirements of Bangladesh Railway, the locomotives have been suitably modified by the Indian side. These locomotives will help handle the increasing volume of passenger and freight train operations in Bangladesh" the ministry stated.
- In the recent times, India and Bangladesh have stepped up their rail cooperation in mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as trade via land border faced disruptions. Rail as a cost effective and environmental friendly solution, has helped in transporting essential commodities across the border. Both sides saw the highest ever exchange of freight trains in the month of June. A total of 103 freight trains were utilized for carrying essential commodities and raw materials.

#### **New Supreme Court building in Mauritius 'landmark project' completed under India's development partnership: MEA**

- **External Affairs Ministry** stated the **new Supreme Courtbuilding** in **Mauritius** is another landmark project completed under India's development partnership. Ministry spokesperson stated, this is an example of India's ability to implement such projects in various parts of the world.
- He stated the project has been completed on schedule and at a cost below the initial estimates. India is making development partnerships that are marked by respect for partners, diversity, care for the future and sustainable development.
- Mr Srivastava stated, India's development partnership footprint transcends the globe and includes successfully completed diverse projects like a major housing project in Sri Lanka, the Parliament building in Afghanistan, Mahatma Gandhi Convention Centre in Niger and improvement in health services through the emergency and trauma hospital in Nepal.

#### Australia to make Google and Facebook pay for news content

- The **Australian government** stated it plans to give **Google** and **Facebook** three months to negotiate with Australian media businesses fair pay for **news content**.
- The government has released a **draft mandatory code of conduct** that aims to succeed where other countries have failed in making the global digital giants pay for news siphoned from commercial media companies.
- Treasurer Josh Frydenberg stated Google and Facebook would be the first digital platforms targeted by the proposed legislation but others could follow.
- If the U.S.-based platforms could not agree with the Australian media businesses on pricing after three months, arbitrators would be appointed to make a binding decision, the draft stated.
- As well as payment, the code covers issues including access to user data and transparency of algorithms used to rank and present media content.
- Breaches of the code could attract penalties of up to 10% of the platform's annual turnover or a 10 million Australian dollar (\$7.2 million) fine.

#### Revision Points

Country	Capital	Currency	Head
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Taka	Abdul Hamid
Germany	Berlin	Euro	Frank-Walter Steinmeier
Indonesia	Jakarta	Rupiah	Joko Widodo
Maldives	Male	Rufiyaa	Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
Sri Lanka	Colombo	Rupee	Gotabaya Rajapaksa
Afghanistan	Kabul	Afghani	Ashraf Ghani
North Korea	Pyongyang	Won	Supreme Leader - Kim Jong-un Premier - Kim Jae-ryong
Taiwan	Taipei	Dollar	Tsai Ing-wen
Chile	Santiago	Peso	Sebastián Piñera
UK	London	Pound Sterling	Boris Johnson
Bhutan	Thimphu	Ngultrum	Lotay Tshering
UAE	Abu Dhabi	Dirham	Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan

USA	Washington D.C	Dollar	Donald Trump
Nepal	Kathmandu	Rupee	Bidhya Devi Bhandari
Turkmenistan	Ashgabat	Manat	Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow
France	Paris	Euro	Jean Castex
Ireland	Dublin	Euro	Gudni Th. Jóhannesson
Pakistan	Islamabad	Rupee	Arif Alvi
China	Beijing	Renminbi	Xi Jinping
Japan	Tokyo	Yen	Shinzo Abe
Australia	Canberra	Dollar	Scott Morrison
Russia	Moscow	Ruble	Vladimir Putin
Mauritius	Port Louis	Rupee	Pravind Jugnauth
South Africa	Cape Town	Rand	Cyril Ramaphosa
Israel	Jerusalem	Shekel	Reuven Rivlin
Nicaragua	Managua	Cordoba	Daniel Ortega
Singapore	Singapore City	Dollar	Halimah Yacob
Poland	Warsaw	Zloty	Andrzej Duda
Suriname	Paramaribo	Dollar	Chan Santokhi
Gabon	Libreville	Central African Franc	Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda
Tunisia	Tunis	Dinar	Hichem Mechichi
Somalia	Mogadishu	Shilling	Mahdi Mohammed Gulaid
Croatia	Zagreb	Kuna	Andrej Plenkovic

### Important Appointments

#### National Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation	Predecessor/Others
Hariharan K	Chief Financial Officer, Lakshmi Vilas Bank	
Shrikant Madhav Vaidya	Chairman, Indian Oil	He is the Chairman of Chennai Petroleum Corporation
Rajkiran Rai G	Managing Director, Union Bank of India	Extended till May end 2022. He was Executive Director of Oriental Bank of Commerce
Ravinder Bhakar	Chief Executive Officer, Central Board of Films and Certification	Anurag Srivastava (Bhakar was posted as the Secretary & Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railways)
V Suryanarayanan	Managing Director,	S S Gopalarathnam

(President & COO of the company)	Cholamandalam MS General Insurance Company	
Sanjay Kapoor	President, Hyderabad Management Association	HMA is affiliated to All India Management Association New Delhi
Sanjay Dwivedi	Director General, Indian Institute of Mass Communication	He is the Registrar of Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication, Bhopal
Karnam Sekar	Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Indian Overseas Bank	Subramaniam Kumar
T C Suseel Kumar	Non-executive member, Axis Bank	Managing Director of LIC
Sukhbir Singh Sandhu	Chairman, National Highways Authority of India	Given the extension of 6 months
Zoya Khan from Vadodara district of Gujarat	1 <sup>st</sup> transgender operator, Common Service Centre in India	
M Taj Mukarrum	Director (Finance), Power Grid Corporation	
SP Kochhar	Director General, Cellular Operators Association of India	Rajan Mathews
Ajai Puri	Chairman, Cellular Operators Association of India	Chief Operating Officer, Bharti Airtel
Pramod Kumar Mittal	Vice Chairman, Cellular Operators Association of India	President, Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited
Injeti Srinivas	Chairman, International Financial Services Centres Authority	
Sukhbir Singh	Brand Ambassador, Luxury Ride	
Sijo Kuruvilla George	Member, Expert Committee on Science and Technology Policy (8-member panel)	CEO of Startup Village and founder of Re-think Foundation
Justice Bansi Lal Bhat	Chairperson, National Company Law Appellate Tribunal	Given extension for three months
Shyamala Gopinath	Additional Director (Independent), CRISIL	She was Deputy Governor at Reserve Bank of India for seven years till June 2011.
Priyanka Chopra	Brand ambassador to the 2020 Toronto International Film Festival	

Saif Ali Khan & Kareena Kapoor Khan	Brand Ambassador,s, Vectus Industries Limited	
Gyanendro Ningombam (Editor of Meeyam)	Officiating President, Hockey India	Mohd Mushtaque Ahmad
Kunal Bahl	Chairman of CII's E-Commerce Committee	Co-founder & CEO of Snapdeal
Hemang Amin	Interim CEO, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)	Rahul Johri
Ashwini Kumar Tewari	MD & CEO, SBI Cards and Payment Services	Hardayal Prasad
Roshini Nadar Malhotra	Chairperson, HCL Technologies	Shiv Nadar
Kulmeet Bawa	President & MD, SAP Indian Subcontinent	Deb Deep Sengupta
Shyam Srinivasan	MD & CEO, Federal Bank	Extended till September 22, 2021
P Praveen Siddharth	Private Secretary to the President	Vikram Singh
Ramesh Babu Boddu	MD & CEO, Karur Vysya Bank	Retired as Deputy Managing Director in State Bank of India in April 2020
Sumit Deb	Chairman & MD, National Mineral Development Corporation	N Bajindra Kumar
Sanjiv Bajaj	Chairman, Bajaj Finance Ltd	Rahul Bajaj
Dr Alok Misra	Chief Executive Officer, Microfinance Institutions Network	Harsh Dhrivatsava
Prakash Chandra Kandpal	MD & CEO, SBI General Insurance	Pushan Mahapatra
Pushan Mahapatra	Director (strategic investments & digital initiatives), SBI General Insurance	
Arun Kumar	Nominated Vice Chairman, International Union of Railways, UIC, Paris	He is the Director General of Railway Protection Force
Ganesh Lakshminarayanan	Chief Executive Officer-Enterprise Business, Bharti Airtel	Ashish Arora
P Amudha	Joint Secretary in PM's Office	She is serving as a professor in Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration
Varsha Joshi	Joint Secretary in the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying	



Keshav Chandra	Director, Serious Fraud Investigation Office, Ministry of Corporate Affairs	
Sajjan Yadav	Joint Secretary, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance	Shifted from the Department of Women and Child
Sudhir Kumar	Additional Secretary, Central Vigilance Commission	
Nitishwar Kumar	Member Secretary, National Council for Teachers' Education	Shifted from the Ministry of Water Resources
Partha Pratim Sengupta	MD & CEO, Indian Overseas Bank	He served as the Deputy MD of SBI
Sahil Seth	Honorary adviser to the steering committee for the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Appointed for the period of 2020-23
Rajesh Bhushan	Union Health Secretary	Preeti Sudan
Sushil Kumar	Secretary of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes	Ram Kumar Mishra
Ram Kumar Mishra	Women and Child Development Secretary	
Anil Kumar Jain	Secretary, Ministry of Mines	
Ajay Tirkey	Secretary, Department of Land Resources	Ruolkhumlien Buhrl
Anandiben Patel (Governor of Uttar Pradesh)	Governor, Madhya Pradesh	Lal Ji Tandon
Vivek Ram Chaudhari	New commander-in-chief, Indian Air Force's Western Air Command	Air Marshal B Suresh
Naveen Tahilyani	MD & CEO, Tata AIA Life Insurance	Rishi Srivastava
N Sivaraman	Managing Director & CEO, ICRA Ltd	aresh Takkar
Anil Kumar Jha (Former Coal India Chief)	Member of a key panel	Panel that deals with violation of environment rules
Varun Sridhar	CEO, Paytm Money	Pravin Jadhav
B Ramesh Babu	MD, CEO of Karur Vysya Bank	

#### International Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation	Predecessor/Others
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Gudni Th. Jóhannesson	President of Ireland	Elected for second 4-year term
Nigar Johar	Lieutenant general of Pakistan Army	1 <sup>st</sup> female surgeon general of the Pakistan Army
Indra Mani Pandey	Next Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva	
Jean Castex	Prime Minister, France	Edouard Philippe
Jayant Krishna	CEO, UK India Business Council	1st Indian CEO of UKIBC
Baoshuan Ger (DG of the department of East Asian and Pacific Affairs)	Taiwan's ambassador to India	Tien Chung-kwang
Dr Parag Chitnis	Acting Director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture	
Rudrendra Tandon	New envoy to Afghanistan	
Vikram Doraiswami	High commissioner to Dhaka	
Lee Hsien Loong	Prime Minister, Singapore	
Madeline Swegle	First known Black female tactical air pilot in the U.S. Navy's history	She is set to receive 'Wings of Gold'
Andrzej Duda	President, Poland	
Dr. Vidhu P. Nair	Next Ambassador to Turkmenistan	
Chan Santokhi	President, Suriname	Desi Bouterse
Ashok Lavasa	Vice President, Asian Development Bank	Diwakar Gupta
Brett Lee (Australian Cricketer)	Brand Ambassador, Sports Adda	
Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda	Prime Minister, Gabon (1 <sup>st</sup> female PM)	Appointed by the president of Gabon, Ali Bongo Ondimba
Andrej Plenkovic	Incumbent Prime Minister, Croatia	
Mahdi Mohammed Gulaid	Interim Prime Minister, Somalia	Hassan Ali Khaire
Hichem Mechichi	Prime Minister, Tunisia	Elyes Fakhfakh
Jin Liqun	President, AIIB (Re-elected)	His second five-year term will begin on January 16, 2021

#### Resignation/Retirement

Name of the Person	Designation
Shashank Manohar	Chairman, ICC (Imran Khwaja will assume the responsibilities of the Chairperson)

Rahul Johri	CEO, BCCI
Elyes Fakhfakh	Prime Minister, Tunisia
Saba Karim	General Manager - Cricket operations, Indian Cricket Board
Rahul Bajaj	Chairman, Bajaj Finance

## 2 Agricultural experts from India named by UN chief to scientific group for 2021 food summit

- Prof Rattan Lal of Ohio State University and Dr Uma Lele of the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) are among the Scientific Group Members named by UN President Guterres.
- Lal, a pre-eminent Indian-American soil scientist, was named last month as the 2020 World Food Prize Laureate for developing and mainstreaming a soil-centric approach to increasing food production that conserves natural resources and mitigates climate change.
- Lal serves as distinguished university professor of Soil Science and founding Director of the Carbon Management and Sequestration Centre at The Ohio State University.
- Lele, the first woman to be awarded a PhD in agricultural economics by Cornell University, was elected President Elect of the International Association of Agricultural Economists in July 2018.
- Guterres, in collaboration with the United Nations (UN) Rome-based Agencies, will convene the Food Systems Summit in 2021, as a critical contribution to the Decade of Action to deliver the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Young Indian activist Archana Soreng named by UN chief to new advisory group on climate change

- A climate activist from India Archana Soreng has been named by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to his new advisory group comprising young leaders who will provide perspectives and solutions to tackle the worsening climate crisis, as the global body mobilises action as part of the COVID-19 recovery efforts.
- Archana Soreng joins six other young climate leaders from around the world are in the UN chief new Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change.
- Soreng is experienced in advocacy and research, and she is working to document, preserve, and promote traditional knowledge and cultural practices of indigenous communities.

## Important Awards and Honours

Winner	Prize	Awarded By/Theme/Purpose
Kritika Pandey's short story, The Great Indian Tee and Snakes	2020 Commonwealth Short Story Prize	Given by the Commonwealth Writers organisation
Mint (for the front page of the special edition dated 24 May 2019)	Newspaper Front Page Design award	WAN-IFRA's 19th Asian Media Awards
Sunflame	Iconic Brands of India 2020	The Economics Times
Headquarters of International Olympic Committee in Lausanne	European 2020 US Green Building Council (USGBC) Leadership Award	It holds the rigorous LEED Platinum certification

Sachin Awasthi	Top Publicist honor under Global Humanitarian Award 2020	He hosted a cleanliness drive at Banke Bihari Mandir
Mukhyamantri Darpan and mobile App of Chhattisgarh	IT institution Elites Technomedia under the 'Digital India initiative'	
Suraji Gaon Yojna	Elites Excellence Awards-2020	
Kezang D Thongdok (Arunachal Pradesh)	Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2020	For the documentary film 'Chi Lupo' on honey hunting
Edappadi K Palaniswami	Paul Harris Fellow recognition	
National Thermal Power Corporation	CII-ITC Sustainability Award 2019	
Dr Kailasavadivoo Sivan (ISRO Chief)	2020 Von Karman Award of the International Academy of Astronautics	It will be conferred in March 2021 in Paris. Previous recipient - Charles Elachi
Shahidul Alam (Noted Bangladeshi photojournalist and founder of Pathshala Media Institute)	One of the winners of the 2020 International Press Freedom Awards.	Other Awardees: Mohammad Mosaed (Iran), Dapo Olorunyomi (Nigeria), Svetlana Prokopyeva (Russia)
Gurbux Singh & Palash Nandi	Mohun Bagan Ratna 2020	
Ashok Kumar, Pranab Ganguly (football), Monoranjan Porel(athletics)	Lifetime Achievement Award	
Joseba Beitia	Best footballer (senior) prize	
Sajal Bag (U-18)	Best youth player	
Ved Parkash Dudeja (Vice Chairman, Rail Land Development Authority)	Infra Business Leader of the Year' award for 2020	Rail Infra and Mobility Business Digital Awards
N Chandrasekaran (Tata group chairman) & Jim Taiclet (Lockhead Martin CEO)	USIBC Global Leadership Award	
Marcus Rashford (Manchester United forward)	Honorary doctorate from the University of Manchester	Joins club greats Alex Ferguson and Bobby Charlton
Marianna Vardinoyannis of Greece and Morissana Kouyate of Guinea	United Nations 2020 Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize	Announced by General Assembly President Tijjani Muhammad-Bande
Central Marine Fisheries	Best research institute of the	2 <sup>nd</sup> time CMFRI has bagged the

Research Institute	Indian Council of Agricultural Research	award
Kannan C S Warriar (recipient of the Rolla S Rao National Award)	National Award of Excellence for Outstanding Research in Forestry for the year 2019	Awarded by Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (for releasing three productive clones of casuarina, known as kattadi and savukku)
Lionel Messi	7 <sup>th</sup> Pichichi award	Break La Liga record
Arnab Chaudhuri ('Arjun: The Warrior Prince' - Only animation from India to date to be longlisted for Oscar awards)	Legend of Animation award	Toonz Media Group (TMG) as part of the Animation Masters Summit (AMS) 2020
Kala Narayanasamy	President's Award for Nurses (Singapore)	For serving on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic
Greta Thunberg (Swedish Activist)	First Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity	
UST Global	Information Services Group (ISG) Digital recognition	It received the recognition for 2 <sup>nd</sup> time
Aditya, India's first solar-powered ferry	Gustave Trousseau Award for Excellence in Electric Boats and Boating	
Sunil ydv SS	Karamveer Chakra Award	United Nations and International Confederation of NGO (iCONGO)

#### Mon District Administration conferred SKOCH Awards in Nagaland

- In Nagaland, Mon District Administration has been conferred the SKOCH Awards under three different categories at the 65TH SKOCH Summit.
- The Mon district administration was awarded the SKOCH Crucible award for its initiative on financial inclusion, District Response to COVID-19 and skill development.
- The SKOCH Crucible Award for 'Financially Inclusive Mon' was conferred in recognition of the district's focus on mission mode implementation of opening bank accounts through the Indian post Payment Bank (IBBP).
- SKOCH Order of Merit for District Response to COVID-19 was also conferred to Mon District Administration for its innovative response to contain and prevent the spread of COVID-19 pandemic while at the same time, delivering basic services at the doorsteps of the people.
- SKOCH Honorable Mention to Skill Mon Mission.

#### India's AI enabled MyGov Corona Helpdesk wins two global awards

- India's Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled MyGov Corona Helpdesk has bagged two awards at the Global Leadership Summit and Festival of AI and Emerging Technology, CogX 2020.
- AI enabled MyGov Corona Helpdesk bagged two awards under categories of Best Innovation for Covid-19 - Society and People's Choice Covid-19 Overall Winner.
- The recently held CogX 2020 is a prestigious Global Leadership Summit and Festival of AI and Emerging Technology held annually in London.

#### **Two renowned Indian-Americans honoured by prestigious American foundation**

- In the United States, two renowned Indian-Americans who have contributed towards the efforts in mitigating the COVID-19 health crisis are among the 38 immigrants honoured by a prestigious American foundation ahead of US Independence Day commemoration this year.
- Pulitzer Prize-winning author and oncologist Siddhartha Mukherjee and Professor of Economics at Harvard University Raj Chetty have been named by the Carnegie Corporation of New York as '2020 Great Immigrants' honorees.
- Dr. Mukherjee is a noted biologist, oncologist and the author of several acclaimed books, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning 'The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer'. Since 2009, he has served on the faculty of Columbia University, where he is Associate Professor of Medicine and a Physician at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. In 2014, Dr. Mukherjee was awarded the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian honours.
- Professor Raj Chetty, who was born in New Delhi, has been one of the youngest professors to be granted tenure in Harvard's history. In addition to his position as the William A. Ackman Professor of Economics at Harvard University, Chetty directs Opportunity Insights, a research lab that aims to identify barriers to economic and social mobility and develop scalable policy solutions to overcome them. He helped launch a resource to monitor the real-time economic impact of COVID-19 on people, businesses and communities across the United States.

#### **Delhi Girl Freya Thakral Receives Prestigious Diana Award for Positive Contribution to Society**

- Thirteen-year-old Freya Thakral, a student from The British School, New Delhi, has been bestowed with the highest accolade a young person can achieve for social action or humanitarian efforts – The Diana Award. She has been added to the roll of honours on Princess Diana's birthday – July 1, 2020.
- Freya developed an App – Recycler, and door-to-door recycling business with the aim to transform the lives of Delhi's rubbish-picking community, contributing towards the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals of reducing poverty, building innovation and infrastructure and encouraging responsible consumption and climate action.

#### **Elton John becomes second artist to be honoured with commemorative coin by Royal Mint**

- Elton John became the second artist to be honoured by Britain's Royal Mint with a commemorative £1,000 gold coin paying tribute to the decorated British singer-songwriter.
- The coin, designed by artist Bradley Morgan Johnson, depicts John's distinctive straw boater's hat, and fashions his trademark glasses out of a pair of musical notes.
- John, who was knighted in 1998, is the second artist to be commemorated under the Royal Mint's Music Legends series after rock band Queen.
- He has sold more than 250 million records, with hits like 'Candle in the Wind', 'Your Song' and 'Bennie and the Jets'.

#### **Indian battalion wins UNIFIL environment award**

- An Indian battalion stationed with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has won an environment award for a project that aims to decrease waste generation, reuse plastic, build green houses and compost pits.



- The Mission's Sector West Headquarters and Irish-Polish Battalion (IRISHPOLBATT) won the award for 2nd place. The Sector West Infrastructure Management Centre (IMC) project aimed at turning food waste into compost and donating to the host communities.
- The IRISHPOLBATT project supported host communities by reducing environmental hazards within their area of responsibility.
- Other UNIFIL units that received awards and recognitions included French-led Force Commander's Reserve, Indonesian Battalion, Republic of Korea Battalion and Italian Battalion.
- UNIFIL launched the "Annual Environment Awards" in December last year to recognise environmental achievements within the Mission's area of operations.

#### **India's 2018 Tiger Census sets Guinness World Record for being largest camera trapping wildlife survey**

- The All India Tiger Estimation 2018, released last year, has entered the Guinness World Record for being the world's largest camera trap wildlife survey.
- The latest results of 2018 had shown that India now has an estimated 2,967 tigers out of which 2461 individual tigers have been photo captured, a whopping 83 per cent of the tiger population, highlighting the comprehensive nature of the survey.
- The quadrennial tiger estimation is steered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority with technical backstopping from the Wildlife Institute of India and implemented by State Forest Departments and partners.
- Camera traps (outdoor photographic devices fitted with motion sensors that start recording when an animal passes by) were placed in 26,838 locations across 141 different sites and surveyed an effective area of 121,337 square kilometres (46,848 square miles).

#### **South Central Railway's Ongole Sub-Division Office bags WATER HEROES AWARD from Jal Shakti Ministry**

- The Ongole Sub-Division Office of South Central Railway has bagged the WATER HEROES AWARD, from Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India.
- The Ongole Sub-Divisional Office of Vijayawada Division, Andhra Pradesh, South Central Railway led by Pratham Agarwal, Assistant Divisional Engineer have been declared as winner in the "Water Heroes Award" for the month of April, 2020 launched by Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- To promote the value of water in general and for supporting the efforts on water conservation and sustainable development of water resources, the Department of water, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Govt. of India has organized a contest for the period from 1st September, 2019 to 30th June 2020.

#### **Avni Doshi, an Indian-origin author, on 2020 Booker Prize longlist for debut novel**

- Dubai-based Indian-origin author Avni Doshi is among the 13 authors longlisted for the prestigious 2020 Booker Prize for her debut novel 'Burnt Sugar', alongside double Booker winner Hilary Mantel for 'The Mirror and The Light'.
- The Booker Prize for Fiction is open to writers of any nationality, writing in English and published in the UK or Ireland. The shortlist of six books will be announced on September 15, with each shortlisted author receiving 2,500 pounds and a specially bound edition of their book at the prize ceremony scheduled for November.
- British and Scottish nominees this year include Gabriel Krauze for 'Who They Was', Douglas Stuart for 'Shuggie Bain' and Sophie Ward for 'Love and Other Thought Experiments'. Zimbabwean writer Tsitsi Dangarembga is nominated for the third novel in her trilogy — 'This Mournable Body'.

- The rest of the longlist is largely dominated by US-based authors, including Diane Cook for 'The New Wilderness', Colum McCann for 'Apeirogon', Maaza Mengiste for 'The Shadow King', Kiley Reid for 'Such a Fun Age', Brandon Taylor for 'Real Life', Anne Tyler for 'Redhead by The Side of The Road', and C Pam Zhang for 'How Much of These Hills is Gold'.
- The 2019 Booker Prize for Fiction was won jointly by 'The Testaments' by Margaret Atwood and 'Girl, Woman, Other' by Bernardine Evaristo. First awarded in 1969, the Booker Prize is recognised as the leading prize for literary fiction written in English.

#### **MoES National Awards for excellence in Earth System Science Announced**

- The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is mandated to provide the nation with the best possible services for weather, climate, ocean, coastal and natural hazards, for the Public Safety and socio-economic benefits. The Ministry also deals with exploration and sustainable harnessing of ocean resources (living and non-living) and plays a nodal role for Antarctic/Arctic/Himalayas and Southern Ocean research.
- The Ministry has instituted the Life Time Excellence Award, National Awards in the field of Atmospheric Science & Technology; Ocean Science; Geoscience & Technology; and Ocean Technology/Polar Science, Two Young Researcher awards and Dr. Anna Mani National Award for Woman Scientist.
- This year the Life Time Excellence Award is being awarded to Professor Ashok Sahni for his significant contribution in the field of Geology, Vertebrate Paleontology and Biostratigraphy.
- The National Award for Ocean Science & technology is being awarded to Dr. V. V. S. S. Sarma, Senior Principal Scientist, CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography, Vishakhapatnam and Dr. M. Ravichandran, Director, National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Goa. Dr. Sarma has made significant contributions in understanding biogeochemistry of the Indian Ocean.
- The National Award for Atmospheric Science & technology will be presented to Dr. S. Suresh Babu, Scientist-SF, VSSC, Thiruvananthapuram. He has made outstanding contributions towards understanding the radiative impacts of black carbon aerosols on atmospheric stability and climate.
- The National award for Geoscience & technology will be presented to N. V. Chalapathi Rao Department of Geology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. He has carried out an enduring research on deeper mantle petrology and geochemistry.
- The National Award for Ocean Technology will be presented to Dr. M. A. Atmanand, Director, National Institute of Ocean Technology, Chennai. He has done pioneering work in the area of deep sea technologies.
- Dr. Lidita D. S. Khandeparker, Senior Scientist, CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography, Goa will receive the Anna Mani award for woman scientist. She has made significant contributions in the field of aquatic microbial ecology, Marine biofilms and their relevance in the oceans.
- The Young Researcher Awards will be presented to Dr. Indra Sekhar Sen, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur and Dr. Arvind Singh Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad for their outstanding work in Earth System Science.

#### **Important MOU's**

##### **MoU signed between Indianoil, NTPC Ltd, and SDMC for Waste to Energy plant in Delhi**

- A MoU was signed on **Waste to Energy plant at Okhla**, Delhi, between **Indian Oil, NTPC Ltd and South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC)**. The ceremony was witnessed by the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Shri RK Singh, Minister of State (I/c) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, and Shri Anil Baijal, Lt. Governor of Delhi.

- Under the MoU, IndianOil, SDMC and NTPC shall come together to develop a demonstration Waste-to-energy Plant at Okhla landfill site in Delhi, using Gasification technology.
- This Plant shall process **17500 tons per annum of Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF)** produced from combustible components of Municipal Waste to generate syngas which shall in turn be used to generate electricity.
- This Energy plant is expected to bring solutions to the management of **Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) in Delhi**.
- The gas generation from waste will also help in **cutting imports of petroleum products** and saving foreign exchange.
- The technology that is used in the Delhi plant will result in **less emission** and also provide usable residues.

#### **NLC India, CIL sign pact to form JV to develop 5,000 MW solar, thermal power assets**

- **NLC India** stated it has signed a pact with state-owned **CIL** to form a joint venture (JV) to **develop 5,000 megawatts of solar and thermal power assets** across the country.
- The equity participation in the proposed **JV between** Coal India Ltd (CIL) and NLC India will be in the ratio of **50:50**, NLC India stated in a regulatory filing.
- This JV company marks a new era in the power sector with the synergy and expertise of two central public sector undertakings under the **Ministry of Coal**, the company stated.

#### **Maharashtra Government and UK India Business Council Extend MoU to Foster Sustainable Business Relations Between UK And India**

- The **UK India Business Council** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC)**, the premier industrial infrastructure development agency of the Government of Maharashtra.
- This business framework between the UKIBC and Government of Maharashtra will help the State to proactively **better its business environment** and strengthen **its collaboration with British business**.
- From banking and insurance services to supporting the city develop its infrastructure, UK businesses have been long-term partners. MoU supports the Government's **focus on improving ease of doing business making India and Maharashtra** – an even more attractive destination for British companies.
- These interactions will take the form of dialogues, annual ministerial meetings and various delegation visits. UKIBC will also work towards **future investment opportunities**, strengthening its relationship with state governments, supporting its members in addressing their key asks and smoothing investor interactions in different markets.

#### **MoU signed between National Medicinal Plants Board and ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources**

- **National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB)** under Ministry of AYUSH and **ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR)** under Department of Agricultural Research and Education have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- The purpose of this MoU to **conserve the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Genetic Resources (MAPGRs)** at designated space of ICAR-NBPGR in long-term storage module (as per availability) in the **National Gene bank** and or at Regional Station for medium term storage module and acquire hands-on training on plant germplasm conservation techniques to the working group of NMPB.
- Both **NMPB and ICAR-NBPGR** are committed to serve the National interests through conservation of germplasm on long-term basis, safely and cost-effectively for present and future generations to **ensure the social and economic security**.
- The authorized institute NMPB and the ICAR-NBPGR on behalf of the ICAR would develop detailed modalities for seed storage of MAPGRs and submit periodic progress report to their respective organizations.

- Medicinal Plants are regarded as rich resources of traditional medicines and are being used for thousands of years in the health care system. India has **rich diversity of medicinal Plants (MPs)** resources. The natural resources are gradually getting depleted due to various developmental activities in its habitat.
- There is a need to conserve these natural resources and make sustainable utilization of them. The conservation of plant **genetic resources is an integral part of biodiversity conservation.**
- The purpose of conservation is to make sustainable development by protecting and using natural resources in ways that do not diminish the variety of genes and species or destroy important habitats and ecosystems.

#### **CBDT, SEBI sign MoU for data exchange**

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** and the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** for **data exchange** between the two organizations.
- The MoU will facilitate the sharing of **data and information** between SEBI and CBDT on an automatic and regular basis.
- In addition to regular exchange of data, the two organizations will also exchange with each other, **on request and suo moto basis**, any information available in their databases for the purpose of carrying out their functions under various laws.
- CBDT and SEBI, who are already collaborating through various existing mechanisms. A Data Exchange Steering Group has also been constituted for the initiative, which will meet periodically to review the data exchange status and take steps to further improve the effectiveness of the data sharing mechanism.

#### **IIT Alumni Council and CSIR-IGIB sign MoU for joint research on COVID-19 and patient data analysis**

- The IIT Alumni Council has signed an agreement with the **CSIR Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB)** to jointly conduct **research on COVID-19 and patient data analysis**. It may be noted that the council is setting up the world's largest molecular diagnostic lab '**MegaLab Mumbai**'.
- The council handed over imaging data of over 8,500 patients, who were admitted at the COVID Care Facility at **Worli's National Sports Club of India**. IIT Alumni Council President Ravi Sharma has stated that this partnership will not only create a world-leading testing and treatment ecosystem but also establish global data leadership.
- Late May, the Council had announced the launch of the **world's largest virology lab testing centre with a capacity of conducting one crore tests**. The first phase, with a capacity to carry out 10 lakh tests, will be ready by the end of this month.
- The IIT Alumni Council is the largest body of alumni, students and faculty from all the **23 Indian Institutes of Technology and partnering Technical Institutes of Excellence** and was formed last year to carry out projects of social importance.

#### **EESL signs pact with Noida Authority to install EV charging stations**

- State-run **EESL** has signed an agreement with New **Okhla Industrial Development Authority (Noida)** to promote **electric vehicles (EVs) and install public EV charging stations and related infrastructure**.
- The partnership will also facilitate the **creation of an infrastructural ecosystem** to accelerate e-mobility uptake as the nation emerges from the lockdown post-COVID-19 pandemic.
- The agreement was signed by Noida Authority General Manager A K Tyagi and EESL Executive Director (Growth) Amit Kaushik in the presence of Noida Authority CEO Ritu Maheshwari.
- EESL will make an upfront investment on services pertaining to the agreement along with operation and **maintenance of public charging infrastructure** by qualified manpower.
- Noida Authority will be responsible for **provision of space for charging infrastructure**.
- Noida Authority has been sanctioned **162 public EV charging stations** under the FAME India Scheme phase-II of Department of Heavy Industry (DHI).

- EESL is the selected organization for deployment of public charging stations in Noida city. So far, EESL has installed **20 EV chargers, 13 of which are commissioned and 7 are under commissioning.**

#### **Flipkart signs MoU with Karnataka govt to Promote local art, craft and handlooms**

- Homegrown e-commerce marketplace **Flipkart** has signed an MoU with **Karnataka MSME and Mines department** to **promote the states arts, crafts and handloom sectors** by bringing them on to e-commerce and providing market access.
- The partnership under the **Flipkart Samarth programme** will enable local artisans, weavers and craftsmen of Karnataka to showcase their hallmark products to a pan-India customer base.
- Both the Government of Karnataka and the **Flipkart Group will focus on creating avenues to increase business and trade inclusion opportunities** for these underserved segments of the society, thereby adding further thrust to **Made in India** efforts.
- The partnership will see renowned **Karnataka based brands- Cauvery - Karnataka Handicrafts Development Corporation and Priyadarshini Handlooms**, part of Karnataka Handlooms Development Corporation joining the Flipkart Samarth programme.

#### **T-Hub partners with MeitY, Digital India for hardware start-ups**

- **T-Hub**, a State government initiative for startups announced its partnership with **the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** and Digital India for **hardware and IoT startups.**
- T-Hub will lead **Digital India's Scale Up program** for hardware and **IoT startups** across India.
- MeitY and Digital India's aim is to provide scale up opportunities to the startups and make them ready in terms of product, investment and new market access.
- MeitY and Digital India have partnered with **T-Hub** based on its rich and successful experience of running various programs for key stakeholders, such as startups, corporates, government, investors and ecosystem enablers.
- This is to take the ecosystem to the next level so innovative startups can scale- up strategically. T-Hub brings its matured acceleration programme with access to customers, investors and specialized mentors.

#### **NATGRID signed MOU with NCRB to access database that links around 14,000 police stations**

- The **National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)** has signed a memorandum of understanding with the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** to **access the centralised online database on FIRs** and stolen vehicles.
- The MoU, signed in March, will give NATGRID access to the **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) database**, a platform that links around 14,000 police stations. All State police are mandated to **file First Information Reports (FIR)** in the CCTNS.
- NATGRID will act as a link between **intelligence and investigation agencies.**
- The project in the pipeline for a decade and envisaged first under Congress' P. Chidambaram has got a renewed push under Home Minister Amit Shah. Initiated at a budget of Rs.2,800 crore, it will be a medium for at least 10 Central agencies such as the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) to access data on a secured platform.
- The data will be procured by NATGRID from **21 providing organisations** such as the telecom, tax records, bank, immigration etc.

#### **UNICEF INDIA announced its partnership with FICCI for #Reimagine Campaign**

- **UNICEF INDIA** announced its partnership with **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (FICCI)**, **Socio-Economic Development Foundation (SEDF)** to jointly **develop UNICEF's #Reimagine Campaign** to support the most vulnerable populations and children during the COVID-19 response and its after-math in India.



- The partnership will also help avoid potential long-term damage to business operations and employment pipelines, and their most important resource, their personnel, their children and their families.
- FICCI and UNICEF will work on **an action plan based on the document** that is being developed jointly by **the International Chambers of Commerce and UNICEF** for governments and businesses on the actions they can take to support the post-pandemic recovery.

#### **NTPC, NIIF to jointly explore business opportunities in India**

- State-run power generator **NTPC and the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)** will now jointly explore business opportunities in India.
- NIIF will be acting through **National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Ltd (NIIFL)** to explore opportunities for investments in areas of **mutual interest with NTPC**, such as renewable energy and power distribution.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the same was signed. The partnership aims to bring together **NTPC's technical expertise and NIIF's ability to raise capital**, and bring in global best practices by leveraging existing relationships with leading players, stated an NTPC statement.
- NTPC group has a total installed capacity of **62,110 MW**. It targets to have nearly **30 GW** of its overall power generation capacity from renewable **energy sources by 2032**.
- NIIFL manages over **\$4.3 billion** of equity capital commitments across **its three funds** — Master Fund, Fund of Funds and Strategic Opportunities Fund, each with its distinct investment strategy. It is a collaborative investment platform for international and Indian investors, anchored by the Central government.
- NIIFL invests across asset classes such as infrastructure, private equity and other diversified sectors in India, with the objective of generating attractive, risk-adjusted returns for its investors. The NIIF Master Fund is the largest infrastructure fund in the country and invests in core infrastructure sectors such as transportation and energy, the statement added.

#### **UNICEF India and SAP India partner to improve employability of young people**

- On World Youth Skills Day, **UNICEF India** announced its partnership with **SAP India** to provide career counselling to young people in the country that will **improve their employability skills** in a COVID-19 and post COVID-19 era.
- UNICEF is collaborating with **YuWaah (Generation Unlimited)** under this initiative to provide digital education and occupational skillset to the underserved young people of the Country. Under the collaboration **UNICEF – YuWaah – SAP** will strengthen the following:
  - Improve digital skills and life skills for young people
  - Provide young people with career options.
  - Reimagine the model in other states with the Government of India
  - Impacting one million young people by the end of **2022**

#### **Formal MoU signed between CBDT & MoMSME for sharing of Data**

- A formal Memorandum of Understanding, MoU was signed between the **Central Board of Direct Taxes, CBDT** and **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises** for **sharing of data by CBDT to the Ministry**.
- The MoU was signed by Principal Director General of Income Tax (Systems) CBDT Anu J Singh and Additional Secretary and Development Commissioner of MSME Ministry Devendra Kumar Singh.
- The MoU will **facilitate seamless sharing of certain Income-tax Return** related information by the **Income Tax Department to MSME Ministry**. This data will enable the Ministry to check and classify enterprises in Micro, Small and Medium categories.



- The MoU came into force. Both the organizations will appoint **Nodal Officer and Alternate Nodal Officers to facilitate the process of data exchange**. The MoU marks the beginning of a new era of cooperation and synergy between the CBDT and MSME Ministry.

#### **CBDT, CBIC sign MoU for data exchange**

- A MoU was signed between Central Board of Direct Taxes, **CBDT and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, CBIC for data exchange** between the two organizations.
- This MoU will facilitate the sharing of data and information between CBDT and CBIC on **an automatic and regular basis**. In addition to regular exchange of data, CBDT and CBIC will also exchange with each other, on request and spontaneous basis, any information available in their respective databases which may have utility for the other organization.
- The MoU comes into force and is an ongoing initiative of CBDT and CBIC, who are already collaborating through various existing mechanisms.
- The MoU was signed by CBDT Chairman Pramod Chandra Mody and CBIC Chairman M. Ajit Kumar, in the presence of senior officers from both the organizations.

#### **Alankit Ltd partners with UTI for PAN Card Services**

- **Alankit Ltd**, e-governance and digital solutions provider has collaborated with **UTI Infrastructure Technology And Services Limited**, a Government Financial Services Provider Company in a bid to offer **PAN card services to the citizens** digitally across India at all its facilitation centers.
- Alankit Ltd will be able to offer hassle-free and seamless PAN Card services such as **New PAN Card application, PAN Correction, Duplicate PAN, PAN card of NRIs, Lost PAN, e-PAN Cards etc.** Alankit through its PAN India network, through its Business Associates, will offer these services, making it easy for the customers.

#### **Airtel Payments Bank partners NSDC to train rural youth for financial services jobs**

- **Airtel Payments Bank Ltd** has collaborated with **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** to **train and skill young people in rural areas on financial services**, enabling them to find jobs and become entrepreneurs in the sector.
- The partnership aims at designing and conducting targeted skill development programs for rural youth that will focus on adoption of tools to boost online banking and digital financial services at a time when the smartphone market is growing and usage of 4G has increased due to stay-at-home restrictions.
- **Airtel Payments Bank and NSDC** will also encourage trainees to take up entrepreneurial roles such as distributors or resellers of financial services, which will lead to creation of more jobs in their local geographies.
- Airtel Payments Bank will also use **NSDC's training centres to conduct awareness campaign** on the importance of digital banking and its benefits.

#### **Amazon Pay ties up with Acko to offer vehicle insurance**

- Digital payments major **Amazon Pay** has launched vehicle insurance in partnership with Bengaluru-based startup **Acko General Insurance**. The product will now be available on the **Amazon Pay home page**.
- Amazon Pay, which is the payments unit of Amazon India, will help customers purchase insurance effortlessly, and Amazon Prime members will get extra benefits including additional discounts.
- Amazon has been selling **third-party insurance products** but this partnership will enable an easy-to-use integrated buying experience for its customers.
- The e-commerce player promises **zero paperwork** coupled with features like **one-hour pick-up and three-day claim servicing** along with one-year repair warranty in few cities.
- Policyholders will also have an option for instant cash settlements for low value claims, making it beneficial for customers.

- Additionally, customers can select from a list of add-ons like **zero-depreciation** and engine protection and they will be able to pay for the insurance using Amazon Pay balance, UPI, or cards.

#### NHPC, GEDCOL ink pact to develop floating solar power projects in Odisha

- State-run hydro giant **NHPC** stated it has inked a MoU with **Green Energy Development Corporation of Odisha Limited** (GEDCOL) to form a joint venture for **developing floating solar energy projects** in the state with initial capacity of 500 MW.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between NHPC Ltd and Green Energy Development Corporation of Odisha Ltd (GEDCOL) on July 20, 2020 through video conferencing, a regulatory filing stated.
- The two entities may collaborate and cooperate to form a joint venture company (JVC) to plan and **develop techno-commercially feasible floating solar power projects of 500 MW in Odisha** under UMREPPs (Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks) scheme of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy), in a phased manner, preferably in packages of **50 MW each**, it stated.
- The parties also agree to explore further potential of installing floating solar projects after joint identification in subsequent periods in Odisha, it added.

#### ADB, GCF Commit to Partnership to Boost Green Recovery from COVID-19

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** and the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** have agreed to partner toward a “**green recovery**” for members confronting the harsh economic impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.
- ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa met with GCF Executive Director Yannick Glemarec to explore opportunities for a pathway of low-carbon and climate-resilient development for ADB members in Asia and the Pacific hit hard by the health crisis. They agreed to strengthen collaboration on nonsovereign operations while ensuring GCF’s processes are as flexible as possible to foster at-scale financing.
- **Under Strategy 2030**, ADB will ensure that **75% of its committed projects** will support climate change mitigation and adaptation by **2030**. Climate finance from ADB’s own resources will reach **\$80 billion cumulatively from 2019 to 2030**. In 2019, ADB committed more than **\$6.5 billion in climate financing**. Concessional financing from partners will also be crucial for helping ADB’s members meet their climate goals.
- ADB’s support for developing members to cope with, and recover from, the impact of COVID-19 includes an enhanced support package of **\$20 billion**, announced on 13 April.

#### TRIFED signs MoU with IIT Delhi under govt’s ‘Unnat Bharat Abhiyan’

- The **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)** has entered into a partnership with **IIT Delhi** under the HRD Ministry’s flagship ‘Unnat Bharat Abhiyan’ (UBA) to **boost livelihood opportunities and income generation for tribal communities**.
- The UBA connects higher education institutions with villages for the economic and social betterment of rural communities.
- TRIFED functions under the **Tribal Affairs Ministry**.

#### Total, IOC form joint venture to manufacture bitumen derivatives

- French energy giant **TotalSA** and the country's top oil firm **Indian Oil Corp (IOC)** announced a 50:50 joint venture to **manufacture and market high-quality bitumen derivatives** and specialty products for the growing road-building industry in India.
- The joint venture company will set up **manufacturing units** across the country with cost-effective **logistics solutions**, **keeping innovation, safety, and sustainability** at the helm of its operations.

- This joint venture company would bring in the latest technologies and formulations for **Polymer Modified Bitumen (PMB)** and other fast-growing non-conventional derivatives such as cold mix & microemulsion, block bitumen, etc. to the Indian market.

**Gujarat, UK India Business Council sign MoU to strengthen state's industrial growth**

- The **United Kingdom India Business Council** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) **with Industrial Extension Bureau** (iNDEXTb), Industries and Mines Department, Government of Gujarat.
- The MoU is the initiation of a collaborative partnership between the UKIBC and Government of Gujarat will help **to boost business and industrial development** in the state, as per the UKIBC official release.
- It will also aim to enhance the business environment proactively and **strengthen collaboration with British businesses in Gujarat**, the official release noted.
- The MoU was signed at a virtual roundtable by Neelam Rani, Managing Director, Industrial Extension Bureau (iNDEXTb), Government of Gujarat, and Kevin McCole, Managing Director, UKIBC.

**PFC ties up with IIT-Kanpur for research, training in smart grid technology**

- State-owned **Power Finance Corporation (PFC)** has signed an agreement with the **Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur**for **training, research, and entrepreneurship development in smart grid technology**.
- The PFC will provide financial assistance **of Rs 2.38 crore (Rs 2,38,97,000)** to IIT-K under its CSR initiative.
- The objective of the pact is to provide **support to IIT-K in developing infrastructure** for research and development on smart grid technology.
- As part of the project, the IIT-K will also provide training on smart grid technology to **90 participants** and provide fellowship to nine selected candidates for development of ideas on smart grid technology.
- The fellows will be assisted by **startup Innovation and Incubation Centre (SIIC)** of IIT-K and encouraged to take up entrepreneurial activities.

**CSIR, UBA-IIT Delhi & Vijnana Bharati signs tripartite MoU**

- **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan-Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (UBA-IITD)** and **Vijnana Bharti (VIBHA)**,**New Delhi** has signed a tripartite **MoU** with **CSIR**. The signed MoU will offer access to CSIR rural technologies for UBA.
- It will also lay the foundation for cooperation as well as joint action in the area of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) for rural development of India.
- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) is Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)'s flagship national program which aims to bring the transformational change in rural development processes by enabling knowledge institutions to help build the architecture of an inclusive India.
- The MoU will also result in effective coordination between CSIR, IIT Delhi, and Vijnana Bharti (Vibha) in order to meet the objectives of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan.

**Revision Points**

Organizations	Purpose
Indian Oil, NTPC Ltd and South Delhi Municipal Corporation	Waste to Energy plant at Okhla
NLC India & CIL	develop 5,000 megawatts of solar and thermal power assets
UK India Business Council & Maharashtra	To better its business environment

Industrial Development Corporation	
National Medicinal Plants Board & ICAR- National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources	To Conserve the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Genetic Resources
Central Board of Direct Taxes & SEBI	Data Exchange
IIT Alumni Council & CSIR Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology	To research on COVID-19 and patient data analysis
EESL & New Okhla Industrial Development Authority	To install public EV charging stations and related infrastructure.
Flipkart & Karnataka	To promote the states arts, crafts and handloom sectors
T-Hub & MeitY	Hardware and IoT startups.
National Intelligence Grid & National Crime Records Bureau	To access the centralised online database on FIRs
UNICEF INDIA & Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry	To develop UNICEF's#Reimagine Campaign
NTPC & National Investment and Infrastructure Fund	To explore business opportunities
UNICEF India & SAP India	To improve Employability of young people
Central Board of Direct Taxes & Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises	Sharing of Data
CBDT & CBIC	Data Exchange
Alankit Ltd & UTI Infrastructure Technology	Pan Card Services
Airtel Payments Bank Ltd & National Skill Development Corporation	To train and skill young people in rural areas on financial services
Acko General Insurance & Amazon Pay	Vehicle Insurance
NHPC & GEDCOL	Developing floating solar energy projects
Asian Development Bank & Green Climate Fund	Green Recovery
TRIFED & IIT Delhi	To boost livelihood opportunities and income generation for tribal communities
Total SA & Indian Oil Corp	To manufacture and market high-quality bitumen derivatives
United Kingdom India Business Council & with Industrial Extension Bureau	To boost business and industrial development
Power Finance Corporation & Indian Institute of Technology- Kanpur	For training, research, and entrepreneurship development in Smart grid technology
Unnat Bharat Abhiyan-Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi & Vijnana Bharti with CSIR	CSIR rural technologies for UBA

## Important Summit & Conference

### India-EU summit to be held through video conference on July 15

- The **15th summit between India and the European Union (EU)** will be held via video conference on July 15.
- India will be represented by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**. The EU will be represented by Charles Michel, President of European Council, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission.
- During the summit, the leaders will discuss **global cooperation and solidarity to protect lives**, to mitigate the socio-economic consequences and to strengthen preparedness and response capacities.
- The summit is aimed at delivering concrete benefits for the people in the EU and India, the leaders will discuss ways to boost cooperation in areas of security, climate, environment, trade and investment, digital economy and connectivity.
- The summit, which was supposed to **take place in March**, was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was scheduled to **visit Belgium's capital Brussels** for the summit but cancelled his visit after two staff members of the EU tested positive for Covid-19.

### Prakash Javadekar Represents India at Fourth virtual Ministerial on Climate Action

- Union Environment Minister, Prakash Javadekar represented India at the **fourth edition of the virtual Ministerial on Climate Action** and stated, India has taken very significant steps for combating climate change and will continue its efforts in the future also.
- **Javadekar** called upon developed country parties, once again, to do their part as envisaged under **UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement**, for extending financial and technological support to developing countries.
- The promise of **USD 1 trillion by 2020** has not been fulfilled so far, and I hope that in the remaining 5 months of 2020, the promised amount is mobilized and delivered, for further strengthening climate actions in developing countries," stressed the Environment Minister.
- The fourth edition of the virtual Ministerial on Climate Action witnessed countries exchanging views on how countries are aligning economic recovery plans with the Paris Agreement and the critical enabling conditions to ensure continued climate action.
- The meeting was **co-chaired by European Union, China and Canada** to advance discussions **on the full implementation of the Paris Agreement** under the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** and to demonstrate continued political commitment to global climate action.
- Highlighting India's efforts, the Environment Minister stated that India has achieved a reduction of 21 per cent in emission intensity of its **GDP between 2005 and 2014**, thereby achieving its pre-2020 voluntary target.
- Further, India's renewable energy installed capacity has increased **by 226 per cent in the last 5 years and stands more than 87 Gigawatt**.
- The share of non-fossil sources in installed capacity of electricity generation increased from **30.5 per cent in March 2015 to 37.7 per cent in May 2020** and our Prime Minister has further announced the aspirational target of increasing our renewable energy capacity to **450 GW.**, pointed Javadekar.
- The fourth edition of the meeting was attended by Ministers and representatives of about **30 countries** and was held virtually for the first time in view of the ongoing pandemic. The purpose was to ensure that progress is made on climate action.

### India Business Council to host 2020 India Ideas Summit on July 22

- **India Business Council** will host the 2020 India Ideas Summit on July 22nd.

- The Summit convenes business and government leaders for discussions **on the future of the U.S.-India Partnership and the trends shaping globalization, trade and investment, and the future of work in the COVID-era and beyond.**
- The Summit will feature a **high-powered lineup of both public and private sector speakers.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will deliver the keynote addresses. Among others, External Affairs minister Dr. S. Jaishankar will address the summit.

#### **FM Sitharaman attends 3rd G20 Finance Ministers & Central Bank Governors Meeting**

- Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, **Nirmala Sitharaman** participated in the **3rd G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG)** meeting under the **Saudi Arabian Presidency** through Video Conferencing to discuss the global economic outlook amid evolving COVID-19 pandemic crisis along with other **G20 Finance Track priorities for the year 2020.**
- The Finance Minister, in the first session of the meeting, talked about the G20 Action Plan in response to COVID-19 which was endorsed by the **G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors** in their previous meeting on 15th April 2020.
- This **G20 Action Plan** lays out a list of collective commitments under the **pillars of Health Response, Economic Response, Strong and Sustainable Recovery and International Financial Coordination,** aimed at co-ordinating G20 efforts to fight the pandemic. Smt. Sitharaman emphasized that it is crucial to ensure that this action plan remains relevant and effective.
- The Finance Minister specifically referred to India's comprehensive economic package to address recovery and growth amounting to over **\$295 Billion, about 10 per cent of India's GDP.**
- In the second session of the meeting, the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors discussed the developments on G20 Finance Track deliverables under the Saudi Arabian Presidency.
- Smt. Sitharaman particularly highlighted how India has successfully employed technology-based financial inclusion by harnessing the nationwide digital payment infrastructure that India has built in last five years, to make contactless cash transfers of over **\$10 billion into the bank accounts of 420 million people.** She also referred to the swift measures to provide free food grain to over 800 million people for eight months till **November 2020.**

#### **Arjun Munda inaugurates e-Symposium "Emergent North-East India: Strategic and Developmental Imperatives in Handicrafts" organized by IIM, Shillong**

- Shri Arjun Munda, Union Minister for Tribal Affairs inaugurated an e-Symposium on Handicrafts titled **"Emergent North-East India: Strategic and Developmental Imperatives in Handicrafts"** organized by **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Centre for Policy Research and Analysis, Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Shillong.**
- The e-Symposium on handicrafts is a part of the e-Symposia Series initiated by **Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Centre for Policy Research and Analysis, IIM Shillong.** The e-Symposium Series is conceived as a platform that brings together policy makers, scholars, institutions, corporates and civil society to discuss and deliberate development initiatives in the North East Region.
- The products of our artisans should be attractive and eye-catching and their costs should be less but quality should be high.

#### **6th BRICS Environment Ministers Meeting**

- Representing India at the **6th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting,** Union Environment Minister, **Prakash Javadekar,** stated that India attaches great importance to the grouping.
- In order to attain sustainable development goals, India offered to help and showcases all the best practices in environmental management in BRICS countries.



- Union Minister **Prakash Javadekar** also elaborated on the efforts made by India in areas relating to sustainable urban management, tackling marine litter, air pollution and the cleaning of rivers. Highlighting the efforts made by India in controlling Air pollution Union Minister stated that in 2015 India launched the Air Quality index monitoring in 10 cities, and it has been extended to 122 cities.
- He also informed that India in 2019 launched the **National Clean Air Programme**, the goal of which is to reduce particulate pollution by 20-30 percent relative to 2017 levels by **2024**.
- The Environment Ministers of the five BRICS countries participated via videoconference under the presidency of **Russia**. Union Minister Prakash Javadekar stated that India believes that Equity, Common but differentiated responsibilities, finance and technology partnerships are key pillars towards attainment of global goals of climate change mitigation and adaptation and India is walking the talk on Paris Agreement and its Climate commitments.

### Revision Points

Conference/Summits	Chaired By/Theme/Addressed By
15th summit between India and the European Union	Prime Minister Narendra Modi
Fourth edition of the virtual Ministerial on Climate Action	Prakash Javadekar
2020 India Ideas Summit	Hosted by India Business Council
3rd G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors	Nirmala Sitharaman
mergent North-East India: Strategic and Developmental Imperatives in Handicrafts	Organized by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Centre for Policy Research and Analysis, Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Shillong.
6th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting	Prakash Javdekar

### Important Defence News

#### India and Japan conduct naval exercise amid tensions with China

- The **Indian and Japanese navies** have reportedly conducted an exercise in the Indian Ocean amidst ongoing **India-China border tensions in Ladakh**.
- Rajput-class destroyer **INS Rana** and Kora-class missile corvette **INS Kulish** of the Indian Navy participated in the **'goodwill training' exercise**.
- The Japanese vessels are **JS Shimayuki** and **JS Kashima**. They belong to the country's Maritime Self-Defence Force's training squadron.
- According to undisclosed sources, the **passing exercise (PASSEX)** is considered a significant strategic signalling for China.
- In the last three years, the **Indian and Japanese navies** have conducted **15 of these training exercises**.
- Since 2015, **Japan** has also been regularly taking part in naval drills between **India and the US**.
- The bilateral exercise **Malabar began in 1992** in the Indian Ocean. Last year, it was held in Sasebo in September.

- In 2018, **India and Japan** launched an annual joint land military exercise called **Dharma Guardian**.

#### **Cochin Shipyard Limited signs contract for construction of Autonomous electric vessels for ASKO maritime AS, Norway**

- INDIA's largest commercial shipbuilder **Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL)** has signed contracts for construction and supply of two autonomous electric ferries to **Norway-based ASKO Maritime**, with an option to build two more identical vessels.
- CSL is already constructing **23 hybrid electric boats for Kochi Water Metro**. It won this export order after detailed evaluation of various global shipyards and based on its value proposition to the customer.
- **ASKO Maritime AS**, the subsidiary group of NorgesGruppen ASA, is one of the largest players in the **Norwegian retail segment**.
- The project, partially funded by the Norwegian Government, aimed at emission-free transport of goods across the **Oslo fjord**.
- The value of two ships is **Rs 125 crore**, the cost does not include the value for two optional ships.
- The **67 meter-long vessels** will initially be delivered as a full-electric transport ferry, powered by **1,846 kWh capacity battery**. After commissioning autonomous equipment and field trials in Norway, it will operate as a fully autonomous ferry of ASKO that can transport **16 fully loaded Standard EU trailers** in one go across the fjords.

#### **Defence Research Body Develops Fully Indigenous P7 Heavy Drop System**

- **DRDO** has developed **P7 Heavy Drop System** which is capable of para dropping military stores up to 7-ton weight class from **IL 76 aircraft**.
- This system is fully indigenous and being manufactured by **L&T** who makes the platform system, parachutes manufactured by **Ordnance Factory**.
- This system has been made under the **Make in India programme**.
- The system would be a force multiplier for armed forces, while enabling the rapid delivery of combat store in the far flung inaccessible areas.

#### **DAC delegates powers for progressing urgent Capital Acquisition Cases upto Rs 300 crore to Armed Forces**

- **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)** has delegated the powers for progressing urgent **Capital Acquisition Cases** upto **Rs 300 crore** to the Armed Forces to meet their emergent operational requirements.
- This will shrink the procurement timelines and ensure placement of orders within six months and commencement of deliveries within one year.
- A decision in this regard was taken during the special DCA meeting held under the chairmanship of **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh**.
- The meeting was called considering the security environment due to the prevailing situation along the Northern Borders and the need to strengthen the Armed Forces for the defence of the country's borders.

#### **USS Nimitz may conduct Passex with Indian Navy**

- The US Navy's nuclear-powered aircraft carrier **USS Nimitz (CVN 68)** may conduct a **passing exercise (Passex)** with the Indian Navy.
- The drill may be held off the coast of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Malacca Strait.
- It also comes after the **Nimitz Carrier Strike Group** and **Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group** carried out high-end dual-carrier exercises in the **South China Sea (SCS)**.
- **Nimitz Carrier Strike Group** has also conducted operations with the Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier in the SCS.

#### **MoD inks contract with BEML for procurement of 1,512 Mine Plough for T-90 tanks**

- With an aim to boost '**Make in India**' initiative of the Government, Acquisition Wing of Ministry of Defence signed a Contract with **Bharat Earth Movers Limited, BEML** for procurement of **1,512 Mine Plough for Tank T-90 S/SK** at an approximate cost of **Rs. 557 crore**.
- The contract has Buy and Make (Indian) categorisation with a minimum of **50 per cent indigenous content** in make portion of the contract.
- These mine ploughs will be fitted on **T-90 Tanks of Indian Armoured Corps** which will facilitate individual mobility to Tanks while negotiating mine field.
- Mobility of Tank Fleet will enhance manifold, which in turn would extend the reach of Armoured Formation deep into enemy territory without becoming mine causality.
- Defence Ministry stated, with the induction of these **1,512 mine ploughs**, planned to be **completed by 2027**, the combat capability of the Army will be further enhanced.

### **3-day long Air Force Commanders' Conference to begin in Delhi**

- The **three day long Air Force Commanders' Conference** will begin at **Air Headquarters (Vayu Bhawan)** in New Delhi. The theme of the conference is "**Indian Air Force in the Next Decade**".
- The Defence Secretary and Secretary Defence Production are also expected to be present during the inauguration.
- The Air Force Commanders' Conference will be chaired by the **Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria**. The discussions would take stock of the current operational scenario and deployments.
- The plan of action for operational capability enhancement of the Indian Air Force in the next decade will also be discussed.

### **DRDO provides 'Bharat drones' to Indian Army for accurate surveillance at India-China border**

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has provided drones named '**Bharat**' to Indian Army. The indigenously developed drones are sent in order to provide an accurate surveillance along the Line of Actual Control in high altitude and mountainous terrains of Eastern Ladakh.
- **Bharat Drones- a series of drones** that comes under one of the world's most lightest and agile drone surveillance systems and is made in India only.
- Bharat drones are equipped with **artificial intelligence** which helps the drone to detect friends from foes and helps take any action accordingly.
- It has been made in a way that ensures its survival in extreme cold weather temperatures. The drones are further being developed to perform in harsher weather.
- Not only this, the drones can also provide a real-time video transmission during the missions and have advanced night vision capabilities. It can also detect humans who are hidden in deep forests.

### **Dhruvastra: DRDO test fires 'made in India' anti-tank guided Nag missile**

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation** conducts flight trials of the anti-tank guided Nag Missile (HELINA), which has been named now as **Dhruvastra**. Trials were done without helicopter at Interim Test Range, Balasore, Odisha.
- Dhruvastra is the helicopter version of '**Nag Helina**' with several new features and meant to be fired from air to destroy enemy bunkers, armoured vehicles and main battle tanks.

It has been designed such that it can be launched from land and air-based platforms.

- The missile in the helicopter-launched configuration has been designated as Helicopter-launched **NAG (HELINA)**. Once the trials are over successfully, this can be fired from the indigenous '**Dhruv'Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH)**, as well as **Rudra (ALH WSI)** attack helicopter. Both these helicopters are made in India by the **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**.

### Largest solar power plant of Navy commissioned in Kerala

- The Indian Navy's largest solar power plant has been commissioned at Ezhimala, in Kannur district of Kerala.
- Vice Admiral Anil Kumar Chawla launched plant operations via virtual conferencing.
- The solar plant has an estimated life of **25 years**. All components have been indigenously developed, including **9180 highly efficient monocrystalline** solar panels employing the latest technology.
- The project was executed by **Kerala State Electronics Development Corporation Ltd (KELTRON)**.
- The solar power plant project will help **Naval Station Ezhimala reduce the carbon footprint** and is one of the many initiatives undertaken **by INA** towards a clean and green environment. Surplus power generated will also feed the **KSEB electricity grid**.
- Earlier this month, another **2 MW solar power plant** was inaugurated at **Naval Station Karanja in Uran city of Maharashtra**.

### DRDO Launches 'Dare To Dream 2.0' Contest For Startups With The Aim To Promote Innovators

- The **Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO)** on launched '**Dare to Dream 2.0**' contest for innovators and those looking to launch a startup on the **5th death anniversary of former President of India and noted scientist Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam**. The DRDO in a statement stated that Dr Kalam, who was also known as the 'Missile man' supported the vision of self-reliance.
- The **Dare to dream 2.0 scheme** aims to promote innovators and startup culture in the country. The winners will be picked following due evaluation by an expert committee. Award money, up to **Rs.10 lakh for startup and Rs five lakh in the individual category**, will be given to the winners. Defence Minister Rajnath has also lauded the initiative and expressed his happiness to announce the contest for the '**Ignited Minds**'.

### 5 Rafale jets land at IAF Ambala air base

- **Five Rafale jets**, the first of the 36 contracted by India, landed at the **Ambala air base**.
- The fighter jet, to be inducted into the Indian Air Force's '**Golden Arrow**' squadron, is the first imported fighter jet to be inducted into the IAF in 23 years after the Russian Sukhoi-30 fighters.
- The first Su-30 entered IAF service in June 1997.
- The **French-manufactured Rafale** multi-role combat jets covered a distance of nearly 7,000 km and were escorted by two Sukhoi 30 MKIs after they entered the Indian air space.
- This is the first batch from a contingent of **36 Rafale jets** from **French aerospace major Dassault Aviation** as part of a **Rs 59,000-crore** deal signed by the government on September 23, 2016. The planes are expected to give a mega-boost to India's air power amid tensions with China and Pakistan.
- The Ambala air base has two squadrons of the Jaguar combat aircraft and one squadron of the MIG-21 Bison.

## Important Science and Technology

### NBRI Lucknow sets up 'Advanced Virology Lab' for testing COVID-19

- The National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI), Lucknow, has established an "**Advanced Virology Lab**" for testing COVID-19. The facility has been developed based on the guidelines of the **Indian Council Medical Research (ICMR)**, the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**, and the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
- It is a **Bio-Safety Level (BSL) 3 level** facility. "Biosafety levels are assigned to a facility depending on the pathogen it deals with. According to ICMR guidelines, **BSL2 level facility is recommended for COVID-19** but this is an advanced version, stated Dr Samir Sawant, Senior Principal Scientist, NBRI.

- This advanced version has a **"Negative Pressure"**, which means it has a suction facility that can suck any aerosol and pass it through filters. It can **filter virus or bacteria** to make it a safe COVID-19 testing facility. It reduces the possibilities of infections at culturing facilities.
- Prof. S K Barik, Director, NBRI, stated that the facility will add to the testing capacity of Uttar Pradesh (UP). At present, **UP is testing about 20,000 samples per day**.
- Prof. Barik also informed that a team of scientists and researchers from the Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP), Lucknow, will also join the NBRI team for the testing of COVID samples.

#### **AIIMS partners IIT-Delhi to launch app for patients needing plasma therapy**

- **AIIMS with the help of IIT-Delhi** students have developed a mobile application to track real-time COVID-19 patients in the hospital, who can become potential plasma donors 28 days after recovery along with those who have been discharged.
- The app named **COPAL-19** has details of patients who have already been discharged from AIIMS, those currently undergoing treatment and their blood groups so that patients who require **plasma therapy** can get it in time without any hassle.
- The app was launched at the premier hospital on the occasion of **Doctors' Day**.
- The app will be available on open platforms. It will be an open source code app which people from other institutions can copy and use in their hospitals.
- The app will also automatically track donors who will be eligible to donate plasma after a cycle of **every 14 days**.
- Patients also can register themselves and get details of plasma donors matching their blood group.

#### **IIT Gandhinagar develops AI based tool to detect Covid-19 from chest X-ray**

- Researchers at the **Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN)** have developed an **Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based deep learning tool** for detection of Covid-19 from Chest X-ray images.
- This online tool indicates the probability if a person is infected with Covid-19, which can be used for quick preliminary diagnosis before the medical test.
- The tool is developed **by Kushpal Singh Yadav (PI)**, an M.Tech student of Computer Science & Engineering at IITGN, under the guidance of Prof Krishna Prasad Miyapuram, Associate Professor of Cognitive Science and Computer Science at IITGN.
- The format of any test image of a new person will be automatically transformed and diagnosed using the AI tool. It will also validate the input images before giving a result. The result is available within a **few seconds**.

#### **IIT-Roorkee researchers develop sterilizing system for personal belongings**

- **IIT-Roorkee** has developed a disinfection box that can be used for **sterilizing a wide variety of personal belongings** including medical equipment, Personal Protection Equipment, apparels among others, against coronavirus.
- Termed as the **'Unisaviour' box**, it comprises a metal coated with specially- designed highly reflective geometry to allow the calibrated passage of UVC light to disinfect personal belongings.
- The device has been developed by a team of researchers at **IIT Roorkee led by Professor Soumitra Satapathi**, Laboratory of Integrated Nanophotonics and Biomaterials.
- The box has an internal coating of indigenously- developed metal oxide along with **herbal anti-bacterial and anti-viral layers** to prevent the growth of microorganisms when UVC light is not in use.
- The user-friendly device comes with an additional safety switch **for UVC light**.
- The **'Unisaviour' box** is equipped with an Arduino-programmed system to control the time exposure and intensity of UVC light, that aids in the sterilization of various personal belongings.

### **IIT Kanpur develops virtual classroom system 'Mobile Masterjee'**

- **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur** has developed an innovative virtual classroom aid titled '**Mobile Masterjee**'.
- The classroom-to-home teaching setup is designed to record the lectures/instructions by the teachers while using smartphones. '**Mobile Masterjee**' can **capture the videos in horizontal (table) and vertical (blackboard) positions**.
- Earlier, IIT Kanpur had developed an Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered solution for instant fact checking amid the deluge of fake news and unverified messages floating on the various social media platforms. Titled '**Satyanweshi**' (seeker of truth in Sanskrit), the AI chatbot is programmed for finding and checking true information about Covid-19.

### **ICMR aims to launch indigenous Covid-19 vaccine by August 15**

- **Indian Council of Medical Research, ICMR** is planning to launch indigenous Covid-19 vaccine for public use by the 15th of August after completion of all clinical trials. ICMR has partnered with Bharat Biotech International Limited to develop this path breaking, Covid-19 vaccine.
- ICMR has asked **Bharat Biotech to fast track** the clinical trial mechanism and ensure that the subject enrolment is initiated by 7th of July.
- This is the first indigenous vaccine being developed in India and one of the top priority projects of the government. The vaccine is derived from a **SARS-COV2 strain isolated by ICMR-National Institute of Virology, Pune**. ICMR and Bharat Biotech are jointly working for the pre-clinical as well as clinical development of this vaccine.
- Recently, the Central Drug Standard Control Organisation, the National regulatory body for Indian Pharmaceuticals and medical devices, has granted approval to Bharat Biotech India to conduct human clinical trials for Corona Vaccine called '**Covaxin**'.

### **UoH-based start-up develops physical distancing monitoring tool**

- A start-up firm based at the **University of Hyderabad (UoH)** has developed a tool for monitoring social distancing in a location with large footfalls.
- **MAVEN LABS**, a start-up firm based at the Technology Business Incubator (TBI) at the UoH, has come up with the tool - **SudRz (Sanskrit, meaning - keen-sighted)**.
- The tool (a software) has been developed under **Project METIS** (Medical Engineering Technology Industrial Strategy).
- The tool analyses real-time video streaming from cameras- eg **CCTV** - and identifies physical distancing violations using **Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithm** between all pairs of individuals.
- IP-enabled cameras are sufficient to implement the system. The tool has an added built-in feature for **Facial Recognition using AI**.
- This application is likely to be a one-stop solution for the existing network of CCTV cameras placed at any locations like malls, airports, railway, bus stations, schools, colleges and corporate offices, which can be customized as per industry needs.

### **Launch of Russia's next-generation Glonass-K Satellite set for August**

- The **launch of Russia's next-generation Glonass-K navigation satellite** from the **Plesetsk space center**, which was postponed several times before, is now planned for August, a space industry source told Sputnik.
- The delivery of the satellite to the spaceport is set for July, its launch is set for August 6, the source stated.
- The **Glonass-K satellite**, the **third Russian navigation satellite** of the type, is planned to be launched using the **Soyuz-2.1b** carrier rocket with the Fregat upper-stage booster. The satellite's launch has been postponed several times since March, amid production delays.
- The **first Glonass-K satellite** was launched in February 2011, while the second one was launched in December 2014.



- There are currently **27 satellites** in the Russian Glonass constellation, 23 of them are operational. Russian satellite maker ISS-Reshetnev stated that nine next-generation Glonass-K satellites would be added to the constellation by **2022**.

#### **IIT-M develops nano-coated filter for COVID warriors**

- A **nano-coated filter for healthcare** workers treating COVID-19 patients has been developed by researchers at **IIT-Madras**.
- The filter's coating properties are optimised for efficient removal of **sub-micron sized dust** particles in the air.
- The use of the filter in face masks can enhance particle **filtration efficiency**. The filter can be used in respirator devices, air purification system in operation theatres, cabin air filters for the comfort and health of air passengers and air filters for armoured vehicle engines.
- The work of developing the filter has been funded by the **Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO)** and the nano-coated filter is in the process of being field tested in practical applications.

#### **DRDO to set up research cell at IIT-Hyderabad**

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** will establish a research cell at Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (IIT-H).
- The '**DRDO - IIT-Hyderabad Research Cell**' will undertake basic and applied research programmes.
- The research cell will help enhance the scientific and technological base of the country in critical defence technology areas, and help the country become self-reliant in select defence technologies.
- The MoU is aimed at bringing together the capabilities of **DRDO and IIT-Hyderabad**, to achieve greater heights in indigenous technology through collaborative research.

#### **Israel conducts surprise launch with Ofek 16 satellite**

- The **Israeli government and Israel Aerospace Industries** conducted a previously-unannounced launch of a reconnaissance satellite using a **Shavit-2 rocket** to deploy the **Ofek 16 satellite** into low Earth orbit.
- **Ofek 16** is a **small electro-optical imaging satellite**, which will capture high-resolution images of the Earth for Israel's Ministry of Defence.
- The name **Ofek**, from the **Hebrew word meaning Horizon**, has been applied to all of Israel's military satellites regardless of their mission, including two early demonstration missions and subsequent optical and radar reconnaissance spacecraft.

#### **BDL signs licence agreement with DRDO for Akash Missile Weapon System**

- **Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)** has signed License **Agreement and Transfer of Technology with DRDO (DRDL)** for Akash Missile Weapon System (Indian Army Variant).
- BDL is the **Lead Integrator for Akash Weapon System** (Indian Army).
- The contract was signed by **Dr Dasharath Ram** Director, DRDL and P Radha Krishna, Director (Production), BDL.

#### **Mylab launches 'Compact XL' to automate molecular diagnostic test for COVID-19**

- Pune-based molecular diagnostics company, **Mylab Discovery Solutions** has launched '**Compact XL**', India's first machine to automate the manual processes of molecular diagnostic tests such as **RNA/DNA-based tests** including COVID-19 RT-PCR tests.
- The machine is designed to automate lab operations from sample handling to RT-PCR ready tube preparation, and do these operations in one single compact benchtop machine.
- **Compact XL** is a cartridge-based machine and can test multiple samples concurrently. Compact XL can be used for a wide range of **RNA/DNA-based tests including COVID-19 RT-PCR tests**.
- The machine can run **32 samples** at a time which can be further increased when machines are connected in a network.

#### **Israeli scientists use waste in battle against virus**

- **Israeli scientists** have come up with a **"simple" and low-cost method** to turn waste into ethanol for use as sanitisers in the battle against the novel coronavirus.
- Professor Hadas Mamane of Tel Aviv University (TAU) and her team have been working for the past five years on recycling waste and transforming it into alcohol.
- Now, in response to the **global demand for hand sanitisers**, they have focused on the production in Israel of ethanol to replace the need to import alcohols.

#### **IITH, NVIDIA to establish joint AI research centre**

- The **Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH)** is collaborating with **NVIDIA**, a multinational technology company, to establish India's first '**NVIDIA AI Technology Centre**' (NVAITC) to accelerate research on Artificial Intelligence and its commercial adoption.
- **IITH already houses two NVIDIA DGX-1TM systems and an NVIDIA DGX-2TM system** dedicated to research being undertaken at the institute. The NVAITC will accelerate research for the **220 faculty at IITH**, which is already among India's foremost research institutions.
- This collaboration will focus on advancing AI research in the areas of agriculture and Smart Cities besides Language Understanding.
- The projects that would be taken up include increasing crop yield using **AI algorithms and applying AI-based solutions** to support safer transportation systems and better ways of managing traffic, among others.
- The Telangana State government recently announced **2020 as the 'Year of AI'**. NVIDIA is already a partner of the government in this endeavour.

#### **IISc Designs Eye Gaze-Controlled Robotic Arm For Speech, Motor Impaired**

- An **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** research team has designed a robotic arm that can be manipulated by eye movement using a computer interface, to help people with **Severe Speech and Motor Impairment (SSMI)**.
- This interface is non-invasive since it is through a webcam and a computer, unlike other eye gaze-tracking devices that use head-mounted systems.
- **Eye gaze-controlled computer** interfaces can help them perform various tasks on par with their non-disabled peers.
- One of the main applications of this eye gaze-controlled robotic arm is rehabilitation of young adults with **SSMI**, through tasks such as fabric printing.
- They usually require assistance in doing such tasks, as they can only do a small part of it by themselves.
- Using the robotic arm designed by the researchers, people with **SSMI** can use their eye gaze to **perform mechanical tasks** that can help them **work on handicrafts** independently
- The students with **SSMI** are able to use the robotic manipulator almost as well as their non-disabled counterparts, and the results were the same during repeated trials.
- This technology can also be used by younger individuals with **SSMI**, to move toys like cars.

#### **IIT-Delhi develops device to disinfect N-95 masks in 90 minutes**

- The **IIT-Delhi** has developed an **ozone-based decontamination device** to reduce bio-medical waste and **enable safe re-use of N-95 face masks**.
- The device, called Chakr DeCoV, will help re-use a mask up to **10 times**. It was launched via a video-conference by Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Ashwini Kumar Choubey.
- The mechanism was developed by an **IIT start-up — Chakra Innovation—** which has been approved by the Indian Medical Council of Research-National Institute of Virology (ICMR-NIV).

- The device can decontaminate an **N-95 mask in 90 minutes**, following which it can be re-used 10 times.

#### Odisha university innovates ultraviolet device for sanitisation

- The **Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT)** in Odisha has come up with a robot-assisted device that uses short-wave ultraviolet rays for sanitisation.
- The contactless device- **Ultra Violet Robot-Assisted Sanitiser (UVRAS)**-can be an effective tool in the war against Covid-19.
- The UVRAS emits ultraviolet light to disinfect enclosed areas like hospital rooms, doctors' chambers, operation theatres, guest rooms, restaurants and meeting spaces.
- This device has a **camera that gives a real-time video of the area** where it will be deployed for sanitisation.

#### Loyal Textile Mills Limited launched the world's first reusable PPE with Triple Viral Shield Technology

- **Loyal Textile Mills Limited** launched **Viral Shield**, a line of COVID-19 anti-viral, reusable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), masks and protective fashion wear range.

The series has been launched in collaboration with **Reliance Industries India and HeiQ** from Switzerland. This PPE emerges as the world's first reusable PPE that has passed the Viral Penetration Test, Synthetic Blood Penetration Test, and the **SBPR Test**.

- **RElan™ FeelFresh** (from Reliance Industries India) fibre used in manufacturing this fabric is inherently anti-microbial that inhibits any viral or bacterial growth. The fabric is then specially treated with "HeiQ Viroblock" the latest technology innovation from Switzerland, proven to have astounding anti-viral efficacy of 99.99 per cent against coronavirus **SARS-CoV-2** (COVID-19).

#### ISRO to launch Amazonia-1 satellite of Brazil onboard PSLV next month

- The **Indian Space Research and Research Organisation (ISRO)** gets ready to launch **Brazil's Amazonia -1 satellite** next month onboard PSLV.
- This Brazilian Satellite has been locally designed, assembled and tested in Brazil and will be the first satellite for Earth Observation. It will be the primary payload and will not be a hitch-hiking satellite.
- The **Amazonia-1** is part of the Framework Agreement signed between India and Brazil in **2004**. The agreement deals with cooperation from both countries for outer space, involving their premier space agencies. Under this agreement, **Brazil received data from the ISRO** remote sensing satellite, the ResourcesAT-1.
- Particularly, the **Amazonia-1 satellite** is designed and developed to observe and monitor the deforestation of the Amazon forests. Following the recent forest fires in the Amazon, Brazil urged the launch of the satellite for better observation and monitoring.

#### Russian varsity claims successful trials of world's first Covid-19 vaccine

- A **Russian Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University** has claimed the clinical trials of the world's first vaccine against the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) on volunteers have been completed successfully.
- The vaccine was produced by **Russia's Gamaleya Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology**.
- The trials in the first stage comprised **18 volunteers** and the second one involved 20 people. All of them were kept in isolation in a hospital for **28 days**.

#### IIT Kanpur develops UV sanitizing device 'SHUDH' to make your room COVID free

- Due to Covid Pandemic People are nowadays afraid of touching anything around, specifically in the areas where masses have to come. To solve this problem Imagineering Laboratory department of **IIT Kanpur** has developed an **Ultraviolet (UV) sanitizing product named SHUDH**.
- Smartphone operated Handy Ultraviolet Disinfection Helper that is SHUDH has six UV lights of **15 Watts** each that can be individually monitored from a distance.
- Initial testing has proved that the device at its full operation can disinfect a **10x10 squared feet room in about 15 minutes**.
- The on/off, speed, and location of the product can be controlled remotely using your available smartphone while installing an android application.
- **SHUDH** can assist in killing the spread of corona virus at the highly prone places such as hospitals, hotels, malls, offices and schools.

#### **HRD minister launches 'world's most affordable' Covid-19 test kit developed by IIT Delhi**

- Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Minister of State (HRD) Sanjay Dhotre launched a **low-cost Covid-19 test developed by Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT) Delhi**. The test, Corosure, has been billed as the world's most affordable probe free RT-PCR based Covid-19 diagnostic kit.
- The HRD minister described the launch as a "historic occasion" and lauded the team of experts at **IIT Delhi for developing the diagnostic kit**. The test kit uses an alternative testing method for testing Covid-19 samples and is launched by the company Newtech Medical under the name '**Corosure**'.
- During the event, Jatin Goyal, managing director of Corosure, stated the total cost of the kit roughly comes to around Rs 650. "This certainly makes it very affordable as compared to other probe tests that are being imported from other countries," he stated.
- The product is approved by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** and the **Drug Controller General of India (DCGI)**.

#### **Hyderabad Airport Gets India's 1st and Only Completely Contactless Car Parking Amid Covid-19**

- **GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL)** that operates the city airport is offering fully contact-less airport car parking service.
- Apart from offering an end-to-end contact-less boarding experience for safe travel, **GHIAL** has also scaled up its NETC (National Electronic Toll Collection) **FASTag Car Parking in collaboration with NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India)**.
- **Hyderabad international airport** now offers the country's first and only fully contact-less airport car parking experience for passengers and visitors.
- Now, customers holding any bank **NETC FASTag** could zip through the airport car parking with zero-contact transactions having full control over their safe travel.

#### **China successfully launches APSTAR-6D telecommunication satellite**

- The **APSTAR-6D telecommunication satellite** was launched via a **Long March 3B carrier rocket** from **Xichang Satellite Launch Center**.
- **APSTAR-6D** is designed and manufactured by the **China Academy of Space Technology (CAST)**, a subsidiary of **China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC)**.
- The development of Satellite **APSTAR-6D** was started back in **August 2016** following the launch contract signed by the **APT Satellite Company Limited** with **CGWIC- China Great Wall Industry Corporation**.
- The lifespan of **APSTAR-6D is of 15 years**. Launch Mass of the Satellite was around 5,550 Kg.

- The APSTAR-6D Satellite will be used for providing optimized high-quality voice and broadband data services for users and as well as aircraft and maritime routes in the Indo-Pacific region.
- It is a part of China's First Global High-Throughput Broadband Satellite Communication System.

#### **IIT Madras-incubated startup develops portable hospital to treat COVID-19 patients**

- **Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M)** incubated start-up Modulus Housing, has developed a portable hospital unit that can be installed anywhere within two hours by four people.
- Called '**MediCAB**,' it aims to decentralize the approach to detect, screen, identify, isolate and treat COVID-19 patients in their local communities through these portable microstructures.
- **MediCAB** has been launched recently in **Wayanad District of Kerala** where the units are being deployed to treat COVID-19 Patients.
- The Medicab is foldable and is composed of four zones – a doctor's room, an isolation room, a medical room/ward and a twin-bed ICU, maintained at negative pressure.

#### **IIT Kanpur-incubated startups develop device to monitor water quality India**

- **IIT Kanpur Incubated Start-ups** i.e Earth-face Analytics Pvt Ltd and Kritsnam Technologies Pvt Ltd have built up a gadget, for dissecting and **observing water quality** through simple to utilize colorimetric test-strip, in view of advanced mobile phone innovation that screens numerous significant water quality boundaries in under two minutes.
- The innovation empowers investigation of different water quality boundaries in a savvy, simple to work, eco-accommodating way, and have incorporated information the board conspires.
- The framework for estimating the nature of fluid will engage the majority with an on-location, ease, **savvy water quality testing Gadget** to manage field-level to family **unit level water sullyng issues**.
- An **IIT K** stated the current development will address difficulties in water quality observing by making it simple to utilize colorimetric test-strip based advanced cell innovation that screens various significant water quality boundaries momentarily.

#### **UV system for baggage scan disinfection developed**

- **Baggage**, an inevitable part of travel involves handling by multiple people and can be contact points for spread of the virus and should be disinfected quickly each time they change hands.
- With increase in the passenger traffic at airports, railway stations and commercial establishments during the post-lockdown period, there is an immediate necessity for a rapid system for the baggage disinfection within few seconds to effectively fight against COVID-19.
- In order to control spread of infection through baggage, **International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI)**, Hyderabad, an autonomous R&D Centre of Department of Science and Technology (DST), Govt. of India and Vehant Technologies, Noida have co-developed KritiScan® UV Baggage Disinfection System.
- The compact **UVC conveyor system** developed can efficiently disinfect the baggage passing through the conveyor within a few seconds and is suitable for use in airports, railway and bus stations, hotels, commercial and private establishments for rapid disinfection of baggage.
- **UVC based disinfection systems** are known for their rapid disinfection capability, and the disinfection process is dry and chemical-free. **UVC irradiation at 254 nm is known for its germicidal properties** where no chemical residues are left behind. UVC light, when irradiated on an infected surface, quickly disrupts the genetic material in the virus and thus inhibits its multiplication.



### China Prepares To Launch Long March-5 Rocket For Mars Mission

- The **fourth Long March-5 rocket**, to be used to launch **China's first Mars exploration mission**, was vertically transported to the launching area at the Wenchang Space Launch Center in south China's Hainan Province.
- The carrier rocket, coded as **Long March-5 Y4**, is planned to be launched in late July or early August, according to the China National Space Administration.
- Space engineers have conducted a general assembly and tests on the rocket, after it was transported to Wenchang at the end of May.
- It took about **two hours** to vertically transport the large rocket to the launching area of the center. Final examinations and tests will be conducted on the rocket before the launch.
- This is the first time the **Long March-5 carrier rocket**, currently **China's largest launch vehicle**, is to be put into practical use after three experimental launches.
- The rocket is expected to send the **Mars probe into the Earth-Mars transfer orbit**, which is also the first such mission to be carried out by China's carrier rocket.
- China's first Mars exploration mission **Tianwen-1** aims to complete orbiting, landing and roving in one mission, and to obtain scientific exploration data on Mars.

### DCGI nod to first indigenous pneumonia vaccine

- **Serum Institute of India Pvt Ltd** — the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by number of doses produced and sold globally (more than 1.5 billion doses)— has got the go-ahead from Drug Controller and General of India to manufacture its own indigenously developed pneumococcal vaccine.
- The vaccine maker has also partnered with **AstraZeneca** to support efforts to make a vaccine against Covid-19.
- The vaccine is used for active immunisation against invasive disease and pneumonia caused by **streptococcus pneumoniae in infants**.
- The **Drug Controller General of India (DCGI)** looked at evidence from human trials to allow the first fully indigenously developed pneumococcal polysaccharide conjugate vaccine for marketing in India. Serum Institute had first obtained the approval of DCGI to conduct clinical trials in Phases I, II and III.
- The **VPM BCG vaccine** for tuberculosis is undergoing clinical trials. Over 1,000 patients have been vaccinated and in two months' time; we will know whether it significantly reduces the severity of Covid-19 or not.

### IIM-Kozhikode startup develops wearable hand band to ensure social distancing

- The **Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIM-K)**, has developed a **wearable hand band that helps in maintaining social distancing** by sending out alarm in case of proximity with another person.
- Known as the **Veli Band**, the device has been developed by **Qual5 India Pvt.Ltd**
- **Veli Band** helps implement social distancing and location/contact tracing which can help organisations comply with social distancing norms during the current pandemic situation.

The band momentarily vibrates, sounds buzzer, and flashes LED simultaneously to notify wearers that another band is within **3 feet (1 metre)**, reminding them of the need to maintain social distance.

- The device, to be worn on the wrist, can anonymously keep track of interactions with other devices and thus not only help in maintaining a safer workplace but also aid in tracking employee movements in real time.
- The band comes with a rechargeable battery and uses **Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology for detection**.
- The data can also be used to monitor crowded areas to take necessary precautionary actions.

### AIIMS begins e-ICU video-consultation programme to reduce COVID-19 mortalityPTI



- In order to strengthen the Government of India's efforts to reduce COVID-19 mortality, **AIIMS, New Delhi** has started a video-consultation programme with **ICU doctors across the country called e-ICU**. The programme aims at holding case-management discussions among doctors who are at the frontline in treating COVID-19 patients in hospitals and COVID facilities around the country.
- Physicians who manage COVID-19 patients including those in the ICUs can raise queries, present their experience and share knowledge with other physicians and experts from AIIMS, New Delhi on this video platform. **Forty three big hospitals in 11 states** so far have been covered.
- The primary objective of these discussions is to reduce mortality from COVID-19 by learning from shared experience and strengthening best practices among hospitals. That 1,000 beds including isolation beds, oxygen supported and ICU beds in hospitals are covered under this programme.
- Each of these sessions conducted through video **conference span nearly two hours**. The discussions have covered the entire range of issues related to management of COVID-19 patients.

#### **THSTI Faridabad develops synthetic peptide-based vaccine candidate targeting CoronaVirus**

- **Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad** has developed a synthetic peptide-based vaccine candidate targeting CoronaVirus. The Institute has stated that the potential vaccine targets the spike domain of the Virus to generate an immune response that could block the viral invasion.
- The multi-epitope based vaccine candidate was developed by stitching the desired peptides to produce the protein.
- This approach generates **potential neutralizing antibodies** and also reduces antibody-dependent pulmonary immune pathology. **Synthetic peptides** provide novel and affordable strategy not only in development of a potential COVID-19 Vaccine but also in production of anti-viral blocking agents.
- Department of Biotechnology has stated that this development can be of immense use in further production of affordable and low cost **diagnostic kits for COVID**.

#### **CMERI develops COVID protection systems for workplaces**

- The **Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CMERI)** has come up with a **surveillance kiosk** which can gauge the body temperature of a person as well as check if he is wearing a face mask through a customised software solution.
- The CMERI, an institute under the **Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**, has also come up with touch-less faucets that can be used in office spaces.
- The **solar-based IntelliMAST** is an intelligent surveillance kiosk which identifies the body temperature and whether an individual is wearing a face mask or not through customised software solutions.
- The IntelliMAST will also facilitate identity **card-based mask dispensing and attendance system**. Facial recognition-based and ID card-based attendance system will be incorporated into the system in the near future.
- This system uses artificial intelligence and information technology to give realtime results and can be synchronised with the human resource data of any organisation for any realtime data response and dissemination of information.
- The institute has also developed a **360 degree car lusher**. The system is a sodium hypochlorite water screen which uses specialised nozzle design to ensure that the sanitiser diffused water is evenly spread over and under the car body wheels with adequate water force and coverage.

#### **CIPET gets accreditation by NABL to test PPE kits**

- **Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering and Technology, CIPET** an apex level premium institute under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has been accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories NABL for Testing and **Certification of PPE Kit**.

- The PPE kit includes **Gloves, Coverall, Face Shield, Goggles and Triple Layer Medical masks** in line with **International Standards**. It is another achievement of CIPET in the fight against COVID- 19 Pandemic and a step forward towards Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- CIPET: IPT Centre Bhubaneswar, after developing facility of testing PPE kit had submitted an application to NABL for accreditation.
- After an online audit of its testing facility **NABL granted accreditation** to CIPET- Centre Bhubaneswar.
- CIPET has been taking up the Research and Development initiatives in **the areas of Health Care as per WHO and ISO guidelines**.
- CIPET has also expanded its capacity to test foodgrain and fertilizer packaging in order to support the essential services during Covid pandemic.

#### SpaceX Launches ANASIS-II Military Communications Satellite for South Korea

- SpaceX launched a South Korean military communications satellite, **ANASIS-II**. **Liftoff of the Falcon 9 Block 5 rocket**.
- The launch took place from **SLC-40 at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida**.
- Army/Navy/Air Force Satellite Information System 2 (ANASIS-II), previously named **KMilSatCom-1**, is a secure communications satellite for the South Korean Agency for Defense Development.
- The spacecraft is the first dedicated South Korean military communications satellite. It supplements the **Koreasat-5/ANASIS-I satellite**, a combined civilian and military communications satellite launched in **2006**.
- The ANASIS-II spacecraft is based on **Airbus's Eurostar E3000 satellite bus**, over 80 of which have been ordered for various communications missions. While the mass of ANASIS-II is classified due to its military mission, other E3000 satellites range from **4500 to 6500 kilograms** at launch.

#### Oxford COVID-19 vaccine early trial shows positive result, India to start trial next month

- The human trial of COVID-19 vaccine candidate developed by the **University of Oxford and backed by AstraZeneca Plc** has shown a positive result. Officially known as **AZD1222**, the vaccine has prompted a protective immune response in hundreds of people who got the shot, according to a report published in British medical journal Lancet. The vaccine did not prompt any serious side effects, the journal stated.
- The researchers stated that they found their experimental COVID-19 vaccine produced a dual immune response in people aged **18 to 55**.
- The vaccine uses a weakened version of chimpanzee adenovirus as a vector, infused with the genetic material of **SARS-CoV-2 spike protein**. Explaining how the Oxford vaccine works, study lead author Andrew Pollard stated: "The new vaccine is a chimpanzee adenovirus viral vector (ChAdOx1) vaccine that expresses the **SARS-CoV-2 spike protein**".
- It uses a common **cold virus (adenovirus) that infects chimpanzees**, which has been weakened so that it can't cause any disease in humans, and is genetically modified to code for the spike protein of the human SARS-CoV-2 virus".
- This means that when the adenovirus enters vaccinated people's cells it also delivers the spike protein genetic code. This causes these people's cells to produce the spike protein, and helps teach the immune system to recognise the SARS-CoV-2 virus."
- The potential vaccine is already in **large-scale phase III human trials** to assess whether it can protect against COVID-19. In phase-3, it will be tested on roughly 30,000 people in the US alone.
- Hill estimated they might have sufficient data by the end of the year to decide if the vaccine should be adopted for mass vaccination campaigns.

#### First indigenous nuclear reactor attains criticality at Kakrapar

- After much delay, **India's first 700 MWe nuclear power reactor** — commissioned at Kakrapar in Gujarat — attained criticality, a statement from the Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) stated.
- The **unit-3 of Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP-3 - 700 MW)** achieved its first criticality (controlled sustained nuclear fission reaction), July 22, at 09.36 hours," the statement stated
- The reactor is the first of its kind as this **700 MWe Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor** was indigenously designed and built by Indian scientists and engineers. The components and equipment for the reactor were manufactured by Indian industry and constructed and erected by various Indian contractors.
- **KAPP-3** is the first among **16 such 700 MWe reactors** that have been given the go-ahead by the government. NPCIL has stated that seven of them are expected to be completed and attain criticality progressively from next year.
- KAPP-3, for which the first concrete pour happened in November 2010, had to face inordinate delay, like all other **700 MWe reactors** currently under construction, in procuring certain equipment.

#### Russia successfully holds flight test of 3D-printed aircraft engine

- **Russia** has for the first time conducted a successful **flight test of a 3D-printed aircraft engine**, and its production is scheduled for **2021-2022**.
- The press service of the **Russian Foundation for Advanced Research Projects in the Defense Industry** told Sputnik: **Russia** has for the first time conducted flight tests of the MGTD-20 gas turbine engine made by **3D-printing**.
- The flight tests were held at **Kazanbakh aviation center in Tatarstan**.
- In December 2019, the foundation reported successful bench tests of small-sized gas turbine aircraft engines made using 3D printing technology.

#### China launches ambitious Tianwen-1 Mars rover mission

- **China's** first fully homegrown Mars mission Tianwen-1 mission launched atop a **Long March 5 rocket** from **Hainan Island's Wenchang Satellite Launch Center**.
- **Tianwen-1** consists of an orbiter and a lander/rover duo, a combination of craft that had never before launched together toward the Red Planet. The ambition of Tianwen-1 is especially striking given that it's China's first stab at a full-on Mars mission.
- The nation did launch a **Red Planet orbiter called Yinghuo-1 in November 2011**, but the spacecraft flew piggyback with **Russia's Phobos-Grunt mission**. And that launch failed, leaving the probes trapped in Earth orbit.

#### IIM Bangalore's NSRCEL launches Women Startup Programme

- **NSRCEL**, the startup and innovation hub at the **Indian Institute of Management Bangalore**, has opened up applications to the third cohort of the **Women Startup Program**.
- The Women Startup Program aims to support ambitious and innovative women entrepreneurs by enabling them to transform their idea into a business venture and enhancing their entrepreneurial and managerial skills.
- The programme focuses on the Centre's vision for a '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**' and '**Vocal for Local**'.
- Early-stage ideas startups (not more than 12 months' old) will be shortlisted for the first phase of the program. The program commences with a five-week training through **Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) to be offered on the Swayam platform**.
- The second and third phases of the program will have the selected entrepreneurs undergo a two-month virtual launchpad program followed by a six-month incubation program designed by **NSRCEL** and its partner institutes. They will then present their product/prototype and pitch to a screening committee.

#### AIIMS Nagpur develops smart band to monitor COVID-19 patients

- The **All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Nagpur**, has developed a smart wrist band.
- The device, designed and developed with the help of teams at **IIT Jodhpur and IIIT Nagpur**, works without a smartphone and helps ensure effective monitoring and tracking of confirmed and suspected COVID-19 patients.
- The device works without a smartphone and uses more reliable geofencing technology to detect when a person wearing the device breaches the quarantine zone.
- As soon as it detects the breach, concerned authorities are given a real-time warning alert to check on the individual's movement and take necessary action.
- With real-time vital monitoring, the band can alert the wearer as soon as something goes off the charts.
- Notably, all the data collected through **the device is securely stored on cloud**, with limited access to select healthcare workers and officials.

#### **IIT Delhi, Wells Fargo sign MoU for home-based Covid-19 testing kit**

- The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi** and **Wells Fargo** have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for development of a **peptide-based ELISA test** for the detection of Covid-19 antibodies.
- **ELISA**, short for **serological enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay**, determines whether or not a person possesses antibodies for Covid-19 in the blood.
- The test results can help the medical fraternity fight the disease in many ways; a significant way would be the identification of individuals with antibodies who can donate their blood as part of an experimental treatment of infected patients.
- The IIT Delhi research team will be working on the **peptide-based ELISA test project** from its idea incubation to implementation stage. The proof of concept is expected by end of 2020, and the kits could be in market by **March 2021**.

#### **BHU Professor launches website to help people in coping up fear of COVID-19**

- **Cold and Cough** are one of the symptoms of **COVID-19** and with the change in season many persons who are having cold fear that they could be infected by Corona Virus. A professor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has launched a dedicated website called **SARDIJUKAM.Com** which will help people in coping up from this fear and will also help in recovery them from depression and other Covid related issues.
- A website for those who fear that their normal cough and cold could be a symptom of Corona infection and also for them who don't know what to do in their quarantine period and getting more time in recovery because of anxiety and depression. Professor VN Mishra, Neurologist of BHU has come up with one solution for all such problems that is **SARDIJUKAM.Com**.
- He stated that it has some special features like **QUARANTINE KAVACH**. Along with the website people can also take help of the mobile app with same name for all their Covid related queries.

#### **DRDO establishes COVID-19 testing facility in Leh**

- The **DRDO** has established a COVID-19 testing facility at the **Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR)** in **Leh** to augment the existing capacity for identification of coronavirus cases in the union territory of Ladakh, according to an official statement.
- The testing facility, which was inaugurated by **Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur**, is capable of screening **50 samples per day**, stated the statement by the Defence Ministry.
- The facility can also be utilised for training manpower for COVID-19 testing and will be of great help to address future bio-threats and carrying out R&D (research and development) activities pertinent to agro-animals diseases, the ministry noted.

- Mathur also inspected the testing facility. According to the Defence Ministry, he was briefed about the bio-safety aspect of the testing facility and precautionary measures to minimise cross-contamination and safety of researchers, health professionals and the environment.
- The **DIHAR** is one of the life sciences laboratories of the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** working on cold arid agro-animal technologies.

#### China launches new high-resolution mapping satellite

- **China** sent a new high-resolution mapping satellite into space from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in the northern province of Shanxi.
- The **Ziyuan III 03 satellite** was launched by a **Long March-4B rocket** at 11:13 a.m. Beijing time, according to the center. It was the 341st flight mission by the **Long March rocket series**.
- The Long March rocket is a series of expendable launch system rockets operated by the space agency of China.
- Also on board the rocket were two satellites used for dark matter detection and commercial data acquisition respectively. They were developed by the **Shanghai ASES Spaceflight Technology Co. Ltd.**
- All three satellites have entered preset orbits, sources with the Taiyuan center stated

#### IIT Kharagpur researchers develop portable device for low-cost Covid-19 rapid test

- IIT Kharagpur have developed a novel **portable rapid diagnostic device** to detect Covid-19 infection.
- The test costs only **Rs 400**, taking all components of expenses and business model into account.

#### About portable rapid diagnostic device:

- The technology essentially deploys a **disposable simple paper-strip for chemical analysis** and visualisation of results.
- The device has remarkable **accuracy and sensitivity, compatible to standard RT-PCR tests**.
- It can be operated by minimally-trained personnel, precluding the needs for skilled technicians. It takes approximately 60 minutes to run each test.

#### IIT Madras startup launches wrist band for detecting COVID symptoms

- A wearable **wrist tracker to detect COVID-19 symptoms** at an early stage will be available in the market next month with its developer, a **IIT Madras** incubated start up, raising a funding of **Rs 22 crore** for the purpose.
- "**Muse wearables**", the start up incubated at **IIT Madras** by an alumni group along with an NIT Warangal alumnus, is planning to launch the trackers in **70 countries**.

#### About Wrist band:

- The wrist-based tracker has sensors for skin temperature, heart rate and **SpO2 (blood oxygen saturation)** which can continuously track these body vitals remotely to help in early diagnosis of COVID-19 symptoms.
- The tracker will be **Bluetooth-enabled** and can be connected to the mobile phone via an app called the **Muse Health App**. The user vitals and activity data are stored in the phone as well as a remote server. Administrative access can also be provided for centralized monitoring of people in containment areas for COVID-19 symptoms.
- The tracker can get notifications from the **Arogya Setu app** and alert the user when she enters a **COVID containment zone**.

#### Medical bed isolation system 'Aashray' launched to combat Covid-19

- A **Pune deemed to be University** has developed '**Aashray**', a medical bed isolation system to combat COVID-19 by preventing or minimising the spread of the virus.



- This medical bed isolation system developed by **Defence Institute of Advanced Technology, (DIAT)** is a low cost, reusable solution to maintain proper isolation of COVID-19 patients by creating a suction or negative pressure near exhale, further filtering and disinfecting the aerosol.
- The bed isolation system envelopes are made up of specialised material and manufacturing process with transparent and translucent supported on medical grade materials structure.
- The product is modular and portable in design and can be suitable for different requirements such as institutional, hospitals and home/individual quarantine. The envelope is reusable as it is antibacterial-antifungal and can be sanitised.
- The cost of the setup for a unit of **10 beds is Rs.1 lakh approximately** and for home, the quarantine will be around **Rs.15,000 for a single bed.**

#### **CSIO-AMESYS INDIA develops decontamination box 'Suraksha'**

- **Central Scientific Instruments Organisation (CSIO)**, along with **AMESYS INDIA** has been developed a microorganism decontamination box. The decontamination device has been named as '**Suraksha**'.
- UVC light and heat are used in the box. It can sanitize an object in **10-15 minutes**. People can decontaminate their belongings like wallet, keys, mobile, masks and any other thing. Decontamination box is developed by **AMESYS INDIA** and designed by **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-CSIO**. This box is useful for places like home, barber shops, restaurants and hospital units.

#### **IIT-Hyderabad develops electrodes from corn husk**

- Researchers from **Indian Institute of Technology-Hyderabad (IIT-H)**, in collaboration with the **International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI)**, have developed an efficient method to derive '**activated carbon electrode**' material from corn husk for high-voltage supercapacitors.
- Both the Telugu States combined, which are the second-largest producers of corn in the country, **can produce a large amount of corn husk waste.**
- Much of that waste is burnt and its potential to be converted to valuable electrode material is not harnessed owing to lack of awareness, and technology.

#### **NASA set to launch robotic rover to seek signs of past Martian life**

- **NASA** is set to launch an ambitious mission to **Mars with the liftoff of its next-generation Perseverance rover**, a six-wheeled robot tasked with deploying a mini helicopter, testing out equipment for future human missions and searching for traces of past Martian life.
- The **\$2.4 billion mission**, slated for liftoff at 7:50 a.m. ET (1150 GMT) from Florida's Cape Canaveral, is planned as the U.S. space agency's ninth trek to the Martian surface. The United Arab Emirates and China separately this month launched probes to Mars in displays of their own technological prowess and ambition.
- Launching atop **an Atlas 5 rocket from the Boeing-Lockheed** joint venture United Launch Alliance, the car-sized Perseverance rover is expected to reach Mars next February. It is due to land at the base of an **820-foot-deep** (250 meters) **crater called Jezero**, a former lake from 3.5 billion years ago that scientists believe could hold traces of potential past microbial Martian life.
- The rover will attempt for the first time to bring Martian rock samples back to Earth, collecting materials in cigar-sized capsules and leaving them scattered on the surface for retrieval by a future "fetch" rover. That conceptual rover is expected to launch the samples back into space to link up with other spacecraft for an eventual Earth homecoming around **2031.**



- Also aboard **Perseverance is a four-pound (1.8 kg)** autonomous helicopter called Ingenuity that is due to test powered flight on Mars for the first time. Bridenstine stated he can imagine a day when NASA places a robot on Mars that can deploy perhaps a dozen different helicopters for exploration.

#### Iran Launches Underground Ballistic Missiles During Exercise

- Iran's paramilitary **Revolutionary Guard** launched **underground ballistic missiles** as part of an exercise involving a mock-up **American aircraft carrier** in the **Strait of Hormuz**.
- Iranian commandos fast-roped down from a helicopter onto the replica in the footage aired from the exercise called "**Great Prophet 14.**" Anti-aircraft guns opened fire on a target drone near the port city of Bandar Abbas.

#### Revision Points

Institutions/Persons	Things to be Discovered/Developed
National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI), Lucknow	Setting up of Advanced Virology Lab
AIIMS & IIT-Delhi	COPAL – 19 App
Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar	Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based deep learning tool
IIT-Roorkee	Developing of sterilizing system for personal belongings
Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur	Mobile Masterjee
Indian Council of Medical Research	Launching of Covaxin
University of Hyderabad	A tool for monitoring social distancing 'MAVEN LABS'
IIT Madras	A nano-coated filter for COVID warriors
Defence Research and Development Organisation	Research cell at Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad
Mylab Discovery Solutions	Compact XL
Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad & NVIDIA	NVIDIA AI Technology Centre
Indian Institute of Science	Eye Gaze-Controlled Robotic Arm For Speech
IIT-Delhi	Ozone-based decontamination device to disinfect N95 masks
Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology in Odisha	Ultra Violet Robot-Assisted Sanitiser
Loyal Textile Mills Limited	Viral Shield
IIT Kanpur	Ultraviolet (UV) sanitizing product named SHUDH
IIT Madras	MediCAB
IIT Kanpur Incubated Start-ups	Monitor water quality India
Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode	Veli Band
Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute	Surveillance kiosk
BHU Professor	SARDIJUKAM.Com

IIT Kharagpur	Portable rapid diagnostic device to COVID 19
IIT Madras	Wrist tracker
Central Scientific Instruments Organisation & AMESYS INDIA	Suraksha
IIT Hyderabad & ARCI	Activated carbon electrode' material from corn husk

### Important Environment News

#### Surviving core of Jupiter-like planet spotted near distant star: Research

- A **rocky planet 39 times as massive as Earth** has been spotted orbiting a distant star at breakneck speed, with astronomers concluding it may be the surviving core of a planet once perhaps larger than Jupiter that was stripped of its gaseous atmosphere.
- Researchers stated that it is the largest rocky planet ever discovered and would be the first planetary core ever found, offering a unique opportunity to better understand the interiors of gas giants like Jupiter, the largest planet in our solar system.
- The planet, **called TOI-849b**, orbits a star a bit smaller and cooler than the sun, **located 730 light years from Earth**. A light year is the distance light travels in a year, **5.9 trillion miles** (9.5 trillion km).
- Gas giants are composed of a solid core surrounded by a vast atmosphere mostly of hydrogen and helium.
- **Its diameter of 27,000 miles** (43,500 km) is a bit less than Neptune, the smallest of our solar system's four gas planets, but much larger than **Earth's 7,900 miles** (12,700 km). It orbits extremely near its star - much closer than our solar system's innermost planet Mercury is to the sun - and travels 10 times more quickly than Earth, completing an orbit every 18 hours.

#### Australian scientists discover ancient underwater Aboriginal sites

- **Australia's first underwater archaeological sites** off its west coast dating to more than 7,000 years ago will help with the understanding of the cultural and technology development of its first peoples, according to scientists.
- Archaeologists in Western Australia discovered hundreds of stone tools made by aboriginal people when the seabed was dry, at two ancient sites now submerged in the Dampier Archipelago.
- While the region is well known for its rich ancient history and its rock-art carvings, the two sites are the first confirmed underwater locations holding evidence of human civilization on Australia's continental shelf.
- Divers from Flinders University plunge into the water on the **Pilbara Coast** to retrieve the aboriginal objects from what was once dry land, at a depth of between **2.4 metres and 11 metres** (8-36 feet).
- They have found cutting and grinding tools and hammer stones that date back thousands of years, as per sources.
- Data from the find is being analysed for precise dating, however radiocarbon dating and analysis of sea-level changes show the site is at least **7,000 years old**.

#### Phobos, the closest and biggest moon of Mars, imaged by MOM: ISRO

- **Mars Colour Camera (MCC) onboard Mars Orbiter Mission** has imaged Phobos, the closest and biggest moon of Mars, on 1st July when MOM was about 7200 km from Mars and at **4200 km from Phobos**.
- Spatial resolution of the **image is 210 m**. This is a composite image generated from **6 MCC frames** and has been **color corrected**.

- Phobos is largely believed to be made up of carbonaceous chondrites. The violent phase that Phobos has encountered is seen in the large section gouged out from a past collision (Stickney crater) and bouncing ejecta. Stickney, the largest crater on Phobos along with the other craters (Shklovsky, Roche & Gildrig) are also seen in this image.

### Important Rankings and Indexes

Index	India's Rank	Top	Released By
Global Real Estate Transparency Index 2020	34 <sup>th</sup>	UK	Jones Lang LaSalle
Cancer preparedness in Asia-Pacific: Progress towards universal cancer control	8 <sup>th</sup>	Australia	Economist Intelligence Unit
Global Manufacturing Risk Index	3 <sup>rd</sup>	China & USA	Cushman & Wakefield
World Intellectual Property Indicators- 2019 Report	10 <sup>th</sup>	China	WIPO

### RIL only Indian company on global list of 100 firms that prospered during the pandemic

- Billionaire **Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries (RIL)** is the only Indian company to feature on a list of businesses that prospered during the Coronavirus enforced lockdown.
- A list of top 100 companies by **Financial Times ranked Mumbai-based RIL at 89**. The publication ranked companies based on resiliency during the pandemic.
- While Reliance's core energy businesses have struggled during the pandemic, foreign investors flocked to its digital arm Jio. After Facebook bought a **10 per cent stake for \$5.7 billion** in April, Jio sold stakes to everyone from Silver Lake and KKR to Mubadala, the publication stated.
- RIL's telecom unit Jio Platforms has raised **Rs 1,17,588.45 crore** from global investors since April 22, the conglomerate stated on July 3.
- On July 3, RIL stated American semiconductor giant Intel will be investing **Rs 1,894.5 crore** in Jio Platforms.
- Here are the top 10 companies on Financial Times' list of businesses that performed well during the pandemic:
  - Amazon
  - Microsoft
  - Apple
  - Tesla
  - Tencent
  - Facebook
  - Nvidia
  - Alphabet

- Paypal
- T-Mobile

#### Bangladesh moves 7 places up on SDG Index

- **Bangladesh** has moved **7 places up** in the latest **Sustainable Development Index** (SDG) for the year 2020.
- Among 166 countries for which the SDG index was prepared, Bangladesh stands at the 109th position compared to the 116th position in the year 2019. **India stands at 117th place.**
- **Sweden** is placed at the **top of the index** with an overall score of **84.7** while Bangladesh has a score of 63.5.
- The report shows that among **17 SDG parameters**, Bangladesh has remained on track in achieving goals relating to poverty alleviation, quality education, decent work and economic growth and climate action.
- However, significant challenges remain on **7 parameters** including the goal of zero hunger, good health, clean water and sanitation, innovation and peace, justice and strong institutions.
- The SDG index frames the implementation of **17 SDG goals** among UN member states in terms of six broad transformations- education and skills, health and well-being, clean energy and industry, sustainable land use, sustainable cities, and digital technologies.

#### Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson becomes Instagram's highest-paid celebrity

- **Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson** has dethroned Kylie Jenner as **Instagram's highest-paid celebrity**.
- According to social media marketing firm **Hopper HQ**, Johnson, can charge advertisers roughly \$1,015,000 for a sponsored post.
- As of publication, **Johnson has 189 million followers** while Jenner has 183 million.
- Also on this year's list were pro soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo – who charged about \$889,000 per post – and Jenner's sister Kim Kardashian, who could charge \$858,000. Ariana Grande rounds out the top five, charging about \$853,000.
- **Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson** was also named Hollywood's highest-paid actor of 2019 by Forbes.

#### India among top 5 nations in e-waste generation: Report

- **India** is among the top five e-waste generating countries in the world besides **China, the US, Japan and Germany**, according to a report.
- Among states, Maharashtra contributes the largest e-waste of **19.8%** but recycles only about 47,810 tonne per annum (TPA), the report released by Assocham and NEC stated ahead of the Environment Day on 5 June.
- Tamil Nadu with e-waste contribution of **13% recycled** about 52,427 TPA; Uttar Pradesh (10.1%) recycles about 86,130 TPA; **West Bengal (9.8%), Delhi (9.5%), Karnataka (8.9%), Gujarat (8.8%) and Madhya Pradesh 7.6%.**
- The global volume of e-waste is expected to reach **52.2 million tonne (MT)** or **6.8 kg per inhabitant by 2021 from 44.7 MT in 2016** at a compound annual growth rate of **20%**, according to the study.
- Of the total e-waste produced in **2016, only 20% (8.9 MT)** is documented to be collected properly and recycled, while there is no record of the remaining, e-waste, the study stated.

#### India ranks 34th in Global Real Estate Transparency Index 2020 by JLL

- India ranks **34th globally on the index**, with higher levels of transparency due to regulatory reforms, enhanced market data, and sustainability initiatives.
- **Jones Lang LaSalle's** (JLL) biennial **Global Real Estate Transparency Index** (GRETI) stated that the improvement is led by the progress in the country's Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT) framework attracting greater interest from institutional investors.
- The index ranks **99 countries and territories and 163 cities globally.**

- The rankings have six Asia Pacific markets – **Mainland China (32nd), Thailand (33rd), India (34th), Indonesia (40th), Philippines (44th) and Vietnam (56th)** – among the top 10 biggest improvers globally.
- India's rank has improved by five notches from 39 to 34 since the last six years from 2014 until 2020. The list is topped by UK and US secured second position.

#### India ranks eighth for cancer preparedness among 10 Asia-Pacific countries: EIU

- India was ranked **eighth** as regards cancer preparedness among 10 Asia-Pacific countries, according to a new report.
- The **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** report on "**Cancer preparedness in Asia-Pacific: Progress towards universal cancer control**", sponsored by Roche, examines the findings from the EIU's Index of Cancer Preparedness.
- The report describes the complexities of the challenge of cancer facing 10 Asia-Pacific countries -- **Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam.**
- The report has ranked India at the eighth position."India ranks eighth for cancer preparedness in the region with an overall score of 51.6 out of 100, below the regional average of 66.5, while **Australia (92.4), South Korea (83.4) and Malaysia (80.3) lead the region,**" the report stated.
- The report ranked only **Vietnam (44.5) and the Philippines (42.6) after India.**
- It stated further progress can be made as India records below-average scores across all three pillars in the index -- policy and planning, care delivery and health system and governance.
- While Indonesia and Malaysia have demonstrated a strong growth in health spending and China has the biggest reduction in out-of-pocket health expenditure in the analysis, it is still only high-income countries that meet the World Health Organisation-recommended spending for universal health coverage, the report stated.

#### Mukesh Ambani now is the fifth richest man in the world: Hurun

- Billionaire **Mukesh Ambani** has moved **three notches up to become the fifth richest man** in the world, a position he shares with **Tesla founder Elon Musk and Former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer.**
- Ambani's rise from the **eighth position last month** was buoyant on a series of fund-raising by Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) for its wholly-owned subsidiary **Jio Platforms.**
- The RIL Chairman and Managing Director's networth rose to **\$70 billion**, much higher than that of **Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett** (\$76 billion) and Google co-founder Sergey Brin (\$69 billion), according to data collated by Hurun Research.
- Ambani's networth, four months into the Covid-19 pandemic stood **at \$66 billion.**
- On June 23, Ambani was the **eighth richest man** in the world, along with Google co-founder Sergey Brin, while the other Indian in the global rich list was '**Vaccine King**' Cyrus Poonawalla at 57th position.
- According to Hurun Research, Mukesh Ambani, riding the digital wave, was expected to emerge as one of the five richest people in the world in the next two or three years.
- Since April 22, 2020, **Jio Platforms** (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ambani-controlled Reliance Industries Ltd) had raised a total of **Rs 117,588.45 crore** from global investors including Facebook, Silver Lake, Vista Equity Partners, General Atlantic, KKR, Mubadala, ADIA, TPG, L Catterton and Intel Capital.
- Amazon founder **Jeff Bezos** with a **networth of \$200 billion** still tops the chart, followed by Microsoft co-founder **Bill Gates** (**\$110 billion**), while French multi-national luxury goods conglomerate Louis Vuitton SE group head **Bernard Arnault is third** (**\$94 billion**).
- Facebook founder **Mark Zuckerberg** (**\$89 billion**) in **fourth position** is the other billionaire in the list.

#### Elon Musk is the 'best' paid CEO, Apple CEO Tim Cook at 2nd spot

- **Tesla CEO Elon Musk** grabbed the top spot in the list of highest paid CEOs in US in 2019 while Apple CEO Tim Cook ranked second in the list created by Bloomberg.
- As per the Bloomberg Pay Index, Musk made **\$595.3 million in 2019** making him the highest paid CEO. Meanwhile, Tim Cook made **\$133.7 million in 2019 from Apple**.
- While Alphabet chief Sundar Pichai took the **eighth spot with \$86.2 million in 2019**, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella was at the ninth spot with a total compensation of **\$77.3 million**.
- The highest paid women CEOs and executives in 2019 starts with Advanced Micro Devices CEO Lisa Su at the 19th spot with a total compensation of **\$55.8 million, followed by Safra Catz of Oracle at the 36th position with \$43.4 million**.

#### India 2nd- largest source of FDI for Britain

- India invested in 120 projects and created **5,429 new jobs in the UK** to become the **second-largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI)** after the US in 2019, according to new UK government figures released.
- The Department for International Trade (DIT) inward investment statistics for 2019-2020 found India moving up from its previous third-largest spot, representing an **overall 4% FDI increase for the UK on 2018-2019** with **1,852 new inward investment projects in the 2019/2020** financial year.
- The US remains the number one source of FDI for the **UK followed by India, Germany, France and China and Hong Kong**. **Australia and New Zealand** were responsible for 72 projects and the Nordic and Baltic region 134.

#### Madhya Pradesh tops in implementing Pradhan Mantri Street Vendors Atma Nirbhar Nidhi-PM Swa Nidhi scheme

- **Madhya Pradesh** has emerged on top in implementing the **Pradhan Mantri Street Vendors Atma Nirbhar Nidhi-PM Swa Nidhi scheme**. The scheme is being implemented in the state to help the street vendors to continue their business.
- Apart from urban street vendors, a scheme to provide interest free assistance of **Rs. 10,000** is being implemented also for the street vendors of rural areas in the state.
- The **Pradhan Mantri Street Vendors Nidhi Yojana** has been launched to provide benefit to beneficiaries of **378 urban bodies** of the state.
- Under the scheme, **interest free working capital of 10,000 rupees** will be provided for one year. **Interest subsidy of 7 percent** on loan amount will be borne by the Central Government while the remaining amount will be borne by the State Government.
- A maximum **special subsidy of 1200 Rs** will also be given in a year on conducting digital transactions.
- On timely repayment of the amount, beneficiaries will be able to get working capital of maximum 20 thousand Rupees in the next year.

#### Mukesh Ambani's \$72 billion fortune makes him richer than Elon Musk and Google's Larry Page and Sergey Brin

- India's richest man **Mukesh Ambani** surged past Silicon Valley tech titan **Elon Musk** as well as **Alphabet Inc. co-founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page** to become the **world's sixth-richest person**.
- The chairman of **Reliance Industries Ltd.**, whose wealth surpassed Warren Buffett's last week, is now worth **\$72.4 billion**, according to the **Bloomberg Billionaires Index**.
- The sudden surge in Ambani's wealth since April is because his three-year-old telecom arm Reliance Jio has raised more than **\$15.6 billion** in the last four months from Facebook, Silver Lake, Vista Equity Partners, General Atlantic, KKR, Mubadala, Saudi PIF (Public Investment Fund) and more.
- **Top 1. Jeff Bezos(US) with USD 184billion, 2. Bill Gates(US) with USD 115billion, 3. Bernard Arnault(France) USD 94.5billion.**

#### India Ranks Third In Global Manufacturing Risk Index: Cushman & Wakefield Report



- India ranks **third** in the list of most-suitable locations for global manufacturing among **48 countries in terms of cost competitiveness and operating conditions**, according to property consultant **Cushman & Wakefield**.
- **China and the U.S.** retain the top two positions, while **India** has moved one place higher to rank third.
- In cost scenario, India is at **3rd position after China and Vietnam**. However, India ranks 30th in risk scenario. Countries that present lower levels of political and economic risks are ranked higher.
- The annual Global MRI scores each country against **20 variables** that make up the three final weighted rankings that cover conditions, cost and risk.

#### India among top ten nations in intellectual property filings

- As per **World Intellectual Property Indicators-2019 Report**, India has emerged as the top **tenth nation** in the ranking of the total (resident and abroad) Intellectual Property (IP) filing activity.
- The overall ranking has been topped by **China**, which was the main source of growth in worldwide IP filings in 2018.
- **China was followed by United States**, Germany, Japan, and Republic of Korea as the top five nations in the list.
- The 2019 report presents data for **49 countries** based on their 2018 filing, registration and renewals statistics, collected from national and regional IP offices and WIPO.

#### India Higher than China in business, technology skills but lags in data science: Global Skills Index 2020

- **India** lags in skills in the data science domain but is an emerging player in the business and technology skills.
- **Data from the Global Skills Index 2020 by online learning platform Coursera** showed that India stood 34th in the world when it comes to business skills, outperforming China which was at the 45th spot (emerging category).
- Similarly, in the technology skills domain, India scored higher than China, taking the 40th spot (emerging category) scoring 34 percent. In the technology domain, China stands in the laggard category, ranking 50th globally and scoring 17 percent.
- In the data science domain, however, **China outperformed India**. Here, China was the 35th spot globally in the emerging category while **India stood at 51st in the laggard category**.
- In the Asia Pacific (APAC) region, the **Global Skills Index** showed that India and China post similar figures in terms of skills mastery.

#### HDFC Bank's Aditya Puri highest paid banker for FY20 with Rs.18.92 cr in remuneration

- **HDFC Bank** Managing Director Aditya Puri has emerged as the highest paid banker among the **top lenders for FY 2019-20**, with a **38 per cent jump in salary and prerequisites to Rs.18.92 crore**.
- The banker, who is set to retire in October this year on attaining the age of 70, had earned **Rs.42.20 crore** by exercising stock options in 2018-19.
- Second largest private sector lender ICICI Bank's managing director and chief executive Sandeep Bakhshi's gross earnings stood at Rs.6.31 crore in his first full year as the head of the lender.
- **Axis Bank's managing director** and chief executive Amitabh Chaudhry was paid Rs.6.01 crore for FY20 as against Rs.1.27 crore for the last three months of FY19.

#### Indian direct selling industry ranked 15th after recording \$2B sales in 2019

- According to **World Federation of Direct Selling Associations**, The Indian direct selling industry has reported a growth of **12.1% to \$2.47 billion in 2019**.
- The ranking of the direct selling industry improved from **19th a year before to 15th**.
- The **US** has topped the list, contributing 20% of the global direct selling industry with sales of \$35.21 billion.
- It is followed by **China with 13 percent contribution, Korea and Germany** with 10 percent each and 9 percent by Japan.

### India ranks among 10 worst countries for working people: ITUC

- **India** is among the 10 worst countries for working people, according to the **seventh edition of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Global Rights Index** that ranks 144 countries on the degree of respect for workers' rights.
- The others include Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Honduras, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, Turkey and Zimbabwe.
- The **Middle East and North Africa** is the worst region in the world for working people for seven years running due to the ongoing insecurity and conflict in Palestine, Syria, Yemen and Libya coupled with the most regressive region for workers' representation and union rights.
- The ITUC report concludes that **85 per cent** of countries violated the right to strike and 80 per cent of countries violated the right to collectively bargain.
- The number of countries that impeded the registration of unions has increased. Three new countries -- **India, Egypt and Honduras** -- have entered the list of ten worst countries for workers.
- The number of countries that denied or constrained freedom of speech increased from **54 in 2019 to 56 in 2020**. Workers were exposed to violence in 51 countries. Workers had no or restricted access to justice in 72 per cent of countries.
- The **Global Rights Index** exposes a breakdown in the social contract that governments and employers have with working people. "There is a trend to restrict working rights through violations of collective bargaining, withholding the right to strike and excluding workers from unions.

### Mukesh Ambani now world's 5th RICHEST

- Billionaire **Mukesh Ambani** is now the world's fifth-richest man. The Real-Time Billionaires List by Forbes Magazine shows **Ambani**, the chairman of oil-to-conglomerate Reliance Industries, at the fifth position, just below Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg.
- Ambani's wealth is pegged at **\$75 billion**, meaning **Rs 5.61 lakh crore**. Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos is at the top with a net worth of **\$185.8 billion**.
- In the last few months, Reliance sold nearly **33 percent stake** in Jio platforms to investors including tech giants Facebook, Google, Qualcomm Ventures, etc.

RANK	THE RICHEST	NET WORTH
1	JEFF BEZOS, AMAZON	\$184.2 B
2	BILL GATES, MICROSOFT	\$113.5 B
3	BERNARD ARNAULT AND FAMILY, LVMH	\$112.8 B
4	MARK ZUCKERBERG, FACEBOOK	\$88.3 B
5	MUKESH AMBANI, RELIANCE	\$75.1 B

### Mukesh Ambani's Reliance breaks into top 50 most valued firms globally, ranks 48

- Billionaire **Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd** has broken into the top 50 most valued companies globally after it became the first company with market capitalisation of over **Rs 13 lakh crore**.
- The oil-to-telecom conglomerate is **ranked 48th in market cap globally**, according to stock market data.
- Globally, **Saudi Aramco** is the company with the highest market cap of **USD 1.7 trillion**, followed by **Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, and Alphabet**.
- Reliance closed at **Rs 2,060.65 on the BSE**, up 2.82 per cent over the previous day's close. This gave the firm a m-cap of over Rs 13 lakh crore.

- Together with the firm's partly-paid shares that were issued in the recent rights issue and are traded separately, the company had a combined m-cap of **Rs 13.5 lakh crore** or over USD 181 billion.
- No Indian company has ever crossed an m-cap of **Rs 13 lakh crore**.
- This is higher than Chevron's about **USD 170 billion m-cap** as well as likes of Oracle, Unilever, Bank of China, BHP Group, Royal Dutch Shell and SoftBank Group.
- Reliance is the **10th highest m-cap company** in Asia. **China's Alibaba Group is ranked 7th globally**.
- The only other Indian company in the top 100 firms is Tata Consultancy Services. As per its closing price of Rs 2,170.75 on the BSE, TCS has an m-cap of Rs 8.14 lakh crore or about USD 109 billion.

#### Hyderabad is 16th most surveilled city in the world

- Telangana's capital **Hyderabad** has found a place among the **top 50 CCTV-surveilled cities** in the world.
- According to a report published by the **UK tech firm Comparitech**, Hyderabad ranks **16th in the list** and is the top-ranked Indian metropolis.

#### Ranking list:

- **Chennai, ranked 21st** overall, comes a close second in Indian surveilled cities, while Delhi is a distant third at 33rd.
- In the top 50 rankings, **34 cities are in China**, two – Moscow and St Petersburg – are in Russia, and Baghdad is located in strife-torn Iraq.
- **Taiyuan in China** is the most surveilled city, with over 4.6 lakh cameras keeping an eye on nearly 39 lakh people.

#### India among top 10 countries gaining forest area in the world: FAO

- India has ranked third among the top 10 countries that have gained in forest areas in the last decade, the latest **Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA)** brought out by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations**.
- India reported **0.38 per cent** annual gain in forest, or 266,000 ha of forest increase every year at an average.
- FAO has brought out this comprehensive assessment every five years **since 1990**. This report assesses the state of forests, their conditions and management for all member countries.

#### Top 10 Countries List:

- The top 10 countries that have recorded the maximum average annual net gains in forest area during 2010-2020 are China, Australia, India, Chile, Vietnam, Turkey, the United States, France, Italy and Romania, according to the FRA 2020. India accounts for two per cent of total global forest area.

#### Reliance overtakes Exxon to become world's 2nd most valuable energy firm

- **Reliance Industries** has overtaken **ExxonMobil** to become the world's second most valuable energy company after its market capitalisation scaled to a record high of over **Rs 14 lakh crore**.
- Reliance was ranked **48th** and was behind **ExxonMobil**. Now it is ranked **46th** globally on market cap
- Globally, **Saudi Aramco** has the highest market cap of USD 1.75 trillion, followed by **Apple (USD 1.6 trillion)**, **Microsoft (USD 1.5 trillion)**, **Amazon (USD 1.48 trillion)**, and **Alphabet (USD 1.03 trillion)**.
- Reliance is now the **second most valuable energy firm**. Aramco being the top energy company.
- Reliance is the **10th highest m-cap company** in Asia. China's Alibaba Group is ranked 7th globally.

#### Agartala ranks no. 1 among 10 smart cities of Northeast India

- Tripura's capital city **Agartala** has been ranked **first amongst** the ten smart cities in the **North Eastern Region** after it scaled up from 76 to 54 in the national rankings of the 100 smart cities of India.
- Chief Minister of Tripura, Biplab Kumar Deb appreciated the efforts of all employees and officials under Agartala Smart City Limited for this achievement and their hard work.

- In order to speed up its implementation, the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** has released an additional Rs 49 crores to Agartala Smart City in July 2020.
- The rankings of other northeastern cities are as follows: Namchi, Sikkim (59), Aizawal, Mizoram (75), Kohima, Nagaland (79), Gangtok, Sikkim (80), Guwahati, Assam (83), Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh (89), Shillong, Meghalaya (92), Imphal, Manipur (93), and Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh (98).

#### Microsoft, Samsung ranked India's most attractive employer brands by Randstad Research

- **Microsoft India**, has emerged as India's most 'attractive employer brand', according to the findings of **Randstad Employer Brand Research (REBR) 2020**.
- Microsoft India scored high on financial health, strong reputation and utilization of the latest technologies — the **top 3 EVP (Employee Value Proposition)** drivers for the organization.
- **Samsung India** emerged as the runner up, followed by **Amazon India**.
- The top 10 most attractive employer brands in India for 2020 were: Microsoft, Samsung, Amazon, Infosys Technologies, Mercedes-Benz, Sony, IBM, Dell Technologies Ltd, ITC Group and Tata Consultancy Services.
- The **Randstad Employer Brand Research** is a comprehensive and independent employer brand research, identifying the most attractive employers among thousands of companies. It provides insights into the perceptions and drivers of choice of potential employees.

#### Chhattisgarh's Bijapur tops Niti's aspirational districts ranking for Feb-June 2020

- **Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh** has **topped** the list of **aspirational districts** ranked by government think-tank **NitiAayog** for the February-June 2020 period.
- **Ri-Bhoi (Meghalaya)** and **Bahraich (Uttar Pradesh)** have been placed at the **second and third positions** respectively.
- The delta rankings took into account incremental progress made by over 112 aspirational districts across six developmental areas during February-June this year.
- Health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and basic infrastructure were the development areas that were taken into consideration for the ranking.
- The aspirational districts programme, launched in January 2018, aims to transform districts that have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas and have emerged as pockets of under-development.

#### Important Books and Authors

Authors/ Released by	Books
Urjit Patel (Published by HarperCollins India)	Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver
R C Bhargava (Published by HarperCollins India)	Getting Competitive: A Practitioner's Guide for India
Tenzin Geyche Tethong (Announced by Roli Books)	His Holiness The Fourteenth Dalai Lama: An Illustrated Biography
A.K. Srikumar (Published by Rupa Publications)	Mahaveer: The Soldier who never died
Stephen King (Published by Hachette India)	If It Bleeds
Ruskin Bond (Published by Penguin)	A Song of India

Random House India)	
Kaling Dabi, Kombong Darang, Rejhoney Borang, Chera Devi, Rumi Deuri (Edited by Lisa Lomdak and Rejhoney Borang)	The Tangams: An Ethnolinguistic Study Of The Critically Endangered Group of Arunachal Pradesh (Executive editor of the book is Prof. S. Simon John)
Baldev Singh Sadaknama (80th martyrdom day of freedom fighter , Sahitya Akademi Awardee)	Suraj Kade Marda Nahi' (sun never dies) (life of Udham Singh) (Sahitya Akademi Award received for his novel Dhaahwan Dilli De Kingre in 2011)
S Hussain Zaidi (Published by HarperCollins India)	The Endgame
Mark Honigsbaum	The Pandemic Century
S Jaishankar (Published by by HarperCollins India)	The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World'
Dr Viral V Acharya (Former Deputy Governor of RBI)	Quest for Restoring Financial Stability in India
Released by Harsh Vardhan	Standard Treatment Guidelines for the Management of Substance Use Disorders and Behavioural Addictions
Matthew McConaughey	Greenlights

### The Meaning of India by Sahitya Akademi Award-winning writer Raja Rao was republished

- The **Sahitya Akademi Award-winning writer Raja Rao** published a selection of his non-fiction writings — decades-long deliberations on metaphysics, religion, his meetings with world leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi and André Malraux and his interpretation of what India stood for — in an anthology titled The Meaning of India.
- Over two decades later, the book has now been **republished (Penguin Random House)** with a foreword by writer and academic **Makarand R Paranjape**.
- Rao passed away in 2006, at the age of 97.

### Important Peoples' in News

#### Ravindra Jadeja named India's 'most valuable player' of 21st Century

- India all-rounder **Ravindra Jadeja** was named as the country's '**Most Valuable Player**' (MVP) of the 21st century by **Wisden**.
- Jadeja's contribution to his team has been noteworthy with the ball, bat, and while fielding. Wisden used **CricViz**, a detailed analysis tool in cricket to analyse his performance.
- **Jadeja's MVP rating** was an astounding **97.3**, **second only to Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan** and thus making him the second most valuable Test player of the 21st century.

#### Badminton: Lin Dan retired at 36

- Two-time Olympic champion **Lin Dan** announced his retirement aged 36.
- It means that Lin, who won **gold at the Beijing 2008 and London 2012 Games**, will not compete at the **2020 Tokyo Olympics**, which have been pushed back to next year because of coronavirus.

- The end of Lin's glorious career comes just over a year after the retirement of his great rival and friend, the **Malaysian star Lee Chong Wei**.
- The duo reigned over badminton for more than a decade and have only relinquished that hold in recent years as their powers waned.
- As well as the Olympic golds, **Lin was also a five-time world champion** and long-time world number one. He earned the nickname "**Super Dan**" at the peak of his career.
- Lin always stated he was determined to reach the **Tokyo Olympics**, but his ranking of **19** in the world and the postponement of the Games made that dream unlikely.

#### Top-ranked squash player Raneem El Welily ends her career

- Top-ranked women's squash player, **Raneem El Welily**, announced her retirement.
- El Welily first took the top ranking in 2015, and won her only world championship two years later. She was a three-time runner-up.
- She will retain the top ranking when current **world No. 2 Nouran Gohar replaces** her compatriot next week.

#### Quinton de Kock named men's Cricketer of the Year in CSA's virtual awards

- White-ball skipper **Quinton de Kock** was named the men's 'cricketer of the year' at Cricket South Africa's (CSA) annual awards ceremony, held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This is the **second time de Kock** has won the men's Cricketer of the Year, having claimed the accolade in **2017**.
- He also bagged the Test cricketer of the year while young opener Laura Wolvaardt took home the women's cricketer of the year and ODI cricketer of the year awards.
- **Pacer Lungi Ngidi** was named ODI and T20 player of the year while **David Miller** was voted the fans' favourite player.
- **Anrich Nortje**, who made his Test debut in India and took a five-for in the Test series against England, was adjudged the International men's 'newcomer' of the year.
- **Shabnim Ismail** took home the women's T20 player of the year with left-arm spinner **Nonkululeko Mlaba** was recognised as the women's 'newcomer' of the Year.

#### Stokes becomes 2nd-fastest all-rounder to score 4000 runs, take 150 wickets

- England's stand-in skipper **Ben Stokes** became the second-fastest all-rounder to reach the Test double of **4000 runs and 150 wickets**.
- He achieved the feat during the third day of the first Test match between **England and West Indies at the Ageas Bowl**.
- With the dismissal of **Alzarri Joseph**, Stokes joined former England all-rounder **Ian Botham** and four other greats of the game in the club of **4000 Test runs and 150-plus wickets**.
- He finished with the figures of 4-49 in his 14 overs including five maiden overs.
- The 29-year-old all-rounder reached the milestone in 64 games. Only former West Indies great Gary Sobers is ahead of him, who achieved the feat in 63 Tests.
- Apart from **Sobers and Stokes**, former **South African cricketer Jacques Kallis**, India's Kapil Dev and ex-New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori are also on the list.

#### Indian Teenager Soham Mukherjee Sets Guinness World Record by Jumping Across Ruler 101 Times In 30 Seconds

- An Indian living in the **United Arab Emirates Soham Mukherjee** sets a **Guinness World Record** after performing a total of **101 side-to-side hops** over a stationery ruler within 30 seconds.
- **Soham Mukherjee**, a 17-year-old hailing from New Delhi got successful in breaking the previous record of **96 hops in 30 seconds**.



### Former Australia Skipper Mile Jedinak Announces Retirement From Football

- Former **Australia skipper and Crystal Palace midfielder Mile Jedinak** announced his retirement from football at the age of 35.
- He played **79 times** for his country, featuring at **three World Cups** before bowing out of international football in late 2018.
- One of his biggest triumphs was captaining the Socceroos to win the 2015 Asian Cup.

### Dubai-based Indian girl breaks world record in performing 100 yoga poses

- A **Dubai-based Indian** girl has broken the world record for performing **100 yoga poses within minutes in a confined space**. This is **11-year-old Samridhi Kalia's third world** record entry and the second one in the last one month.
- Her performance was recorded at the iconic **Burj Khalifa's viewing deck**. On Yoga Day (June 21) this year, **Samridhi** bagged her second world record -- performing 40 advanced yoga postures in **one minute**.

### World Cup Winner Andre Schurrle Retires

- World Cup winner **Andre Schurrle** has confirmed his retirement at the age of just 29.
- Schurrle began his career with **Mainz**, and won club honours including the 2014-15 **Premier League with Chelsea**, and two DFB-Pokal titles – in 2015 with Wolfsburg and 2017 with Dortmund.
- His last international match for Germany was in March 2017, playing in a 4-1 victory against Azerbaijan in qualification for the 2018 World Cup.

### Jordan Henderson named as FWA Footballer of the Year

- **Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson** has been voted the **2019/20 Football Writers' Association Footballer of the Year**.
- With Henderson as captain, Liverpool secured the title with a record seven games left to play, He succeeded **Steve Gerrard as Liverpool captain in 2015**, beat **City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne** into second place, with **Manchester United's Marcus Rashford** coming in third after a vote by the members of the Football Writers' Association.

### Sri Lanka woman cricketer Sripali Weerakkody retires from international cricket

- Sri Lanka women cricketer **Sripali Weerakkody** announced to retire from the international cricket with immediate effect.
- The 34-year old fast bowling all-rounder represented the international side in **89 ODIs and 58 T20 internationals**.
- The decision to retire was a personal decision.

### Young Bangladesh pacer Kazi Anik handed two-year ban for doping violation

- Young Bangladesh pacer **Kazi Anik Islam** has been handed a two-year ban by the national cricket board for failing a dope test in 2018.
- Kazi, who was Bangladesh's leading wicket-taker in the **2018 U-19 World Cup**, tested positive for Methamphetamine, a prohibited substance, during a National Cricket League game in the same year.
- His two-year ban began on **February 8, 2019**.

### Jamie Vardy wins Premier League's Golden Boot award

- **Leicester City striker Jamie Vardy** bagged the Premier League's Golden Boot award after netting **23 goals** across the 2019/20 season.
- He is the first **Leicester City player** to claim the award and is only the second Englishman after Harry Kane to take the crown in the last 20 years.
- Manchester City's **Brazilian keeper Ederson** won the Golden Glove award after keeping his 16th clean sheet of the season against **Norwich City to beat Burnley's Nick Pope** to the award.

### Veteran All-Rounder Rajat Bhatia Announces Retirement From All Forms Of Cricket

- Veteran domestic all-rounder and former **Kolkata Knight Riders star Rajat Bhatia** has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.
- The all-rounder started his domestic career with **Tamil Nadu in 1999-2000 season** before moving to Delhi in 2003-04. **Bhatia's 525 runs and 26 wickets** in nine games - including a gutsy knock of 139 runs in the final against Uttar Pradesh were instrumental in Delhi lifting the Ranji Trophy in 2007-08.
- He also played for **Delhi Daredevils** (Delhi Capitals) in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

### Important Mergers and Acquisitions

#### Carlyle Group to acquire 25% stake in Airtel's data centre biz for \$235 mn

- US-based **Carlyle Group** will invest **\$235 million** (approximately Rs 1770 crore) for approximately **25 per cent stake in Nxtra Data Ltd**, an arm of Bharti Airtel engaged in the data centre business.
- The transaction is subject to the necessary regulatory approvals, including approval from the Competition Commission of India.
- US-based Carlyle has prior experience in data centre ownership through investments in Coresite in the US and **Itconic in Spain**.
- Nxtra, which is building multiple large data centres across India, will use the proceeds from the deal to scale up its infrastructure.
- Carlyle invested **\$700 million** during the **first half of 2020**, excluding **\$235 million for 25 per cent stake in Airtel's data** which was announced today. In 2019, the company invested \$698 million over three deals which rose to **\$700 million** during the first half of 2020.
- Besides Airtel data center investment, the other top investments by Carlyle in India includes **\$200 million in Financial Services firm Destimoney** (in February 2015), **\$260 million in payment services firm SBI Cards & Payment Services** (in December 2017), **\$653 million SBI Life Insurance** (March 2019) among others.

#### Intel Capital to invest Rs 1,894 cr in Jio Platforms

- Reliance Industries Limited and Jio Platform Limited announced that **Intel Capital** will invest Rs. 1,894.50 crore in **Jio Platforms** at an equity value of Rs. 4.91 lakh crore and an enterprise value of Rs. 5.16 lakh crore. Intel Capital's investment will translate into a **0.39% equity stake** in Jio Platforms on a fully diluted basis.
- The deal with Intel Capital — the **12th such investment in 11 weeks** —takes the total stake that RIL sold in Jio Platforms to 25.09 percent.
- **Intel Capital** joins the list of marquee firms who have recently invested in Jio Platforms, taking the total investment amount to **Rs. 117,588.45 crore**. Jio Platforms, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Reliance Industries, has more than 388 million subscribers.
- Jio Platforms has made significant investments across its digital ecosystem, powered by leading technologies spanning **broadband connectivity, smart devices, cloud and edge computing, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, augmented and mixed reality and blockchain**.
- Intel Capital invests globally in innovative companies with a focus on disruptive technology areas like cloud computing, artificial intelligence and **5G – opportunities** where Jio is also innovating and investing for growth.
- Intel Capital is the investment arm of **Intel Corporation**, a leader in the semiconductor industry, shaping the data-centric future with computing and communications technology that is the foundation of global innovations. Intel has operated in

India for more than two decades and employs thousands of employees there with state-of-the-art design facilities in Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

#### **Adani Transmission acquires Alipurduar Transmission from KPTL for Rs.1,286 crore**

- **Adani Transmission Ltd (ATL)** has acquired **Alipurduar Transmission Limited** from **Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd (KPTL)** for an enterprise value of Rs.1,286 crore.
- The acquisition is expected to be completed in a few months, subject to all necessary regulatory approvals and other consent, ATL stated.
- Alipurduar Transmission Ltd operates transmission lines aggregating **650 ckt kms in West Bengal and Bihar**. The project was awarded through a competitive bidding process on a build, own, operate, maintain basis.
- The project comprises two elements namely **Alipurduar-Siliguri Line (element 1)** and **Kishanganj-Darbhanga Line (element 2)**. In March 2019, ATL had commissioned the Kishanganj-Darbhanga Line, which was connected to the grid. Element 1 of the project, consisting of the transmission line from Alipurduar to Siliguri, was commissioned on January 20. The transmission line will improve access to power and contribute to the development of Bihar and West Bengal.
- **Alipurduar Transmission Limited** had won this project through a competitive bidding process from REC Transmission Projects Company limited (RECTPCL) for **35 years**.
- This acquisition follows ATL's buyout of its entire stake in Kharghar Vikhroli Transmission (KVTPCL), which is part of Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company Ltd (MSETCL).
- KPTL is also looking to sell off its Transmission and Distribution assets as it looks to clean up its balance sheet. In 2019, KPTL sold off three power transmission assets to CLP India for Rs.3,275 crore.

#### **Paytm, CEO Sharma to acquire general insurer Raheja QBE for Rs 568 crore**

- **Paytm** and the firm's Chief Executive Vijay Shekhar Sharma (pictured) will acquire **Raheja QBE General Insurance** for nearly **Rs 568 crore** to expand the digital payments company's financial services.
- According to regulatory filings made by Prism Johnson, Raheja QBE would be sold "to **QorQI**, a tech company with majority shareholding of Vijay Shekhar Sharma and remaining held by Paytm (owned by One97 Communications), for an aggregate consideration of **Rs 289.68 crore**".
- **Paytm will acquire Prism Johnson's 51 per cent and QBE Australia's 49 per cent stake in Raheja QBE** to become 100 per cent owner. The acquisition is expected to close by March 31 next year, subject to approvals from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India and other regulators.

#### **Qualcomm picks 0.15 per cent stake in Jio for Rs 730 crore**

- **Qualcomm Ventures** has picked up **0.15 per cent stake in Jio Platforms** for Rs 730 crore, Reliance Industries stated. **Qualcomm is the 12th investor in Jio Platforms** in as many weeks.
- Qualcomm Ventures, the investment arm of Qualcomm Incorporated, an industry leader in wireless technologies, has committed to invest up to **Rs 730 crore in Jio Platforms** at an equity value of Rs 4.91 lakh crore and an enterprise value of **Rs 5.16 lakh crore**.
- "Qualcomm Ventures' investment will translate into **0.15 per cent equity stake** in Jio Platforms on a fully diluted basis," the company stated.

#### **Google to pick 7.7 per cent stake in Jio for Rs 33,737 crore**

- **Reliance Jio- a \$66 billion**, four years old startup led by world's sixth richest man, Mukesh Ambani has raised \$4.5 billion (Rs 33,737 crore) from the search giant, **Google for a 7.77% stake**.

- This marks the end of the successful **\$20.6 billion ( Rs 1,52,056 crore) funds raise cycle from 13 investors by Reliance Jio-** India's largest digital company for a **33% stake** in the firm.
- The investments in Reliance have brought two of the technology world's rivals- Facebook and Google together.
- Both Google and Facebook's investments in Jio value the company at an equity value of **Rs 4.36 lakh crore** whereas the other investments have pegged **Jio's equity value at Rs 4.9 lakh crore**.
- The Reliance-Google partnership is stated to be making cheap data, affordable smartphones beyond the current **500 million internet customers** across India. Jio platforms alone has a subscriber base of 388 million people. Google has also entered into a commercial agreement with Reliance to build entry level-affordable **4G/ 5G smartphones** targeting a majority of India's population who are feature phone users.

#### CCI approves Aceso Company's acquisition of 58.92 pc stake in HealthCare Global Enterprises

- The Competition Commission has given its nod to **Aceso Company Pte Ltd's** acquisition of **58.92 per cent** stake in **HealthCare Global Enterprises Ltd.**
- HealthCare Global Enterprises and its group are engaged in providing services through cancer treatment clinics, multispecialty hospitals, fertility treatment centres, apart from others, while Aceso Company forms a part of the CVC Network.
- The **CVC Network** consists of **CVC Capital Partners SICAV-FIS S.A.** and its subsidiaries, and CVC Capital Partners Advisory Group Holding Foundation and its subsidiaries, which are privately owned entities whose activities include providing investment advice and managing investments on behalf of certain investment funds and platforms.

#### CCI approves Krishnapatnam port acquisition by Adani Ports, SEZL

- The Competition Commission of India has approved the acquisition of **Krishnapatnam Port Company Limited** by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited. The proposed combination envisages acquisition of equity shareholding along with management control of Krishnapatnam Port Company Limited by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited.
- **Adani Ports** is a customer-facing integrated port infrastructure services provider currently present across ten domestic ports in **six maritime states of Gujarat, Goa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Odisha.**
- The Acquirer manages the **logistics chain**. The logistics chain includes vessel management to anchorage, pilotage, tug pulling, berthing, goods handling, internal transport, storage and handling, processing and final evacuation by road or rail.
- **KPCL** is engaged as a developer and operator of the deep water port at Krishnapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

#### JSW Energy set to acquire GMR's Odisha thermal plant

- **JSW Energy Limited** is expected to sign a deal with **GMR Energy** for acquiring 100 per cent stake in **GMR Kamalanga Energy**. The transaction had been put on hold given the ongoing uncertainty and will be revisited once the situation normalizes.
- The **two sides** had entered into negotiations in October 2019. GMR Kamalanga Energy Ltd owns and operates a **1,050-MW (3x350 MW) thermal power plant in Odisha.**
- Post-acquisition, the total installed power generation capacity of JSW Energy will increase to **5,609 MW**. This will expand the Company's presence in the Eastern region of the country and further diversify its fuel mix and offtake arrangements.

#### Revision points

Company	Merging Company
JSW Energy Limited	GMR Kamalanga Energy (100%)
Krishnapatnam Port Company Limited	Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited
Aceso Company Pte Ltd	HealthCare Global Enterprises Ltd (58.92%)

Google	Reliance Jio (7.77%)
Qualcomm Ventures	Jio Platforms (0.15%)
Paytm	Raheja QBE General Insurance (100%)
Adani Transmission Ltd	Alipurduar Transmission Limited from Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd
Intel Capital	Jio Platforms (0.39%)
Carlyle Group	Nxtra Data Ltd (25%)

### Important Web Portals and Mobile Apps

#### HDFC Bank launches "e-Kisaan Dhan" app for farmers

- HDFC Bank launched "**e-Kisaan Dhan**" app for farmers across India to access a bouquet of agricultural and banking services on their mobile.
- The app, which serves as a repository of knowledge and information for any individual engaged in farming, helps meet needs of the rural ecosystem.
- The app will also provide **value-added services**, like mandi prices, latest farming news, weather forecast, information on seed varieties, SMS advisory, e-pashuhaat and Kisan TV.
- Users can also avail multiple banking services, like procuring loans, opening bank accounts, insurance facilities, online calculation of **KCC loan eligibility**, and for acquiring government social security schemes.
- The app will help with traditional banking services and keep users informed about new government schemes and ways to access them.
- It's part of the bank's "**Har Gaon Hamara**" initiative to reach out to customers in the rural and under-served areas.

#### Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs launches PM SVANidhi Portal

- Shri **Durga Shanker Mishra**, Secretary, Housing & Urban Affairs, launched the Beta version of **PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi "PM SVANidhi"** Portal in presence of officials from States/UTs, Banks, Payment aggregators and other stakeholders.
- Leveraging on the digital technology solutions, the portal provides for an integrated end to end IT interface to users for availing benefits under the scheme.
- An integrated IT platform (pmsvanidhi.mohua.gov.in) to provide an end-to-end solution for scheme administration is being developed by **SIDBI**, which is the scheme implementation partner for **PM SVANidhi**.
- The portal will facilitate multiple scheme functions viz. loan application flow, Mobile App, e-KYC of applicants, integration with **UIDAI, Udyamimitra, NPCI, PAISA, lenders, States, ULBs** and other stakeholders, calculation of digital incentives and payment of interest subsidy etc.
- The **PM SVANidhi Portal** shall start accepting loan applications from **Street Vendors** from July 2nd, who can apply directly or with the help of **CSCs/ ULBs/ SHGs**.
- The Mobile App facilitated with e-KYC module and loan application flow, to be used by lenders and their agents for application origination, shall be released.

#### Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju launches NADA app to help athletes stay updated on banned substances

- Sports Minister **Kiren Rijiju** unveiled **National Anti-Doping Agency's first mobile app** to provide information about prohibited substances and their inadvertent use, **calling the initiative an important step towards dope-free sports**.



- The app aims to create a **bridge between athletes and the NADA** by providing easily accessible information on various aspects of sport, and most importantly about prohibited substances and their inadvertent use which may affect the career of athletes.
- With this app, athletes can check for themselves the list of prohibited substances and don't have to depend on anyone else for assistance.
- The app also has exhaustive information about whether a specific commonly-prescribed medicine contains any substance that is prohibited by **NADA**, therefore helping athletes and coaches to decide which medicines athletes can consume in case they are unwell.

#### Ezetap launches app to help government bodies collect spot fines

- Payment solutions company **Ezetap** announced the launch of an app which it stated would enable government bodies and municipal corporations to accept payments of spot fines easily.
- With an aim to give boost to contactless payments in the post-COVID-19 period, the Spotfine app allows government organisations and corporations to **accept payments from citizens for offences like not wearing masks** and spitting in a hassle-free manner, a company release stated.
- While hygiene and safety are the responsibility of every citizen, there have been instances when ignorant individuals avoid wearing masks, and spit and urinate at public places, it noted.
- **A one-stop solution** for this is digitisation of the system. The app is designed to match the operational needs of government organisations across the country.
- The **Ezetap Spotfine app** is available for free and mainly focuses on organisations collecting spot fines, the company stated. Government bodies can add up to **10 offences** for which the municipal bodies can customise and generate invoices.
- The omnichannel payments platform has end-to-end capabilities to handle digital payment processing through integrated software solutions. Through **a SaaS payments system**, the startup has changed the payment processes of brick-and-mortar retailers, e-commerce players, enterprises, government bodies and financial inclusion organisations. Built-in services include reconciliation, EMI, loyalty, brand offers, cashbacks, and dynamic currency conversion.

#### PM Modi launches Aatmanirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge

- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched **Aatmanirbhar Bharat Innovation Challenge** to identify the best Indian Apps that are already being used by citizens and have the potential to scale and become world class Apps in their respective categories.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged people of tech community to participate in **Aatmanirbhar Bharat App** Innovation Challenge. This will run in two tracks- Promotion of Existing Apps and Development of New Apps.
- PM Modi stated, for promotion of existing Apps and platforms across the categories of E-learning, Work-from-Home, Gaming, Business, Entertainment, Office Utilities, and Social Networking, Government will provide mentoring, hand-holding and support.
- **Track one** will work in mission mode for identifying **good quality Apps** for the leader-board and will be completed in around a month. For incubating new Apps and Platforms, **Track two initiative** will work to help create new champions in India by providing support in ideation, incubation, prototyping and roll out along with market access.

#### India's Vice President launches social media super app 'Elyments'

- India's **first social media super application**, **Elyments**, was launched by the Vice President of India, Venkiah Naidu.
- The app allows users to stay in touch through a vibrant feed, free audio/video calls, and private/group chats.



- This app is being seen as a massive boost to **Indian startups** and a major push towards **'Make in India'** initiative.
- Elyments is available in **eight languages** including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and English.
- The team members of Elyments stated the app has been created with user's privacy as priority.

#### **Mamata Banerjee launches West Bengal's 'Self Scan' app**

- In the backdrop of the central government imposing a ban on as many as **59 Chinese mobile phone apps**, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched a mobile app, indigenously developed by state information technology department, for documents scanning. The app is named - **'Self Scan'**.
- The application will be made available on the app **store and will be free and completely safe**.
- Self Scan is a completely safe and **a protected app**. No data is saved on the server. Documents can be edited too on the application besides the scanning feature.

#### **PM SVANidhi app launched to help street vendors apply for micro loans**

- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** launched the PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (**PM SVANidhi**) App.
- It aims to provide a user-friendly digital interface for lending institutions (LIs) and their field functionaries for sourcing and processing loan applications of street vendors under the scheme.
- PM SVANidhi Mobile App is a **step towards boosting the use of digital technology** and will enable field functionaries of **LIs like Banking Correspondents (BCs) and Agents of Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)/ Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs)**, who have proximity with the street vendors, to ensure maximum coverage of the Scheme.
- The ministry has already launched the website on June 29, 2020 and the app has all the features similar to the **web portal of PM SVANidhi**. The features include vendor search in the survey data, e-KYC of applicants, processing of applications, and real-time monitoring.
- PM SVANidhi was launched by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**, on June 01, 2020, for providing affordable working capital loan to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to Covid-19 lockdown.

#### **About PM SVANidhi scheme**

- This scheme targets to benefit over 50 lakh Street Vendors who had been vending on or before 24 March, 2020, in urban areas including those from surrounding peri-urban/ rural areas. Under the Scheme, the vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs. 10,000, which is repayable in monthly instalments in the tenure of one year.
- On timely/ early repayment of the loan, an interest subsidy @ 7% per annum will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer on a quarterly basis.
- There will be no penalty on early repayment of loan. The scheme promotes digital transactions through cash back incentives up to an amount of Rs. 100 per month. Moreover, the vendors can achieve their ambition of going up on the economic ladder by availing the facility of enhancement of the credit limit on timely/ early repayment of loan.

#### **Researchers develop PROSIT app that tracks mental health by studying phone usage**

- The researchers of **Dalhousie University** have come up with a new app that can detect mental conditions like anxiety and depression based on how you use your phone.
- The app is called **PROSIT** and includes tracking features like **exercise, sleep, call frequency, message histories and music tastes**.
- An emotionally charged state can be detected with your typing speed and the force you use.
- The App will also ask the users to record a **90-second audio clip** to talk about their best and exciting part of the week. They (users) will be asked to self-report their feelings on a five-point scale.

- **PROSIT** is currently is under the testing stage where about 300 people are using this app. Half among the users are patients.
- To tackle this issue, the use of app requires a signed consent and the data will be stored in a secure location.
- PROSIT does not provide a complete analysis of one's mental health but could prove useful for the psychologists track and better understand their patients' development outside of sessions.

Prakash Javadekar hails **KURMA mobile app towards conservation of Indian turtles**

- Union Environment and Information & Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar hailed the **KURMA mobile application as a unique tool for tracking and reporting Indian turtles.**
- The Mobile Application, **KURMA**, was launched on 23rd May this year on the occasion of World Turtle Day. The citizen science initiative aims at conservation of turtles and tortoises.
- The mobile application has been developed by the **Indian Turtle Conservation Action Network (ITCAN)** in collaboration with the **Turtle Survival Alliance-India and Wildlife Conservation Society-India**. It provides users the database to identify a species and also provides the location of the nearest rescue centre for turtles across the country.

**ICAT launches automotive technology e-portal ASPIRE**

- **International Centre of Automotive Technology (ICAT)** has announced the launch of the automotive technology **e-portal ASPIRE**, which stands for Automotive Solutions Portal for Industry, Research and Education.
- ICAT said that Department of Heavy Industry (DHI), Govt of India, under the leadership of Secretary, Heavy Industries, has decided to promote innovation, R&D and product development in India for various sectors. The new automotive technology e-portal is claimed to be a part of that strategy.
- A step towards this mission is the creation of technology platform e-portals where such technology development, information exchange and innovation can be facilitated.
- It further informed that there are five portals being developed for specific sectors by different organizations viz, **BHEL for power sector equipment, HMT for machine tools, CMFTI for manufacturing technology, ICAT and ARAI for the automotive sector.**
- The e-portal will aim to bring together the automotive OEMs, Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 companies, R&D institutions and academia on matters involving technology advancements.

**Actor Sonu Sood launches Pravasi Rojgar app to help migrants find job opportunities**

- In Maharashtra, **actor Sonu Sood** has launched a free online platform called '**Pravasi Rojgar**' to help migrants find job opportunities in various sectors across the country. Mr Sood, who catapulted to the national spotlight for his work in helping migrants reach their homes amid the COVID-19 pandemic, stated the app will provide all the necessary information and right linkages to find jobs.
- The online platform has over **500 reputed companies** related to construction, apparel, health care, engineering, BPOs, security, automobile, e-commerce and logistics sectors, offering job opportunities. The platform will also be offering **specific job training programmes like spoken English.**
- The actor stated, a lot of planning and consultation with organizations involved in skilling and placement of youth has happened over the last few months to ensure that the app provides a holistic experience.

**IMD launches weather app for real-time updates and warnings across India**

- The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** launched its own app that will give real-time updates and warnings across 450 cities across the country, the first of its kind official weather app.
- This app is launched on the occasion of the **14th foundation day of Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).**

#### About Mausam App:

- It is designed and developed by the **International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)**, the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM)**, Pune and the India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- It will also show radar and satellite images, which were earlier visible only on IMD's website.

#### Paswan launches BIS-Care mobile app, 3 portals

- Consumer Affairs Minister **Ram Vilas Paswan** launched a mobile app **BIS-Care**, which consumers can use for checking the authenticity of ISI and hallmark quality certified products.
- The minister also launched **three portals of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** on standardisation, conformity assessment and training, which consumers and stakeholders can login through [www.manakonline.in](http://www.manakonline.in).
- The BIS is the national standards setting body in the country. So far, it has set 20,866 standards and mandatory standards for **358 products**. The ISI mark is a standards-compliance mark for industrial products in **India since 1955**. Hallmark is quality certification for gold jewellery.
- On BIS-Care mobile app, consumers can check the authenticity of ISI and hallmark quality certified products and lodge complaints. The mobile app, in **Hindi and English**, can be operated on any Android phone and can be downloaded free from Google play store.

#### A Startup introduces mobile app for detection, risk assessment of Covid-19 infected individuals

- A **Bangalore based startup has introduced a mobile app** for detection and risk assessment of Covid-19 infected individuals. The technology has been developed with the support of the Department of Science and Technology.
- This technology will detect the possible infection in asymptomatic individuals and carry out a risk assessment with the use of smartphone processors and sensors which will capture a bunch of body signals.
- The Department of Science and Technology has selected Acculi Labs to develop a Covid risk assessment profile called **Lyfas COVID score under the Centre for Augmenting WAR** with COVID-19 Health Crisis, **KAWACH initiative**.
- **Lyfas** is an android application in which, when any person keeps the index finger on the rear phone camera of a mobile phone for five minutes, it captures the capillary pulse and blood volume change.
- The technology is focused on population screening, monitoring of quarantined individuals and surveillance at the community level. **KAWACH initiative** is supporting market-ready innovations for the control of COVID-19.

#### Microsoft launches new Family Safety app for iOS and Android

- **Microsoft** is launching a new **Family Safety app** for iOS and Android.
- The software giant has been testing the app, and it's designed to allow families to manage screentime and app usage.
- Parents can use the **Family Safety app** to receive reports on app usage and overall screentime and even set app time limits with **the ability for children to request extensions**.
- Microsoft is also planning to add notifications for when family members arrive or leave a location, but this will be a premium feature for **Microsoft 365 subscribers**.

#### Revision Points

Applications/Web portals	Launched By/Developed By
Family Safety app	Microsoft
BIS-Care	Ram Vilas Paswan
Mausam App	India Meteorological Department
Pravasi Rojgar	Actor Sonu Sood

ASPIRE e-portal	International Centre of Automotive Technology
KURMA	Indian Turtle Conservation Action Network
PROSIT	Dalhousie University
PM SVANidhi App	Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
Self -Scan App	West Bengal govt
Elyments	Venkiah Naidu
Aatmanirbhar Bharat App	Narendra Modi
NADA App	Kiren Rijju
PM SVANidhi Portal	Durga Shanker Mishra
e-Kisaan Dhan app	HDFC Bank

## Important Sports News

### Cricket

#### Asia Cup Cricket tournament postponed till June 2021

- The **Asia Cup Cricket tournament**, which was scheduled to be held in September this year, has been postponed till June next year by the **Asian Cricket Council (ACC)** owing to an upsurge in COVID-19 cases in the region.
- The Asian Cricket Council tweeted that after careful consideration and evaluating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Board of the ACC decided to postpone the Asia Cup tournament. **Pakistan was to originally host the Asia Cup** this time but due to security reasons, the tournament was later rescheduled to be held in Sri Lanka.

#### Ben Stokes overtakes Jason Holder to become No.1 all-rounder in ICC Test rankings

- England Test vice-captain **Ben Stokes** has overtaken **Jason Holder** to become the No.1 Test all-rounder in the **ICC rankings**. Stokes went past Holder thanks to his match-winning performance against West Indies in the **Manchester Test**.
- Stokes' match haul of **254 runs** and three wickets fashioned England's series-leveling victory against **Jason Holder's West Indies in the second Test**, also earning him the player-of-the-match award.
- Stokes now leads Holder by **38 points in the ICC rankings as England** and West Indies head into the series decider. Stokes's belligerent performance with the willow in the second Test also helped him to the 3rd spot (tied with Marnus Labuschagne) in **ICC rankings for Test batsmen**.
- Stokes is the first **England player** since **Andrew Flintoff** to be at the top of the ICC Men's Test Player Rankings for all-rounders. The latest rankings update wasn't all about Stokes though.
- Dom Sibley**, following his 120 in the first innings in Manchester, **jumped 29 places to No.35 in the rankings**, while Stuart Broad capped his Test return after missing out in Southampton with a rise of four places back into the top 10 in the bowlers' ranking.
- Broad, who was dropped for the first Test, returned to the top 10 after claiming three wickets in each innings of Manchester Test. **Chris Woakes**, who scalped five in the match to reach the **100-wicket mark**, is in the **21st position**, his highest since late 2016.

#### ICC officially postpones World T20 due to coronavirus pandemic

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) officially postponed this year's **T20 World Cup slated to held in Australia**.
- ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 will be held **October – November 2021** with the final on **14 November 2021**
- ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 will be held **October – November 2022** with the final on **13 November 2022**
- ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 will be held in India **October – November 2023** with the final on **26 November 2023**.

- Also, the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2021 will be held in **February of 2021 at New Zealand**.

#### **IPL 2020 in UAE to start on September 19, final on November 8**

- The **Indian Premier League** is all set to begin from September 19 and will continue till November 8 in the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**.
- IPL Chairman, **Brijesh Patel**, has confirmed the schedule.
- There are **three venues in the UAE—Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Dubai**--where matches can be staged.

#### **England wins Wisden Trophy**

- **England beat the West Indies** by 269 runs to claim a series-clinching win in the third Test at Old Trafford.
- They regain the **Wisden Trophy** because they lost in the Caribbean last year.
- England paceman **Stuart Broad** became just the **seventh bowler** to take **500 Test wickets**.
- Stuart Broad picked up both the Man of the Match and the Player of the Series award

### **Football**

#### **FIFA World Cup 2022 schedule announced**

- The latest edition of the **World Cup** will be played for the first time in Qatar.
- The **FIFA World Cup 2022** will have four games every day in a **12-day group stage** and matches later in the tournament that go into extra time will extend past midnight in Qatar.
- FIFA released the schedule for the **first World Cup** to be played in November and December, with kickoff times at 00:30 am IST, 3:30 pm IST, 6:30 pm IST and 9:30 pm IST.
- Both semifinals - like some games in the previous rounds - will kick off at 00:30 am IST while the final, along with the third place match, will kickoff at 8:30 pm IST .
- FIFA is looking to stage the draw for the tournament in late March or early April 2022, when **30 of the 32 finalists** will be known.

#### **France Football announce the Ballon d'Or will not be awarded in 2020**

- **France Football**, the magazine behind the annual **Ballon d'Or award**, have announced that the prize will not be handed out this year.
- The decision comes due to the complications caused by the coronavirus pandemic, which put a halt or cancelled the major football leagues.
- It's the first time since **1956 that the Ballon d'Or** will not be awarded.

### **Others**

#### **Lt. Col. Bharat Pannu creates history by securing a podium place at the first edition of Virtual Race Across America**

- **Lt. Col. Bharat Pannu**, a serving Indian Army Officer created history by successfully securing a podium place at the **first edition of the Virtual Race Across America (VRAAM) 2020** and became the first Indian ever to win a podium place at an international ultracycling race.
- He is an Army officer posted with **Army's Aviation Test Team**. The Race Across America (RAAM) is a **5000 km transcontinental race** from the West coast to East coast of the United States of America with a cut-off time of 12 days.
- This year, the organizers had to cancel the event due to the ongoing pandemic and came up with a virtual format for the race. The race saw participation of **17 ultra-endurance cyclists** from around the world, of which only 9 could successfully complete the grueling race.

- **Lt. Col. Pannu** finished **3rd** on the leaderboard with a total distance of **4086 km** in **12 days** and total cumulative elevation gain of **71,000 meters**.

#### India Tennis Star Sumit Nagal Wins PSD Bank Nord Open in Germany

- India tennis star **Sumit Nagal** defeated German Daniel Masur in straight sets to win the **PSD Bank Nord Open in Berlin (Germany)**.
- Nagal is the current top-ranked Indian in men's singles at **127**.

#### African Cup of Nations postponed from January next year to 2022

- The **Confederation of African Football (CAF)** decided next January's Africa Cup of Nations finals in Cameroon has been postponed by one year and will now take place in **2022**.
- The Africa Nations Championship, which is the tournament for quasi-national teams made up of locally-based players only, will now be played in January during the period initially planned for the Cup of Nations having been postponed from April this year.
- **CAF** has decided to scrap this year's **African Women's Championship**. No new host has been found since Congo withdrew last year.

#### Sports Ministry to launch TOPS for junior athletes soon

- Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said his government will soon launch **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)** for junior athletes in the country with an aim to produce **Olympic champions by 2028**.
- Rijiju announced the decision during the **"Fit Hai To Hit Hai Fit India"** webinar which was also attended by HRD minister Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal, Olympic medallist shuttler PV Sindhu and India football captain Sunil Chhetri.
- The TOPS is currently there for senior athletes who are medal prospects in Olympics but we will soon launch the TOPS scheme for the juniors as well.
- The government will identify **10 to 12-year-old talents** and adopt them.

#### Tamil Nadu's G Akash becomes India's 66th chess Grandmaster

- **Tamil Nadu's G Akash** became the country's **66th chess Grandmaster** while his statemate **M Pranesh** and **Goa's Ameya Audi** earned International Master titles.
- **Akash's GM title** was confirmed at the second council meet of **International Chess Federation (FIDE)** for the year 2020 held recently.
- He earned his **third GM norm** at the **National 'A' championship in Sikkim** last year and the fourth norm in Prague earlier this year.

#### Valtteri Bottas wins F1 Austrian Grand Prix after Hamilton suffers penalty

- **Valtteri Bottas** has struck the first blow in the 2020 season, winning the **Austrian Grand Prix** from Ferrari's **Charles Leclerc**, as **Lewis Hamilton** was demoted from a second place finish on the road to P4 after a five-second penalty for contact with Alex Albon – handing McLaren's Lando Norris his first F1 podium for finishing P3.
- The Mercedes duo of **Bottas and Hamilton** enjoyed a comfortable performance advantage throughout the **71-lap encounter**. But with 10 laps to go, the race exploded into life, with Hamilton handed his penalty after nerfing Albon into a spin on a Safety Car restart on Lap 61.
- Behind Norris, **Hamilton took fourth**, ahead of the **second McLaren of Carlos Sainz and Perez**. Then came the **AlphaTauri of Pierre Gasly in seventh**, ahead of F1 returnee Esteban Ocon in eighth, with **Alfa Romeo's Antonio Giovinazzi P9** and Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel – who spun early on in the race after contact with **Sainz** – in **P10**, just one place ahead of the final finisher, Williams' Nicholas Latifi.



### China Masters and Dutch Open 2020 cancelled by BWF due to coronavirus

- The **China Masters 2020** and **Dutch Open 2020** have been cancelled by the Badminton World Federation (BWF) due to coronavirus.
- Two **BWF Tour Super 100** tournaments have been cancelled from the revamped BWF Tournament Calendar for the year - the **Lingshui China Masters 2020** and **YONEX Dutch Open 2020**.
- The **Dutch Open** was slated to take place from October 6 to October 11 in Almere, Netherlands.
- The Lingshui China Masters 2020 was rescheduled twice previously from its original slot at the start of the year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

### AIBA releases rankings in nearly two years, Amit Phangal trumps Olympic champion Zoirov to become World No.1

- **Amit Phangal** has been **ranked no.1 in the men's 52kg weight category** as per the latest rankings released by the **Amateur Indian Boxing Association (AIBA)**. **Manju Rani** was the highest-ranked **women's boxer**, securing the **second spot in the 48kg category**, while **Mary Kom** was placed third in her category.
- It was back in 2019 that the **AIBA last released** its rankings, when **Mary Kom was at the top of the charts in the 48kg category**, following her **sixth world championship triumph** in New Delhi. As per the latest rankings, **Amit Phangal** is the **top-ranked pugilist in the 52kg category**, while **Manju Rani secured the second spot in the women's 48kg category**. **Mary Kom** was placed at the **third spot in her 51kg category**, while **Lovlina Borgohain** held a similar position in the **69kg weight class**.
- Asian silver-medallist **Kavinder Bisht** was placed at the **fourth position in the 56 kg category**, while **Deepak** earned the **sixth position in the 49kg slot**. **Manish Kaushik**, 2018 Commonwealth Games Gold medallist also cemented a top-10 position, having secured the sixth spot in the **63kg category**.

### Lewis Hamilton takes dominant Styrian Grand Prix win after Ferraris collide

- Mercedes driver **Lewis Hamilton** cruised to a comfortable victory in the **Styrian Grand Prix**.
- The world champion's first victory of the year was founded on a stupendous performance in wet qualifying, in which he took pole by more than **1.2 seconds**.
- **Hamilton** led from pole position, headed only at the pit-stops, as team-mate **Valtteri Bottas** overtook **Red Bull's Max Verstappen** late on for second.
- Having been classified a disappointing **P4 at last weekend's Austrian Grand Prix**, **Hamilton** was strong away from the start line, before spending the race managing the gap, first to **Red Bull's Verstappen** then to **Bottas**, to secure his **85th Grand Prix** win.
- Despite a stern defence from **Verstappen**, **Bottas** claimed **second place from the Dutchman** four laps from the end, last week's **Austrian Grand Prix winner** limiting the damage in the drivers' championship, which the Finn still heads.

### IOC Postpones Dakar 2022 Youth Olympic Games To 2026 Due To COVID-19 Pandemic

- **Senegal and the International Olympic Committee (IOC)** have mutually agreed to postpone the **Dakar 2022 Youth Olympic Games (YOG) to 2026** due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.
- Senegal President **Macky Sall's proposal** was welcomed by IOC president Thomas Bach, following in-depth discussions on the subject. This postponement meets the requirement of responsibility and the concern for efficiency imposed by current circumstances.
- At the same time, it allows Senegal to carry on the excellent preparations for the Youth Olympic Games.
- The **IOC** and Senegal understand that this news will be disappointing for many young athletes. Both parties can only appeal to their understanding. This agreement results from the large scale of the operational challenges which the **IOC**, the **NOCs and the IFs** are facing following the postponement of the **Olympic Games Tokyo 2020**.

- Earlier, the **2020 Tokyo Olympics** have been postponed to next year. Now the event will be held from **July 23 to August 8, 2021**.

#### Real Madrid clinch La Liga title for 34th time as Benzema scores brace in win against Villarreal

- **Real Madrid** were crowned La Liga champions for the 34th time over Villarreal which clinched the title with one game to spare.
- Karim Benzema starred for Madrid with a brace to seal the win – which is also their tenth consecutive win.
- **Third-place Atlético Madrid** won 2-0 at **seventh-place Getafe**, while **fourth-place Sevilla** drew 0-0 at **sixth-place Real Sociedad**. Valencia moved into **eighth place** to keep alive their hopes of grabbing a Europa League spot after a 1-0 win against last-place Espanyol.

#### Captain Sourabh Kalia Cup cancelled in Kargil due to COVID- 19

- Many important events and programmes are being cancelled due to the threat of Spread of Covid 19.
- The pandemic has also affected the celebration of this year 21st **Kargil Vijay Diwas** both from the **Indian Army Side** as well as from the Local Level as no event has been organised.
- The most popular **Captain Sourabh Kalia cricket Cup** has also been postponed due to the pandemic in Kargil.

#### Hamilton takes the lead with eighth Hungarian GP win

- A masterful **Lewis Hamilton** won the **Hungarian Grand Prix** in dominant style and for a record eighth time to wrest the **Formula One** championship lead from Mercedes team mate **Valtteri Bottas**.
- **Max Verstappen** took second for Red Bull, the Dutch youngster awarded 'drive of the day' after crashing on the way to the grid in early drama that had his mechanics scrambling to fix the damage before the start.
- Bottas, now five points behind **Hamilton after three races**, finished a close third after battling back from a botched start off the front row.
- **Hamilton's 86th career** victory, from his **90th pole position** and collecting a bonus point for fastest lap, left the **six-times world champion** five short of **Michael Schumacher's** all-time record of 91 wins.
- The Briton also equalled **Schumacher's record of winning a grand prix eight times**, something the Ferrari great achieved in France **between 1994 and 2006**.
- Hamilton, winner of the **Styrian Grand Prix in Austria** the weekend before, now has three wins in a row in Hungary, with the next two races on home soil at Silverstone.

#### Rahm wins PGA Memorial to seize World Number One ranking

- **Jon Rahm** became the first Spaniard since **Seve Ballesteros in 1989** to hold golf's world number one ranking, fending off a late challenge to win the US PGA Memorial tournament.
- Rahm holed out an amazing **31-foot chip shot at the par-3 16th** and, despite a two-stroke penalty that turned it from a birdie to a bogey, took a three-stroke victory over American Ryan Palmer that boosted him over **Rory McIlroy** atop the rankings.
- Rahm was among the Spanish youth inspired by the **feats of Ballesteros**, a five-time major champion who died in 2011 at age 54 of brain cancer.
- Rahm, who **won a US PGA** event for the fourth year in a row, was given a two-stroke penalty after television slow-motion cameras showed his ball moved when he pushed down on the grass behind it shortly before his incredible chip, although it didn't change the lie and was unperceptible to Rahm himself.

#### Statement of Intent signed for partnership with UNICEF India, YuWaah India, UN in India

- Youth Affairs Secretary **Usha Sharma** signed a Statement of Intent for partnership with **UNICEF India, YuWaah India and United Nations in India** to work together with young people for empowering them and to make them changemakers with access to aspirational socio-economic opportunities.
- The statement of intent was signed with **UNICEF representative in India Dr Yasmin Ali Haque** in the presence of Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju.

#### **WADA Extends Suspension of India's Dope Testing Laboratory by 6 Months**

- The **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)** has extended the suspension of the country's **National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL)** by another six months citing non-confirmation to international standards.
- The **WADA first suspended NDTL** in August last year for a period of **six months**.
- The suspension prohibits the NDTL from carrying out any anti-doping activities, including all analyses of urine and blood samples.
- The WADA conducted a second inspection of **NDTL in February**. But corrective measures weren't found to be good enough to revoke the suspension, which is now **extended till January 2021**.

#### **Haryana to host 2021 Khelo India Youth Games after Tokyo Olympics**

- **Haryana** will host the **fourth edition of the Khelo India Youth Games** after the **2021 Tokyo Olympics**, the state's chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar and union sports minister Kiren Rijiju announced. The Games will be held in Panchkula.
- **Haryana** finished first in the **2018 Khelo India Youth Games** while in the last edition in Guwahati, it was on the 2nd spot with 200 medals to its name.
- The dates have still not been finalised but the sports minister clarified that Khelo India Youth Games in 2021 will be held after the completion of the **Olympic Games in Tokyo**, which is from 23rd July - 8th August 2021. The **2020 edition of the games stands cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic**.

#### **Divij Sharan-Vijay Sundar Prashanth win doubles title in Surrey**

- **Vijay Sundar Prashanth and Divij Sharan** combined well to win the doubles title in the LTA British Tour tennis tournament at the National Tennis Centre in Surrey.
- In Surrey, **Vijay and Divij** won the first two matches in the super tie-break before asserting themselves as the top seeds, with a comfortable win in the final for the loss of three games.
- They defeated **Ryan Peniston & David Stevenson**.

#### **Punjab's Princepal Singh picked for NBA developmental league**

- Princepal Singh, the starry-eyed kid from **Dera Baba Nanak village**, has signed to play in the NBA G-League, the National Basketball Association's official minor league, in 2020-21.
- He is the **first NBA Academy** graduate to sign with the NBA G League and first NBA Academy India graduate to sign a professional contract; it was announced by NBA G-League president Shareef Abdur-Rahim.
- Princepal participated in several high-profile international basketball events, including **Basketball Without Borders (BWB) Asia 2018, BWB Global 2018 and the NBA Global Camp 2018**. He also represented India in international competitions as part of the Indian men's senior national team.
- He will be the third Indian player after Satnam Singh Bhamara and Amjyot Singh, to play in the NBA G-League.

#### **India's 2018 Asian Games mixed relay medal upgraded to gold after Bahrain's disqualification**

- The **Indian 4x400m mixed relay team's silver medal in the 2018 Asian Games** has been upgraded to gold following the disqualification of original winners **Bahrain** on account of a doping ban handed to one of its runners.

- **Bahrain**, which had topped the **4×400 mixed relay final**, was disqualified after **Kemi Adekoya** was handed a four-year ban by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) for failing a dope test.
- The Indian quartet of Mohammed Anas, MR Poovamma, Hima Das and Arokia Rajiv had clocked 3:15:71 behind Bahrain (3:11:89). Raghavan had clocked 56.92 to finish fourth in the final race in Jakarta.

#### Harikrishna finishes 2nd at Biel Chess Festival

- Indian Grandmaster **P Harikrishna** finished **second** in the rapid section of the **53rd Biel International Chess Festival in Switzerland**.
- The World No. 26 scored 10 points, two less than **Radoslaw Wojtaszek of Poland**, who finished on **top**.
- Earlier, the Indian GM had finished on top in the ACCENTUS Chess960 tournament, with 5.5 points.
- The Biel Chess Festival, the first major event to be played over the board amid the COVID-19 pandemic, is being organised by adhering to all health protocols.

#### Revision Points

Organization	Headquarters	Key Person
Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)	Zurich, Switzerland	Gianni Infantino
Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)	New Delhi	Pramod Chandra Mody
United Nations	New York, USA	António Guterres
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Washington D.C.	Kristalina Georgieva
Energy Efficiency Services Limited	New Delhi	Rajeev Sharma
National Investment and Infrastructure Fund	Mumbai	Sujoy Bose
National Institute of Food and Agriculture	Washington DC	Rajuv Shah (Founder)
National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)	New Delhi	Manish Kumar
NHPC Ltd	Faridabad	Abhay Kumar Singh
NTPC Ltd	New Delhi	Gurdeep Singh
Coal India Ltd	Chennai	Sarat Kumar Acharya
Power Finance Corporation	New Delhi	Ravinder Singh Dhillon
NLC India	Chennai	
World Economic Forum (WEF)	Cologny, Switzerland	Klaus Schwab
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	Beijing, China	Jin Lique
World Bank	Washington D.C, USA	David Malpass
Asian Development Bank	Mandaluyong, Philippines	Masatsugu Asakawa
International Cricket Council (ICC)	Dubai, UAE	Manu Sawhney
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)	Washington DC	James Morhard
European Union	Brussels	Ursula von der Leyen
AIIMS	New Delhi	Harsh Vardhan

United Nations Childrens' Fund (UNICEF)	New York, USA	Henrietta H. Fore
World Health Organization	Geneva, Switzerland	Tedros Adhanom
United Nations Environment Programme	Nairobi, Kenya	Inger Anderson
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
Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)	New Delhi	Trilochan Mohapatra
National Anti-Doping Agency	New Delhi	Navin Agarwal
Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)	New Delhi	Uday Kotak
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	New York	Achim Steiner
United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)	Geneva	Winnie Byanyima
Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs	New Delhi	M Ajit Kumar
Indian Council of Medical Research	New Delhi	Balram Bhargava
Mobikwik	Gurugram	BipinPreet Singh

### Important Obituaries

Name	Field
Carl Reiner	Writer, Actor, Director & Comedy Legend
Rudolfo Anaya	Writer
Sanjeev Kumar Yadav	Delhi Police Inspector, Gallantry Award winner
Upa Rokamlova	Former Speaker of Mizoram Legislative Assembly, rural development Minister of the Lal Thanhawla government
Everton Weekes	Former West Indies cricketer
Dr Hari Krishen Kaul	IIC Librarian, Poet, Author & Bibliographer
Professor Vikas Satwalekar	Alumnus and former executive director of the National Institute of Design
Saroj Khan	Bollywood choreographer, Recipient of three National Awards
Ibidunni Ighodalo	Former beauty queen

Bishnu Prasad Kumar	Journalist
Pascoal DSouza	Councillor of the Mormugao Municipal Council in Goa
Earl Cameron	British film and TV actor
Pokuri Rama Rao	Telugu film producer
Nick Cordero	Broadway Actor
Ennio Morricone	Oscar-winning Italian film composer
Vasudeva Maiya	Former CEO of Sri Guru Raghavendra Co-operative Bank
Dr Suresh Amonkar	Former health minister of Goa
Charlie Daniels	Country Music Hall of Fame in 2016
Jagdeep (Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed Jafri)	Bollywood Actor
Amadou Gon Coulibaly	Prime Minister of Ivory Coast
Jack Charlton	England's 1966 football World Cup player
Brahm Vasudeva	Chairman, Hawkins Cookers
Avad Bin Hassan Jami	Cartoonist
Ranjan Sehgal	TV Actor
Nagindas Sanghvi	Gujarati journalist, columnist, writer (Padma Shri in 2019)
Divya Chouksey	Actress-Singer
P Ramaswamy	Former Minister and MP
Wim Suurbier	Dutch Footballer
Jyotsna Bhatt (Baroda based)	Ceramic Artist
Neela Satyanarayan	Maharashtra's first woman Election Commissioner
Acharya Shree Purushottam Priyadasji Swamishree	Head of Swaminarayan Sanstha
Ramesh Tikaram	Arjuna awardee and ace para-badminton player (1 <sup>st</sup> para badminton player)
John Lewis	Civil Rights icon Congressman (US)
C.S. Seshadri	One of the leaders of Indian Mathematics (Received Padma Bhushan in 2009)
C.T. Vivian	Key adviser to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr
Rajat Mukherjee	Bollywood Director
Juan Marsé	Spanish Novelist
Lalji Tandon	Governor of Madhya Pradesh
Bijoy Mohanty	Odia film actor
Viktor Chizhikov	National artist of Russia ( He was known as the author of the Olympic bear MISHA)
Andrew Mlangeni	Struggle stalwart and the last surviving Rivonia Trialist
Annie Riss	Jazz Singer & Actor
Amala Shankar	Dancer and Choreographer



Nusrat Zaheer	Urdu Journalist
Mohammad Shamsuddin (Shams Jalnavi)	Urdu Poet
Benjamin Mkapa	Former President of Tanzania
Peter Green	Blues Guitarist, Co-founder of the band Fleetwood Mac
Bhaskarrao Awhad	Senior advocate and former president of Bar Council of Maharashtra
John Saxon	Actor
Olivia de Havilland	Two time Oscar winning Actor
P Achyuta Rao	Founder and President of Balala Hakula Sangham, Child Welfare Activist
Kansai Yamamoto	Japanese fashion designer
Parvez Khan	Bollywood action director
Shaankar Sen	Chairman and Managing Director of Senco Gold Ltd
Kumkum	Bollywood Actress
V Bhalan	Former Puducherry MLA and NR Congress General Secretary
Sanjay Gupta	Justice of J & K High Court
Somendranath Mitra	West Bengal Congress Committee president
Ashok Mustafi	Cricket Coach
Anil Murali	Malayalam Actor
Sonam Tshering Lepcha	Folk Musician & Padma Shri awardee