

SSC BANKING MANTHAN

Current Affairs Supplement

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Preface

Dear Readers,

The “Current Affairs” section is an integral part of any examination. This edition of Manthan has been developed by our team to help you cover all the important events of the month for the upcoming exams like **SSC Banking, Insurance and RBI** etc. This comprehensive bulletin will help you prepare the section in a vivid manner. We hope that our sincere efforts will serve you in a better way to fulfil aspirations.

Happy Reading!

Best Wishes

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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

National



Asia's first-ever Continuous Galvanized Rebar manufacturing facility launched in Punjab

- **International Zinc Association (IZA), in collaboration with Madhav KRG Group launched Asia's first-ever Continuous Galvanized Rebar (CGR) manufacturing facility in Punjab.** The project will be supported by Hindustan Zinc Limited.
- **The new plant was virtually inaugurated near Gobindgarh, Punjab by Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Steel, Petroleum & Natural Gas,** along with Sunil Duggal, Group CEO-Vedanta Limited and Andrew Green – Executive Director, International Zinc Association, Global and other representatives.
- **The first-of-its-kind facility will produce a new product, Continuously Galvanized Rebar (CGR).** CGRs are value added rebars for higher life and low maintenance of infrastructure to provide significant cost savings compared to other corrosion resistant rebar systems.
- **With an annual capacity of over 30,000 tonnes, the plant will manufacture ZNCOAT TEMPCORE TMT BARS under the brand name – JYOTI** – a name that is now synonymous with excellence in steel manufacturing. This will be the **first brand in Asia to apply CGR technology** that will not only be superior but will also enhance life span of the rebars thereby reducing the overall maintenance cost.

Dharmendra Debendra Pradhan is currently serving as the Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Minister of Steel in the Second Modi Ministry. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in March 2018 from Madhya Pradesh. The International Zinc Association (IZA) is the only global industry association dedicated exclusively to the interests of zinc and its users. IZA's headquarters are Durham, North Carolina (USA) and has offices in China, Europe, Latin America, North America, India and Southern Africa.

Members of 3 communities get J&K domicile certificates

- **Members of the Valmiki Samaj, the Hindu refugees from erstwhile West Pakistan and the Gurkhas, got domicile certificates from the Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) administration after years of being denied equal rights.**
- **Earlier, they were not considered as permanent residents in the erstwhile J&K, which was bifurcated into two Union Territories (UTs) – J&K and Ladakh – after the scrapping of Article 370 of the Constitution on August 5, 2019.**
- **Under the Domicile Rules, all those people and their children, who have lived in J&K for 15 years, or have studied for seven years and appeared in Board examinations (Grade X or XII) from a UT-based educational institution are eligible for the grant of domicile.**

Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 re-constituted the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, with effect from 31 October 2019. Girish Chandra Murmu is the first lieutenant governor of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Ladakh is a region administered by India as a union territory; Radha Krishna Mathur is the first Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh.

India is the first nation to control locusts through drones: Agriculture Ministry

- The Union Ministry of Agriculture said that **India is the first country to control locusts by using drones**. “India is the first country to control locust by using drones after finalising the protocols and getting all statutory approvals.
- **Major operations are concentrated in Rajasthan where maximum resources are committed**. According to the information given by the ministry, all the groups of locust swarms are being **tracked by teams of the state agriculture departments of Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh**, local administrations and officials of the Central Locust Warning Organisation, and control operations are underway.

The **desert locust (Schistocerca gregaria)** is a **species of locust, a periodically swarming short-horned grasshopper** in the family **Acrididae**. They are found mainly in Africa, through Arabia, West Asia and extending into parts of South Asia. **On February the UN stated that the swarms are the largest in Somalia and Ethiopia in 25 years**. The swarm spread into east Africa from war-torn Yemen, after heavy rainfall in late 2019 created ideal conditions for the insects to flourish, and as of February 2nd, **Somalia is the first country in the region to declare an emergency over the infestation**. **On 1 February 2020, the Pakistani government declared a national emergency to counter an invasion of desert locusts that are destroying crops**. Locusts have been migrating from Africa to Pakistan, and have reached India, as of May 27, 2020. They have spread widely due to availability of crops from one place to another. The states widely affected are **Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab**. Locust Warning Organisation maintains two headquarters, one in Faridabad (near New Delhi) for administrative duties and one in Jodhpur (Rajasthan) for technical operations.

Arjun Munda launches tribes India products on GeM and new website of TRIFED

- **Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda launched through a video conference the tribes India products on Government e-Marketplace - GeM and a new website of TRIFED**. The **TRIBES India store on Government eMarketplace can now help in facilitating purchases by the government**. The new website has all relevant details about the schemes and initiatives to benefit tribal communities.
- **The Team of “Trifed Warriors” will take Tribal Commerce based on forest products, handlooms and handicrafts to a new high for transforming tribal lives and livelihoods**. This was the key focus area of the webinar ‘**TRIFED Goes Digital**’ and “**Be Vocal for Local**” #GoTribal ”which was organised by TRIFED today and was attended by over 200 participants.

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) came into existence in 1987. TRIFED has its registered and Head Office located in New Delhi. Arjun Munda is a member of the 17th Lok Sabha of India. He represents the Khunti constituency of Jharkhand. He is the current minister for Tribal Affairs.

Maharashtra set to launch a plasma therapy trial ‘Project Platina’ on COVID-19 patients

- **The Maharashtra government launched the largest plasma therapy trial for Covid-19**. Launching the programme, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said Maharashtra will be the **first state in the country to conduct an overarching trial on convalescent plasma therapy**.
- **Project Platina will be the “world’s largest trial and hence will give robust data regarding the role of convalescent plasma in the treatment of COVID-19 patients”, the government said**. **Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has approved Rs 16.65 crore from the Chief Minister’s Relief Fund for the project**.
- **In the absence of a cure for COVID-19, the respiratory illness caused by the coronavirus, the convalescent plasma therapy, an experimental treatment, is the next best bet for severe cases, the report said**.

Maharashtra is India’s second-most populous state and third-largest state by area. Nagpur is Maharashtra’s second capital and hosts the winter session of the state legislature. Pune is its cultural capital. Shiv Sena President Uddhav Thackeray takes oath as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Uddhav Thackeray is the first of his family to be the chief minister of Maharashtra. His father Bal Thackeray founded the Shiv Sena over five decades ago. Bhagat Singh Koshiyari is serving as the current Governor of Maharashtra.

In a first, Chhattisgarh police make public list of most-wanted Maoists

- In a first since Chhattisgarh was carved out as a separate state in 2000, the state police have released in public domain a poster with names and images of 34 senior “most wanted” Maoist leaders and cadres operating in the state, and announced rewards for information leading to their arrest. The list includes two women. While several such lists have been prepared by police in the past, this is the first time they have released the list along with pictures, and rewards for information on each one, in public domain.

Chhattisgarh was formed on 1 November 2000 by partitioning 10 Chhattisgarhi and 6 Gondi speaking southeastern districts of Madhya Pradesh. Naya Raipur, officially known as Nava Raipur, (also known as Atal Nagar) is an upcoming planned and fully developed city in Indian state of Chhattisgarh. It is planned to replace Raipur as the capital city of Chhattisgarh. Anusuiya Uikey is present Governor of Chhattisgarh. Bhupesh Baghel is serving as the third and current Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh. In India, there are five landlocked states which do not have an international boundary are Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Telangana.

Chhattisgarh becomes first Indian state to buy cow dung from cattle owners

- Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel announced the launch of ‘Godhan Nyay Yojana’ in the state. The scheme aims to make animal husbandry commercially profitable, prevent open grazing by cattle and solve the problem of stray animals on roads and for environment conservation.
- The ‘Godhan Nyay Yojana’ was launched through an online press conference. According to Chhattisgarh Chief Minister, the scheme was launched to promote animal husbandry and make it a profitable practice.
- As per the Chief Minister, the Godhan Nyay Yojana will be an innovative step forward towards protecting the financial interest of livestock owners in the state. The scheme is expected to boost the efforts made by the state government to strengthen the rural economy.

Himachal’s panchayati raj dept wins first prize for effective use of e-applications

- The Himachal Pradesh panchayati raj department has won first prize under the e-Panchayat Puraskars-2020, to be given by the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- The state has been selected for the award for effective implementation of the e-application developed by the central government and other applications developed by the state government.
- All 3,226 panchayats in the state have been provided with internet facility, with the help of which people can access various services online. Various services such as family register, registration of birth, death and marriages are registered online at panchayats.
- The e-panchayat puraskar is conferred to those states which have ensured maximum use of information technology for monitoring the works of the panchayats

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

- The 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. 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.

Ministry of Human Resource Development, formerly Ministry of Education is responsible for the development of human resources in India. The Ministry is held currently by Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. He represents the Haridwar Parliamentary constituency of Uttarakhand in the 17th Lok Sabha.

Madhya Pradesh constitutes migrant labour commission to provide employment to those who returned due to Covid-19

- Nearly four weeks after making an announcement to provide employment to labourers who returned after March 1 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led the state government constituted Madhya Pradesh State Migrant Labour Commission that promises the same.
- The commission will have tenure of two years and its term could be extended. The government will soon name the chairman and two members. While the chairman could be anyone with not less than 10 year of experience in labour welfare or a retired bureaucrat of the rank of secretary or above.
- It will have two members with minimum experience of five years in labour welfare. Only state domiciles will benefit. The commission will have to recommend steps to strengthen the socio-economic status of the migrant workers. It will have to submit an interim report every three months and the final report not later than two years.
- The commission will speak to individuals, organisations, departments and boards and focus on employment creation, skill development of labourers and their families and effective implementation of existing laws to protect their interests. It will also recommend how the benefits of existing social security and welfare schemes could be extended to them.

Madhya Pradesh (meaning Central Province) is a state in central India. Its capital is Bhopal. Nicknamed the “Heart of India” due to its geographical location in India. Madhya Pradesh is the second-largest state in the country by area after Rajasthan. This state was the largest in India by area until 2000, when its southeastern Chhattisgarh region was made as a separate state. MP has the largest reserves of diamond and copper in India. Lalji Tandon is serving as the current Governor of Madhya Pradesh.

“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.
- Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that the State’s economy is badly hit with many nonresident Keralites losing their job amid COVID crisis. 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 Government will be coordinating the project. Through the Dream Kerala project, ideas and suggestions from public will be invited.

Kerala is a state on the southwestern, Malabar Coast of India. It was formed on 1 November 1956 following the States Reorganisation Act by combining Malayalam-speaking regions. Kerala has the highest literacy rate 93.91% in the 2011 census; the highest life expectancy, 77 years; and the highest sex ratio, 1,084 women per 1,000 men. Arif Mohammad Khan is the current Governor of Kerala. Kerala is known as “God’s own country” and is one of the popular tourist destinations in India. Pinarayi Vijayan is the current Chief Minister of Kerala, in office since 25 May 2016. Kerala is the first State to have a floating solar power plant with a capacity of 250 MW.

Delhi to set up India’s first plasma bank for covid-19 treatment

- In a first for India, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led government in Delhi launched a plasma bank for treating covid-19 patients.
- Delhi was one of the first states to give the go-ahead for plasma therapy in April. It has now stated that the proposed plasma bank will be up and running in two days, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said.
- The facility is to be set up at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS), and will be made available to government and private hospitals. Delhi was the first state in the country to start a trial for plasma therapy.

Delhi bordered by Haryana on three sides and by Uttar Pradesh to the east. According to the 2011 census, Delhi city proper’s population was over 11 million, the second-highest in India after Mumbai. Anil Baijal is the current & 21st Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. Arvind Kejriwal is the current and 7th Chief Minister of Delhi. The Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991 declared the Union Territory of Delhi to be formally known as the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

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. Surface water and underground water will be used to provide drinking water through taps in every household of the region.

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India as well as the most populous country subdivision in the world. It was created on 1 April 1937 as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during British rule, and was renamed Uttar Pradesh in 1950, giving the acronym UP. The state is divided into 18 divisions and 75 districts with the capital being Lucknow. On 9 November 2000, a new state, Uttarakhand, was carved out from the state's Himalayan hill region. The two major rivers of the state, the Ganges and Yamuna, join at Allahabad and flow further east as Ganges. The state contributes 80 seats to the lower house of the Indian Parliament, Lok Sabha and 31 seats to the upper house of the Indian Parliament, Rajya Sabha.

Delhi launches e-portal for its students

- The Delhi government launched an online portal, LEAD (Learning through E-Resources Made Accessible for Delhi), with over 10,000 instructional material and course content available on it for classes 1 to 12.
- LEAD will make textbooks, study material and course content as per the syllabus of CBSE, NCERT and Delhi government's curriculum accessible to students. Support study material produced by Delhi government teachers will also be available on this portal. Through this portal, developed by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), the Delhi government will upload its curriculum on the ministry of Human Resource Development's (HRD) online platform, Diksha.

Government clears Defence acquisition worth Rs 38,900 Cr

- Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) in its meeting held 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 Indigenous content in some of these projects is up to 80 per cent of the project cost. The cost of these Design and Development proposals is in the range of 20400 crore rupees.
- The 21 MiG-29 fighter jets will be procured from Russia while 12 Su-30 MKI aircraft will be bought from State-run aerospace behemoth Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL). A separate proposal to upgrade existing 59 MiG-29 aircraft has also been approved.
- The procurement of 21 MiG-29 and upgrade of the existing fleet of MiG-29 is estimated to cost the government Rs 7,418 crore while purchase of 12 new Su-30 MKI from HAL will be made at a cost of Rs 10,730 crore, the officials said.
- The ministry has also approved procurement of 248 ASTRA beyond visual range (BVR) air-to-air missile systems. The missile is designed to engage and destroy highly manoeuvring supersonic aircraft and has all weather day and night capabilities. The DAC also approved acquisition of Pinaka missile systems as well as procurement of long range land attack missile systems having a firing range of 1000 KM.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is charged with coordinating and supervising all agencies and functions of the government relating directly to national security and the Indian armed forces. The President of India is the ceremonial commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the country. The Indian Armed Forces (including Indian Army, Indian Air Force, and Indian Navy) and Indian Coast Guard under the Ministry of Defences are primarily responsible for ensuring the territorial integrity of the nation. A military department was created by the supreme government of the British East India Company at Kolkata in the year 1776. Rajnath Singh is currently serving as the Defence Minister of India.

Telangana amends FRBM Act, extends borrowing limit

- **Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan promulgated ‘The Telangana Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020’.** Thus, the State government accepted the recent decision of the Central government **to expand the borrowing limit of the States under FRBM Act from the present three per cent to five per cent**, allowing the States to borrow more to face the present financial crisis arisen due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- However, **the States are eligible to go in for market borrowing up to five per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), only after fulfilling the conditions laid down by the Centre.** The State may fulfil all the conditions, **except reforms in the power sector.** Even if the reforms in the power sector are not implemented, **the State can raise a loan up to 4.5 per cent of GSDP this year.**
- According to sources in the Finance Department, **the gross borrowing was Rs 34,000 crore in 2020-21 Budget. The net borrowing was Rs 30,000 crore** at three per cent of around Rs 10 lakh crore GSDP. Thus, the State can raise extra loan up to Rs 20,000 crore in this fiscal under FRBM Act at 5 per cent of the GSDP.

The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM Act), 2003, establishes financial discipline to reduce fiscal deficit. The FRBM Bill was introduced by the then finance minister, Yashwant Sinha, in 2000. The Bill, approved by the Union Cabinet in 2003, became effective from July 5, 2004. The FRBM Act aims to introduce transparency in India’s fiscal management systems. The Act’s long-term objective is for India to achieve fiscal stability and to give the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) flexibility to deal with inflation in India.

‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge’ launched for Indian techies, start-ups

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge’.** This challenge will run in two tracks: Promotion of Existing Apps and Development of New Apps.
- **For the 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-01 will work in mission mode for identifying good quality Apps for the leadership and shall be completed in around a month.
- For incubating new apps and platforms, Track-02 initiative will work **to help create new champions in India by providing support in ideation, incubation, prototyping and roll out along with market access.**

Proposed Rs. 8,250-cr. Chambal Expressway a game changer for M.P., U.P., Rajasthan

- **Asserting that the proposed Rs. 8,250-crore Chambal Expressway could be a game changer for the poor and the tribal community living in far-flung areas of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh,** Union Minister Nitin Gadkari urged these States to expedite land acquisition, environment clearances and tax relief for the project.
- The project will also **provide cross-connectivity with the Golden Quadrilateral’s Delhi-Kolkata corridor, North-South Corridor, East-West Corridor and Delhi-Mumbai -Expressway.** “The upcoming expressway could be a game changer for tribals and poor living in the far-flung areas, **especially Chambal region which is considered as one of the most backward areas in the country.**
- **The about 404 km-long expressway provides an alternate route from Kanpur to Kota through Madhya Pradesh, and then it joins the Delhi-Mumbai corridor.**

Nitin Jairam Gadkari was served as the President of the Bharatiya Janata Party from 2010-2013. He is the current Minister for Road Transport & Highways of India and Shipping Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the Government of India. Gadkari contested 2014 Lok Sabha election successfully from Nagpur constituency, Maharashtra and won it.

New Pamban Rail Bridge: Railways starts construction of India’s first Vertical Lift Sea Bridge

- **The Indian Railways has started constructing the first pillar in the sea for the country’s first vertical lift railway sea bridge – the Pamban Rail Bridge.** The development work on the advanced bridge is underway at Pamban in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu.

- The vertical lift railway sea bridge is expected to be constructed within the next two years. **The new Pamban Bridge is a first-of-its-kind project for the Indian Railways, having a 2.05 km long stretch, connecting Mandapam in Tamil Nadu to Rameswaram at the Pamban Island. It is set to be India's first vertical lift rail bridge over the sea.**
- The vertical lift railway sea bridge project is being developed by Railway Vikas Nigam Limited. The foundation stone for the new Pamban railway sea bridge was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the month of March, 2019, in Kanyakumari. The railway sea bridge is expected to help the national transporter operate trains at a higher speed, and also allow trains to carry more weight on the route. The new railway sea bridge will also maximize the traffic volume between the mainland of Pamban and Rameswaram.

Pamban Bridge is a railway bridge which connects the town of Mandapam in mainland India with Pamban Island, and Rameswaram. Opened on 24 February 1914, it was India's first sea bridge, and was the longest sea bridge in India until the opening of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link in 2010.

Indian Railways (IR) is the fourth-largest railway network in the world by size. There are a total of 18 Railway zones. South Coast Railway Zone is the newest and 18th railway zone, headquartered at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Piyush Vedprakash Goyal is currently serving as the Minister of Railways and Commerce in India. He was elected as the BJP candidate from Maharashtra for the Rajya Sabha in 2016.

Ladakh LG e-launches M.O.D.I & Greenhouse Project to steer UT on sustainable path

- **Ladakh Lieutenant Governor RK Mathur has e-launched Mission Organic Development Initiative (M.O.D.I) and a Greenhouse Project to steer the Union Territory on a sustainable path. Mr Mathur held a special meeting to discuss the roles and functioning of Leh and Kargil Hill Councils.**
- **“By converting Ladakh into an organic state, we will be able to achieve the Prime Minister Modi's vision of a Carbon Neutral Ladakh”. Organic agriculture produce is also aimed at increasing 40 per cent additional income for the Ladakh farmers.**

Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 re-constituted the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, with effect from 31 October 2019. Girish Chandra Murmu is the first lieutenant governor of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Ladakh is a region administered by India as a union territory; Radha Krishna Mathur is the first Lieutenant Governor of the union territory of Ladakh.

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.**
- **Indian 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.**

Net zero emission means that all man-made greenhouse gas emissions must be removed from the atmosphere through reduction measures, thus reducing the Earth's net climate balance, after removal via natural and artificial sink to zero. This way humankind would be carbon neutral and global temperature would stabilise.

In a first in the world, Indian Railways sets up solar power plant in Madhya Pradesh to run trains

- In a significant development, **Indian Railways has set up a solar power plant in Bina in Madhya Pradesh to power the Railway overhead lines** that power the electric locomotives.
- According to Railway officials, **this is the first time in the world that solar power will be used to run trains.**
- While Indian Railways, and other railway networks in the world, have been using solar power, **they are mainly used to fulfil the electricity requirements of stations, residential colonies and offices etc.**
- **Indian Railways has also installed solar power panels on the roof of some coaches**, which supply electricity for lights in the coaches. **But till now, no Railway network has used solar power to actually run trains by powering the locomotives.**
- **The 1.7 megawatt solar power plant has been set up as a pilot project by Railways in collaboration with Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited (BHEL) on Railway land near the tracks in Bina.** The plant will have stepped up voltage of 25,000 volts through transformers to be fed to the overhead power lines of the Railways to power the traction system of the locomotives.

CBSE partners with Facebook to launch free training program for teachers, students

- **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has partnered with Facebook to provide student training on digital safety and online well-being and teacher training on augmented/ virtual reality.** The increasing use of internet among students for online classes, e- learning in the time of Coronavirus poses a threat of online abuse, bullying, misinformation, fake news and internet addiction among them. **Thus, CBSE has partnered with Facebook India to launch free and comprehensive training program for teachers and students of its affiliated schools in the first phase from August to November 2020 in virtual mode.** The participants will also receive a joint e- certificate from CBSE and Facebook on successful completion of the course.
- **The training program will be of three weeks in which 10,000 teachers will be trained on augmented reality and 10,000 students will be trained on digital safety and well-being.** Under the digital safety category, students will be trained about digital safety and Instagram Toolkit. The registration process will be held from July 6 to 20. The programme for teachers will be launched on August 10 while the students training will begin from August 6.

Facebook is an American online social media and social networking service company based in Menlo Park, California. Its website was launched on February 4, 2004, by Mark Zuckerberg along with Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes. WhatsApp was founded in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum, both former employees of Yahoo!. WhatsApp Inc., based in Mountain View, California, which was acquired by Facebook in February 2014 for approximately US\$19.3 billion.

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.** **Doing Business in India Report** found that Maharashtra is regarded as the top destination for improved business environment in India and, relatedly, **the most common state that UK companies are looking to expand in.** It is no surprise that **30 percent of UK companies running operations in India,** including industry giants like Perkins Engines and Diageo are based in Maharashtra.

Haryana drafting Ordinance for 75% reservation to locals in private sector

- **The Haryana Cabinet approved a proposal for drafting the Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Ordinance, 2020, to provide 75% reservation to residents of the State in jobs in the private sector.**

- The draft to be brought before the next Cabinet meeting will **earmark new jobs with a salary of less than Rs. 50,000 per month to local candidates in privately managed companies**, societies, trusts, limited liability partnership firms, and partnership firms etc. **which employ more than 10 persons.**
- **Providing 75 per cent reservation in private sector jobs to the youth of the state** was a key poll promise of Dushyant Chautala's Jannayak Janta Party, which is coalition partner of the BJP. He said the **responsibility of registration would lie on the company concerned or job provider**. Chautala said the companies which would not register on the portal, would face a penalty from Rs 25,000 to Rs one lakh.

Haryana was carved out of the former state of East Punjab on 1 November 1966 on linguistic basis. Among the world's oldest and largest ancient civilizations, the Indus Valley Civilization sites located at Rakhigarhi village in Hisar district of Haryana. Haryana is a landlocked state in northern India. As per the 2011 Census, Haryana has the lowest child sex ratio in the age group of 0-6 years in the country. According to the census, against 1,000 boys born, there were only 834 girls. The state capital of Haryana is Chandigarh, a Union Territory and also the capital of the neighboring state of Punjab. Kaptan Singh Solanki is the current Governor of Haryana.

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**. CM Thackeray said that **state-of-the-art data centres such as Yotta can be key to the economy of Maharashtra**, as they are projected to boost investment in the area.
- **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.

Maharashtra is India's second-most populous state and third-largest state by area. Nagpur is Maharashtra's second capital and hosts the winter session of the state legislature. Pune is its cultural capital. Shiv Sena President Uddhav Thackeray takes oath as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Uddhav Thackeray is the first of his family to be the chief minister of Maharashtra. His father Bal Thackeray founded the Shiv Sena over five decades ago. Bhagat Singh Koshiyari is serving as the current Governor of Maharashtra.

BRO making world's highest motorable road in Ladakh a double lane pass

- The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is doubling the lane of the world's highest motorable road at Khardung La which provides connectivity to the Siachen Glacier as well as the China border.
- The road at top point remains covered with ice for almost entire year. **The double lane will help in preventing accidents of both military and civilian vehicles.**

Border Roads Organisation (BRO) develops and maintains road networks in India's border areas and friendly neighboring countries. The BRO was formed on 7 May 1960 to secure India's borders and develop infrastructure in remote areas of the north and north-east states of the country. It is **headquartered in New Delhi.**

Cabinet gives nod to setting up of One Lakh Crore Rupees Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

- **The Union Cabinet 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.
- Under the scheme, **one lakh crore rupees will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans to Primary Agricultural Credit Societies, Marketing Cooperative Societies, Farmer Producers Organizations, Self Help Group, Farmers, Startups and Centre and State agency among others.** The duration of the Scheme will be for ten years from Fiscal year 2020 to 2029.
- Under it, loans will be disbursed in four years starting with sanction of 10 thousand crore rupees in the current year and 30 thousand crore rupees each crore in 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 two crore rupees** and this subvention will be **available for a maximum period of seven years**. Further, credit guarantee coverage will be available for **eligible borrowers from this financing facility under Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) scheme** for a loan up to two crore rupees.
- **Agri Infra fund** will be **managed and monitored through an online Management Information System (MIS) platform**. It will enable all the qualified entities to apply for loan under the fund. **The National, State and District level Monitoring Committees** will be set up to ensure real-time monitoring and effective feed-back.

PM Narendra Modi delivered the inaugural address at India Global Week 2020

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at the inaugural address at the India Global Week 2020, a virtual conference being organised in the UK, said India is a powerhouse of talent which is eager to contribute and “ever-ready” to learn. “India has overcome every challenge,” the PM said at the event which will also feature a “never-seen-before” performance on the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat campaign. This is also the first time the prime minister addressed a global audience since the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic.**
- **The event – a three-day virtual conference themed ‘Be The Revival: India and a Better New World’ – will have 5,000 global participants from 30 nations being addressed by 250 global speakers across 75 sessions.**
- **India provides two-thirds of the world’s vaccine needs for infants and children. India is now even working on the COVID-19 vaccine. I am happy to note that this Forum is also marking the 100th birth anniversary of Pandit Ravi Shankar. He took the beauty of Indian classical music to the world.**

“India Global Week is where India meets the World, and the World meets India.” India Global Week will re-energise and ignite optimism, but also inspire action. From Geopolitics to Business, Arts & Culture to Emerging Technologies, Banking and Finance, Pharma, Defence and Security, Social Impact and the all-important Diaspora Dividend, be a part of the promise to bring about an action-oriented focus to global deliberations. Join our high-powered country sessions on Australia, Japan, Singapore, the UK and US. **India Inc. Group – the UK-headquartered media house behind flagship publications ‘India Global Business’ and the recently-launched diaspora news network ‘iGlobal’ – once again brings together some of the best strategic minds and experts in their respective fields.**

Union Cabinet extends Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Ann Yojana till November

- **The Union Cabinet has given approval for extending Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Ann Yojana for five more months.** Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said 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.** The scheme will benefit more than 80 crore people in the country.
- **The Government has extended the time limit for availing three free gas cylinders by beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.** Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said that the **beneficiaries can avail the free cylinders till September this year.**
- **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.
- **The 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.**

Odisha uses satellite technology to prevent encroachment of government land

- **The Bhubaneswar Land Use Intelligence System (BLUIS), a web and mobile-based solution, launched by Odisha government would raise alarm over attempts to change the land use.**

- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik unveiled BLUIS which would monitor changes in all government lands in Bhubaneswar by leveraging high resolution satellite imagery, thus making Odisha the first state in the country to tap space technology and artificial intelligence for safeguarding government lands.
- According to government, BLUIS is a geo-tagged repository of all the government lands in Bhubaneswar, created through high resolution satellite imagery to detect all changes taking place on government lands.
- The Litigation Management System, an online application to record information of legal cases and enable end-to-end communication between government officials and advocates during different stages of a case, was also launched.

PM Modi dedicated to nation a 750 MW Solar project at Rewa in Madhya Pradesh

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation a 750 MW Solar project set up at Rewa in Madhya Pradesh. The Rewa project will reduce carbon emission equivalent to about 15 lakh ton of CO₂ per year.
- The project comprises three solar generating units of 250 megawatt each located on a 500 hectare plot of land situated inside a Solar Park. The Solar Park was developed by the Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL).
- It is a Joint Venture Company of Madhya Pradesh Urja Vikas Nigam Limited, and Solar Energy Corporation of India, a Central Public Sector Undertaking. Central Financial Assistance of 138 crore rupees has been provided to RUMSL for development of the Park. The Rewa Solar Project was the first solar project in the country to break the grid parity barrier. While inaugurating it, PM Modi claimed that the Rewa Ultra Mega Solar project in Madhya Pradesh is the largest in Asia.

Solar power in India is a fast developing industry. The country's solar installed capacity reached 35.12 GW as of 30 June 2020. India has the lowest capital cost per MW globally of installing solar power plants. The Indian government had an initial target of 20 GW capacity for 2022, which was achieved four years ahead of schedule. In 2015 the target was raised to 100 GW of solar capacity (including 40 GW from rooftop solar) by 2022, targeting an investment of US\$100 billion. The International Solar Alliance (ISA), proposed by India as a founder member, is headquartered in India. India has also put forward the concept of "One Sun One World one Grid" to harness abundant solar power on global scale.

Shri Rajnath Singh e-inaugurates six strategic bridges in Jammu & Kashmir

- Ushering in a new revolution in the connectivity of roads and bridges in sensitive border areas close to the International Border (IB) and Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh dedicated six major bridges to the nation through video conferencing. These bridges of strategic importance were completed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in a record time.
- Raksha Mantri congratulated all ranks of BRO for completing the works of six bridges in record time and complimented them for contributing towards nation building by working in the most difficult terrain and weather conditions.

Rajnath Ram Badan Singh is the current Defence Minister of India and previously served as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and as a Cabinet Minister in the Vajpayee Government. He has also served as the President of the BJP twice, 2005 to 2009 and 2013 to 2014. He has been representing the 17th Lok Sabha from Lucknow constituency. He also served as Union Home Minister of India from 2014 to 2019.

Hyderabad International Airport Introduces India's First Airport Contact-Less Car Parking

- The GMR Hyderabad International Airport (GHIAL) introduced India's first fully contact-less airport car parking in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.
- The authority has also scaled up its NETC (National Electronic Toll Collection) FASTag car parking in collaboration with NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India) integrating 10 NETC FASTag issuer banks and will go live with other issuer banks in the next few weeks.
- Although the airport had introduced India's first-ever 'NETC FASTag Car Park' in collaboration with NPCI in November 2019. But with the recent ramp up, the airport has added a high standard of safety with contact-less toll transactions during the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

GMR Group is an infrastructural company headquartered in New Delhi. The company was founded in 1978 by Grandhi Mallikarjuna Rao. Employing the Public Private Partnership model, the Group has implemented several infrastructure projects in India. GMR Group chairman Grandhi Mallikarjuna Rao, a first-generation entrepreneur hailing from Rajam in Srikakulam District in Andhra Pradesh. Rajiv Gandhi International Airport is an international airport that serves Hyderabad, the capital of the Indian state of Telangana. It is named after Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India. It is the only airport in India ranking in AirHelp's list of top 10 airports in the world.

UP start-up policy approved by Yogi Adityanath government

- The Yogi Adityanath cabinet gave its approval to the Uttar Pradesh Startup Policy 2020. There was no comprehensive startup policy in the state and for encouraging a startup culture and building a strong startup ecosystem, an independent and comprehensive policy was required.
- Special encouragement will be provided for setting up startups in Purvanchal and Bundelkhand areas adding that the policy would be helpful in turning the youth from job-seekers to job-providers.

Fish Cryobanks will be set up in different parts of the country: Govt

- Government said that Fish Cryobanks will be set up in different parts of the country. This will facilitate all time availability of fish sperms of desired species to fish farmers.
- Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister Giriraj Singh announced this on the occasion of National Fish Farmers Day. National Fisheries Development Board in collaboration with the National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources will take up the work to establish Fish Cryobanks.
- The Minister said, Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana had been launched with highest ever investment of over 20 thousand crore rupees during next five years. This scheme will address the critical gaps in fish production and productivity, quality, modernisation and establishing a robust fisheries management framework and fishermen's welfare.

Indian Railways' first cable-stayed rail bridge

- The Railways Minister Piyush Goyal has announced, India's first cable-stayed Railways Bridge "Anji Khad Bridge" to connect Katra and Reasi in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). According to details shared by the Railway Ministry, 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 USBRL passes through the Young Himalayas. The stretch consists of various legs and sections, divided on the basis of construction phases. The USBRL project also involves the Chenab river bridge. The Chenab Bridge once completed, will become the world's highest rail bridge.

Indian Railways (IR) is the fourth-largest railway network in the world by size. There are a total of 18 Railway zones. South Coast Railway Zone is the newest and 18th railway zone, headquartered at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Piyush Vedprakash Goyal is currently serving as the Minister of Railways and Commerce in the Government of India. He was elected as the BJP candidate from Maharashtra for the Rajya Sabha on 3 June 2016. The practice of a separate Railway Budget was started by the British in 1924 under the recommendation of a 10-member Acworth Committee headed by British economist William Mitchell Acworth in 1920-21. On 21 September 2016, Government of India approved the merger of the Railway Budget with the Union budget of India, and thus came to end — a 92-year-old practice of separate rail and general budgets.

ASEEM portal launched to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities

- Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launched Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employee-Employer Mapping (ASEEM) portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities. The

portal will map details of workers based on regions and local industry demands and will bridge demand-supply gap of skilled workforce across sectors.

- It refers to all the data, trends and analytics which describe the workforce market and map demand of skilled workforce to supply. **The Artificial Intelligence-based platform will also provide real-time granular information** by identifying relevant skilling requirements and employment prospects.

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is set up on 9 November 2014 to coordinate all skill development efforts across the country. Industrial training, apprenticeship and other skill development responsibilities were transferred from the Ministry of Labour and Employment to this newly made ministry on 16 April 2015. **It aims to remove the disconnect between demand and supply of skilled manpower, to build the new skills and innovative thinking not only for existing jobs but also for jobs that are to be created.** Mahendra Nath Pandey is the current Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship of India and Member of Lok Sabha for Chandauli since 2014.

India's population may peak by 2047

- **When this century ends, India may no longer be a country of a billion**, says a projection that appears in the online edition of the Lancet. **At the current rate of growth, India's population is likely to peak by 2047 at about 1.61 billion and then decline to 1.03 billion by 2100.** However, **was it to meet UN Sustainable Goal Development targets, the peak would be earlier and see a population decline to 929 million.**
- Conventional wisdom is that though a decline in population is expected, it is expected to begin only around 2046 and that fall, **according to the latest 2019 assessment by the United Nations Development Programme calculation, is expected to see India's population settle at a little over 1.4 billion**, though this too ranges from 2.1-0.9 billion.
- **This scenario will lead to a sharper reduction in the Total Fertility Rate**, a metric that shows on average how many children a women must have to keep replenishing population. **A TFR lower than 2.1**, it is said, leads to a decline in a country's population. **India will, however, remain the most populous country.** **The five largest countries in 2100 (are projected) to be India, Nigeria, China, the U.S. and Pakistan.**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are **integrated**—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. That is why the SDGs are designed to bring the world to **several life-changing 'zeros', including zero poverty, hunger, AIDS and discrimination against women and girls.**

Chhattisgarh organises India's first e-Lok Adalat

- Amid the restricted judicial functioning owing to Covid-19 outbreak, **an e-Lok Adalat is 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**", said Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra, executive chairman of the Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority.

Chhattisgarh was formed on 1 November 2000 by partitioning 10 Chhattisgarhi and 6 Gondi speaking southeastern districts of Madhya Pradesh. **Naya Raipur, officially known as Nava Raipur**, (also known as **Atal Nagar**) is an **upcoming planned and fully developed city** in Indian state of Chhattisgarh. It is **planned to replace Raipur as the capital city of Chhattisgarh.** **Anusuiya Uikey is present Governor of Chhattisgarh.** **Bhupesh Baghel is serving as the third and current Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh.** In India, there are five landlocked states which do not have an international boundary are Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Telangana.

IAF gets last of 5 Apache attack helicopters from Boeing

- **Boeing handed over the last of the five AH-64E Apache attack helicopters to the Indian Air Force (IAF), completing the contract for 22 Apaches. The Apaches were deployed at the Leh air base as part of the forward movement of assets, amid the stand-off with China in Ladakh.**
- **The final five of the 22 Apache attack helicopters were handed over to the IAF at the Air Force Station, Hindan. Earlier, in March, Boeing handed over the last five of the 15 CH-47F(I) Chinook heavy-lift helicopters to the IAF.**

The **Boeing AH-64 Apache** is an American twin-turboshaft attack helicopter with a tailwheel-type landing gear arrangement and a tandem cockpit for a crew of two. It features a nose-mounted sensor suite for target acquisition and night vision systems.

NITI Aayog launches ATL App Development Module for school children

- **NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission launched the 'ATL App Development Module' for school children across the country. The ATL App is an online course, which is completely free.**
- **Through six project-based learning modules and online mentoring sessions, young innovators can learn to build mobile apps in various Indian languages and showcase their talent. Additionally, to build capacities and acumen for app development within school teachers, periodic Teacher Training sessions will be conducted on the AIM App Development course.**
- **The course has been jointly developed by NITI Aayog's AIM and Indian startup, Plezmo. Structuring the course module for the school students to develop mobile applications in various Indian languages is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of AtmaNirbhar Bharat, said the statement issued by NITI Aayog.**

The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015 by replacing Planning Commission of India. NITI Aayog is the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs. The current chairman of NITI Aayog is Shri Narendra Modi, current vice chairman is Dr. Rajiv Kumar and the current chief executive officer is Shri Amitabh Kant.

Indian firm helped build world's first fusion reactor for endless clean energy

- **Larsen & Toubro has finished the construction of 3,800-tonne ITER cryostat — the world's largest steel vacuum chamber and a critical part of the ITER machine — for world's first fusion reactor as a source of endless clean energy.**
- **'ITER' was originally an acronym for International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor, but recently has been rebranded as 'iter' which is Latin for 'the way'. India's biggest contribution to this is the single largest component of the ITER machine, the very shell within which the whole reactor exists, called the cryostat.**

Government links FASTags with vehicle registration portal

- **The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has written to all States and Union Territories about the integration between the Vaahan system for registration of vehicles as well as the National Electronic Toll Collection programme for FASTags.**
- **It has urged them to ensure the synchronisation of the two portals is implemented effectively. While FASTags now come pre-fitted on new cars, often owners fail to update their FASTag id after receiving the registration number of their new vehicles.**

FASTag is an electronic toll collection system in India, operated by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI). It employs Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology for making toll payments directly from the prepaid or savings account linked to it or directly toll owner. It is affixed on the windscreen of the vehicle and enables to drive through toll plazas without stopping for transactions.

Nitin Gadkari laid foundation stones for new economic corridor projects in Haryana

- Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated and laid foundation stone for 11 national highway projects worth Rs.20,000 crore in Haryana as part of the new economic corridor.
- In the ‘new economic corridor’, more than Rs.20,000 crore will be invested to ensure smooth connectivity from Haryana to other States, including Punjab, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, the Minister for Road Transport and Highways Gadkari said in his address through video conferencing.
- The projects for inauguration include the 35.45 km 4-lane Rohna/Hasangarh to Jhajjar section of NH 334B costing Rs 1183 crore, the 70 km 4-laning of Punjab-Haryana Border to Jind section of NH 71 costing Rs 857 crore, and the 85.36 km 2-lane with paved shoulders Jind-Karnal Highway on NH 709 costing Rs 200 crore.

Nitin Jairam Gadkari was served as the President of the BJP from 2010-2013. He is the current Minister for Road Transport & Highways of India and Shipping Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the Government of India. Gadkari represents Lok Sabha from Nagpur constituency, Maharashtra.

First ‘virtual’ Constitution bench hearing in SC

- The Supreme Court held its first Constitution bench sitting through videoconferencing with, for the first time since March 5, five judges sitting together in one court to take up critical matters that require an interpretation of the Constitution.
- A bench of Justices Arun Mishra, Indira Banerjee, Vineet Saran, MR Shah and Aniruddha Bose appeared wearing masks and maintaining nearly two-feet distance between themselves on the bench. There were previously concerns in some quarters that the Constitution bench would not be able to sit during the pandemic.
- Several important cases are awaiting the attention of the Constitution bench. These include the matter on rights versus faith relating to religious practices that restrict women from entering mosques, Parsi worship places and the Sabarimala temple, petitions challenging scrapping of Jammu and Kashmir’s special status under Articles 370 and 35A, validity of the Citizenship Amendment Act granting citizenship to non-Muslims from neighbouring Islamic countries, and the legal case to determine what is a money bill.

The Supreme Court of India came into being on 28 January 1950. It replaced both the Federal Court of India and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which were then at the apex of the Indian court system. The first Chief Justice of India was Sir H J Kania. Originally, the Constitution of India envisaged a supreme court with a chief justice and seven judges; leaving it to parliament to increase this number. At present, SC is consisting of the Chief Justice of India and 33 sanctioned other judges. The motto of the Supreme Court is ‘Yato Dharmastato Jayah’, means “whence law (dharma), thence victory”. It is also referred to – as the wheel of righteousness, encompassing truth, goodness and equity.

Chhattisgarh’s CM Darpan Portal and mobile app get award by IT institution

- The Mukhyamantri Darpan and mobile App which contains the details of all the flagship schemes of the Chhattisgarh government including the ambitious ‘Suraji Gaon Yojna’ has been awarded “Elites Excellence Awards-2020” at the national level.
- The state of Chhattisgarh has been awarded this honour by the country’s prestigious IT institution Elites Technomedia under the ‘Digital India initiative’.

Punjab Police is India’s first force to recruit civilian experts for cutting-edge investigations

- The Captain Amarinder Singh led Council of Ministers paved the way for Punjab Police to become India’s first police force drawing civilians as domain experts in IT/Digital, Legal Forensics and Finance to give a high-quality cutting edge to its investigation functions.
- As many as 798 such experts will be recruited directly as plain clothes Civilian Support Staff for the Punjab Investigation Bureau, which is all set to get a dose of fresh expert blood and a qualitative edge with the induction of a total of 4,251 personnel, across different ranks and positions, as a result of the restructuring of the Punjab Police department.

Union HRD Minister virtually releases PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education

- **Union Human Resource Development Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ released PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education through online medium in New Delhi.** Minister of State for HRD Shri Sanjay Dhotre was also present through online medium.
- Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ said that **COVID-19 pandemic has led to closure of schools and has impacted over 240 million children of the country** who are enrolled in schools. Extended school closures may cause loss of learning.
- Shri Pokhriyal said that to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, **schools will not only have to remodel and reimagine the way teaching and learning have happened so far**, but will also need to introduce a suitable method of delivering quality education through a healthy mix of schooling at home and schooling at school.

Ministry of Human Resource Development, formerly **Ministry of Education** is responsible for the development of human resources in India. The Ministry is **held currently by Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank**. He represents the **Haridwar Parliamentary constituency of Uttarakhand** in the 17th Lok Sabha.

Guidelines for implementation of Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund launched

- **Union Minister Giriraj Singh launched the implementation guidelines for the Rs 15,000 crore Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) that seeks to boost processing capacities in dairy and meat segments.** The fund was approved by the Union Cabinet on June 24 under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan stimulus package.
- 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, an official statement said.
- 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.
- **India is producing 188 million tonne milk and this is set to increase to 330 million tonne by 2024.** Only 20-25 per cent milk is being processed and the government is trying to bring the same up to 40 per cent.
- He said the **Dairy Processing Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF)** is being implemented for infrastructure development in cooperative sector and AHIDF is first such scheme for the private sector.
- 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 statement said.

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.** With government push to schemes like ‘Make in India’, ‘Skill India’ and now ‘Atma-nirbhar Bharat’, IP Filing and grant activity is likely to increase.
- Industry 4.0 is witnessing new inventions and breakthroughs as it faces challenges in providing the right environment to stimulate innovation, especially in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. IP-intensive industries have been identified as an important and integral part of a country’s economy and account for more jobs and a larger share of its GDP. **The National IPR Policy, launched in May 2016, to promote strong IP regime in the country encourages innovation to achieve Country’s industrial and economic development goals.**

Indian Navy conducted drill near the Andaman & Nicobar Islands

- **A US Navy carrier strike group, led by USS Nimitz conducted maritime drills with Indian warships in the Indian Ocean region (IOR),** against the backdrop of the India-China border standoff in Ladakh, people familiar with the development said on Monday.

- **The passage exercise involved a total of eight Indian and US warships**, said an official, requesting anonymity. The drills also came at a time when tensions have mounted over China's activities in the South China Sea, where the US Navy has just conducted a major exercise that involved two carrier strike groups.
- **Indian Navy conducted drill near the Andaman & Nicobar Islands** with several warships, destroyers, frigates and submarines taking part in the exercise.

The Indian Navy is the naval branch of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Navy. The Chief of Naval Staff, a four-star admiral, commands the navy. The Indian Navy traces its origins back to the East India Company's Marine which was founded in 1612 to protect British merchant shipping in the region. In 1793, the British East India Company established its rule over eastern part of the Indian subcontinent i.e. Bengal, but it was not until 1830 that the colonial navy was titled as His Majesty's Indian Navy. When India became a republic in 1950, the Royal Indian Navy as it had been named since 1934 was renamed to Indian Navy.

World's first electrified rail tunnel fit to run double-stack containers to be operational soon

- In the next 12 months, **the world's first electrified rail tunnel fit to run double-stack containers** will be operational in the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor. Once operational, a double-stack container goods train will be able to run at a speed of more than 100 km from within this tunnel near Haryana's Sohna. Two parts of the tunnel were added after a blast at the zero point of the tunnel.
- Geologically, this tunnel is safe and stable as it is caved through 2500 to 500 million-year-old Proterozoic Rocks mainly Quartzite, Schists and slates of Alwar/Azabgarh groups of Delhi Supergroup rocks which have the high bearing capacity, the company said.
- The tunnel connects the Mewat and Gurugram district of Haryana and negotiates a steep gradient on the uphill and downhill slope of the Aravalli range. 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.
- "Tunnel breaking ceremony marks the completion of the tunnel caving work at the WDFC's one-kilometer long tunnel through the Aravallis near Sohna in Haryana. This will be the world's first electrified rail tunnel fit to run double-stack containers.

In 2019, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu in Andhra Pradesh inaugurated India's longest electrified rail tunnel between Cherlopalli and Rapuru and the electrified railway line between Venkatachalam and Obulavaripalli. A South Central Railway (SCR) release on the occasion said the 112-km new line reduces travel time from 10 to five hours for a goods train from Krishnapatnam Port to Obulavaripalli. Indian Railways (IR) is the fourth-largest railway network in the world by size. There are a total of 18 Railway zones. South Coast Railway Zone is the newest and 18th railway zone, headquartered at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Piyush Vedprakash Goyal is currently serving as the Minister of Railways and Commerce in the Government of India. He was elected as the BJP candidate from Maharashtra for the Rajya Sabha on 3 June 2016.

Rajkot first to get IGBC certification

- After bagging the prestigious title of 'National Capital of India 2019-20' by winning the global climate challenge last month, Rajkot has added another feather to its cap by becoming the first city to get the crucial Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) certification for the Raiya Smart City.
- The Smart City is being developed on 930 acres of land earmarked in Raiya area under the Smart Cities Mission of the union government. The IGBC certification was awarded based on the initiatives focussing on energy efficiency and conserving natural resources taken in the city and the master plan developed for the smart city as per the IGBC guidelines.

The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), part of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) was formed in the year 2001. The vision of the council is, "To enable a sustainable built environment for all and facilitate India to be one of the global leaders in the sustainable built environment by 2025".

Andhra Pradesh Renewable Energy Export Policy unveiled, aims to attract private investments

- Ambitiously aiming to attract private investments to help establish renewable power projects of 120 gigawatts (GWs) using the available land bank, the state government has notified the Andhra Pradesh Renewable Energy Export Policy, 2020, which the state Cabinet approved a couple of days ago.
- After ruffling feathers by attempting to review renewable power purchase agreements, which spooked private investors across the globe, the government unveiled the five-year policy, coming into force, to facilitate the lease of five lakh acres of potential land in the state to renewable energy export project developers, to promote setting up of renewable energy equipment manufacturing facilities, and to generate additional revenue to the exchequer.
- For perspective, the Union government, in 2015, announced that India would install 175 GW of renewable power by 2022.

Andhra Pradesh is the first state in India to be formed under the State reorganisation act in 1956 and first state to be created based on the language in India. On 2 June 2014, the north-western portion of Andhra Pradesh was separated to form the new state of Telangana. The longtime capital of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, was transferred to Telangana as part of the division. Amaravati is the de facto capital city of the Andhra Pradesh. Biswabhusan Harichandan is serving as the current Governor of Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh is the first state in India to have Five Deputy Chief Ministers one each from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, backward, minority and Kapu communities. YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is the current Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

HRD Minister launched Manodarpan initiative to provide psychosocial support to students

- Union Human Resource Development Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal launched 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.
- 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. Appreciating the role of the teachers and students, he said, there are 33 crore students in the country and they will play an important role in making India clean and healthy

The Ministry of Education (MoE), previously the Ministry of Human Resource Development (1985-2020), is responsible for the implementation and formulation of the National Policy on Education approved by Union cabinet of India and to ensure that it is implemented in letter and spirit. The Ministry is held currently by Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. He represents the Haridwar Parliamentary constituency of Uttarakhand in the 17th Lok Sabha. Abul Kalam is the First Minister of Education in the Indian. He is commonly remembered as Maulana Azad; the word Maulana is an honorific meaning 'Our Master' and he had adopted Azad (Free) as his pen name.

RK Singh inaugurates India's first public EV charging plaza in New Delhi

- Minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh inaugurated India's first public EV (Electric Vehicle) charging plaza at Chelmsford Club in New Delhi. The EV charging plaza is a new avenue for making e-mobility ubiquitous and convenient in India.
- Energy Efficiency Services Limited EESL is spearheading the EV ecosystem development in India by undertaking demand aggregation for procuring EVs and identifying innovative business models for implementation of Public Charging Station. EESL in collaboration with NDMC has established the public EV Charging Plaza in Central Delhi. It is the first of its kind in India. The plaza will host 5 Electric Vehicle Chargers of different specifications. The Minister also launched Retrofit of Air-conditioning to improve Indoor Air Quality for Safety and Efficiency (RAISE) national programme.

Raj Kumar Singh is a former Indian bureaucrat and On 30 May 2019, he was appointed as Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Power, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Minister of State in the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India. He is a Member of the Indian Parliament for Arrah, Bihar, since May 2014.

Yogi Adityanath launched “Navin Rojgar Chhatra Yojana” for Scheduled Castes

- **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched “Navin Rojgar Chhatra 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 Swarojgar Yojana” and interacted with some beneficiaries from Rae Bareilly, Gorakhpur, Basti, Meerut, Azamgarh and Moradabad districts.**
- **The Chief Minister said, “Economic equality becomes the basis of social equality. The society with one of its sections becoming strong while another remaining weak will not be able to become self-reliant. It is necessary that there is a balance in the society and this balance should also be at the economic level.”**

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India as well as the most populous country subdivision in the world. It was created on 1 April 1937 as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during British rule, and was renamed Uttar Pradesh in 1950, giving the acronym UP. The state is divided into 18 divisions and 75 districts with the capital being Lucknow. On 9 November 2000, a new state, Uttarakhand, was carved out from the state's Himalayan hill region. The two major rivers of the state, the Ganges and Yamuna, join at Allahabad and flow further east as Ganges. The state contributes 80 seats to the lower house of the Indian Parliament, Lok Sabha and 31 seats to the upper house of the Indian Parliament, Rajya Sabha.

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.**

To give a major boost to the food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage and loss at each stage of the supply chain with particular focus on perishables, Ministry of Food Processing Industries is implementing Food Mega Food Parks Scheme in the country since the year 2008. Financial Assistance upto Rs. 50.00 Crore is provided for setting up Mega Food Parks for creation of modern infrastructure facilities for food processing along the value chain from farm to market.

India Business Council hosts 2020 India Ideas Summit on July 22

- **India Business Council hosted 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 theme for this year's India Ideas Summit is 'Building a Better Future'. The India Ideas Summit will be held virtually by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on July 22, 2020.**
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo delivered the keynote addresses. Other key speakers at the Summit include Minister of External Affairs Dr. S Jaishankar, U.S. Secretary of State Mr. Mike Pompeo. The summit supports strong and inclusive growth in trade and investment relations between India and the United States.**

U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) was formed in 1975 as a business advocacy organization to enlighten and encourage the private sectors of both India and United States to enhance investment flows. The organization serves as a direct link between business and Government leaders, resulting in increased trade and investment to strengthen ties between the two nations. USIBC is headquartered in Washington, D.C., USA. President Nisha Biswal currently serves as the current chairman of USIBC.

‘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.

Karnataka: Siddi community, India's little known African-origin tribe, gets its first lawmaker

- Shantharama Budna Siddi, a social worker, has become the first lawmaker from his community as Governor Vajubhai Vala has nominated him to the Karnataka Legislative Council. The Siddis, an ethnic group in India, are said to have descended from the people of the East African region. They are included in the list of Scheduled Tribes (ST) in Karnataka.
- They are spread along the coast of Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Their main population is, however, concentrated in Junagadh district. With an estimated population of 50,000-60,000, they are mostly practising Muslims, although those in Karnataka are Catholics.

Karnataka is a state in the south western region of India. It was formed on 1 November 1956, with the passage of the States Reorganisation Act. Originally known as the State of Mysore, it was renamed Karnataka in 1973. The capital and largest city is Bengaluru. Bookanakere Siddalingappa Yediyurappa is serving as the 19th and current Chief Minister of Karnataka. Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala is currently serving as the Governor of Karnataka.

Punjab gets its first Plasma Bank for COVID-19 patients

- Punjab got its first plasma bank at Patiala's Rajindra Hospital where those who have recovered from the novel coronavirus can donate their blood plasma to help treat COVID-19 patients.
- Multiple trials of plasma therapy have been successfully conducted in the state that paved the way for the establishment of the plasma bank, he said. The plasma bank is equipped with two plasma machines while a third machine would be introduced soon.

On July 2, 2020, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated India's first plasma bank at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) to ease access to plasma that is being used as a trial to treat Covid-19 patients. The bank will coordinate with patients who have recovered from Covid-19, and are eligible to donate plasma. A plasma bank functions like a blood bank, and has been created specifically for those who are suffering from Covid-19, and have been advised the therapy by doctors.

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal approves 'Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana'

- 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. Kejriwal in a video message said that people who take ration from the government-owned ration shops can get the food items delivered to their residences.

Delhi bordered by Haryana on three sides and by Uttar Pradesh to the east. According to the 2011 census, Delhi city proper's population was over 11 million, the second-highest in India after Mumbai. Anil Baijal is the current & 21st Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. Arvind Kejriwal is the current and 7th Chief Minister of Delhi. The Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991 declared the Union Territory of Delhi to be formally known as the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

MHRD sets up panel to form guidelines for more students studying in India

- The HRD Ministry has set up a committee to form guidelines and suggest measures to ensure that more students study in India and there is a smooth transition for students returning from abroad due to COVID-19 situation.
- The committee headed by chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) is also supposed to recommend a mechanism to increase the intake in well-performing universities.

The University Grants Commission of India (UGC India) is a statutory body set up by the Government of India in accordance to the UGC Act 1956 under Ministry of Education, and is charged with coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of higher education. It provides recognition to universities in India, and disbursements of funds to such recognized universities and colleges. Its headquarters is in New Delhi, and has six regional centres in Pune, Bhopal, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Guwahati and Bangalore. UGC is modelled after University Grants Committee of UK which was an advisory committee of the British government and advised on the distribution of grant funding amongst the British universities. The committee was in existence from 1919 until 1989. Dhirendra Pal Singh is the current chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

World Class State of the Art Honey Testing Lab inaugurated at Anand, Gujarat

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the 'World Class State of Art Honey Testing Laboratory' established by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in Anand (Gujarat) with support of National Bee Board (NBB).

Based on the parameters notified by FSSAI, the NDDB has set-up this world class lab with all the facilities and developed the test methods/protocols, which have been accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL). FSSAI has now notified new standards of Honey, Bee Wax and Royal Jelly.

Narendra Singh Tomar is the Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Minister of Rural Development in the Second Modi ministry. He is a member of the 17th Lok Sabha from Morena, Madhya Pradesh.

IIM Calcutta to become India's first 'net zero' campus

- The Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIM-C), established in 1961, is set to become the first 'net-zero campus' in India. The statement by the management institute said that it will be adding a new academic block and new hostel that will be able to accommodate approximately 1,000 students. IIM-C is planning to an overall transformation of its existing 135 acre campus situated at Diamond Harbour Road, Joka, Kolkata.

'Puttapaka Telia Rumal' gets Geographical Indication tag

- 'Puttapaka Telia Rumal' has been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications registry headquartered in Chennai. Telia Rumal is a unique tie and dye technique that uses oil for the treatment of the yarn that helps it retain softness and has a distinct smell of gingelly oil.
- Gajam Govardhana, Nalgonda-based weaver known for his mastery over the art of Ikkat dyeing of Telia Rumal tradition and a Padma Shri awardee, filed an application for GI tag in 2017 on behalf of Puttapaka handloom cluster.

Telangana is the newly formed 28th state of India with Hyderabad as its permanent capital in 2014. Kalvakuntla Chandrashekhar Rao is the first and the current Chief Minister of Telangana. Tamilisai Soundararajan is serving as Governor of Telangana. Telangana is a landlocked state in the country. On 2 June 2014, the north-western portion of Andhra Pradesh was separated to form the new state of Telangana.

Andhra Pradesh is the first state in India to have to three capital cities

- The decks have been cleared for the formation of three capital cities for Andhra Pradesh – the executive capital at Visakhapatnam, the legislative capital at Amaravati and the judicial capital at Kurnool. The first state in India to have three capital cities is Andhra Pradesh.
- Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan gave his nod to the two bills – AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill, 2020 aimed at creating the three capital cities for the state and the AP Capital Region Development Authority (Repeal) Bill, 2020, seeking to abolish the APCRDA formed in December 2014 to develop Amaravati as the state capital.
- Andhra Pradesh is the first state to be formed on a linguistic basis in India on Oct 1, 1953. After Potti Sreeramulu's death, the Telugu-speaking area of Andhra State was carved out of Madras State on 1 October 1953, with Kurnool as its capital city.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh declared Dharamshala as the second capital of the state after Shimla, making it the third Indian state to have more than one capital. The winter capital of Uttarakhand is Dehradun, the largest city of the state, which is a rail head. Gairsain, a town in Chamoli district is the summer capital of Uttarakhand. The High Court of the state is located in Nainital. While Maharashtra has Mumbai and Nagpur as its capitals, Srinagar and Jammu are the respective summer and winter capitals of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Centre grants permanent commission for women officers in Army

- **Women officers in the Indian Army will now be able to play larger roles with the grant of Permanent Commission (PC) for women** in the armed forces by the Centre.
- The Ministry of Defence issued the **formal letter sanctioning the grant of Permanent Commission (PC) for women officers**, empowering eligible women personnel to take on more responsibility in the army.
- **The order specifies grant of Permanent Commission to Short Service Commissioned (SSC) women officers in all the ten streams of the Indian Army** including Army Air Defence (AAD), Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME), Army Service Corps (ASC), Army Ordnance Corps (AOC), and Intelligence Corps in addition to the existing streams of Judge and Advocate General (JAG) and Army Educational Corps (AEC).

Entry of women in the Army till now has only been through Short Service Commission (SSC) but till now they could not serve beyond 14 years, however, there were some who continued on extensions but were still not given permanent commission. There are over 300 women officers who are serving for more than 14 years on extension. **Till now the percentage of women in the Indian Army was only 3.89 per cent**, Navy 6.7 per cent and Air Force 13.28 per cent, excluding the medical corps, dental corps and Military Nursing Service.

Amit Shah inaugurates international webinar on 'Lokmanya Tilak - Swaraj to Self-reliant India' organized by ICCR

- **Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated** a two-day international webinar on the theme of 'Lokmanya Tilak - Swaraj to Self-reliant India' organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations on the 100th death anniversary of the great freedom fighter Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak.
- Mr Shah said that Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak played a key role in the making of the Indian Independence movement complete in letter and spirit. The Home Minister said that the **slogan of 'Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it'** given by Lokmanya Tilak, will always be written in golden letters in the history of the Indian Independence Movement.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (or Lokmanya Tilak, 23 July 1856 – 1 August 1920), born as Keshav Gangadhar Tilak, was an Indian nationalist, teacher, and an independence activist. He was one third of the Lal Bal Pal triumvirate. Tilak was the **first leader of the Indian Independence Movement**. The British colonial authorities called him "The father of the Indian unrest." He was also conferred with the title of "Lokmanya", which means "accepted by the people (as their leader)". Mahatma Gandhi called him "The Maker of Modern India". Tilak was one of the **first and strongest advocates of Swaraj ("self-rule")** and a strong radical in Indian consciousness. He is **known for his quote in Marathi: "Swarajya is my birthright and I shall have it!"**. Tilak took up this issue by publishing inflammatory articles in his paper Kesari (Kesari was written in Marathi, and "Maratha" was written in English).

Union Home Minister launches Tree Plantation Campaign-2020 of the Coal Ministry

- **Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah launched the Tree Plantation Campaign "Vriksharopan Abhiyan" of the Ministry of Coal** in the presence of Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Pralhad Joshi.
- During the launch event at his residence, the **Union Home Minister inaugurated and laid the Foundation stone of 6 Ecoparks/ Tourism sites**. The tree plantation campaign was conducted at more than 130 locations spread in 38 Districts of 10 coal/lignite bearing States through Video Conferencing.

Amitabh Anilchandra Shah (Amit Shah) is the current Minister of Home Affairs who has been President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) since 2014. He was elected to the lower House of Parliament the Lok Sabha in the 2019 Indian general election from Gandhinagar. He was earlier elected as a member of the upper House of Parliament the Rajya Sabha from Gujarat in 2017. He also became the youngest serving full-time Home Minister at an age of 54.

In a historic first, Kashmir saffron gets GI certification

- **Saffron grown in Kashmir** has received the **geographical indication (GI) tag**, with Lieutenant Governor G C Murmu saying that it is a major historic step in bringing the valley's brand on the global map.
- The Union government issued a certificate of GI registration for the saffron grown in the Kashmir Valley. **Kashmir saffron is the only saffron in the world that is grown at an altitude of 1,600 meters** which adds to its unique characteristics like longer and thicker stigma, natural deep-red colour, high aroma, bitter flavour, chemical free processing and high quality colour strength, flavour and bitterness," said Choudhary adding that **sprinkler irrigation system saffron fields are being installed on a war footing** and this is likely to be completed in next two weeks.

A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place. In addition, the qualities, characteristics or reputation of the product should be essentially due to the place of origin. Geographical Indications protection is granted through the TRIPS Agreement of WTO. India, as a member of the WTO, enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15 September 2003. GIs have been defined under Article 22 (1) of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement. Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India, in 2004–2005.

President Ram Nath Kovind appoints Anandiben Patel the Governor of MP

- **President Ram Nath Kovind appointed Smt. Anandiben Patel the Governor of Madhya Pradesh.** Presently, she is the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. She has been given the additional charge of the Governor of Madhya Pradesh after the demise of Lal Ji Tandon.
- **Anandiben Patel had succeeded Ram Naik to the post of the UP Governor in January 2018.** Before that, she was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, a post she had succeeded Prime Minister Narendra Modi to.

In the Republic of India, a governor is the constitutional head of each of the twenty-eight states. Governors exist in the states while lieutenant governors or administrators exist in union territories including National Capital Territory of Delhi. The governor is appointed by the President of India for a term of five years, and holds office at the President's pleasure. The governor is *de jure* head of the state government; all its executive actions are taken in the governor's name. However, the governor must act on the advice of the popularly elected council of ministers, headed by the chief minister, which thus holds *de facto* executive authority at the state-level. The Constitution of India also empowers the governor to act upon his or her own discretion, such as the ability to appoint or dismiss a ministry, recommend President's rule, or reserve bills for the President's assent. Although in Union Territories real power lies in lieutenant governor or administrator, except in NCT of Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir where he/she shares power with a council of ministers headed by a Chief Minister. According to 7th Constitutional Amendment Act 1956, the same person can be the Governor of two or more states.

Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda inaugurates e-Symposium on Handicrafts

- **Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda inaugurated an e-Symposium on Handicrafts** organized by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Centre for Policy Research and Analysis, Indian Institute of Management, Shillong.
- The e-symposium was titled '**Emergent North-East India: Strategic and Developmental Imperatives in Handicrafts**'. Mr Munda said that the traditional lifestyle in India is very artistic and creative, but we could not make our due place in global market due to lack of proper marketing management. He cited the example of Agarbatti which is now mostly imported in India.

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) came into existence in 1987. TRIFED has its registered and Head Office located in New Delhi. Arjun Munda is a member of the 17th Lok Sabha of India. He represents the Khunti constituency of Jharkhand. He is the current minister for Tribal Affairs. Ministry of Tribal Affairs was set up in 1999 after the bifurcation of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (India) to have a more focused approach on the integrated socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes (STs), the most underprivileged of the Indian Society.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed Grand Finale of world's largest ever online hackathon

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Grand Finale of the largest ever online hackathon in the world on 1st of August 2020 through video-conference. The Grand Finale of Smart India Hackathon-2020 (Software) was held till 3rd of August.
- Mr. Nishank chaired a high-level meeting on Smart India Hackathon (SIH) and discussed achievements of the already conducted hackathons.
- He said that considering the COVID-19 pandemic, the Grand Finale for SIH-2020 was organized online by connecting all the participants throughout the nation together over a specially-built advanced platform. This year, over ten thousand students were competing to solve 243 problem statements from 37 Central Government departments, 17 State Governments and 20 industries during the online Grand Finale.

The Ministry of Education (MoE), previously the Ministry of Human Resource Development (1985-2020), is responsible for the implementation and formulation of the National Policy on Education approved by Union cabinet of India and to ensure that it is implemented in letter and spirit. The Ministry is held currently by Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. He represents the Haridwar Parliamentary constituency of Uttarakhand in the 17th Lok Sabha. Abul Kalam is the First Minister of Education in the Indian. He is commonly remembered as Maulana Azad; the word Maulana is an honorific meaning 'Our Master' and he had adopted Azad (Free) as his pen name.

Ministry of Earth Sciences launches mobile App "Mausam" for IMD

- The Union Ministry of Earth Sciences launched two mobiles apps 'Mausam' and 'Meghdoot' to propagate data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) for public users and those involved in agriculture to track weather updates and other features. The data being fed to the app comes from the state- and district-based IMD weather stations across the country.
- The Meghdoot app was developed jointly by the Digital Agriculture & Youth (DAY) team at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology.
- Mausam and Meghdoot will allow smartphone users on Android and iOS to access real-time weather updates, forecasts, radar images and be proactively warned of impending weather events, the ministry revealed at the time of launch.
- Mausam carries features like current weather, forecast, warnings and Radar images, and doesn't require its users to register. The Meghdoot app is still under construction, with many of its features still to be updated with feeds or data. For now, the app gives weather feeds from the past ten days, forecasts for the next seven days.

The Ministry of Earth Sciences was formed in the year 2006 from a merger of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, and Earth Risk Evaluation Centre (EREC), and the Ministry of Ocean Development. Currently, the ministry is headed by Dr. Harsh Vardhan.

Centre to convert ravines of Chambal region into arable land with World Bank support

- 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, and a preliminary report for the same will seemingly be going to be prepared in a month, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar talked about. After preparation of the preliminary report, subsequent conferences will seemingly be going to be held with the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh for added course of movement, he talked about.

- A standing on this regard was taken in a digital meeting with World Bank knowledge Adarsh Kumar, who talked relating to the monetary establishment is raring to work in Madhya Pradesh, an official assertion talked about. **The Chambal Expressway will be built and will pass through this area**, by which the overall development of the region would be possible.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan chairs India's first virtual cabinet session from hospital

- **Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shivraj Singh Chauhan chaired India's first virtual Cabinet session** from Chirayu hospital. "Approval has been given to the **CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority) scheme**, which will greatly benefit the forest department and the rural area. The CM's Rural Path Vendor Loan Scheme has also been approved.
- **CAMPA Act or Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act is an Indian legislation that seeks to provide an appropriate institutional mechanism, both at the Centre and in each State and Union Territory**, to ensure expeditious utilization in efficient and transparent manner of amounts released in lieu of forest land diverted for non-forest purpose which would mitigate impact of diversion of such forest land.

Madhya Pradesh (meaning Central Province) is a state in central India. Its capital is Bhopal. Nicknamed the "Heart of India" due to its geographical location in India. Madhya Pradesh is the second-largest state in the country by area after Rajasthan. This state was the largest in India by area until 2000, when its southeastern Chhattisgarh region was made as a separate state. MP has the largest reserves of diamond and copper in India.

Cabinet Approves National Education Policy 2020, paving way for transformational reforms in school and higher education systems in the country

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the **National Education Policy 2020, making way for large scale, transformational reforms in both school and higher education sectors**. This is the first education policy of the 21st century and **replaces the thirty-four year old National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986**. Built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability, this policy is aligned to the 2030.
- The policy has **emphasized mother tongue/local language/regional language as the medium of instruction at least till Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond. Sanskrit to be offered at all levels of school and higher education as an option for students, including in the three-language formula.**
- **All students will take school examinations in Grades 3, 5, and 8 which will be conducted by the appropriate authority. Board exams for Grades 10 and 12 will be continued**, but redesigned with holistic development as the aim. A new National Assessment Centre, **PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)** will be set up as a standard-setting body.
- Emphasis on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, no rigid separation between academic streams, **extracurricular, vocational streams in schools; Vocational Education to start from Class 6 with Internships.**
- New Policy aims for Universalization of Education from pre-school to **secondary level with 100 % GER in school education by 2030**. NEP 2020 aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035. 3.5 Crore new seats will be added to Higher education institutions.
- NEP 2020 will **bring 2 crore out of school children back into the main stream. New 5+3+3+4 school curriculum with 12 years of schooling and 3 years of Anganwadi/Pre-schooling.**
- **Higher Education curriculum to have Flexibility of Subjects. Multiple Entry / Exit to be allowed with appropriate certification.** Academic Bank of Credits to be established to facilitate Transfer of Credits.
- **National Research Foundation to be established to foster a strong research culture.** Light but Tight Regulation of Higher Education, single regulator with four separate verticals for different functions.
- **Affiliation System to be phased out in 15 years with graded autonomy to colleges.** NEP 2020 advocates increased use of technology with equity; National Educational Technology Forum to be created. NEP 2020 emphasizes setting up of Gender Inclusion Fund, Special Education Zones for disadvantaged regions and groups.

- **New Policy promotes Multilingualism in both schools and HEs; National Institute for Pali, Persian and Prakrit, Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation to be set up.**
- **A new and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE 2021, will be formulated by the NCTE in consultation with NCERT. By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree.** Stringent action will be taken against substandard stand-alone Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

In June 2017 a ‘Committee for the Draft National Education Policy’ was constituted under the Chairmanship of eminent scientist **Padma Vibhushan, Dr. K. Kasturirangan**, which submitted the **Draft National Education Policy, 2019 to the Hon’ble Human Resource Development Minister** on 31st May, 2019. The **Draft National Education Policy 2019** was uploaded on MHRD’s website and at ‘MyGov Innovate’ portal eliciting views/suggestions/comments of stakeholders, including public. **Based on the report and recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964–1966), the government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced the first National Policy on Education in 1968, which called for a “radical restructuring” and proposed equal educational opportunities in order to achieve national integration and greater cultural and economic development. In 1986, the government led by Rajiv Gandhi introduced a new National Policy on Education. The new policy called for “special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity,” especially for Indian women, Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the Scheduled Caste (SC) communities. The 1986 National Policy on Education was modified in 1992 by the P.V. Narasimha Rao government. In 2005, Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh adopted a new policy based on the “Common Minimum Programme” of his United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government.**

First five Rafale jets land at Ambala air force station; India welcomes the ‘Golden Arrows’

- **Five brand-new Indian Air Force Dassault Rafale fighters recently touched down at Ambala Air Force Station in Haryana, India. The aircraft had departed from Dassault Aviation’s Bordeaux-Mérignac facility in France and made the over 5,000-mile journey supported by French tanker aircraft, with a stop-off at Al Dhafra in the United Arab Emirates.**
- **The Rafales are joining No. 17 Squadron “Golden Arrows” Squadron at Ambala. This is the first of at least two planned units that will fly the 36 Rafales that are currently on order as part of a €7.87-billion contract, or around \$8.7 billion in U.S. dollars at the time that was signed in 2016. All 36 aircraft are expected to be delivered by 2022 and they will be equally split with No. 101 “Falcons” Squadron, which will be re-established as the second Indian Rafale unit, based at Hashimara Air Force Station.**

Each aircraft has 14 storage stations for weapons. The jets come with one of the most advanced Meteor air-to-air missiles. The 190-kg missile has a Beyond Visual Range (BVR) of over 100 km, traveling at a top speed of Mach 4. The F16 jets, used by Pakistan, carry the AMRAAM missile, which has a BVR of 75 km. Rafale can also outperform F16 in dogfights. The Rafale jets also come with SCALP, the air-to-ground cruise missile with a range over 300 km. It is a long-range deep strike missile.

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. 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.**

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 Niti Aayog for the February-June 2020 period. Ri-Bhoi (Meghalaya) and Bahraich (Uttar Pradesh)**

have been placed at the second and third positions respectively. Nawada (Bihar) has been ranked fourth and Moga (Punjab) is at the fifth place.

- 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.

Green-Ag project launches in Mizoram

- **Green-Ag, a project funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF), which aims to catalyze sustainable transformation of Indian agriculture without compromising the country's food security and farmers' income, was launched in Mizoram.**
- **Mizoram is among five Indian states where the project will be implemented.** The other four states are Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. The project will be **implemented in Dampa Tiger Reserve in west Mizoram's Mamit district and Thorangtlang Wildlife Sanctuary in Lunglei district** in southern part of the State covering more than 30 villages.
- **The Green-Ag project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through its sixth funding cycle. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW) is the national executing agency and FAO is the designated GEF Implementing Agency.**

ITBP became first CAPF to have supplies from KVIC

- **Indo Tibetan Border Police, ITBP became the first Central Armed Police Force CAPF to have supplies from the Khadi & Village Industries Commission, KVIC.**
- According to the agreement, **total 1200 Quintal of Mustard Oil is being procured from KVIC by ITBP** with a total financial implication of 1 Crore 73 Lakh 80 Thousand rupees. It was decided during a meeting of the Directors General of the CAPFs held at Home Ministry in October last year that **use of Terry Khadi Uniform and other items of swadeshi origin should be made available to the CAPFs.**

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) is India's primary border patrol organization with its border with China (Tibet). It is one of the five Central Armed Police Forces of India, raised on 24 October 1962, under the CRPF Act, in the wake of the Sino-Indian War of 1962. Border Security Force (BSF) is the border guarding organisation of India. It is one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces of India, and was raised in the wake of the 1965 War on 1 December 1965, "for ensuring the security of the borders of India and for matters connected there with". It currently stands as the world's largest border guarding force. BSF has been termed as the First Line of Defence of Indian Territories.

Atal Innovation Mission launches 'AIM-iCREST', in partnership with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Wadhvani Foundation

- In a major initiative to encourage and enable **holistic progress in the incubator ecosystem across the country**, NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), has launched **AIM iCREST – an Incubator Capabilities enhancement program for a Robust Ecosystem focused on creating high performing Startups**. This is a **first of its kind initiative for advancing innovation at scale in India**.
- **AIM has joined hands with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Wadhvani Foundation - organizations that can lend credible support and expertise in the entrepreneurship and innovation space.** These partnerships will provide global expertise and showcase proven best practices to the AIM's incubator network.
- **AIM iCREST, as the name suggests, has been designed to enable the incubation ecosystem and act as a growth hack for AIM's Atal and Established incubators across the country. Under the initiative, the AIM's incubators are set to be upscaled and provided requisite support to foster the incubation enterprise economy that will help them to significantly enhance their performance.**

- This will be **complemented by providing training to entrepreneurs, through technology driven processes and platforms**. The program aims at going beyond incubator capacity building. Given the current pandemic crisis, the effort will focus on supporting start-up entrepreneurs in knowledge creation and dissemination as well as in developing robust and active networks.

With a vision to ‘Cultivate one Million children in India as Neoteric Innovators’, Atal Innovation Mission is establishing Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs) in schools across India. The objective of this scheme is to foster curiosity, creativity and imagination in young minds; and inculcate skills such as design mindset, computational thinking, adaptive learning, physical computing etc.

Raise creamy layer ceiling, don't count salary, farm income, says Parliamentary panel

- **Not including salary and agricultural revenue while calculating the annual income ceiling for the creamy layer category of OBCs and raising this limit to Rs 15 lakh from eight lakh at present** are some of the recommendations made by a parliamentary panel in its report.
- **At present those belonging to other backward classes (OBCs) are eligible for 27 per cent reservation in educational institutions and government jobs**, barring those who come under the creamy layer category with an annual income of more than Rs 8 lakh.
- **Parliamentary standing on welfare of backward classes which is chaired by BJP MP Ganesh Singh** in its report on ‘Rationalisation of Creamy Layer in Employment for OBCs in Services and Posts under the control of Government of India’ has recommended to **raise the ceiling of creamy layer from Rs 8 lakh to Rs 15 lakh**.

NHRC forms expert panel to study COVID 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.

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India is a Statutory public body constituted on 12 October 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Ordinance of 28 September 1993. It was given a statutory basis by the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 (PHRA). The NHRC is the National Human Rights Commission of India, responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights, defined by the Act as “Rights Relating To Life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India”. **Handyala Lakshminarayananaswamy Dattu** is a former Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the current chairman of the National Human Rights Commission.

International



Russian President Vladimir Putin records resounding victory in presidential polls

- Russians voted by a landslide to pass constitutional changes that will allow Vladimir Putin to run for president twice more, potentially extending his rule until 2036.
- With nearly all of the ballots counted the tally for the voting that has taken place over a full week showed a 78% “yes” vote, according to Russia’s Central Election Commission. The commission estimated the turnout was 65% of eligible voters.
- Russia’s constitution had required Putin to step down after his current six-year term expires in 2024. The amendments will “reset” the two-term presidential limit to zero, allowing Putin to run for another two six-year, consecutive mandates after his current term ends in 2024. He has already led Russia for more than two decades, as either President or Prime Minister.
- It also includes changes designed to strengthen the country’s State Council and a provision banning the relinquishing of any Russian territory — a move aimed at solidifying Moscow’s hold on Crimea, which had been under Ukraine’s control until it was annexed by Russia in 2014.
- In January, Putin’s Cabinet, including Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, abruptly resigned in a move aimed at easing the constitutional changes.

Vladimir Putin has served as the president of Russia since 2012, previously holding the position from 2000 until 2008. He was also the Prime Minister of Russia from 1999 to 2000 and again from 2008 to 2012. He served as the first Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), the KGB’s successor agency, before being appointed as prime minister in August 1999. After the resignation of Yeltsin, Putin was elected to succeed him. A **duma** is a Russian assembly with advisory or legislative functions. The Russian ruble or rouble is the currency of the Russia.

Malawi opposition leader declared winner of presidential re-run

- Malawi’s electoral commission declared opposition leader Lazarus Chakwera winner of a re-run presidential election a dramatic reversal of the incumbent’s discredited win in a process that has been seen as a triumph for African democracy. Mr. Chakwera secured the required majority, with 58.57% of the vote.

Malawi officially the **Republic of Malawi**, is a landlocked country in southeastern Africa that was formerly known as **Nyasaland**. Its capital is **Lilongwe**, which is also Malawi’s largest city. The **kwacha** is the currency of Malawi. Lazarus Chakwera became President of Malawi in June 2020.

Nile countries agree to restart talks over disputed dam

- The leaders of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia agreed to return to talks aimed at reaching an accord over the filling of Ethiopia’s new hydroelectric dam on the Blue Nile. Egypt, which relies on the Nile for more than 90% of its water supplies and already faces high water stress, fears a devastating impact on its booming population of 100 million. Sudan, which also depends on the Nile for water, has played a key role in bringing the two sides together after the collapse of U.S.-mediated talks in February.

The Nile is a **major north-flowing river in northeastern Africa**, and is the **longest river in Africa and the disputed longest river in the world**, as the Brazilian government says that the Amazon River is longer than the Nile.

Ireland gets coalition government, Leo Varadkar to return as PM in 2022

- **Leo Varadkar, the outgoing Prime Minister of Ireland, will now be the deputy Prime Minister under a new coalition government headed by Micheal Martin, and return as the Prime Minister in 2022 under the power-sharing arrangement.**
- **Varadkar, became a caretaker Prime Minister after no party won a majority in the February 8 election. Three parties have now agreed to form the coalition government. They are Varadkar's Fine Gael party, Martin's Fianna Fail (both centrist) and the Green party. Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, who have long been rivals since the Irish Civil War, are joining a coalition for the first time.**

Ireland is an island in the North Atlantic. It is separated from Great Britain to its east by the North Channel, the Irish Sea, and St George's Channel. Ireland is the second-largest island of the British Isles, the third-largest in Europe, and the twentieth-largest on Earth. The capital and largest city is Dublin. Micheal Martin has been serving as Taoiseach, since June 2020. Ireland currency is euro.

U.N.-75 declaration delayed

- **In a battle of and for words, a commemorative declaration marking the 75th anniversary of the signing of the U.N. Charter was delayed as member states could not reach an agreement on phraseology.**
- **The Five Eyes — the U.S., the U.K., Australia, New Zealand and Canada — along with India, objected to the use of a phrase “shared vision of a common future”, associated with China. The language and theme in question, while associated with the Chinese government, has been used outside China by other countries, including at the 2019 Commonwealth Summit, UNA-UK, a non-profit that promotes U.K. action at the U.N.**
- **The phrase, “community with a shared future for mankind” is closely associated with the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) and especially Chinese President Xi Jinping as an articulation of the country's vision for the world. While objecting to the language that is apparently inspired by the CPC ideology is not new, the current impasse comes at a time when China's relationships with a number of democracies, including India, Australia and the U.S., are strained.**
- **Given the impasse, President of the 74th General Assembly Muhammad-Bande had suggested, on June 25, an alternatively phrased declaration. The proposed change, available on the UN website, read: “We will work together with partners to strengthen coordination and global governance for the common future of present and coming generations.”**

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. Under the Charter, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions. The permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (also known as the Permanent Five, Big Five, or P5) are China (formerly the Republic of China), Russia (formerly the Soviet Union), France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit was an Indian diplomat and elected as the first female president of the United Nations General Assembly. Antonio Guterres is a Portuguese politician and diplomat who is serving as the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations. Previously, he was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees between 2005 and 2015.

Pakistan Army appoints first female lieutenant general

- **Pakistan Army has appointed a woman officer as lieutenant general for the first time. Major General Nigar Johar, who got the coveted post of a three-star general, has also been appointed as the first female surgeon general of the Pakistan Army.**

Pakistan is a country in South Asia. It is the fifth-most populous country. Islamabad is the capital city of Pakistan. Pakistani rupee is the currency of Pakistan. Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi is the 22nd and current Prime Minister of Pakistan and the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Before entering politics, Khan was an international cricketer and captain of the Pakistan national cricket team, which he led to victory in the 1992 Cricket World Cup. Arif-ur-Rehman Alvi is 13th and current President of Pakistan

Agreement for Hydroelectric Project in Bhutan signed in presence of EAM S Jaishankar

- The Concession Agreement for the 600 MegaWatt Kholongchhu (Joint Venture) Hydroelectric Project between Bhutan government and Kholongchhu Hydro Energy Limited was signed in Thimphu, in virtual presence of External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar and his Bhutanese counterpart Dr. Tandi Dorji.
- The 600 MW run-of-the-river project is located on the lower course of the Kholongchhu River in Trashiyangtse District in Eastern Bhutan. The Project envisages an underground powerhouse of four 150 MW turbines with water impounded by a concrete gravity dam of 95 meters height.
- It will be implemented by Kholongchhu Hydro Energy Limited, a Joint Venture company formed between Druk Green Power Corporation of Bhutan and Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited of India.
- The signing of the Concession Agreement will lead to commencement of construction and other works of **this first Joint Venture Hydroelectric Project between India and Bhutan**. The project is expected to be completed in the second half of 2025.

Bhutan is a landlocked country in South Asia. Thimphu is its capital and largest city, while Phuntsholing is its financial center. Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck is the current reigning Druk Gyalpo or “Dragon King” of the Kingdom of Bhutan. Lotay Tshering is the current Prime Minister of Bhutan, in office since 7 November 2018. Bhutan is the first country in the world to come up with a happiness index and linked it to development, which is otherwise based on GDP numbers. The ngultrum is the currency of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

New Zealand cancels 2021 APEC summit, will lead it virtually

- New Zealand was scheduled to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Auckland. The event would have brought thousands of people to the country throughout the year, **culminating in a leader’s week in November 2021**.
- New Zealand canceled its plans to host a major meeting of the U.S. and Asian leaders next year because of the coronavirus, opting instead to lead a virtual summit.
- APEC focuses on trade issues, although it also provides a chance for world leaders to catch up. Its 21 members include the U.S., China, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Indonesia and Hong Kong.
- Last year, Chile canceled the APEC leaders’ meeting because of violent anti-government protests. This year Malaysia has been hosting virtual APEC meetings. New Zealand’s Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters said it was necessary to cancel next year’s summit now for planning and security reasons.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is an inter-governmental forum for 21 member economies in the Pacific Rim that promotes free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region. APEC started in 1989 in response to the growing interdependence of Asia-Pacific economies and the advent of regional trade blocs in other parts of the world; it aimed to establish new markets for agricultural products and raw materials beyond Europe. It is headquartered in Singapore.

Israel start-up creates world’s first plant-based steak with 3d printing

- For the first time ever, an Israeli start-up has created the world’s first plant-based steak using industrial 3D-printing. **Redefine Meat**, will start testing the alt-beef cuts that merge culinary and food tech worlds at some of the high-end restaurants in Israel by next month then market the 3D-printed steaks by 2021, according to reports.
- The company is producing realistic beef and chicken from vegetable protein and is manufacturing several such layers that mimic the texture of beef built using the 3D printers. **Eshchar Ben-Shitrit**, the CEO and founder who set up the company formerly known as Jet Eat, in 2018, was quoted saying that the company was printing the 3D “alternative meat” which was a meat-free product but tasted like real steak.
- Further, he said that the company was manufacturing the imitations in large amounts to be able to supply the product widely. **The announcement marked the start of a new era in alternative meat – the alt-steak era**, Ben-Shitrit added. The global market for meat alternatives is the fastest-growing segment of the food industry and is expected to reach \$140 billion.

Salma Lakhani appointed Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, first Muslim in Canada to hold post

- A community advocate and businessperson Salma Lakhani made history upon her appointment as the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta, the first-ever Muslim with roots in the Indian subcontinent to occupy the post in Canada.
- Her appointment was announced by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Lakhani, a follower of the Ismaili sect, was born in Uganda but her family was forced to leave after the Indian-origin community in the African country was expelled by Dictator Idi Amin.
- A Lt Governor in Canada is the equivalent of a Governor in India and is nominated by the federal government. While the role is largely ceremonial, the appointment is symbolic of diversity in how leadership in the country looks.

Canada is a country located in the northern part of North America. Canada is the world's second-largest country by total area. Elizabeth II is the Head of the Commonwealth and queen regnant of seven independent Commonwealth countries: the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon. Its capital is Ottawa, and its three largest metropolitan areas are Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Canadian dollar is the currency of Canada. Justin Pierre James Trudeau is serving as the 23rd and current Prime Minister of Canada since 2015.

Record 56 million tons e-waste dumped globally, says top UN report

- The Global E-waste Monitor 2020 report found that the world dumped a record 53.6 million tons of e-waste last year. Just 17.4% was recycled.
- Across the river from Delhi's Red Fort, the grim neighbourhood of Seelampur lives off what consumers in the modern world throw away - their broken or obsolete electronic and electrical goods. Home to one of the world's largest markets for e-waste, Seelampur exemplifies the challenge highlighted in a UN-led report released. Although India is the only country in South Asia to draft legislation for e-waste, its collection remains rudimentary.
- China, with 10.1 million tons, was the biggest contributor to e-waste, and the United States was second with 6.9 million tons. India, with 3.2 million tons, was third. Together these three countries accounted for nearly 38% of the world's e-waste last year.
- Global warming is just one issue cited by the report as it noted 98 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalents were released into the atmosphere as a result of inadequate recycling of "undocumented" refrigerators and air conditioners.

Electronic waste or e-waste describes discarded electrical or electronic devices. Used electronics which are destined for refurbishment, reuse, resale, salvage recycling through material recovery, or disposal are also considered e-waste. Informal processing of e-waste in developing countries can lead to adverse human health effects and environmental pollution. Electronic scrap components, such as CPUs, contain potentially harmful materials such as lead, cadmium, beryllium, or brominated flame retardants. Recycling and disposal of e-waste may involve significant risk to health of workers and their communities

Maldives, Sri Lanka eliminate measles and rubella, ahead of 2023 target

- Maldives and Sri Lanka were verified for having eliminated rubella, making them the first two countries in WHO South-East Asia Region to achieve measles and rubella elimination ahead of the 2023 target.
- "Protecting all children against these killer and debilitating diseases is an important step in our endeavor to achieve healthier population and health for all,". The announcement was made after the fifth meeting of the South-East Asia Regional Verification Commission for Measles and Rubella Elimination, held virtually.
- A country is verified as having eliminated measles and rubella when there is no evidence of endemic transmission of the measles and rubella viruses for over three years in the presence of a well performing surveillance system. Maldives reported 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.

Maldives is a **South Asian country**, located in the **Indian Ocean**, situated in the **Arabian Sea**. **Male** is the **capital and most populated city**, traditionally called the “**King’s Island**” for its central location. **Maldivian rufiyaa** is the currency of the Maldives. **Ibrahim Mohamed Solih** is the **current President of the Maldives**.

Sri Lanka is an island country in **South Asia**, located in the **Indian Ocean** to the southwest of the **Bay of Bengal**. Sri Lanka is separated from the **India** by the **Gulf of Mannar** and the **Palk Strait**. **Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte** is the official, administrative capital of Sri Lanka. **Colombo** is the commercial capital and largest city of Sri Lanka. **Gotabaya Rajapaksa** is the current President of Sri Lanka. **Mahinda Rajapaksa** is the current Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. **Sri Lankan rupee** is the currency of Sri Lanka.

15th meeting of India-EU Summit held in virtual mode on 15th July

- The 15th meeting of the India-European Union Summit was held in virtual mode on 15th July, 2020. The Summit was co-chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President of European Council Charles Michel and President of European Commission Ursula von der Leyen.
- The Summit discussed about developments around the Covid-19 pandemic and contemporary global matters of interest to both sides. The 14th India-EU Summit was held on 6 October 2017 in New Delhi.
- It was in the year 2000 in which India and the European Union decided to institutionalise the mechanism at the level of the Summit. This year marks 20 years of the Summit process between India and EU. The last Summit between the two sides took place in 2017.
- India and the European Union committed to a framework for strategic cooperation until 2025, and vowed to cooperate on their response to the coronavirus pandemic, and at the United Nations Security Council.
- In a new initiative to revive talks on a free trade agreement that have been suspended since 2013, the two sides announced a “high level dialogue” between Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and E.U. Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan to try and take the Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) forward.
- Both sides stressed the importance of bilateral trade, as EU is India’s largest trading partner, while India is the E.U.’s ninth biggest trading partner. According to diplomats, the high level dialogue on trade and investment now launched is a key takeaway of the E.U.-India summit, which was last held in 2017.

European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe. The Maastricht Treaty established the European Union in 1993 and introduced European citizenship. A monetary union was established in 1999 and came into full force in 2002 and is composed of 19 EU member states which use the euro currency. Brussels is the de facto capital of the European Union. Ursula von der Leyen is serving as President of the European Commission. Charles Michel has been the President of the European Council.

Singapore’s PAP retains power but has weakest showing ever

- Singapore’s ruling party retained a firm grip on power but suffered its weakest performance in 55 years in office in an election with the economy badly hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. The opposition Workers’ Party won a record 10 seats and secured two group representation constituencies.
- The ruling party won 83 seats – or 89% of those up for grabs, according to an official count by the Elections Department. That allows it to amend the constitution, pass laws and set policies without major obstacles.
- Even so, it’s a setback for the People’s Action Party, which has always won at least 93% of parliamentary seats since Singapore became an independent nation in 1965. The result could potentially disrupt Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong’s succession plan.

Singapore is a sovereign city-state and island country in Southeast Asia. **Singapore dollar** is the official currency of Singapore. **Lee Hsien Loong** is the current Prime Minister of Singapore. **Halimah binti Yacob** is the current President of Singapore. She is the first female president in the country’s history.

First five re-printed volumes of Mongolian Kanjur Manuscripts released

- The Ministry of Culture has taken up the project of reprinting of 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur under the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM). The first set of five volumes of Mongolian Kanjur published under the NMM was presented to the President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind on the occasion of Guru Purnima, also known as Dharma Chakra Day.
- Mongolian Kanjur, the Buddhist canonical text in 108 volumes is considered to be the most important religious text in Mongolia. In the Mongolian language ‘Kanjur’ means ‘Concise Orders’- the words of Lord Buddha in particular. It is held in high esteem by the Mongolian Buddhists and they worship the Kanjur at temples and recite the lines of Kanjur in daily life as a sacred ritual.
- The Kanjur are kept almost in every monastery in Mongolia. Mongolian Kanjur has been translated from Tibetan. The language of the Kanjur is Classical Mongolian. The Mongolian Kanjur is a source of providing a cultural identity to Mongolia.

Mongolia is a landlocked unitary sovereign state in East Asia. Ulaanbaatar is the capital and largest city of Mongolia. Battulga Khaltmaa is currently serving as the President of Mongolia since 10 July 2017. Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh is currently serving as Prime Minister of Mongolia since October, 2017. The togrog or tugrik is the official currency of Mongolia.

US notifies UN of decision to withdraw from WHO

- The US has formally notified the United Nations (UN) of its decision to withdraw from the World Health Organization (WHO). The US has accused the WHO of siding with China on the outbreak of the virus, which originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan late last year.
- Washington alleged that WHO misled the world resulting in deaths of over half a million people globally, including over 1 lakh 30 thousand in America.

United States of America (USA) is a federal republic composed of 50 states and capital is Washington, D.C., Donald John Trump is the 45th and current President of the United States. He became the oldest and wealthiest person ever to assume the presidency, the first without prior military or government service, and the fifth to have won the election while losing the popular vote.

Russia first nation to finish human trials for Covid-19 vaccine

- Russia has become the first nation to complete clinical trials of Covid-19 vaccine on humans, and the results have proven the medication's effectiveness.
- Chief researcher Elena Smolyarchuk, who heads the Center for Clinical Research on Medications at Sechenov University, told Russian news agency TASS that the human trials for the vaccine have been completed at the university and they will be discharged soon.
- Russia had allowed clinical trials of two forms of a potential Covid-19 vaccine developed by the Gamaleya National Research Center for Epidemiology and Microbiology on June 18. The first vaccine, in the form of a solution for intramuscular administration, was carried out at the Burdenko Military Hospital. Another vaccine, in the form of a powder for the preparation of a solution for intramuscular administration, was carried out at Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University.

Vladimir Putin has served as the president of Russia since 2012, previously holding the position from 2000 until 2008. He was also the Prime Minister of Russia from 1999 to 2000 and again from 2008 to 2012. He served as the first Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), the KGB's successor agency, before being appointed as prime minister in August 1999. After the resignation of Yeltsin, Putin was elected to succeed him. A duma is a Russian assembly with advisory or legislative functions. The Russian ruble or rouble is the currency of the Russia. Mikhail Vladimirovich Mishustin is serving as Prime Minister of Russia since 16 January 2020. He previously served as Director of the Federal Taxation Service from 2010 to 2020. Russia President Vladimir Putin has said his country showed unity by voting to back reforms allowing him to stay in power until 2036 and that Russians had felt the need for the changes in their hearts.

Poland's conservative President wins another term

- Polish President Andrzej Duda has won five more years in power on a socially conservative, religious platform in a closely fought election that is likely to deepen Warsaw's isolation in the European Union (EU).
- Nearly final results presidential election run-off showed Mr. Duda on over 51%, giving him an unassailable lead over liberal Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski, who won almost 49% of the votes. A devout Catholic, Mr. Duda is allied with the ruling nationalist Law and Justice (PiS) party, and his victory reinforces the government's mandate to pursue reforms of the judiciary and media which the European Commission says subvert democratic standards.

Poland is a country located in Central Europe. Poland's capital and largest metropolis is Warsaw. Mateusz Jakub Morawiecki has been the Prime Minister of Poland since December 2017. Andrzej Sebastian Duda has served as president of Poland since 6 August 2015. The zloty is the official currency and legal tender of Poland.

India-Bhutan opened new trade route to facilitate connectivity between two nations

- India and Bhutan have opened a new trade route between Jaigaon in West Bengal and Pasakha in Bhutan.
- "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".

Bhutan is a landlocked country in South Asia. Thimphu is its capital and largest city, while Phuntsholing is its financial center. Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck is the current reigning Druk Gyalpo or "Dragon King" of the Kingdom of Bhutan. Lotay Tshering is the current Prime Minister of Bhutan, in office since 7 November 2018. Bhutan is the first country in the world to come up with a happiness index and linked it to development, which is otherwise based on GDP numbers. The ngultrum is the currency of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Two new Israeli assault rifles Arad and Carmel now set to be manufactured in India

- In a boost to the fledgling domestic small arms industry, two latest Israeli assault rifles — the Arad and the Carmel — are set to be manufactured in India. The assault weapons are to be produced under the 'Make in India' initiative in Madhya Pradesh, where a plant had been set up in 2017 by Israel Weapons System (IWI) in a joint venture called PLR Systems.
- While Punj Llyod originally held 51 per cent shares in the joint venture, it was bought over by a company called Fouraces System India Private Limited with the Indian conglomerate facing debt issues. The joint venture is aiming for contracts from the Special Forces of the Army, Navy and Air Force besides the central armed police forces and the state police.

Israel is a country in the Middle East, Jerusalem is one of the oldest cities in the world, and is considered holy to the three major Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority claim Jerusalem as their capital, however, neither claim is widely recognized internationally. Knesset is the unicameral national legislature of Israel. Israeli new shekel is the currency of Israel. Benjamin Netanyahu is serving as the 9th and current Prime Minister of Israel since 2009. Reuven Rivlin is serving as the 10th and current President of Israel since 2014.

Iran drops India from Chabahar rail project, cites funding delay

- Four years after India and Iran signed an agreement to construct a rail line from Chabahar port to Zahedan, along the border with Afghanistan, the Iranian government has decided to proceed with the construction on its own, citing delays from the Indian side in funding and starting the project.
- Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami inaugurated the track-laying process for the 628 km Chabahar-Zahedan line, which will be extended to Zaranj across the border in Afghanistan.
- The entire project would be completed by March 2022, and that Iranian Railways will proceed without India's assistance, using approximately \$400 million from the Iranian National Development Fund. The development

comes as China finalises a massive 25-year, \$400 billion strategic partnership deal with Iran, which could cloud India's plans.

The Chabahar port is being considered a gateway to golden opportunities for trade by India, Iran and Afghanistan with central Asian countries besides ramping up trade among the three countries in the wake of Pakistan denying transit access to New Delhi. Under an agreement signed between India and Iran in May 2016, India is to equip and operate two berths in Chabahar Port Phase-I with capital investment of USD 85.21 million and annual revenue expenditure of USD 22.95 million on a 10-year lease.

Tunisian PM resigns triggering political crisis

- **Tunisian Prime Minister Elyes Fakhfakh stepped down plunging the country into a political crisis as it tries to weather the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic. Mr. Fakhfakh presented his resignation to President Kais Saied.**
- In June 2020, according to Al Jazeera, “an independent member of Parliament published documents indicating that Fakhfakh owned shares in companies that won deals worth 44 million dinars”. Fakhfakh denied any wrongdoing. On 15 July 2020, he resigned.

Tunisia is a country in the Maghreb region of North Africa, Tunisia is bordered by Algeria to the west and southwest, Libya to the southeast, and the Mediterranean Sea to the north and east. Tunisia's population was 11.7 million in 2019. Tunisia's name is derived from its capital city Tunis. The dinar is the currency of Tunisia.

Gabon Appoints First Woman Prime Minister amid Government Shakeup

- **Gabon President Ali Bongo promoted his defence minister, Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda, to Prime Minister, the first time a woman has held the role in the country.**
- **Ossouka Raponda, 56, is the sixth Prime Minister appointed since Bongo succeeded his father in 2009.** Her first job is to form a new government after her predecessor, Julien Nkoghe Bekale, stepped down.

Gabon is a country on the west coast of Central Africa. Located on the equator, Gabon is bordered by Equatorial Guinea to the northwest, Cameroon to the north, the Republic of the Congo on the east and south, and the Gulf of Guinea to the west. Its capital and largest city is Libreville. Ali Bongo Ondimba has been President of Gabon since October 2009. Central African CFA franc is the currency of six independent states in central Africa: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, and Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.

Estonia launches the world's first 'Digital Nomad Visa'

- **Estonia has announced the launch of the world's first “Digital Nomad Visa.”** The country passed a law offering one-year visas to freelancers and employees who are able to work remotely to spend part of their time working from the Baltic state.
- **While the COVID-19 pandemic has restricted international travel,** it has also highlighted the efficiency and possibilities of remote working. Whereas before, local employment and visa laws restricted options for freelancers, now Estonia is hoping that 2,000 people might take advantage of the new scheme.

Estonia is a country on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea in Northern Europe. Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, and Tartu are largest cities and urban areas in the whole country. Kersti Kaljulaid is the fifth and current President of Estonia, in office since 10 October 2016. She is the first female head of state of Estonia since the country declared independence in 1918, as well as the youngest ever President, age 46 at the time of her election. Juri Ratas has been Prime Minister of Estonia since 2016.

Abu Dhabi begins world's first WHO-listed stage 3 clinical trial of COVID-19 vaccine

- **Abu Dhabi began phase three of clinical trials for a COVID-19 vaccine. The human trial is the world's first WHO-listed phase three clinical trial for a coronavirus inactivated vaccine.** Taking place in Abu Dhabi, the trial is a partnership between Sinopharm's China National Biotec Group (CNBG), Abu Dhabi based artificial intelligence and cloud computing company Group 42 and the Abu Dhabi Department of Health.

Abu Dhabi is the capital and the second most populous city of the United Arab Emirates (the most populous being Dubai), and also capital of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the UAE's seven emirates. United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federal sovereign absolute monarchy in Western Asia. Khalifa Al Nahyan is the current President of the United Arab Emirates. Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai. United Arab Emirates Dirham is the currency of the United Arab Emirates.

At 273 Million People, India Records World's Largest Reduction In Poverty: UN

- About 273 million Indians moved out of multidimensional poverty between 2005-2006 and 2015-2016, 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.

Belgian wind farm to become 'world's first' to grow seaweed between wind turbines

- A Belgian wind farm on the North Sea will become the first in the world to grow seaweed between its wind turbines.
- The project, which is co-funded by the European Union, seeks to find if offshore wind farms can provide a suitable space to meet the increasing demand for seaweed, which until now is grown mainly in sheltered areas or sometimes close to the coast. Many scientists have also found increased consumption of seaweed could be one way of combating climate change.

Belgium is a country in Western Europe. It is bordered by the Netherlands to the north, Germany to the east, Luxembourg to the southeast, France to the southwest, and the North Sea to the northwest. The capital and largest city is Brussels. The euro is the official currency of 19 of the 27 member states of the European Union. Sophie Wilmes is currently the Prime Minister of Belgium. She is the first woman to hold the post.

US seeks to rent SPR space to India after similar deal with Australia

- The United States and India signed a memorandum of understanding that could result in India renting space in the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve for an overseas oil stockpile, after Australia did the same earlier this year.
- India has relatively small SPR capacity at home – 39 million barrels – considering its ranking as the third-largest oil consumer after China and the US. The US SPR, held in four caverns on the Gulf Coast, currently has capacity for 714 million barrels. If the US and India work out a deal for SPR rental, India would be able to buy US crude at low prices and store it until demand rebounds.

Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL) is an Indian company responsible for maintaining the country's strategic petroleum reserves. ISPRL is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB), which functions under the administrative control of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. Strategic crude oil storages are at three underground locations in Mangalore, Visakhapatnam and Padur (Udupi, Karnataka). In the 2017-18 Budget, it was announced that two more such caverns will be set up Chandikhole, Odisha and Bikaner in Rajasthan as part of the second phase. In June 2018, the Narendra Modi administration approved the construction of a new storage facility in Chandikhole and doubling the capacity at Padur. Apart from this, India is planning to expand more strategic crude oil facilities in second phase at Rajkot in Gujarat.

World's first e-pilgrimage at France's Lourdes shrine

- **France's Lourdes Roman Catholic shrine organised its first ever e-pilgrimage following the coronavirus crisis, drawing a virtual audience of 80 million from around the world.** Lourdes is usually thronged in summer with pilgrims who travel, sometimes across the world, to light a candle in the sanctuary where Catholics believe the Virgin Mary appeared.
- But with flights grounded, many international borders still closed and social distancing rules in place due to the coronavirus pandemic, Lourdes had to find another way. **The sanctuary in southwest France broadcast mass and prayers all day in five different languages on television and social media for the e-pilgrimage, dubbed "Lourdes United".**

The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes or the Domain (as it is most commonly known) is an area of ground surrounding the Catholic shrine (Grotto) to Our Lady of Lourdes in the town of Lourdes, France. The Sanctuary is a destination for pilgrimage; sick pilgrims are reputed to be miraculously healed by Lourdes water. This ground is owned and administered by the Roman Catholic Church, and has several functions, including devotional activities, offices, and accommodation for sick pilgrims and their helpers. Lourdes water is water which flows from a spring in the Grotto of Massabielle in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, France.

Pakistan with annual fertility rate of 3.6 among top two fastest growing South Asian nations

- **Pakistan, whose total population is approximately 220.9 million, is among the top two fastest growing countries in the South Asian region with an annual fertility rate of 3.6 children per couple, according to a new report by a US-based private non-profit organisation.**
- **Strife-torn Afghanistan topped the chart among the South Asian countries with 4.5 children per couple, according to the 2020 World Population Data Sheet released recently by the US Population Reference Bureau.**
- **With 1.4 billion people, India has the second largest population in the world but has reduced its fertility rate to 2.2, it said in a recent report.** At Pakistan's growth rate — 3.6 — a population doubles in 19.4 years. A country needs to bring its growth rate down to 2 per cent a year to reduce its population.

Pakistan is a country in South Asia. It is the fifth-most populous country. Islamabad is the capital city of Pakistan. Pakistani rupee is the currency of Pakistan. Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi is the 22nd and current Prime Minister of Pakistan and the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Before entering politics, Khan was an international cricketer and captain of the Pakistan national cricket team, which he led to victory in the 1992 Cricket World Cup. Arif-ur-Rehman Alvi is 13th and current President of Pakistan

Greta Thunberg donates million-euro rights prize to green groups

- **Climate activist Greta Thunberg was awarded a Portuguese rights award and promptly pledged the million-euro prize to groups working to protect the environment and halt climate change.**
- **She was awarded the Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity for the way she "has been able to mobilise younger generations for the cause of climate change."**

Greta Thunberg is a Swedish environmental activist who has gained international recognition for promoting the view that humanity is facing an existential crisis arising from climate change. Thunberg's activism started after convincing her parents to adopt several lifestyle choices to reduce their own carbon footprint. Soon, other students engaged in similar protests in their own communities. **Together, they organised a school climate strike movement under the name Fridays for Future.** Thunberg sailed to North America where she attended the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit. Her speech there, in which she exclaimed "how dare you", was widely taken up by the press and incorporated into music. She has received numerous honours and awards including: **honorary Fellowship of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society; Time magazine's 100 most influential people and the youngest Time Person of the Year; inclusion in the Forbes list of The World's 100 Most Powerful Women (2019) and two consecutive nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize (2019 and 2020).**

Malaysia to file WTO case against EU over palm oil curbs

- Malaysia is planning to file a World Trade Organisation (WTO) case against the European Union over its restrictions on palm oil biofuel by this year. Malaysia is the world's second-largest palm oil producer and exporter. It is big challenge for the new Prime Minister of Malaysia Muhyiddin Yassin.

Malaysia is a federal constitutional monarchy in Southeast Asia. Sultan Muhammad V is the 15th and the current Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King) of Malaysia and the Sultan of Kelantan. The Malaysian ringgit is the currency of Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur is the national capital and largest city in Malaysia.

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. "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.

Vladimir Putin has served as the president of Russia since 2012, previously holding the position from 2000 until 2008. He was also the Prime Minister of Russia from 1999 to 2000 and again from 2008 to 2012. He served as the first Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), the KGB's successor agency, before being appointed as prime minister in August 1999. After the resignation of Yeltsin, Putin was elected to succeed him. A duma is a Russian assembly with advisory or legislative functions. The Russian ruble or rouble is the currency of the Russia. Mikhail Vladimirovich Mishustin is serving as Prime Minister of Russia since 16 January 2020. He previously served as Director of the Federal Taxation Service from 2010 to 2020. Russia President Vladimir Putin has said his country showed unity by voting to back reforms allowing him to stay in power until 2036 and that Russians had felt the need for the changes in their hearts.

World's first shaft Hydropower plant goes online

- The world's first-ever shaft hydropower plant, a hydropower plant consisting of a turbine hidden in a shaft in the riverbed of Loisach River in Bavaria has gone online.
- The hydropower plant is a concept that was created at the Technical University of Munich (TUM). Ideally, it is supposed to allow fish to pass freely over the power plant on their migration downstream when the fish are usually dragged by the strong currents towards the plant turbine and grids.

Azad Pattan hydel power project on the Jhelum River in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK)

- 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 project will be commissioned by 2024. The project will comprise a 90-metre-high dam, with a 3.8 sq km reservoir.
- 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.

Nile dam dispute: Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan agree to resume talks

- The first-year target for filling the controversial mega dam on the River Nile has been reached, Ethiopia says. This would allow the first set of turbines to be tested. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's announcement came as Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan agreed to resume talks over the dam, following a virtual summit.
- The project has been a source of huge diplomatic tension since its construction began in Ethiopia in 2011. Ethiopia sees the hydroelectric project as crucial for its economic growth and a vital source of energy. But Egypt and Sudan, which are downstream, fear the \$4 bn (£3 bn) dam will greatly reduce their access to water.
- When operational, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (Gerd) will generate 6,000 megawatts, making it the largest hydroelectric dam in Africa. It will provide power to some 65 million Ethiopians, who currently lack a regular electricity supply.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam formerly known as the Millennium Dam and sometimes referred to as Hidase Dam is a gravity dam on the Blue Nile River in Ethiopia under construction since 2011. The dam is in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region of Ethiopia, about 15 km (9 mi) east of the border with Sudan. The primary purpose of the dam is electricity production to relieve Ethiopia's acute energy shortage and for electricity export to neighboring countries. The Nile is a major north-flowing river in northeastern Africa, and is the longest river in Africa and the disputed longest river in the world as the Brazilian government says that the Amazon River is longer than the Nile.

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.
- 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.

Turkmenistan is a sovereign country in Central Asia, bordered by Kazakhstan to the northwest, Uzbekistan to the north and east, Afghanistan to the southeast, Iran to the south and southwest and the Caspian Sea to the west. Ashgabat is the capital and largest city of the country. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow has been serving as the President of Turkmenistan since February 2007. The manat is the currency of Turkmenistan.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. World Trade Organization has replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which commenced in 1948. Roberto Azevedo is the current Director-General of the WTO. The WTO has 164 members and 23 observer governments. Liberia became the 163rd member on 14 July 2016, and Afghanistan became the 164th member on 29 July 2016.

UK-based diaspora group to conduct 1st-ever British Indian Census

- The India League, a UK-based diaspora group which dates back to 1916 announced the launch of a first-ever British Indian Census to collate data around Britain's estimated 1.5 million Indian-origin populations.
- The census will be conducted online in collaboration with the University of Oxford and will culminate in a British Indian Report later this year, reflective of the true make-up of Britain's Indian diaspora and their concerns in 2020.

NGOs to generate funds from solar energy under world-first model

- The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) has announced \$220,000 in funding for a pilot project in which charitable organisation. The Salvation Army will run the world's first solar-energy on-selling PPA, using Allume Energy's groundbreaking behind-the-meter electricity distribution technology to become a solar-energy retailer to tenants of its City Corps building in Glenorchy Tasmania.

UK PM Boris Johnson launches Jet Zero Council to cut airline emissions

- UK Prime Minister launched a new Jet Zero Council to tackle aviation emissions as part of a wider 350-million pound plan to step up efforts to tackle climate change.
- The multimillion pound investment package will drive forward progress on the UK's target to reach net zero by 2050, by helping businesses to decarbonise across the heavy industry, construction, space and transport sectors and to secure the UK's place at the forefront of green innovation.

India, Maldives sign contract for setting up Neighbourhood Fish Processing Plants

- India and Maldives signed a contract for setting up Neighbourhood Fish Processing Plants at two of the islands in the neighboring country. These fish-processing plants are the first in a series of High Impact Community Development (HICDP) projects that India and Maldives have committed to execute together under a total grant of USD 5.5 million.

- High Commissioner of India Sunjay Sudhir participating in the ceremony recalled that the MoUs for implementation of the Fish Processing Plants were signed during a Video conferencing between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Maldives President Ibrahim Solih.

Maldives is a South Asian sovereign state, located in the Indian Ocean, situated in the Arabian Sea. Male is the capital and most populated city, traditionally called the “King’s Island” for its central location. Maldivian rufiyaa is the currency of the Maldives.

Australia: First country outside S China Sea region to approach UN on China’s claims

- Australia has become the first country outside the South China Sea region to approach the United Nations over China’s territorial claims and development of artificial islands in the area – a gateway for global trade including India.
- In its petition to the UN, Australia said it rejected China’s “historical claims” in the South China Sea region because they violate international law and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. This comes after the US lambasted Chinese claims in the region, which is the world’s busiest shipping route.
- India has maintained over the years that trade through the South China Sea region should not be impeded under any circumstance and has advocated upholding the convention on the Law of the Sea.

The South China Sea, one of the world’s busiest waterways, is subject to several overlapping territorial disputes involving China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei. Several countries have made competing territorial claims over the South China Sea. Both the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC, commonly known as Taiwan) claim almost the entire body as their own, demarcating their claims within what is known as the nine-dotted line, which claims overlap with virtually every other country in the region. In January 2013, the Philippines formally initiated arbitration proceedings against China’s claim on the territories within the “Nine-Dash Line” that includes the Spratly Islands, which it said is unlawful under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). On July 12, 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration backed the Philippines, saying that there was no evidence that China had historically exercised exclusive control over the waters or resources, hence there was “no legal basis for China to claim historic rights” over the nine-dash line.

Environment friendly: Sweden’s ReTuna Mall is world’s first second-hand mall

- ReTuna Mall, located in a small industrial town in Sweden. ReTuna is world’s first second-hand mall. The mall is located in a small Swedish town called Eskilstuna.
- From cycle wheels to lamps to clothes, the mall will only sell recycled items. The mall has 13 stores and covers 5,000 square metres, employing between 50 and 65 people. The mall was inaugurated in 2015 but has now been recognized as “the world’s first shopping mall designated for repaired, recycled and restored items” by the Guinness Book of World Records in 2020.

Sweden is a Scandinavian country in Northern Europe. Stockholm is the capital of Sweden and the most populous city in the Nordic countries. The Riksdag is the national legislature and the supreme decision-making body of Sweden. The krona has been the currency of Sweden since 1873. Carl XVI Gustaf is the King of Sweden.

Indian-origin politician Pritam Singh appointed Singapore’s first Leader of Opposition

- Indian-origin politician Pritam Singh was designated as the Leader of the Opposition in Singapore, the first such appointment in the history of the city-state.
- Singh’s Workers’ Party won 10 parliamentary seats out of the 93 contested in the general elections held, making it the biggest opposition presence in Singapore’s Parliament. Singh is the Secretary-General of Workers’ Party.

Singapore is a sovereign city-state and island country in Southeast Asia. Singapore dollar is the official currency of Singapore. Lee Hsien Loong is the current Prime Minister of Singapore. Halimah binti Yacob is the current President of Singapore. She is the first female president in the country’s history.

47 Chinese clone Apps banned in the country

- The government of India has banned 47 Chinese apps in India. Near the end of June, 59 Chinese apps (total 106) had been banned by the government to “protect national interest and security” — including the hugely popular TikTok app.
- The government earlier banned apps including CamScanner, SHAREit, and UC Browser, among others. That ban was announced under the provisions of Section 69A of the Information Technology Act.

China is a country in East Asia and the world's most populous country, with a population of around 1.404 billion. Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China, the world's third most populous city proper, and most populous capital city. Xi Jinping is serving as president of China. National People's Congress is the national legislature of the People's Republic of China. With 2,980 members in 2018, it is the largest parliamentary body in the world. China's currency yuan joins the International Monetary Fund's basket of reserve currencies.

SABIC chemical plant to become world's first-of-its-kind to operate on 100 per cent renewable power

- SABIC's polycarbonate facility in Spain is set to become the world's first large scale chemical production plant which will run entirely on renewable power after a major agreement was signed with Iberdrola, an electricity utility company.
- The plant is expected to be completely operational by 2024 and is expected to help SABIC reach its 2025 clean energy target. Once the solar plant is operational, SABIC's customers including the ones from automotive and constructive sectors will have access to polycarbonate solutions produced with 100 per cent renewable power.

SABIC is a global diversified chemicals company, headquartered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. It manufactures on a global scale in the Americas, Europe, Middle East and Asia Pacific, making distinctly different kinds of products including chemicals, commodity and high performance plastics, agri-nutrients and metals.

PM Modi, PM Jugnauth inaugurated new Supreme Court Building of Mauritius on July 30

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Mauritius counterpart jointly inaugurated the new Supreme Court Building of Mauritius. The inauguration took place through video-conference in presence of senior members of Judiciary from Mauritius and other dignitaries from both countries.
- The building has been constructed with Indian grant assistance and will be the first India assisted infrastructure project within the capital city of Port Louis.
- The new Supreme Court building project is one of the five projects being implemented under the 'Special Economic Package' of 353 million dollars extended by India to Mauritius in 2016. The project has been completed within schedule and below expected costs.
- The new building will bring all divisions and offices of the Supreme Court of Mauritius into a single building improving its efficiency. In October last year, Prime Minister Modi and the Mauritius Prime Minister had jointly inaugurated the Phase -I of the Metro Express Project and the new ENT Hospital project in Mauritius, also built under the special economic package.

Mauritius is an island nation in the Indian Ocean about 2,000 kilometres (1,200 mi) off the southeast coast of the African continent. Ameenah Gurib was the first woman to ever hold the title of President of Mauritius. Prithvirajsing Roopun is serving as President of Mauritius as of 2 December 2019. Port Louis is the capital city of Mauritius. The rupee is the currency of Mauritius.

EGEB: Germany builds the world's first hydrogen train filling station

- The town of Bremervörde in Lower Saxony, Germany, has broken ground on the world's first hydrogen filling station for passenger trains. Chemical company Linde will construct and operate the hydrogen filling station for the Lower Saxony Regional Transport Company.

- **The hydrogen filling station should be up and running by mid-2021 and be able to take over the current mobile filling station.** It will have a capacity of roughly 1,600 kg of hydrogen per day. From the start of 2022, 14 hydrogen-powered Coradia iLint trains will use the hydrogen filling station on a daily basis. Each hydrogen train has a range of 1,000 km, allowing them to run for a full day on a single tank.

India to set up solar power park in Sri Lanka

- **India's largest power generation utility NTPC Ltd plans to set up this project** in the island nation **under the aegis of International Solar Alliance (ISA).** The solar park is NTPC's second foray after Colombo scrapped a proposal to set up a \$500 million coal-fuelled power project in Trincomalee over environmental concerns in 2016.
- **The move comes amid a growing Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean Region,** which India considers its sphere of influence. Further flexing its muscle, **Indian Navy conducted joint exercises in the Bay of Bengal with the US Navy, which sailed in with an aircraft carrier battle group led by the USS Nimitz.**
- **State-run Ceylon Electricity Board has an installed power generation capacity of around 35.8 gigawatts (GW).** India has been working on improving the energy infrastructure in Sri Lanka. **Petronet LNG Ltd had earlier announced its plans of setting up a liquefied natural gas terminal in Sri Lanka.**
- India is also exploring laying an **overhead electricity link with Sri Lanka as part of efforts to create a new-energy ecosystem in the South Asian neighbourhood.** China is already one of the biggest investors in infrastructure projects in Sri Lanka.

The **International Solar Alliance** is a common platform for cooperation among sun-rich countries lying fully or partially between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. The initiative was launched at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris at the end of 2015 by the then, President of France and the Prime Minister of India. In January 2016, Narendra Modi, and the then, French President François Hollande jointly laid the foundation stone of the **International Solar Alliance headquarters** and inaugurated the interim Secretariat at the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) in Gwalpahari, Gurugram, India.

China conducts drills in South China Sea

- **China recently conducted "high-intensity" naval exercises in the South China Sea,** China's Defence Ministry said as tensions grow over the Asian power's manoeuvres in the contested waters.
- **China's expanding military presence in the region has worried several of its neighbours,** while the U.S. has vowed to stand up against Beijing's territorial claims to much of the South China Sea, including the contested Paracel Islands. **China – which is locked in disputes with neighbours including India, Japan and Vietnam over islands in the South China Sea – has infuriated other nations by building artificial islands with military installations in parts of the sea.**

Australia to make Facebook, Google pay for news in world first

- **Australia will force U.S. tech giants Facebook Inc and Alphabet Inc's Google to pay Australian media outlets for news content in a landmark move to protect independent journalism** that will be watched around the world.
- **Australia will become the first country to require Facebook and Google to pay for news content** provided by media companies under a royalty-style system that will become law this year.
- **For every A\$100 spent on online advertising in Australia, excluding classifieds, nearly a third goes to Google and Facebook,** according to Frydenberg.

Australia is the largest country in Oceania and the world's sixth-largest country by total area. Australia's capital is Canberra, and its largest city is Sydney. Elizabeth II is the Head of the Commonwealth and queen regnant of seven independent Commonwealth countries: the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon. Scott Morrison is the current Prime Minister of Australia. The Australian dollar is the currency of Australia.

New Zealand claims world first in setting standards for government use of algorithms

- New Zealand's government says it is the first in the world to produce a set of standards for how public agencies should use the algorithms that increasingly drive decision-making by officials about every area of public life.
- The increasing application of algorithms by governments around the world – particularly when they are deployed to profile or generate decisions about citizens by law enforcement, immigration, welfare and health agencies – has proved controversial in recent years. Critics claim that decision-making driven by lines of code can be inaccurate and discriminatory and that their use is often kept secret from the public.

New Zealand is an island country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. Wellington is the capital city. Jacinda Ardern is the current New Zealand Prime Minister. New Zealand dollar is the official currency and legal tender of New Zealand, the Cook Islands, Niue, the Ross Dependency, Tokelau, and a British territory, the Pitcairn Islands.

UAE becomes first country in Arab World to produce nuclear energy

- As the Barakah Nuclear Plant's 1st Unit got operational, UAE became the first country in the Arab World to produce nuclear energy. The new plant is part of the UAE's graph to become less reliant on oil and gas, the current source of the vast majority of its energy.
- UAE is among the world's biggest fossil fuels producers. Barakah plant situated in the Al Dhafrah region of Abu Dhabi started producing heat.
- The plant, powered by South Korean technology, hopes to produce 5.6 gigawatts of electricity and supply up to 25% of the UAE's electricity needs.
- With the announcement Saturday, the UAE becomes the newest member of an exclusive club of 31 countries running nuclear power operations. It's also the first new country to launch a nuclear power plant in three decades, the last being China in 1990.

Abu Dhab is the capital and the second most populous city of the United Arab Emirates (the most populous being Dubai), and also capital of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the UAE's seven emirates. United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federal sovereign absolute monarchy in Western Asia. Khalifa Al Nahyan is the current President of the United Arab Emirates. Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai. United Arab Emirates dirham is the currency of the United Arab Emirates.

India-UK resolves to cooperate in various sectors in 14th Joint Economic and Trade Committee meeting

- India and UK held the 14th Joint Economic and Trade Committee meeting on 24th July, 2020 virtually. It was co-chaired by Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and UK Secretary of State for International Trade, HE, Elizabeth Truss.
- They were assisted by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Hardeep Singh Puri and his counterpart, UK Minister of State for International Trade, HE Ranil Jayawardena.

London is the capital and most populous city of England and the United Kingdom. Pound sterling is the official currency of the United Kingdom. Boris Johnson is serving as the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Elizabeth II is Queen of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms. She is the longest-lived and longest-reigning British monarch as well as the world's longest-reigning queen regnant and female head of state, the oldest and longest-reigning current monarch and the oldest and longest-serving current head of state.

ECONOMY AND FINANCE



Economy News

Government launches Special Liquidity Scheme of 30 thousand crore rupees to improve liquidity for NBFCs and HFCs

- The Union Government has launched the Special Liquidity Scheme of 30 thousand crore rupees to improve the liquidity position for Non-Banking Finance Companies- NBFCs and Housing Finance Companies- HFCs.
- The scheme was launched through a Special Purpose Vehicle in the form of SLS Trust set up by SBI Capital Markets Limited (SBICAP). Ministry of Finance in a statement said, Reserve Bank of India will provide funds for the Scheme by subscribing to government guaranteed special securities issued by the Trust.
- The total amount of such securities issued outstanding shall not exceed 30 thousand crore rupees at any point of time. The Central Government will provide an unconditional and irrevocable guarantee to the special securities issued by the Trust.
- The Scheme will remain open for three months for making subions by the Trust. The period of lending by the Trust will be for a period of up to 90 days. The financing would be used by the NFBCs and HFCs only to repay existing liabilities and not to expand assets.
- This facility is a part of the Central Government and RBI's efforts to alleviate the concerns of the market participants on the availability of funds to the sector. Any NBFC including Micro-finance Institutions registered with RBI and any HFC registered with the National Housing Bank complying with the given conditions will be eligible to raise funding from the said facility.

National Housing Bank (NHB), a Government of India owned entity, was set up on 9 July 1988 under the National Housing Bank Act, 1987. NHB is an apex financial institution for housing. NHB has been established with an objective to operate as a principal agency to promote housing finance institutions both at local and regional levels and to provide financial and other support incidental to such institutions and for matters connected therewith. The Finance Act, 2019 has amended National Housing Bank Act, 1987. The amendment confers the powers of regulation of housing finance companies to Reserve Bank of India. NHB registers and supervises Housing Finance Company (HFCs), keeps surveillance through On-site & Off-site Mechanisms and co-ordinates with other Regulators.

Government launched floating rate savings bond from July 1, 2020

- Indian Government has decided to launch Floating Rate Savings Bonds 2020 (Taxable) from July 1, giving an opportunity to invest in secured government instruments. The new scheme has been brought in place of 7.75 per cent Savings (Taxable) Bonds, 2018, which was withdrawn from the close of banking business on May 28, 2020.
- The interest on the seven-year bond will be paid semi-annually on January 1 and July 1 every year. The interest on January 1, 2021 will be paid at 7.15 per cent. The rate for next half-year will be reset every six months, the first reset being on January 1, 2021. There will be no option to pay interest on cumulative basis, it said, adding the bonds will be repaid on the expiry of seven years from the date of issue.

- Any resident Indian can invest in this bond. NRIs are not eligible for making investments in Floating Rate Savings Bonds 2020. The bonds can be purchased from designated branches of SBI, IDBI, HDFC, and ICICI bank and will be issued only as Bond Ledger Account.

Bengaluru in world's top 30 startup ecosystem list

- Indian's startup capital Bengaluru has been ranked in the world's top 30 startup ecosystems. Topped by the Silicon Valley in California, Bengaluru is at the 26th spot and the only India city to feature in the list by 'The Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2020' by Startup Genome.
- While Delhi is in the runner-up category at the 36th spot, Mumbai ranks first in the list of top 100 emerging ecosystem ranking. The list of emerging startup hubs also includes Chennai, Hyderabad and Pune.
- London and New York tied for second spot. The report by Startup Genome, a California-headquartered innovation policy advisory and research firm, analyses cities around the world where early stage startups have the best shot at building global success.

Indian Government bans 59 mobile apps including TikTok, Helo, WeChat prejudicial to sovereignty & integrity of India

- Government has banned 59 mobile apps which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order.
- Electronics and IT Ministry said in a release that these apps were banned in view of information available they are engaged in activities which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of the country, defence of the country and security of state and public order.
- The banned apps include TikTok, Helo and WeChat. Over the last few years, India has emerged as a leading innovator when it comes to technological advancements and a primary market in the digital space.
- The Ministry of Information Technology, invoking its power under section 69A of the Information Technology Act read with the relevant provisions of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking of Access of Information by Public) Rules 2009 and in view of the emergent nature of threats has decided to block 59 apps since in view of information available they are engaged in activities which is prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order.
- Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-IN) has also received many representations from citizens regarding security of data and breach of privacy impacting upon public order issues.

The Information Technology Act, 2000 (also known as ITA-2000, or the IT Act) is an Act of the Indian Parliament (No 21 of 2000) notified on 17 October 2000. It is the primary law in India dealing with cybercrime and electronic commerce. A major amendment was made in 2008. It introduced Section 66A which penalized sending "offensive messages". It also introduced Section 69, which gave authorities the power of "interception or monitoring or decryption of any information through any computer resource". Union Minister for Home Affairs, Shri Amit Shah, inaugurated the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I⁴C) and also dedicated National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal to the Nation. This state-of-the-art Centre is located in New Delhi.

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.

World Bank approves fresh funds for Ganga cleaning mission

- **India and the World Bank signed a loan agreement worth \$400 million (Rs. 3,000 crore) to enhance support for the Namami Gange programme**, which seeks to rejuvenate the Ganga. The project is **aimed at stemming river pollution and strengthening management of the river basin**, which is home to more than 50 crore people.
- **The \$400 million funding support comprises a loan of \$381 million and a proposed guarantee of up to \$19 million**, the Finance Ministry said in a statement. **The \$381 million loan has a maturity of 18.5 years**, including a grace period of five years.
- **The World Bank is supporting the National Ganga River Basin Project, which helped set up the National Mission for Clean Ganga as the nodal agency to manage the river**, and finance sewage treatment infrastructure in several riverside towns and cities.
- Some of the projects to be undertaken under the second phase of the mission include spillover projects from the first phase of the mission as well cleaning projects in tributaries such as the Yamuna and Kali rivers. **The Ganges passes through the states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal.**

Ministry of Jal Shakti is a ministry under Government of India which was formed in May 2019 under the second Modi ministry. This was formed by merging of two ministries; Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. Since 31 May 2019, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat is the Minister of Jal Shakti. The Minister of State (Jal Shakti) is Rattan Lal Kataria. The ministry was incorporated with an aim to clean the river Ganges.

Amendments in Indian Stamp Act, 1899 to come into effect

- **The Amendments in the Indian Stamp Act, 1899 brought through Finance Act 2019 and Rules made there under will come into effect.** In order to facilitate ease of doing business and to bring in uniformity of the stamp duty on securities across States and thereby build a pan-India securities market, the Central Government, through requisite amendments, has created the legal and institutional mechanism.
- **It will enable states to collect stamp duty on securities market instruments at one place by one agency through on one Instrument.** Ministry of Finance in a statement said that a mechanism for appropriately sharing the stamp duty with relevant State Governments has also been developed which is based on the state of domicile of the buyer.

The Indian Stamp Act of 1899 is an in-force Act of the Government of India for the charging of stamp duty on instruments recording transactions.

Bangladesh moves 7 places up in latest SDG index for year 2020

- **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.**
- **Sweden is placed at the top of the index with an overall score of 84.7 followed by Denmark and Finland while Bangladesh has a score of 63.5. India has been ranked 117th in the index with overall score of 61.92.** The score can be depicted as the percentage of SDG achievement.
- **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.**
- **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 wellbeing, clean energy and industry, sustainable land use, sustainable cities, and digital technologies.**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. That is why the SDGs are designed to bring the world to several life-changing ‘zeros’, including zero poverty, hunger, AIDS and discrimination against women and girls.

India's first e-commerce policy to be rolled out soon

- Union Government of India is likely to roll out the country's first e-commerce policy soon which will include the provisions issued by the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) as well as mandate sellers to notify the origin of products, top sources privy to the development.
- The revised draft of the policy may even entail stricter regulations for e-commerce giants like Amazon and Flipkart especially after trader bodies have been accusing them of predatory pricing and getting preferential treatment.
- Industry watchers said that the government is likely to introduce the revised FDI regulations seeking government approval for any investment from a neighbouring country as a policy measure for the e-commerce sector.
- Besides, the DPIIT has also been meeting representatives of e-commerce companies over the past week seeking their suggestions on notifying the “origin of products” on the marketplaces so that buyers make an informed choice in purchasing the commodities. This was after the Delhi High Court issued notices to e-commerce firms mandating the disclosure of the country of origin of products sold on their platforms.
- The inclusion of provisions under Press Note 3 issued by DPIIT may also worry e-commerce companies as Chinese investors have been funding firms like Flipkart, Snapdeal albeit for a minority stake.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry administers two departments, the Department of Commerce and the Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (formerly Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion). The head of the Ministry is a Minister of Cabinet rank. The first Minister of Commerce and Industry of independent India was Syama Prasad Mukherjee. The current Minister is Piyush Goyal. Goyal took over from Suresh Prabhu on 31 May 2019.

India ranks 34th in JLL's 11th edition of the Global Real Estate Transparency Index 2020

- India's real estate industry has registered one of the largest improvements globally and regionally in Jones Lang LaSalle's (JLL) biennial Global Real Estate Transparency Index (GRETl).
- The country ranks 34th globally on the index, with higher levels of transparency observed in India due to regulatory reforms, enhanced market data, and sustainability initiatives.
- JLL 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.
- India has also edged into the top 20 for Sustainability Transparency through the active role of organizations like the Indian Green Building Council and Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment.

JLL has been tracking real estate transparency since 1999. This 11th edition of GRETl covers 99 countries and territories, and 163 city regions. This latest survey has been extended to quantify 210 separate elements of transparency, with additional coverage on sustainability and resilience, health and wellness, proptech, and alternatives sectors.

Injeti Srinivas appointed chairman of IFSCA

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved the appointment of Injeti Srinivas as chairman of the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA).
- The former corporate affairs secretary and 1983-batch IAS officer of the Odisha cadre will head the IFSCA for a period of three years.

Currently, the banking, capital markets and insurance sectors in IFSC are regulated by multiple regulators such as Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI). The notification brings into effect certain provisions of the IFSCA Act, 2019, related to its functioning, however, the Centre refrained from fully enabling the authority with all its powers as envisaged in the Act. The main function of the authority will be to regulate financial products such as securities, deposits or contracts of insurance, financial services, and financial institutions which have been previously approved by any appropriate regulator in an IFSC.

Mukesh Ambani's RIL first domestic firm to cross Rs 11.5 lakh cr m-cap mark

- Reliance Industries Limited added another feather to its cap as its market valuation crossed Rs 11.5 lakh crore mark, the first by any domestic company.
- Reliance Industries, the country's most valued firm, last month became the first Indian company to cross the Rs 11 lakh crore market valuation mark.

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) is an Indian conglomerate holding company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. On 18 October 2007, Reliance Industries became the first Indian company to breach \$100 billion market capitalization. It is also the highest income tax payer in the private sector in India. Dhirubhai Ambani founded Reliance Industries in Bombay with his cousin. Mukesh Dhirubhai Ambani is an Indian billionaire business magnate, and the chairman, managing director, and largest shareholder of Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL), a Fortune Global 500 company and India's most valuable company by market value. He is currently the richest man in Asia.

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

- The Government of India and the World Bank signed a 750 million US dollar agreement for the MSME Emergency Response Programme.
- It aims at supporting increased flow of finance into the hands of 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. Ministry of Finance in a statement said this is the first step among a broader set of reforms that are needed to propel the MSME sector over time.

Centre has revised the definition of micro, small and medium enterprises to give them the confidence to grow. Under the new definition, the distinction between manufacturing and services enterprises has been eliminated. Under the new definition of MSMEs, the investment criteria for such enterprises have been revised upwards, while an additional criterion of turnover has been introduced. Under the new definition, manufacturing and services enterprises with investments up to Rs 1 crore and turnover up to Rs 5 crore will be classified as micro enterprises. For small enterprises, the investment criteria has been revised upwards to Rs 10 crore, with the turnover criteria of Rs 50 crore added to the mix. Enterprises with investment up to Rs 50 crore and turnover up to Rs 250 crore will be termed medium enterprises.

World's first collectible crypto coin released in Lithuania

- Lithuania, which is positioning itself as a financial-technology hub for start-ups, rolled out the world's first crypto coin for collectors.
- The coins, which cost €99 (RM477) and are known as LBCOIN, won't enter into circulation and won't be legal tender. Collectors will be able to exchange them for a physical silver coin or to transfer them to a public NEM wallet for trade on the secondary market.

Lithuania is a country in the Baltic region of Europe. Lithuania is one of the Baltic States. Its capital and largest city is Vilnius. The euro is the official currency of the Lithuania. Saulius Skvernelis has been Prime Minister of Lithuania since 2016. Gitanas Nausėda is serving as the current President of Lithuania.

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.

Tamil Nadu lies in the southernmost part of the Indian subcontinent and is bordered by the union territory of Puducherry and the South Indian states of Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. Its capital and largest city is Chennai. Its official language is Tamil, which is one of the longest-surviving classical languages in the world. Banwarilal Purohit is the current Governor of Tamil Nadu.

India moves up a rank, becomes second-largest foreign investor in UK

- 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.
- 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 per cent 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, delivering 462 projects and 20,131 jobs, followed by India, Germany, France and China and Hong Kong.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment in a business by an investor from another country for which the foreign investor has control over the company purchased. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) are those institutional investors which invest in the assets belonging to a different country other than that where these organizations are based. FDI is an investment that a parent company makes in a foreign country. On the contrary, FII is an investment made by an investor in the markets of a foreign nation. The FDI flows into the primary market, while the FII flows into secondary market. While FIIs are short-term investments, the FDI's are long term investment. FII can enter the stock market easily and also withdraw from it easily. But FDI cannot enter and exit that easily. The Foreign Direct Investment is considered to be more stable than Foreign Institutional Investor.

Mobile App of PM SVANidhi launched to bring Microcredit facility for street vendors

- Shri Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched the Mobile Application of PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi). This App aims to provide user friendly digital interface for Lending Institutions (LIs) and their field functionaries for sourcing and processing loan applications of street vendors under the Scheme.
- The launch event was organised through a video conference in which, besides senior officials from the Ministry, Principal Secretaries dealing with Urban Development Department and other officials from the States and UTs participated.
- 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. It is believed that launch of Mobile App will give impetus to the implementation strategy of the Scheme besides promoting paper-less digital accessing of micro-credit facilities by the Street Vendors.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched PM Svanidhi, or Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi scheme, which is a special micro-credit facility plan to provide affordable loan of up to Rs.10,000 to more than 50 lakh street vendors, who had their businesses operational on or before 24 March. The scheme is valid until March 2022.

UNICEF India Partners 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.
- FICCI SEDF will reach out to its membership base to garner support for the campaign and leverage its resources like cash and core assets to mobilize funds that can be utilized to help generate support for the most vulnerable population affected due to COVID disruption. 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.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF is a United Nations (UN) agency headquartered in New York City that provides humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers in developing countries. It was created by the United Nations General Assembly on 11 December 1946, to provide emergency food and healthcare to children in countries that had been devastated by World War II. Henrietta Holsman Fore is an American government official who serves as the Executive Director of UNICEF.

India ranks 3rd in global manufacturing locations among 48 countries, shows 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 US retain the top two positions, while India has moved one place higher to rank third, the consultant said in its Global Manufacturing Risk Index (MRI) report.
- In its annual ranking of the most suitable locations for global manufacturing among 48 countries in Europe, Americas and the Asia-Pacific, the consultant said India is in top-3 countries this year and an upcoming manufacturing hub globally from an operating conditions and cost-competitiveness perspective.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 commences

- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, an Act of Parliament, received the assent of the President of India last year. But it came into force only last week on Monday 20 July, 2020. This is 'an Act to provide for protection of the interests of consumers and for the said purpose, to establish authorities for timely and effective administration and settlement of consumers' disputes and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto'.
- Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said that this new Act will empower consumers and help them in protecting their rights through its various notified Rules and provisions like Consumer Protection Councils, Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions, Mediation, Product Liability and punishment for manufacture or sale of products containing adulterant or spurious goods.
- The Act will establish a new regulatory authority known as the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), which will have wide powers of investigation including the power of search and seizure. The Central Authority has been granted wide powers to take suo-moto actions, recall products, order reimbursement of the price of goods/services and file class-action suits if a consumer complaint affects more than one individual.
- 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.
- The Act introduces, for the first time, a definition of 'misleading advertisement'. It covers false description and guarantee of a product or services. It also covers information that was deliberately concealed from the consumer.
- The Act fixes liability on endorsers considering that there have been numerous instances in the recent past where consumers have fallen prey to unfair trade practices under the influence of celebrities acting as brand ambassadors. Penalty amounts of INR 10 lakhs (approximately USD 14,000) and one year imprisonment to

INR 50 lakhs (approximately USD 70,000) and up to 5 years imprisonment. Ban on endorsing any products/services upto 1 year, extendable to 3 years in case of subsequent contravention.

- The Act has widened the definition of ‘consumer’. The definition now includes any person who buys any goods, whether through offline or online transactions, electronic means, teleshopping, direct selling or multi-level marketing.

Indian direct selling industry records \$2.47 billion sales in 2019, ranks 15th globally

- The Indian direct selling industry has recorded sales of \$2.47 billion in 2019, reporting a growth of 12.1 percent, a report by World Federation of Direct Selling Associations (WFDSA) said.
- This has helped the direct selling industry improve its ranking to the 15th from the earlier 19th a year before, said The Global Direct Selling - 2019 Retail Sales report by Washington-based WFDSA. Moreover, in terms of the number of direct sellers, India has been ranked at sixth position, proving employment to 57.50 lakh people.
- However, the global direct selling industry has reported an overall decline of 4.3 per cent in sales to USD 180.47 billion in 2019. According to the report, the US is leading in the list contributing 20 per cent of the global direct selling industry with sales of USD 35.21 billion, though it has registered a marginal de-growth of 0.4 per cent. It is followed by China with 13 per cent contribution, Korea and Germany with 10 per cent each and 9 per cent by Japan. India recorded the highest year-on-year growth and CAGR over three years, in top 20 Direct Selling markets around the world, the association said in a statement.

Nitin Gadkari launches advisory platform, Restart India, to help MSME sector

- Nitin Gadkari, the minister for micro, small and medium enterprise sector launched www.restartindia.in, a mentoring platform primarily aimed at aiding the sector to restart businesses across the country.
- Muthoot Fincorp and INKtalks, an innovation platform for young professionals jointly conceptualised “RestartIndia”, which is an open platform for advisory support.

Nitin Jairam Gadkari was served as the President of the Bharatiya Janata Party from 2010-2013. He is the current Minister for Road Transport & Highways of India and Shipping Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the Government of India. Gadkari contested 2014 Lok Sabha election successfully from Nagpur constituency, Maharashtra and won it.

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.

APSEZ becomes the first Indian port to sign up for Science Based Targets Initiative

- Strengthening India’s commitment to the ‘Paris Climate Agreement’, APSEZ has signed up for the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). Through SBTi, companies are responding by committing to set science-based emissions reduction targets - across their entire value chain - that are consistent with keeping global warming to 1.5 degree C above pre-industrial levels. Committed companies have 24 months to have their targets approved and published by the SBTi. APSEZ is the only Port in the country and 7th Port in the world to sign the commitment letter to SBTi.
- The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) is a collaboration between CDP, the United Nations Global Compact, World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).
- 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 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. A total of 16 Indian companies are supporting the TCFD out of which two are Adani Group's subsidiaries.

Changes in FDI norms on civil aviation notified; 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.
- As per the notification, foreign investments in Air India, including that of foreign airlines shall not exceed 49% either directly or indirectly except in case of those NRIs, who are Indian nationals, where foreign investments is permitted up to 100% under automatic route.
- The Union Cabinet had in March, approved changes in FDI norms that allowed NRIs to bid for 100% shares owned by the government in national carrier Air India in a move to make its disinvestment process more attractive as previous attempts to attract buyers were unsuccessful.
- The government has put its entire stake in Air India up for sale. Previously, NRIs could own up to 49% in the carrier. India allows upto 49% FDI under the automatic route, government route beyond that and up to 100% for NRIs in scheduled air transport service/ domestic scheduled passenger airline, and regional air transport service. Air transport services also include non-scheduled services, helicopter and seaplane services.

The Air India airline was founded by J. R. D. Tata as Tata Airlines in 1932. After World War II, it became a public limited company and was renamed as Air India. In 1953, the Government of India passed the Air Corporations Act and purchased a majority stake in the carrier from Tata Sons though its founder J. R. D. Tata would continue as Chairman till 1977. Air India is the flag carrier airline of India, headquartered at New Delhi. Air India's mascot is the Maharajah (Emperor) and the logo consists of a flying swan with the wheel of Konark inside it.

Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan launches Bureau of Indian Standard's Mobile App BIS-Care

- Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan launched the Bureau of Indian Standard's Mobile App BIS-Care. He also launched three portals on Standardization, Conformity Assessment and Training of e-BIS.
- The mobile app BIS-Care can be operated on any Android phone and consumers can check the authenticity of the ISI-marked and hallmarked products through this Application. Customers can also lodge complaints using this medium. BIS is strengthening its capacity of enforcement by implementation of e-BIS.

Piyush Goyal inaugurates CII National Digital conference on Ease of Doing Business

- Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said the government is aiming to cover the nation's length and breadth in optic fibres within the next two years. Mr Goyal said digital is the way forward. Inaugurating CII National Digital conference on Ease of Doing Business for Atmanirbhar Bharat the Minister emphasized that a single window system for industrial approvals will soon be in place.

Aatmanirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge receives enthusiastic response from tech entrepreneurs, Start-ups

- Aatmanirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge has seen a very enthusiastic response from tech entrepreneurs and Start-ups from across the country. A total of 6,940 entries have been received across the eight categories identified.
- These include 3,939 from individuals and about 3,001 from organizations and companies. Amongst those received from individuals, around 1,757 applications are ready to use and the remaining 2,182 are under development. For the Apps submitted by organizations, 1,742 Apps have already been deployed and the remaining 1,259 are under development.

- **The category-wise breakup of the Apps submitted include 1,142 under Business, 901 under Health and Wellness, 1,062 under E- Learning, 1,155 under Social Networking, 326 under Games, 662 under Office and Work from Home, 237 under News and 320 under Entertainment. Around 1,135 Apps have been submitted under the others category. Around 271 of these Apps have more than one lakh downloads with 89 of the Apps having million plus downloads.**

Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) is the vision of the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi of making India a self-reliant nation. On May 12, the Prime Minister, Shri. Narendra Modi, announced a special economic package of Rs 20 lakh crore (equivalent to 10% of India's GDP) with the aim of making the country independent against the tough competition in the global supply chain and to help in empowering the poor, labourers, migrants who have been adversely affected by COVID. This self-reliant policy does not aim to be protectionist in nature and as the Finance Minister clarified, "self-reliant India does not mean cutting off from rest of the world".

15th Finance Commission's HLEG on Agricultural Exports submits report

- **The High Level Group (HLEG) on Agricultural Exports set up by the Fifteenth Finance Commission to recommend measurable performance incentives for States to encourage agricultural exports and to promote crops to enable high import substitution, has submitted its report to the Commission. The HLEG was set up to recommend measurable performance incentives for states to encourage agricultural exports and to promote crops to enable high import substitution. The recommendations include demand driven approach and focus on 22 crop value chains.**

The Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV-FC or 15-FC) is an Indian Finance Commission constituted in November 2017 and is to give recommendations for devolution of taxes and other fiscal matters for five fiscal years, commencing 2020-04-01. The commission's chairman is Nand Kishore Singh, with its full-time members being Ajay Narayan Jha, Ashok Lahiri and Anoop Singh. Finance Commissions are commissions periodically constituted by the President of India under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution to define the financial relations between the central government of India and the individual state governments. The First Commission was established in 1951 under The Finance Commission (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1951.

IFSCA sets up panel to suggest ways for development of international retail business

- **The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has constituted a seven-member committee to suggest ways to enhance international retail participation in IFSC. The committee will recommend a roadmap for the future growth of international retail business in IFSC.**
- **"The committees may also examine and recommend any other issues which are important though not specifically mentioned in the above terms of reference". The committee, headed by Indasia Fund Advisors Pvt Ltd Chairman Pradip Shah, may invite industry experts as special invitees on need basis under intimation to IFSCA. Other members of the committee include G Srinivasan, former CMD of New India Assurance; Dipesh Shah, Head - IFSC Department, GIFT IFSC; and Nitin Jaiswal, Head - Government Affairs and Strategic Relations, Bloomberg.**

The finance ministry has established the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) through a notification. The body will be headquartered in Gandhinagar in Gujarat, as per the notification. With this, the government has established a unified authority to regulate all financial services in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) in the country. Senior bureaucrat Injeti Srinivas has been appointed as the first chairman of the International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA) for the Gandhinagar-based financial special economic zone or Gujarat International Finance Tech (GIFT) City. Currently, the banking, capital markets and insurance sectors in IFSC are regulated by multiple regulators such as Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

Banks in News

President Kovind promulgates Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance 2020

- President Ram Nath Kovind has promulgated the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020 in pursuance of the commitment to ensure safety of depositors across banks.
- The Ordinance amends the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 as applicable to Cooperative Banks. It seeks to protect the interests of depositors and strengthen cooperative banks by improving governance and oversight by extending powers already available with RBI in respect of other banks to Co-operative Banks.
- The amendments do not affect existing powers of the State Registrars of Co-operative Societies under state co-operative laws. The amendments do not apply to Primary Agricultural Credit Societies or co-operative societies whose primary object and principal business is long-term finance for agricultural development.
- The Ordinance also amends Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act to enable making of a scheme of reconstruction or amalgamation of a banking company for protecting the interest of the public, depositors and the banking system and for securing its proper management, even without making an order of moratorium, so as to avoid disruption of the financial system.

Article 123 of the Constitution grants the President certain law making powers to promulgate Ordinances when either of the two Houses of Parliament is not in session and hence it is not possible to enact laws in the Parliament. An Ordinance may relate to any subject that the Parliament has the power to legislate on. The President cannot promulgate an Ordinance unless he is satisfied that there are circumstances that require taking 'immediate action'.

'Balaram' for agri credit to landless farmers

- The Naveen Patnaik-led Odisha government on July 3 launched a scheme to provide agricultural credit of Rs 1,040 crore to landless farmers across the state who have been facing hardships due to the coronavirus pandemic. A first-of-its-kind targeted scheme named 'Balaram' is aimed at providing financial assistance to seven lakh landless farmers in the next two years.
- Under this, Institute on Management of Agricultural Extension (IMAGE) and Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) will act as nodal agency at the State and district level to mobilise landless farmers through Krushak Sathis and village agriculture workers (VAWs) for formation of joint liability group (JLGs) and link them to banks for credit facility.
- The Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment Secretary, Sourabh Garg, said that the scheme was designed in collaboration with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). "Each JLG will have five members and one group will get Rs 1.6 lakh. The target is to cover around seven, lakh landless, cultivators through 1.40 lakh JLGs within two years.

NABARD came into existence on 12 July 1982 by transferring the agricultural credit functions of RBI and refinance functions of the then Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC). NABARD is headquartered at Mumbai. The Bank has been entrusted with "matters concerning policy, planning and operations in the field of credit for agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas in India".

SIDBI, TransUnion CIBIL launch financial knowledge platform for MSMEs

- The Small Industries Development Bank of India in association with Trans Union CIBIL has launched a comprehensive financial education and knowledge platform for micro, small and medium enterprises.
- The one-stop knowledge portal- MSME Saksham, will guide MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) seeking seamless and quick access to finance and will also support them in managing their credit obligations.
- The portal aims to guide MSMEs across their credit lifecycle, from availing credit to start and grow their businesses, to manage credit lines to sustain and build structural strength of the business as well as ensuring timely closures and renewals of credit facilities.

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) set up on 2nd April 1990 under an Act of Indian Parliament, acts as the Principal Financial Institution for Promotion, Financing and Development of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector as well as for co-ordination of functions of institutions engaged in similar activities. It is headquartered in Lucknow.

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

- The Reserve Bank of India has launched the inflation expectations survey 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.

HDFC Bank to offer instant auto loans in tier 1, 2 cities

- HDFC Bank said it will offer ZipDrive instant auto loans to customers in 1,000 cities across India. ZipDrive is HDFC Bank's instant auto loan disbursement product for customers with pre-approved offer.
- The product will now be available in tier 2 and 3 cities across India. Auto loans can be availed within 10 seconds. This solution gives the customer with a pre-approved loan offer to avail an auto loan through net banking or via assistance from the bank's phone banking team.

HDFC Bank Limited is an Indian banking and financial services company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra. HDFC Bank is India's largest private sector lender by assets. In 1994 HDFC Bank was incorporated, with its registered office in Mumbai, India. Aditya Puri is the Managing Director of HDFC Bank.

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.

Yes Bank Limited is an Indian public bank headquartered in Mumbai, India and was founded by Rana Kapoor and Ashok Kapur in 2004. On 5 March 2020, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has taken control of the bank which had an excessive amount of bad loans in an attempt to avoid the collapse of the bank. On 13 March 2020, the Union Cabinet approved the reconstruction scheme for Yes Bank. During this reconstruction, seven investors infused 12000 crore in Yes bank and Prashant Kumar has been proposed as new CEO of the bank. These investors include State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, Radhakishan Damani and Azim Premji trust.

SBM Bank India, Mastercard to facilitate cross border transactions, remittances

- Government of Mauritius-promoted SBM Bank India and global payments technology major 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', the statement said.

- **Remittances and payments businesses have become the cornerstone of SBM Bank India's growth strategy.** As banking evolves to become more personal, platform-agnostic and always-on – the Bank has been leading the collaboration narrative to access the best-in-class solutions with its switching partner.

State Bank of Mauritius (SBM) is a bank in Mauritius that the Bank of Mauritius, the national banking regulator, has licensed as a commercial bank. **SBM, together with its subsidiary businesses in Kenya, Mauritius, Madagascar and India, is known as SBM Group.** It is headquartered in Port Louis.

ADB becomes observer for the network for greening the financial system

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) joined the Central Banks and Supervisors Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) as an observer.
- NGFS, launched at the Paris One Planet Summit 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 mobilizing 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,” said ADB Chief Economist Yasuyuki Sawada.
- ADB joins the ranks of the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development as NGFS observers.
- The banks' 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.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966, which is headquartered in the Ortigas Center located in the city of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines. Masatsugu Asakawa, by career a Japanese civil servant, is the president of the Asian Development Bank. Asakawa, who took office on 17 January 2020, is the 10th president of ADB.

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.
- Citing the 2011 census, the bank said India's population in the age group of 10-19 years was over 250 million and in 2021 this is expected to go up. More than 70% of this population lives in rural areas. **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.**

Payments banks are a new model of banks conceptualised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). These banks can accept a restricted deposit, which is currently limited to Rs.1 lakh per customer and may be increased further. These banks cannot issue loans and credit cards. Both current account and savings accounts can be operated by such banks. Payments banks can issue services like ATM cards, debit cards, net-banking and mobile-banking. **Bharti Airtel set up India's first live payments bank.** The minimum capital requirement is 100 crore. For the first five years, the stake of the promoter should remain at least 40%. Foreign shareholding will be allowed in these banks as per the rules for FDI in private banks in India.

RBI estimates gross NPA of banks may rise to 12.5% by March 2021

- The Reserve Bank of India released the **Financial Stability Report (FSR)** that “reflects the collective assessment of the sub-committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) on risks to financial stability and the resilience of the financial system in the context of contemporaneous issues relating to development and regulation of the financial sector.”

- The gross non-performing assets (NPAs) for all banks together was at 8.5 per cent as of March 2020. This is expected to increase to 12.5 per cent by March 2021 under the baseline scenario, and may escalate to 14.7 per cent under a “very severely stressed” scenario, the RBI added.

A non-performing asset (NPA) is a loan or advance for which the principal or interest payment remained overdue for a period of 90 days.

RBI releases ‘Report of the Committee for Analysis of QR Code’ for public comments

- The Reserve Bank of India has placed on its website the ‘Report of the Committee for Analysis of QR (Quick Response) Code’. The Committee was constituted by RBI under the Chairmanship of Prof. D.B. Phatak (Professor Emeritus, IIT-Bombay) to review the prevalent system of QR Codes in India for facilitating digital payments and submit recommendations.
- Post demonetization, the acceptance infrastructure for QR codes has seen tremendous growth. As a result, QR based payments are rapidly increasing. One can simply scan a QR code to pay utility bills, fuel, grocery, food, travel, and several other categories. The acceptance infrastructure is a key element for the overall development of digital payments in India.

The Reserve Bank of India was founded on 1 April 1935 to respond to economic troubles after the First World War. RBI was conceptualised as per the guidelines, working style and outlook presented by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his book titled “The Problem of the Rupee – Its origin and its solution” and presented to the Hilton Young Commission. The bank was set up based on the recommendations of the 1926 Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance, also known as the Hilton–Young Commission. In 1969, the Indira Gandhi-headed government nationalised 14 major commercial banks. Upon Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980, a further six banks were nationalised. The first Governor of the RBI was British banker Osborn Smith and C.D. Deshmukh was the first Indian Governor of RBI. Shashikant Das is the current Governor of RBI.

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. The bank will market LIC products of term insurance, pension, plan, children plan, ULIPs, and endowment schemes.

Union Bank of India is one of the largest government-owned banks of India with 120+ million customers and a total business of US\$106 billion. After the amalgamation with Corporation Bank and Andhra Bank, which came into effect on 1 April 2020, the amalgamated entity becomes the fourth largest bank in terms of branch network and fifth largest in terms of business. Union Bank of India was the anchor bank for both Andhra bank and corporation bank, which came into effect on 1 April 2020 as announced by finance Minister of India Nirmala Sitharaman. Union Bank of India (Union Bank) was registered on 11 November 1919 as a limited company in Mumbai and was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi.

Nirmala Sitharaman Attends 3rd G20 Finance Ministers and 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.

- In her intervention, Smt. Sitharaman discussed two such deliverables. **First, enhancing access to opportunities for Women, Youth and SMEs is a priority agenda under Saudi Presidency** and a Menu of Policy Options on Access to Opportunities has been developed by G20 under this agenda.

Nirmala Sitharaman is currently serving as the **Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs**. She is the **first full-time female Finance Minister**. She is currently a member of the **Rajya Sabha from Karnataka**. **Nirmala Sitharaman** became the **first full-time Defence Minister to fly in a Sukhoi 30 MKI of the Indian Air Force**. She is the **first full-fledged woman defence minister of India**. The **first defence minister of independent India was Baldev Singh**. She is the **second woman since Indira Gandhi to hold this major post**. She is the **second women finance minister after Indira Gandhi to present Union Budget**. As of March 2020, **Morarji Desai** has presented 10 budgets which is the highest count followed by **P Chidambaram's 9** and **Pranab Mukherjee's 8**. **Yashwant Sinha, Yashwantrao Chavan and C.D. Deshmukh** have presented 7 budgets each while **Manmohan Singh and T.T. Krishnamachari** have presented 6 budgets.

IRCTC, SBI Card launched new Co-branded Contactless Credit Card on RuPay Platform

- IRCTC and SBI Card together launched their new Co-branded Contactless Credit Card on RuPay Platform**. Railway Minister Piyush Goyal dedicated this new card to the Nation.
- The new RuPay credit card is equipped with **Near Field Communication, NFC**, technology with which, users can expedite their transactions at the POS machines by just tapping the card on the machines.

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) is a subsidiary of the **Indian Railways** that handles the catering, tourism and online ticketing operations of the latter, with around 5, 50,000 to 6, 00,000 bookings every day. **IRCTC started running private trains, and "Tejas Express" becomes India's first private train on 4th Oct 2019**. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister **Yogi Adityanath** flagged off the first Tejas Express, the country's first "private" train run by its subsidiary **IRCTC, on the Lucknow-New Delhi route**.

Asian Development Bank approves three million US dollar grant to India

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has approved a **three million US dollar grant to India from its Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund (APDRF)**. This grant will further support the government's emergency response to the **COVID-19 pandemic**. This support will enhance disease surveillance and help in early detection, contact tracing, and treatment.
- ADB said, this will be further supplemented by other public health measures. **ADB approved a 1.5 billion US dollar COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) Programme to support India in its immediate pandemic response efforts**.

HSBC to set up IFSC unit at GIFT City

- The **Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Ltd (HSBC)** has got in-principle approval from the **GIFT SEZ Authority to set up an IFSC Banking Unit (IBU) at GIFT City**.
- "Government of India has envisaged GIFT IFSC as a hub to bring offshore financial transactions onshore and the presence of HSBC Bank has further strengthened the IFSC ecosystem of India,". So far, **13 banks have set up their IBUs in GIFT IFSC**. The cumulative business in banking vertical have crossed \$28 billion.

HSBC's origins in India date back to 1853 when the **Mercantile Bank of India** was established in **Mumbai**. The **Mercantile Bank of India, London and China** was founded in **Bombay (now Mumbai)**. Founded in **1865** to serve the needs of the **merchants of the China coast and finance the growing trade between China, Europe and the US**. **HSBC in India** has been active in the development of the **Indian banking industry - even giving India its first ATM in 1987**.

Bank of Baroda Credit Card offers EMIs on PoS Terminals in partnership with Innoviti

- Bank of Baroda Credit Card customers get another unique offering in terms of convenient and affordable EMI options**, as **BOB Financial Solutions Limited** ties up with **Innoviti Payment Solutions**. The **Bank of Baroda credit cardholders pan India** would be serviced at **70,000+ Innoviti PoS terminals across 1,000+ cities**.

- Consumers are cautious about their spending and yet would need affordable options in essential categories such as healthcare, education, IT (computers and laptops), and furniture & kitchen appliances. This new partnership will help **Bank of Baroda credit card holders' access to EMIs** that can be repaid conveniently through their credit cards.
- The proposed solution design has been kept simple in-line that offer great payment experiences. **Customers wanting to opt for EMI, only need to notify the cashier during billing. The cashier can convert the payment into EMI over-the-counter on the POS terminal.**

Bank of Baroda (BOB) is an **Indian Multinational, public sector Banking and financial services company**. It is the **fifth largest public sector bank in India**. The **Maharaja of Baroda, Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III**, founded the bank on **20 July 1908** in the Princely State of Baroda, in Gujarat. The **Government of India** nationalized the bank, along with 13 other major commercial banks of India on **19 July 1969**; the bank has been designated as a profit-making public sector undertaking (PSU).

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.

Federal Bank is a **Private Sector, scheduled commercial bank in India, headquartered in Aluva, Kochi**. The Bank also has its Representative Offices abroad at Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The Bank is also listed in the **BSE, NSE and London Stock Exchange** and has a branch in India's first International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at GIFT City in Gujarat. The bank name was named **Federal Bank Limited** on **2 December 1949**, after completing the formalities of Banking Regulation Act, 1949. **MoneyGram International, Inc. is an American money transfer company based in the United States with headquarters in Dallas, Texas.** The company provides its service to individuals and businesses through a network of agents and financial institutions.

Firms in News

NPCI launches UPI AutoPay feature for recurring payments

- **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, launched its one-stop fintech payment solution- **UPI AutoPay** in a virtual event of Global Fintech Fest. The feature is dedicated to recurring payments and can be used for multiple financial purposes such as utility payments, booking bus pass, train tickets, paying DTH subscriptions among others.
- **Customers can create e-mandate through their UPI ID or QR Scan for transactions up to Rs 2000.** In case of transactions above Rs 2000, the UPI PIN will be needed to authenticate the payment.

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India. **Founded in 2008**, the NPCI is a not-for-profit organisation registered under section 8 of the Companies Act 2013, established by Reserve Bank of India & IBA. It is headquartered in Mumbai.

NHAI to undertake performance assessment & ranking of highways in country

- **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has decided to undertake performance assessment and ranking of the highways in the country.
- The assessment audit and ranking of the National Highways is aimed to take corrective recourse, wherever needed, to improve the quality and provide higher level of service to highway commuters. The criteria for the assessment have been broadly categorised in three main heads. They are - Highway Efficiency, Highway Safety and User Services.

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is an autonomous agency of the Government of India, responsible for management of a network of over 50,000 km of National Highways out of 1,15,000 km in India. The NHAI was created through the promulgation of the National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988.

Tata's Chandrasekaran, Lockheed's Taiclet to receive USIBC Global Leadership Award

- **Tata group Chairman N Chandrasekaran and Lockheed Martin CEO Jim Taiclet** will receive the **USIBC Global Leadership Award** this year. "Every year, the USIBC Global Leadership Awards are conferred upon executives in recognition of outstanding leadership and for promoting Indo-US trade and business.
- It added that this year, the prestigious annual award would be presented to **Jim Taiclet**, chief executive of Lockheed Martin and co-chair of the US-India CEO Forum, and **Natarajan Chandrasekaran**, chairman of the Tata group and co-chair of the US-India CEO Forum.

U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) was formed in 1975 as a business advocacy organization to enlighten and encourage the private sectors of both India and United States to enhance investment flows. The organization serves as a direct link between business and Government leaders, resulting in increased trade and investment to strengthen ties between the two nations. **USIBC is headquartered in Washington, D.C., USA.** **President Nisha Biswal** currently serves as the current chairman of USIBC.

With a fortune of \$68 bn, Mukesh Ambani now richer than Warren Buffet

- **The chairman of Reliance Industries Ltd.** is now worth **\$68.3 billion**, surpassing **Buffett's \$67.9 billion** according to the **Bloomberg Billionaires Index**.
- **Shares of Ambani's Indian conglomerate** have more than doubled since a low in **March** as its digital unit got more than **\$15 billion** in investments from companies including Facebook Inc. and Silver Lake.
- While Ambani's wealth has jumped – he became the only Asian tycoon in the exclusive club of the world's top 10 richest people last month – **Buffett's fortune** dropped this week after he gave away **\$2.9 billion** to charity.
- **Ambani, is now the eighth richest person on the planet**, and **Buffett** is ninth, according to the index, which started in 2012. Thanks to Mr Ambani's deals, India has emerged as a hot-spot for M&A this year, accounting for more than 12% of those announced in Asia Pacific – the highest ratio since at least 1998.

Warren Edward Buffett is an American investor, business tycoon, and philanthropist, who is the chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway. He founded The Giving Pledge in 2009 with Bill Gates, whereby billionaires pledge to give away at least half of their fortunes.

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. BuyUcoin is working continuously towards making its user experience effortless by introducing features that would enable faster and swift transactions and secure virtual accounts.

A cryptocurrency (or crypto currency) is a digital asset designed to work as a medium of exchange wherein individual coin ownership records are stored in a ledger existing in a form of computerized database using strong cryptography to secure transaction records, to control the creation of additional coins, and to verify the transfer of coin ownership. Bitcoin is a cryptocurrency, a form of electronic cash. It is a decentralized digital currency without a central bank or single administrator that can be sent from user-to-user on the peer-to-peer bitcoin network without the need for intermediaries. Bitcoin was invented by an unknown person or group of people using the name Satoshi Nakamoto and released as open-source software in 2009.

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.
- 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 is claimed to be facilitating the Indian automotive industry to become self-reliant by assisting in innovation and adoption of global technological advancements by bringing together the stakeholders from various associated avenues.

The International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) was established in 2006 at Manesar, Haryana, India. ICAT is providing quality services to the industry in all the domains of automotive and non-automotive development, such as Powertrain, Noise Vibration and Harshness, Component, Fatigue, Photometry, Tyre & Wheel, Passive Safety, EMC and CAD & CAE.

Cabinet approves capital infusion for the three Public Sector General Insurance Companies

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved the capital infusion for an overall value of Rs.12,450 crore; (including Rs. 2,500 crore infused in FY 2019-20) in the three Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs) namely Oriental Insurance Company Limited (OICL), National Insurance Company Limited (NICK) and United India Insurance Company Limited (UIICL) but of which Rs.3,475 crore will be released immediately; while the balance Rs.6,475 crore will be infused later.
- Cabinet also approved increase in authorised share capital of NICK to Rs.7, 500 crore and that of UIICL and OICL to Rs 5,000 crore respectively to give effect to the capital infusion. Further, the process of merger has been ceased so far in view of the current scenario and instead, the focus shall be on their profitable growth.
- The capital infusion of Rs.3, 475 Crore will be allocated to three PSGICs viz. OICL, NICK and UIICL as the first tranche in the current financial year and the. Balance amount will be released in one or more tranches. To give effect to the infusion, the authorised capital of NICK will be increased to Rs. 7,500 Crore and that of UIICL and OICL to Rs.5, 000 Crore respectively.

India's first numberless card: Do online, offline transactions with Face ID, pattern lock or PIN

- **FamPay, India's first Neobank for teenagers** that brings cashless convenience to millions of teens and their parents **announced the launch of India's first numberless card – FamCard.**
- **FamCard is just like a debit card that teenagers can now use to make 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 finally make online (UPI & P2P) and offline payments without the need to set up a bank account.** Every transaction is protected with device locks like fingerprint, Face ID, pattern lock or PIN.

'FamPay is India's first payment app for teenagers and their families. With FamPay, minors can do UPI, P2P and card payments without the need to set up a bank account. **FamPay allows parents to send money to their kids below the age of 18, which they can spend securely anytime, anywhere, under parent's supervision.** FamPay aims at making payments smooth and fun for children.'

IRDA constitutes working group to explore a Pandemic Risk Pool

- **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA)** announced that it has **constituted a working group to study the possibility of creating a 'pandemic risk pool'** to come up with a long term solution to deal with economic fallouts of a future such pandemic.
- **The nine-member working group is headed by IRDA's executive director Suresh Mathur** and has **representatives from regulators, reinsurers and insurance companies.** The insurance regulator said that such a risk pool in the future could offer protection for business interruption without material damage, loss of income and livelihood and other related pandemic related losses currently not insured in India.

India's first swadesi storage & management service provider DigiBoxx™ to launch on 15th August

- **The COVID-19 era has only exacerbated this need and cloud storage has now become a necessity in order to navigate through these challenging times.**
- **DigiBoxx is a Digital Asset Management (DAM) platform that will be launched for Indian users on 15th August 2020 to address this growing need in the market.** It can often be difficult to keep your business documents organized and securely stored with seemingly endless options for digital document storage and organization.

DigiBoxx™ is an Indian digital file storage, sharing and management platform that's secure, fast, intuitive and easy on the pocket. With a goal to make digital asset management locally global, **DigiBoxx™ now helps store and share your or your client's various assets like photos, videos, PDFs, work files with other people securely, yet have them stored locally.** This is the first of its kind solution coming out of India and is definitely a good news for the 600 Mn+ internet users of the country especially considering the efficiency metric & the promised pricing.

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

- **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has **allowed 29 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 said 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 ages 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 said 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.

MCX launches Gold Mini Options

- The Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) launched Gold Mini Options after receiving the regulatory nod from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).
- The regulatory board has given the approval to MCX to launch Gold Mini Options with Gold Mini (100 grams) bar as underlying. The commodity exchange said in a statement that Gold Mini Option August 2020.
- A gold option is a derivative with gold as the underlying asset. The gold options contract is a contract between two parties to facilitate a potential transaction on a quantity of gold. In this option, a gold futures agreement would be the underlying asset securing the investment. The option agreement terms list details such as the quantity, delivery date and strike price, which are all predetermined.

Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd (MCX) is an independent commodity exchange based in India. It was established in 2003 and is based in Mumbai. It is India's largest commodity derivatives exchange where the clearance and settlements of the exchange happen and the turnover of the exchange for the quarter ended September 2018 was 1.78 billion rupees. MCX offers options trading in gold and futures trading in non-ferrous metals, bullion, energy, and a number of agricultural commodities (mentha oil, cardamom, crude palm oil, cotton, and others).

Hyundai delivers world's first hydrogen-powered trucks

- Hyundai Motor Company has shipped the first 10 units of the Hyundai Xcient Fuel Cell, the world's first mass-produced fuel cell heavy-duty truck, to Switzerland. The company plans to ship a total of 50 Xcient Fuel Cells to Switzerland this year, with handover to commercial fleet customers starting in September.
- Hyundai plans to roll out a total of 1,600 Xcient Fuel Cell trucks by 2025, reflecting the company's environmental commitment and technological prowess as it works toward reducing carbon emissions through zero-emission solutions.
- The trucks – the first in the world of their type, and a pointer to how heavy transport could make the switch to electrification – essentially use the same technology that will power the fleet of Hyundai Nexo hydrogen cars that will soon hit the roads of Canberra as part of a trial in the nation's capital.
- In a fuel cell car – and truck – hydrogen is transformed into electricity to charge an onboard battery pack which in turn powers an electric motor or motors. It means a hydrogen-powered car can refuel in a matter of minutes – just like a petrol or diesel vehicle – rather than the hours it takes for an electric car to fully recharge.

Hyundai Motor Company is a South Korean multinational automotive manufacturer headquartered in Seoul. Hyundai Motor Company was founded in 1967 and, along with its 32.8% owned subsidiary, Kia Motors, and its 100% owned luxury subsidiary Genesis Motor altogether comprise the Hyundai Motor Group. Hyundai operates the world's largest integrated automobile manufacturing facility in Ulsan, South Korea which has an annual production capacity of 1.6 million units.

Together with Nokia, Apple has developed the world's first network operating system NOS

- A new network operating system has received the name SR Linux NOS. A Nokia developer, together with colleagues from other Internet companies has created a platform for entrepreneurs FSP. Now Apple is using a new OS in cloud data processing center. Nokia SR Linux created on the new microservices. The developer kit NDK allows programmers to implement tasks of high complexity.
- SR Linux is the world's first open and flexible environment for creating applications intended for use in the Network. Nokia FSP is a set of tools for cloud service providers. They are needed in the implementation of actions on the basis of a premeditated plan. FSP allows you to deploy and monitor networks data center. The platform

provides invulnerability, adaptability and operations without active human intervention. This simplifies the configuration and use of the data center, and cloud computing.

Apple Inc. is an American multinational technology company headquartered in California, that designs, develops, and sells consumer electronics, computer software, and online services. It was founded by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, and Ronald Wayne in April 1976 to develop and sell Wozniak's Apple I personal computer. It was incorporated as Apple Computer, Inc. in January 1977. Tim Cook is the Chief Executive Officer.

Nokia is a Finnish multinational telecommunications, information technology, and consumer electronics company, founded in 1865. Nokia's headquarters are in Espoo, in the greater Helsinki metropolitan area, Finland. Knut Fredrik Idestam is best known as a founder of Nokia.

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 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 Securities and Exchange Board of India was established on April 12, 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992. SEBI has its headquarters at the business district of Bandra Kurla Complex in Mumbai. Shri Ajay Tyagi is the current chairman of Securities and Exchange Board of India. All the credit rating agencies in India are regulated by SEBI (Credit Rating Agencies) Regulations, 1999 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992. There are a total of six credit agencies in India viz, CRISIL, CARE, ICRA, SMREA, Brickwork Rating, and India Rating and Research Pvt. Ltd.

Google announces \$10 billion India Digitization Fund

- Technology giant Google will invest \$10 billion (Rs. 75,000 crore) in India over the next five-seven years with a focus on digitising the economy and building India-first products and services, its CEO Sundar Pichai said.
- He said the investment will focus on four areas important to digitization including enabling affordable access and information for every Indian in their own language, building products and services that are deeply relevant to India's unique needs, empowering businesses in their digital transformation journey and leveraging technology and AI for social good, in areas like health, education, and agriculture.
- In April, social networking major Facebook bought 9.9% stake in Jio Platform for Rs. 43,573.62 crore, while e-commerce giant Amazon had in January announced \$1 billion investment over five years to help digitise small and medium businesses.

Google Inc. is an American multinational technology company that specializes in Internet-related services and products, which include online advertising technologies, search engine, cloud computing, software, and hardware. Google was founded in 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin while they were Ph.D. students at Stanford University, California. It is now headquartered in California, USA. Pichai Sundararajan is the current chief executive officer (CEO) of Google Inc.

NTPC Limited wins prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Award 2019

- National Thermal Power Corporation, NTPC Limited, a Central PSU under Ministry of Power has won the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Award 2019, under Outstanding Accomplishment in Corporate Excellence Category. The company has also received Commendation for Significant Achievement in the category of CSR.
- NTPC always strives for sustainable development of its communities around the power stations. CII-ITC Sustainability Awards recognize and reward excellence in sustainability practices. It is considered to be the most credible platform for sustainability recognition in the country.

NTPC Limited, formerly known as **National Thermal Power Corporation Limited**, is an Indian Public Sector Undertaking, engaged in the business of generation of electricity and allied activities. It is a company incorporated under the Companies Act 1956 and is promoted by the Government of India. **The headquarters of the company is situated at New Delhi.** It was **founded by Government of India in 1975**, which now holds 54.74% of its equity shares. **In May 2010, NTPC was conferred Maharatna status** by the Union Government of India.

NHAI to set up InvIT; forms search panel for Investment Manager Board

- **The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** is in the process of **setting up an Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT)** to facilitate investment in the highways sector.
- **This will be the first InvIT to be sponsored by any government entity in the country.** A search committee has been set up for appointment of chairman and two independent directors for its Investment Manager Board. InvITs are instruments on the pattern of mutual funds and **are designed to pool small sums of money from a number of investors to invest in assets that generate cash flows over a period of time.**

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is an **autonomous agency of the Government of India, set up in 1988 and is responsible for management of a network of over 50,000 km of National Highways** out of 1,15,000 km in India. It is a nodal agency of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. **NHAI has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Space Research Organisation for satellite mapping of highways.** **Sukhbir Singh Sandhu (IAS)** is the present **Chairman of NHAI** since October 2019. **Nitin Jairam Gadkari** is the current **Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Minister of Shipping and the Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.**

NLC, Coal India form JV to develop solar and thermal power assets

- **NLC, Coal India form JV to develop solar and thermal power assets.** Government-owned mining majors **NLC India Ltd and Coal India Ltd** have formed a joint venture to develop solar and thermal power assets to the tune of **5,000 megawatts of power.**
- **Both companies will hold equal 50:50 equity in the joint venture company.** “This marks a new era in the power sector with synergy and expertise of two central public sector undertakings under the Ministry of Coal”.
- **The company – earlier known as Neyveli Lignite Corporation – has a power generation capacity of 5,192 megawatts besides lignite mining capacity of 30 million tonnes per annum.**
- **Coal India is the single largest coal producer worldwide** and operates through 83 mining areas spread over eight states in India. It produces 607 million tonnes of coal annually.

IRDAI committee to examine Surety Bonds for road contracts

- Taking cue from a proposal from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, **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.
- **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.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) is an **autonomous, statutory body** tasked with regulating and promoting the insurance and re-insurance industries in India. It was **constituted by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999**, an Act of Parliament passed by the Government of India. The agency's **headquarters are in Hyderabad, Telangana**, where it moved from Delhi in 2001. **IRDAI is a 10-member body** including the chairman, five full-time and four part-time members appointed by the government of India.

Amazon Pay joins hands with Acko to offer auto insurance

- **Amazon Pay**, the payments arm of e-commerce giant Amazon India, has **partnered Acko General Insurance Ltd to offer insurance for two- as well as four-wheelers.**
- **Customers can get a quote for their cars or two-wheelers on Amazon Pay by providing basic details.** They can also select from a list of add-ons such as zero-depreciation, engine protection and more.

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. The oil-to-telecom conglomerate is now ranked 46th globally on market cap, according to stock market data.
- **Reliance was ranked 48th and was behind ExxonMobil.** Its share price scaled an all-time high of Rs 2,163 before settling at Rs 2,146.20, taking the company to 46th position. **The Rs 13.6 lakh crore m-cap of Reliance together with Rs 54,262 crore m-cap of its partly-paid shares** that were issued in the recent rights issue and are traded separately, puts the company's combined market value at Rs 14.1 lakh crore or USD 189.3 billion.

Exxon Mobil Corporation, doing business as **ExxonMobil**, is an **American multinational oil and gas corporation headquartered in Irving, Texas.** It is the **largest direct descendant of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil, and was formed on November 30, 1999** by the merger of Exxon (formerly the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey) and Mobil (formerly the Standard Oil Company of New York). ExxonMobil's primary brands are Exxon, Mobil, Esso, and ExxonMobil Chemical. ExxonMobil is incorporated in Texas. **Darren W. Woods** is the **current chief executive officer (CEO) and chairman of ExxonMobil** since January 1, 2017.

In a world first, Sharekhan launches fin movie platform MoneyFlix

- **French financial power house BNP Paribas-owned brokerage Sharekhan unveiled an edutainment platform called MoneyFlix** to help drive digital revolution in financial education.
- Catering to both the digitally-savvy millennials and the not-so-millennials, **MoneyFlix, from Sharekhan Education, offers financial modules with entertainment that aims to keep viewers engaged.** Teaching about money through edutainment is an effective way to demystify a complicated subject by using compelling and familiar concepts.
- **MoneyFlix aims to educate and help both the new-to-market and experienced investors** as well as traders to understand finance and help them take better decisions on financial market opportunities. **The platform offers nearly 100 videos, which has a duration of 5 to 30 minutes,** and the number of videos will double shortly. **These videos cover topics from the simplest investing principles to complex trading strategies** in Bollywood style.

MYPINPAD Receives World's First Certification for Contactless Card Payments on Mobile Devices

- **UL, a leading global safety science company, announced that MYPINPAD, a provider of secure personal authentication for payment solutions on smartphones and tablets, is the first company globally to be certified to the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Security Standards Council's Contactless Payments on COTS Security and Testing Requirements** for its MYPINPAD Soft POS solution.
- A set of principles and requirements for a mobile payment-contactless acceptance solution, CPoC Security and Test Requirements provide a security framework to protect the confidentiality and integrity of sensitive payment information captured and processed in CPoC solutions. **MYPINPAD SoftPOS facilitates contactless chip-based payments using the near-field communication (NFC) interface of common commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) devices, such as a smartphones or tablets.**

Huawei tops Samsung as world's No. 1 smartphone company for first time

- **For the first time, Huawei Technologies Co. has passed Samsung Electronics as the world's No. 1 supplier of smartphones,** according to new data from research company Canalys.

- The Chinese technology giant sold 55.8 million devices in Q2, 2020 followed by Samsung which sold 53.7 million mobile devices. However, it is more the plunge in Samsung sales number by 30 per cent that helped Huawei earn the top spot as the seller of the most mobile devices. Huawei's own sales number slumped 5% year on year according to Canalys data.

Huawei Technologies Ltd is a Chinese multinational technology company headquartered in Shenzhen, Guangdong. It designs, develops, and sells telecommunications equipment and consumer electronics (mainly smartphones). The company was founded in 1987 by Ren Zhengfei, a former Deputy Regimental Chief in the People's Liberation Army.

India's first passengers of AirAsia India to get support services through WhatsApp

- In a big convenience, AirAsia India customers will now be able to get support services through WhatsApp following the budget carrier making available its virtual assistant, AirAsia Virtual Allstar (AVA) on the Facebook-run messaging platform.
- AVA answers queries from customers instantly in 11 languages, including English, Hindi, Bahasa Malaysia, Thai, Bahasa Indonesia, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, among others.

AirAsia India is an airline in India headquartered in Bangalore, Karnataka. The airline is a joint venture with Tata Sons holding 51% stake in the airline and AirAsia Investment Limited holding 49% stake. AirAsia India commenced operations on 12 June 2014 with Bangalore as its primary hub. AirAsia is the first foreign airline to set up a subsidiary in India and the company marked the Tata Group's return to the aviation industry after 60 years, having ceded Air India in 1946. As of June 2020, AirAsia India was the 4th largest carrier in India, after IndiGo, SpiceJet and Air India, with a market share of 7.1%

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.

MobiKwik is an Indian company founded in 2009 that provides a mobile phone based payment system and digital wallet. Customers add money to an online wallet that can be used for payments. In 2013 the Reserve Bank of India authorized the company's use of the MobiKwik wallet, and in May 2016 the company began providing small loans to consumers as part of its service. MobiKwik was founded in 2009 by husband and wife team Bipin Preet Singh and Upasana Taku. The company is headquartered in Gurgaon, Haryana.

Reliance Power, JERA ink loan agreement with banks for new power plant in Bangladesh

- Reliance Power and Japanese energy major JERA have inked a pact with a group of banks for full financing, totalling USD 642 million (approx Rs 4,798 crore), for their new gas-fired thermal power generation project in Bangladesh.
- Reliance Power and JERA, through their project company, are developing a new 745 MW natural gas combined-cycle power project in Meghnaghat in Bangladesh.

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) is an Indian conglomerate holding company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. On 18 October 2007, Reliance Industries became the first Indian company to breach \$100 billion market capitalization. It is also the highest income tax payer in the private sector in India. Dhirubhai Ambani founded Reliance Industries in Bombay with his cousin. Mukesh Dhirubhai Ambani is an Indian billionaire business magnate, and the chairman, managing director, and largest shareholder of Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL), a Fortune Global 500 company and India's most valuable company by market value. He is currently the richest man in Asia.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



SpaceX launches South Korea's 1st military satellite, nails rocket landing at sea

- **SpaceX successfully launched South Korea's first military satellite** and ached a rocket landing, too, to mark its 12th launch of the year. **A sooty Falcon 9 rocket took to the skies on July 20**, off from Space Launch Complex 40 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, following a 30-minute weather delay.
- The mission was originally slated to launch on July 14, but was postponed by SpaceX to allow time for additional preflight rocket checks. **The California-based rocket builder launched South Korea's first military communications satellite, called Anasis-II.** Built by Airbus Space and Defense, the spacecraft is based on the Eurostar E3000 satellite design and "will provide secure communications over a wide coverage".

Space Exploration Technologies Corp., doing business as SpaceX, is a private American aerospace manufacturer and space transportation services company headquartered in Hawthorne, California. It was founded in 2002 by entrepreneur Elon Musk with the goal of reducing space transportation costs and enabling the colonization of Mars. SpaceX has since developed the Falcon launch vehicle family and the Dragon spacecraft family, which both currently deliver payloads into Earth orbit.

Pradhan Mantri Scheme for Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises launched by Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal

- **Food Processing Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal launched Pradhan Mantri Scheme for Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises** as a part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- This centrally sponsored scheme will **generate an investment of 35 thousand crore rupees** and will **provide employment to nine lakh skilled and semi-skilled workers.**

Harsimrat Kaur Badal has been serving as the Union Cabinet Minister of Food Processing Industries in the Government of India and **Member of Parliament in the Lok Sabha from Bathinda.**

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.**

AI enabled MyGov Corona Helpdesk wins two awards at Global Leadership Summit

- **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.

Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurates First-ever Virtual Healthcare and Hygiene Expo 2020 organised by FICCI

- The Minister of State for Shipping (Independent charge) and Chemicals & Fertilisers Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated the country's largest and first Virtual Healthcare & Hygiene EXPO 2020.
- The Expo has been organised by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), and supported by Ministry of AYUSH, GoI.
- This is the first of its kind event and largest virtual exhibition in India. The event was inaugurated virtually and lived daily from 22nd to 26th June, 2020. The expo witnessed participation of over 1,000 international buyers from 120 countries with 147 exhibitors.

Norway to fund world's first full-scale testing of ammonia-fuelled four-stroke engine

- The world's first long term, full-scale testing of ammonia as a fuel in a marine four-stroke combustion engine will commence early next year thanks to \$2.05m funding from the Norwegian Research Council.
- The partners involved in the landmark project are Knutsen OAS Shipping, Eidesvik Offshore, Repsol, Wärtsilä and the Sustainable Energy Catapult Centre.
- The project will commence in the Sustainable Energy Catapult Centre's testing facilities at Stord, Norway during the first quarter of 2021. The centre is part of the Norwegian Catapult programme that facilitates a national infrastructure for innovation.

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. An event was held to mark the commencement of operations of this centre.
- 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.

Health Minister releases White paper on 'Focused Interventions for 'Make in India': Post COVID 19' by TIFAC

- Union Minister for Science & Technology, Health and Family Welfare and Earth Sciences **Dr. Harsh Vardhan** released a white paper on "Focused Interventions for 'Make in India': Post COVID 19" and "Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients: Status, Issues, Technology Readiness and Challenges", prepared by Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC), at a virtual function in New Delhi.
- This White Paper captures sector-specific strengths, market trends, and opportunities in five sectors, critical from the country's perspective, includes healthcare, machinery, ICT, agriculture, manufacturing, and electronics with reference to supply and demand, self-sufficiency and mass-scale production capacity. It has identified policy options primarily in the areas of Public health system, MSME sector, Global relations: FDI, recalibrated trade alignments, new-age technologies, etc.

USAID, MNRE announce new partnership to develop clean energy

- US Agency for International Development (USAID) and Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has announced a new partnership to increase collaboration for clean energy development.

- In a step toward increasing US-India collaboration for clean energy development, **the USAID and MNRE announced the launch of a partnership between the USAID-supported South Asia Group for Energy (SAGE) and MNRE's National Technical Institutions**, USAID said in a statement.
- Under the partnership, **SAGE will provide advanced technical knowledge on clean energy development embedded in the US Department of Energy's National Laboratories to the MNRE's National Technical Institutions and other public institutes.**

India and ISRO team up with Swedish space agencies for the 2023 Venus Mission-Shukrayaan-1

- **Swedish Institute of Space Physics is going to help Indian space agency, ISRO in order to return to Venus on the first Indian Venus Mission- Shukrayaan-1.**
- The IRF made a satellite instrument that will be **inside the Shukrayaan-1**. It is going to be the **9th generation of IRF's series of miniaturized ion and ENA instruments**. ISRO is currently planning on the moon mission Gaganyaan after the success of SpaceX.
- **IRF's satellite instrument Venusian Neutrals Analyzer (VNA) will study how the charged particles from the Sun interact with the atmosphere and exosphere of the planet.**
- **Between 2006-2014 IRF's instrument ASPERA-4 (Analyzes of Space Plasma and Energetic Atoms) studied Venus onboard the European spacecraft Venus Express. Onboard the Indian Venus mission Shukrayaan-1, the Swedish Institute of Space Physics (IRF) will explore Venus for the second time.**

Venus is the second planet from the Sun. It is named after the Roman goddess of love and beauty. As the second-brightest natural object in the night sky after the Moon, Venus can cast shadows and can be, on rare occasion, visible to the naked eye in broad daylight. Venus lies within Earth's orbit, and so never appears to venture far from the Sun, either setting in the west just after dusk or rising in the east a bit before dawn. **Venus orbits the Sun every 224.7 Earth days. With a rotation period of 243 Earth days, it takes longer to rotate about its axis than any other planet in the Solar System and does so in the opposite direction to all but Uranus (meaning the Sun rises in the west and sets in the east). Venus does not have any moons, a distinction it shares only with Mercury among planets in the Solar System.**

India ranks eighth for cancer preparedness among 10 Asia-Pacific countries: EIU 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 said.**

Two agricultural experts from India named by UN chief to scientific group for 2021 food summit

- **Two eminent agricultural experts hailing from India have been named members of an international scientific group, aimed to offer foremost scientific evidence for sustainable food systems, established by UN chief Antonio Guterres ahead of a global food summit next year.**
- **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 Guterres.**
- **Lal, a preeminent 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 & Sequestration Center at The Ohio State University.**

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'.
- According to a statement issued 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 said that this partnership will not only create a world-leading testing and treatment ecosystem but also establish global data leadership.
- 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.

Independent evaluation of global COVID-19 response announced

- WHO Director-General announced the initiation of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR) to evaluate the world's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Panel will be co-chaired by former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark and former President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Prime Minister Clark went to on lead the United Nations Development Programme and President Sirleaf is a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

The World's first CIIE-themed Airplane launched by CEA Flew to Paris for its first Overseas Flight

- The world's first CIIE-themed airplane flew from Shanghai to Paris Charles de Gaulle International Airport, performing the airplane's first overseas flight with 245 passengers.
- The plane, jointly launched by the CIIE bureau and China Eastern Airlines (CEA), is an international long-range flagship model with new type of passenger service system, Boeing 777-300ER. Painted patterns include mascot panda "Jin Bao" of the China International Import Expo (CIIE).
- The World's First CIIE-themed Airplane Launched by CEA Flew to Paris for its First Overseas Flight.
- The third CIIE will be held in Shanghai from November 5 to 10, 2020. As the largest main base airline in Shanghai and one of the world's top 10 airlines, CEA has signed up as "core supporting company" and "designated air carrier" for the expo, playing multi-roles of sponsor, carrier, purchaser, service provider, etc. at the same time.
- The Expo is the world's first national exhibition with the theme of imports. The cumulative intended turnover of transactions during the second Expo in November 2019 reached US\$71.13 billion, an increase of 23% over the first. More than 3,800 enterprises participated in the expo and more than 500,000 buyers attended to discuss purchases.

UAE's Mars probe a first for the Arab world

- The United Arab Emirates launched its first mission to Mars as it strives to develop its scientific and technology capabilities and move away from its reliance on oil. The Hope Probe blasted off from Japan's Tanegashima Space Center for a seven-month journey to the red planet, where it will orbit and send back data about the atmosphere. The Al Amal probe, as it is called in Arabic, is expected to reach Mars by February 2021. China plans its first Mars probe, Tianwen-1 (formerly Huoxing 1), in the coming few days. The US, the only country that has sent previous missions to Mars, plans its Perseverance mission on July 30.
- The oil-rich United Arab Emirates has built a nuclear power programme and sent a man to space, and now plans to join another elite club by sending a probe to Mars.

- **Only the United States, India, the former Soviet Union, and the European Space Agency** have successfully sent missions to orbit the Red Planet, while China is preparing to launch its first Mars rover later this month.
- **The UAE – a collection of sheikhdoms better known for its skyscrapers, palm-shaped islands and mega attractions – is now pushing to join their ranks in what will be a first for the Arab world.**
- **Hazza Al Mansouri is an astronaut and the first person from the United Arab Emirates in space.** On 25 September 2019, he launched aboard the Soyuz MS-15 spacecraft to the International Space Station. He landed safely in Kazakhstan after eight days, on 3 October 2019 aboard Soyuz MS-12. Al Mansouri stated that he proudly returned with Zayed's ambition achieved.

The Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM), also called Mangalyaan is a space probe orbiting Mars since 24 September 2014. It was launched on 5 November 2013 by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It is India's first interplanetary mission and it made it the fourth space agency to reach Mars, after Roscosmos, NASA, and the European Space Agency. It made India the first Asian nation to reach Martian orbit and the first nation in the world to do so on its maiden attempt. On 1 July 2020, ISRO's space probe Mangalyaan was able to capture a photo of the Mars satellite Phobos from 4200 kms away. The Mars Colour Camera (MCC) onboard ISRO's Mars Orbiter Mission has captured the image of Phobos, the closest and biggest moon of Mars.

Loyal Textile introduces 'triple viral shield' range

- **Loyal Textile Mills unveiled reusable 'triple viral shield' products with anti-viral coating, under its Supera Shield brand.** Loyal said that it had collaborated with HeiQ Materials AG, Switzerland, and Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL). It uses R Elan fibre from Reliance and HeiQ's Viroblock technology to make these ranges of products.
- **Masks, personal protection equipment (PPE), and garments will be made of fabric woven with cotton and Reliance's R Elan fibre. The fabric is then treated with HeiQ Viroblock, Dhamodaraswamy Devadas, chief technology and business development officer, Loyal, said. "We have also used an in-house developed embedded technology," he added. As additional protection, an anti-viral spray technology had been developed for garments. While the garments and masks can be washed 25 times.**

Ingenuity will be the first helicopter to fly on Mars

- **When NASA's Perseverance rover launches at the end of this month, an experiment named Ingenuity will be safely tucked beneath the rover for the seven-month journey.**
- **Ingenuity will be the first helicopter to attempt flight on another planet.** Although development of the rover began 10 years ago, engineers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena began working on the design for a lightweight aircraft that could fly on Mars in 2014.
- **Ingenuity is an incredibly lightweight design, weighing only 4 pounds and featuring four carbon-fiber blades, solar cells and batteries. The blades are divided among two rotors spinning opposite of each other. Ingenuity's rotors will spin much faster than the helicopters we have on Earth.**

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is an independent agency of the executive branch of the United States federal government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and aerospace research. President Dwight D. Eisenhower established NASA in 1958. James Frederick Bridenstine is an American politician and the current administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. He became the first member of Congress to lead NASA.

India's indigenously developed anti-tank guided missile 'Dhruvastra' test-fired

- **India has successfully conducted three flight tests of its indigenously developed anti-tank guided missile 'Dhruvastra' from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in Odisha.**
- **Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the helicopter-launched anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) is one of the most advanced anti-tank weapons in the world.**
- **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.**

- **HELINA (Helicopter based NAG) is a third generation fire and forget class anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system mounted on the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH). A variant of HELINA Weapon System called DHRUVASTRA is being inducted into the Indian Air Force.**

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is an agency of the Republic of India, **charged with the military's research and development, headquartered in New Delhi, India.** It was **formed in 1958 by the merger of the Technical Development Establishment and the Directorate of Technical Development and Production** with the Defence Science Organisation. **Dr G. Satheesh Reddy is the current Chairman of DRDO.**

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.**

The Union Cabinet has approved the launch of a **new Centrally Sponsored Ayushman Bharat -National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM) having central sector component under Ayushman Bharat Mission anchored in the MoHFW.** The scheme has the benefit cover of **Rs. 5 lakh per family per year.** The target beneficiaries of the proposed scheme will be **more than 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on SECC database.** AB-NHPM will subsume the on-going centrally sponsored schemes –**Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS).**

India and EU renew Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation 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.

Govt 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.** Mr Gowda said that this in line with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and his clarion call for making India Atmanirbhar in pharma sector.
- **For this, 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. It is a matter of concern that the **country is critically dependent on imports for basic raw materials that are used to produce some of the essential medicines.**
- The Minister exhorted the industry and the states to come forward and participate in these schemes. **India is often referred to as 'the Pharmacy of the World'** and this has been proved true especially in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic when India continued to export critical lifesaving medicines to needy countries.

China launches new high-resolution mapping satellite

- **The Ziyuan III 03 satellite is launched by a Long March-4B rocket from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center.** 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 the 341st flight mission by the Long March rocket series. 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.

PFC signs agreement with IIT-Kanpur for research, training in smart grid technology

- Power Finance Corporation, PFC, a PSU under Ministry of Power has signed an agreement with Indian Institute of Technology- Kanpur for Training, Research, and Entrepreneurship Development in Smart Grid Technology.
- Under the agreement, PFC will provide financial assistance of worth two crore thirty eight lakhs and ninety seven thousand rupees to IIT-Kanpur.



Career
Launcher

Inventions/ Discoveries

Super-Earths Discovered Orbiting Nearby Red Dwarf Gliese 887

- In research led by the University of Göttingen, the RedDots team of astronomers has detected a system of super-Earth planets orbiting the nearby star Gliese 887, the brightest red dwarf star in the sky. The nearest exoplanets to us provide the best opportunities for detailed study, including searching for evidence of life outside the Solar System. The newly discovered super-Earths lie close to the red dwarf's habitable zone, where water can exist in liquid form, and could be rocky worlds. The results were published in the journal Science.
- The RedDots team of astronomers monitored the red dwarf, using the HARPS spectrograph at the European Southern Observatory in Chile. They used a technique known as "Doppler wobble," which enables them to measure the tiny back and forth wobbles of the star caused by the gravitational pull of the planets.
- The regular signals correspond to orbits of just 9.3 and 21.8 days, indicating two super-Earths — Gliese 887b and Gliese 887c — both larger than the Earth yet moving rapidly, much faster even than Mercury. Scientists estimate the temperature of Gliese 887c to be around 70°C.
- Gliese 887 is one of the closest stars to the Sun at around 11 light-years away. It is much dimmer and about half the size of our Sun, which means that the habitable zone is closer to Gliese 887 than Earth's distance from the Sun. RedDots discovered two more interesting facts about Gliese 887, which turn out to be good news not only for the newly discovered planets but also for astronomers.

Super-Earths are planets that have a mass higher than the Earth's but substantially below those of our local ice giants, Uranus and Neptune, which are 14.5 and 17 times Earth's, respectively. The term "super-Earth" refers only to the mass of the planet, and so does not imply anything about the surface conditions or habitability.

100 million-year-old microbes revived from depths of seafloor

- Scientists have succeeded in reviving microbes retrieved from sediment deep under the seafloor in the heart of the South Pacific that had survived in a dormant state for 101.5 million years in research illustrating the resiliency of life on Earth.
- The microbes, spanning 10 major and numerous minor groups of bacteria, may be the planet's oldest-known organisms. The scientists said the microbes were present in clay samples drilled from the research vessel JOIDES Resolution about 245 feet (74.5 meters) under the seafloor, below 3.5 miles (5.7 km) of water.
- Up to 99 percent of the microbes, dating back to the age of dinosaurs, that were found encased in the sediment survived despite having essentially no nutrients for all that time.
- The researchers, led by Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology geomicrobiologist Yuki Morono, incubated the microbes for up to 557 days in a secure laboratory setting, providing carbon and nitrogen "food" sources such as ammonia, acetate and amino acids. The microbes grew, multiplied and displayed diverse metabolic activities.
- The microbes were aerobic - requiring oxygen to live - and oxygen was present in the sediment samples. This indicates, the researchers said, that if sediment accumulates gradually on the seafloor at a rate of no more than a yard (metre) or two every million years, oxygen may remain present to enable such microbes to survive stupendous lengths of time.

NASA, ULA Launch Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover Mission to Red Planet

- NASA's Mars 2020 Perseverance rover mission is on its way to the Red Planet to search for signs of ancient life and collect samples to send back to Earth. "With the launch of Perseverance, we begin another historic mission of exploration," said NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine.
- Perseverance, sometimes called *Percy*, is a Mars rover manufactured by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory for use in NASA's Mars 2020 mission. The rover was launched on July 30, 2020 for Mars mission and is expected to land on Mars on February 18, 2021. The rover started off from Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. The target landing site of Perseverance Rover is Jezero Crater.

- **Perseverance carries seven scientific instruments to study the Martian surface at Jezero crater.** It carries several cameras and two microphones. **The rover is accompanied by the helicopter Ingenuity, which will help Perseverance to scout for locations to study.**

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is an independent agency of the executive branch of the **United States** federal government responsible for the **civilian space program**, as well as aeronautics and aerospace research. **President Dwight D. Eisenhower** established NASA in 1958. **James Frederick Bridenstine** is an **American politician** and the current administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. He became the **first member of Congress** to lead NASA.

Black hole merges with unusual compact object

- **The LIGO Scientific and VIRGO Collaborations (LSC)** have detected an **unusual compact object** whose mass falls in between that of a typical black hole and a neutron star. The absence of accompanying electromagnetic signatures such as flashes of light are compatible with both.
- **Since the first ever detection of gravitational wave signals emerging from the coalescing of binary black holes in 2015, the LIGO and VIRGO detectors have detected mergers of pairs of black holes, pairs of neutron stars and black hole-neutron star duo.**

The **Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO)** is a **large-scale physics experiment and observatory** to detect cosmic gravitational waves and to develop gravitational-wave observations as an astronomical tool. Two large observatories were built in the United States with the aim of detecting gravitational waves by laser interferometry. The initial LIGO observatories were funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and were conceived, built and are operated by Caltech and MIT. LIGO is the largest and most ambitious project ever funded by the NSF. In 2017, the Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded to Rainer Weiss, Kip Thorne and Barry C. Barish “for decisive contributions to the LIGO detector and the observation of gravitational waves”.

Biofuel developed from non-edible waste seeds

- **A team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati (IIT-G)** has used an **innovative method to produce biofuels from non-edible seeds.** The team has also found industrial applications for chemicals from the discards after extracting combustible oil from these seeds.
- **Non-edible seeds of plants such as peela kaner, mahua, gulmohar and neem for the project in order to eliminate competition between food and fuel.** The research is focussing on the “**low-cost pyrolyzer**” they designed to derive the biofuels using certain catalysts was published in at least four journals such as Bioresource Technology and Journal of Analytical and Applied Pyrolysis.

A **biofuel** is a **fuel that is produced through contemporary processes from biomass**, rather than a fuel produced by the very slow geological processes involved in the formation of fossil fuels, such as oil. **Since biomass technically can be used as a fuel directly (e.g. wood logs),** some people use the terms biomass and biofuel interchangeably. **Biofuels can be produced from plants (i.e. energy crops), or from agricultural, commercial, domestic, and/or industrial wastes (if the waste has a biological origin).** Renewable biofuels generally involve contemporary carbon fixation, such as those that occur in plants or microalgae through the process of photosynthesis.

NEOWISE comet

- **The C/2020 F3 comet aka NEOWISE** has **caught the attention of the stargazers in India** as they have been and was able to get a glimpse of the celestial event from July 14 onwards. The comet was visible to the naked eye for 20 minutes every day for 20 days.
- **On July 14, the comet** was visible an hour before the dawn sky. This was continued in mid-July. However, the comet was visible in the evening later this month before it starts to fade away in August.
- **It was visible only through binoculars and telescopes** before disappearing next month as it enters the outer orbit of our solar system. **It was closest to earth on July 22 as the distance from Earth will be 64 million miles or 103 million kilometres as it crosses the planet’s orbit.**

C/2020 F3 (NEOWISE) or Comet NEOWISE is a long period comet with a near-parabolic orbit discovered on **March 27, 2020**, by astronomers during the **NEOWISE** mission of the **Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer (WISE)** space telescope. At that time, it was an 18th-magnitude object, located 2 AU away from the Sun and 1.7 AU (250 million km; 160 million mi) away from Earth.

IIT Kanpur develops virtual classroom system ‘Mobile Masterjee’

- In the backdrop of the disruption in normal classroom teaching owing to Covid-19 lockdown, the **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.
- Developed by the **Imagineering Lab of IIT Kanpur**, it is targeted at helping the rural schools overcome the teaching and learning challenges posed by the pandemic. It is lightweight and compact, and has adjustments to fit sheets/book on it for delivering instructions to pupils.

Exposed core of Jupiter-like planet, 39-times bigger than Earth, spotted near distant star

- 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.
- 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.

ISRO’s MOM captures image of the Mars’ biggest moon Phobos

- The **Mars Colour Camera (MCC)** onboard **ISRO’s Mars Orbiter Mission** has captured the image of **Phobos**, the closest and biggest moon of Mars.
- The image was taken on **July 1** when **MOM** was about **7,200 km from Mars** and **4,200 km from Phobos**. “Spatial resolution of the image is 210 m.
- This is a composite image generated from 6 MCC frames and has been colour corrected,” ISRO said in an update along with the image. “**Stickney, the largest crater on Phobos along with the other craters (Shklovsky, Roche & Grildrig) are also seen in this image**”.

The **Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM)**, also called **Mangalyaan** is a space probe orbiting Mars since **24 September 2014**. It was launched on **5 November 2013** by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**. It is **India's first interplanetary mission** and it made it the fourth space agency to reach Mars, after **Roscosmos, NASA, and the European Space Agency**. It made India the first Asian nation to reach Martian orbit and the first nation in the world to do so on its maiden attempt. The **Mars Orbiter Mission probe** lifted-off from the **First Launch Pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre (Sriharikota Range SHAR), Andhra Pradesh**, using a **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)** rocket **C25** on **5 November 2013**.

ISRO to launch Brazil’s Amazonia-1 Earth Observation Satellite on PSLV

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** is gearing up to lift off **Brazil’s Amazonia-1 satellite** next month onboard the **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)**. **Amazonia-1** will be the **first satellite for Earth Observation** that is designed, assembled and tested in **Brazil**. The launch of the Brazilian satellite is confirmed, but there is not clarity on a date for the planned launch.

- **India and Brazil signed a Framework Agreement for cooperation in the field of outer space in January 2004.** Apart from this, an agreement on the programme of cooperation between the two space agencies was also signed. **Under this, Brazil received data from ISRO's remote sensing satellite ResourceSAT-1.**
- **At the 6th BRICS Summit in 2014, the two countries –India and Brazil had an agreement all signed which talked about setting up a Brazilian earth station to receive data from the Indian satellites.** For operating the station and gathering data through remote sensing, the Brazilian scientists have been getting training at the ISRO facility.

ISRO is the space agency of India headquartered in the city of Bangalore. ISRO was formed in 1969. ISRO built India's first satellite, Aryabhata, which was launched by the Soviet Union on 19 April 1975. Dr Kailasavadivoo Sivan is current the chairperson of the ISRO. Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) or Sriharikota Range (SHAR) is a rocket launch centre operated by ISRO. It is located in Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

Astrophysicists unveil biggest-ever 3D map of Universe

- **Astrophysicists published the largest-ever 3D map of the Universe, the result of an analysis of more than four million galaxies and ultra-bright, energy-packed quasars.**
- **The efforts of hundreds of scientists from around 30 institutions worldwide have yielded a “complete story of the expansion of the universe”,** said Will Percival of the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada.
- **In the project launched more than two decades ago, the researchers made “the most accurate expansion history measurements over the widest-ever range of cosmic time”. The map relies on the latest observations of the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS), titled the “extended Baryon Oscillation Spectroscopic Survey” (eBOSS), with data collected from an optical telescope in New Mexico over six years.**

China launches first Mars mission

- **China successfully launched its first Mars probe aiming to complete orbiting, landing and roving in a single mission, taking an ambitious step towards planetary exploration of the solar system.**
- **A Long March-5 rocket, China's largest and most powerful launch vehicle, carrying the spacecraft with a mass of about five tonnes, soared into the sky from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site on the coast of southern China's island province of Hainan.**
- **The Tianwen-1 mission launched atop a Long March 5 rocket from Hainan Island's Wenchang Satellite Launch Center on July 23).**
- **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.)
- **The United Arab Emirates' Hope orbiter launched on July 19 to study the Martian atmosphere and climate, streaking into space from Japan atop an H-2A rocket. Like Tianwen-1, Hope (also known as the Emirates Mars Mission) is historic: It's the first interplanetary mission ever developed by an Arab state.**

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Health/ Disease

India races to release first indigenous Covid-19 vaccine by August 15

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has partnered with Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL) for clinical trials of indigenous vaccine for the coronavirus disease. BBIL is using the virus strain isolated at ICMR's National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune to develop the vaccine.
- The clinical trials will be held in 12 institutes across the country. The ICMR has asked these institutes to fast-track clinical trials of the vaccine as it is being considered as one of the "top priority projects" which are being "monitored at the topmost level of the government."

Bharat Biotech International Limited is an Indian biotechnology company headquartered in Hyderabad, India engaged in the drug discovery, drug development, and manufacture of vaccines, bio-therapeutics, pharmaceuticals and health care products. In April 2020, the company announced that they have partnered with US-based company FluGen and University of Wisconsin-Madison to develop a COVID-19 vaccine. In May 2020, Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR's) National Institute of Virology approved and provided the virus strains for developing a fully indigenous COVID-19 vaccine. On June 29, 2020, the company got permission to conduct Phase 1 and Phase 2 human trials of a developmental COVID-19 vaccine named Covaxin, from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), Government of India.

Spain Introduces the World's First Quantum Phase Battery

- In what could be a massive step for quantum computing, researchers from the University of the Basque Country claim to have developed the world's first quantum phase battery.
- Today, batteries are ubiquitous, with lithium-ion batteries being the most common out of them, although alternatives do exist. These batteries convert chemical energy into a voltage that can provide power to an electronic circuit.
- In contrast, quantum technologies feature circuits based on superconducting materials through which a current can flow without voltage, therefore negating the need for classic chemical batteries. In quantum technologies, the current is induced from a phase difference of the wave function of the quantum circuit related to the wave nature of matter.
- A quantum device that can provide a persistent phase difference can be used as a quantum phase battery and induce supercurrents in a quantum circuit, powering it.

NCBS scientists identify 33 molecules that could be used to treat virus patients

- Researchers at the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) have identified 33 drugs, some of them approved by the US Food and Drug Administration, that could potentially be used to treat patients with Covid-19 symptoms
- A group of scientists led by Professor R. Sowdhamini at NCBS has identified the 33 small molecules from a database of over 3,30,000 small molecules using new computational research, which bind to NSP1, one of the SARS-CoV-2 proteins. The scientists have recommended that these can be taken forward for wet-lab validation.
- Some of these molecules are United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) -approved drugs; while others are small molecules of natural origin, mostly from plants. The team claims that the shortlist will reduce time and efforts for experimentation.

IIT Madras-incubated startup develops portable hospital to treat COVID-19 patients

- A startup incubated in the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, has developed a portable hospital.
- The students involved in the project say the modular structure can be installed anywhere within two hours by just four people. Called 'MediCAB,' the portable structures can be used to screen, isolate and treat COVID-19 patients even in remote locations.

- **‘MediCAB’ was launched recently in Wayanad District of Kerala** where the units are being deployed to treat COVID-19 Patients. The startup is developing micro hospitals that can be deployed rapidly across the nation.

IIT Kanpur develops UV sanitizing device ‘SHUDDH’ 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 SHUDDH.**
- **Smartphone operated Handy Ultraviolet Disinfection Helper** that is SHUDDH 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.

Glenmark Pharmaceuticals launches world’s first Hypertension Awareness symbol

- **In collaboration with Association of Physicians of India and Hypertension Society of India. Glenmark Pharmaceuticals launched the world’s first hypertension awareness symbol,** in collaboration with Association of Physicians of India (API) and Hypertension Society of India (HSI).
- The symbol is developed in consultation with 50,000 leading doctors in the country, to raise awareness of the growing burden of hypertension and the need for timely screening. **Hypertension (high blood pressure) is one of the biggest risk factors for heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. The condition is directly responsible for 29% of all strokes and 24% of heart attacks in India.**

Glenmark Pharmaceuticals is a pharmaceutical company headquartered in Mumbai, India that was founded in 1977 by Gracias Saldanha as a generic drug and active pharmaceutical ingredient manufacturer; he named the company after his two sons. In May 2019, Yasir Rawjee was elected as CEO of Glenmark Life Sciences.

AIIMS panel nod to human clinical trial of Covaxin

- **The AIIMS Ethics Committee gave its nod for a human clinical trial of the indigenously developed COVID-19 vaccine candidate Covaxin** following which the premier hospital is likely to begin the exercise by enrolling healthy volunteers.
- **AIIMS-Delhi is among the 12 sites selected by the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) for conducting phase I and II human trials of Covaxin.** In phase I, the vaccine would be tested on 375 volunteers and the maximum of 100 of them would be from AIIMS.
- **Healthy volunteers having no comorbid conditions and without a history of COVID-19, aged more than 18 years and less than 55 years, would be eligible to participate in the randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial.”**

COVAXIN™, India’s indigenous COVID-19 vaccine by Bharat Biotech is developed in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) - National Institute of Virology (NIV). The indigenous, inactivated vaccine is developed and manufactured in Bharat Biotech’s BSL-3 (Bio-Safety Level 3) high containment facility. The vaccine received DCGI approval for Phase I & II Human Clinical Trials and the trials will commence across India from July, 2020.

First antigen kit of Indian make gets ICMR approval

- **The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) approved a second rapid antigen test kit, by Mylab Discovery Solutions, to diagnose coronavirus disease (Covid-19).** This is the **first Indian made test kit to be granted an approval.** The test, named **Pathocatch Covid-19 Antigen Rapid testing kit,** is developed and manufactured in India.

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research, is one of the oldest and largest medical research bodies in the world. The ICMR is funded by the Government of India through the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The governing body of the council is presided over by the Union Health Minister. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

WHO launches Covid-19 law lab for implementing legal frameworks to manage pandemic

- In a bid to establish and implement strong legal frameworks to manage the coronavirus pandemic across the globe, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** launched **COVID-19 Law Lab**.
- The initiative gathered and shared legal documents from over 190 countries across the world. **The goal of the law lab is to ensure that laws protect the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities** and that they adhere to international human rights standards.
- **The new Lab is a joint project of 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.**

World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health. It was established on 7 April 1948, and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The WHO is a member of the United Nations Development Group. **Tedros Adhanom** from Ethiopia is the current Director-General of the WHO.

India registers a steep decline in maternal mortality ratio

- **The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in India has declined to 113 in 2016-18 from 122 in 2015-17 and 130 in 2014-2016**, according to the special bulletin on Maternal Mortality in India 2016-18, released by the Office of the Registrar General's Sample Registration System (SRS).
- One of the key indicators of maternal mortality is the MMR, defined as the number of maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births. The target 3.1 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) set by the United Nations aims to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 1,00,000 live births.

Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Covid Hospital built by DRDO in record time of 12 days becomes operational

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** along with Home Minister Amit Shah and Health Minister Harsh Vardhan visited the **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel COVID hospital in Delhi**. The one thousand -bedded hospital with 250 ICU beds became operational.
- **The facility was built in a record time of 12 days by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** along with Home Ministry, Health Ministry, the Armed Forces, Tata Sons and other industry players. The Ministers were also accompanied by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy.
- **The national capital is currently experiencing a surge in number of COVID-19 infections with an increasing number of patients requiring medical care.**
- An urgent need to augment the existing hospital beds capacity of Delhi for the COVID-19 patients was discussed between Home and Defence Ministries on the modalities of deploying a one thousand bed hospital in a span of less than 14 days.
- Defence Minister said, **more than 250 Intensive Care Units are available in this centre**. Mr Singh said, all the guidelines of World Health Organization are being followed in this hospital. **With the permission from the Indian Air Force, land situated near the New Delhi Domestic Airport Terminal T1 was identified and construction work by DRDO commenced on the 23rd of June.**

COVID-19: IIT Roorkee Develops Disinfection Box for Personal Things

- **Researchers at IIT Roorkee have developed a disinfection box that can be used to sterilize personal belongings, medical equipment, PPE, apparels among others, against coronavirus.**
- **"A team of researchers at IIT Roorkee led by Prof. Soumitra Satapathi, Laboratory of Integrated Nanophotonics and Biomaterials, 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.**

IIT-Madras researchers develop nano-coated filter for healthcare workers treating Covid-19

- **Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M)** researchers have developed a nano-coated filter media for healthcare workers treating Covid-19 patients. This filter has applications **not only in healthcare** but also has applications in defence and other places where air filtration of submicron particles is required.
- This nano-coated filter media has been fabricated with a nylon-based polymer coating on cellulose paper and was developed through the electrospinning process. **The coating properties are optimized for efficient removal of sub-micron sized dust particles in the air.** The nano-coated filter media is in the process of being field-tested in practical applications. Upon validation through field trials, it will be recommended for bulk manufacturing through industry collaborations.

First indigenous vaccine for infant pneumonia approved

- The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has approved the first fully indigenously developed conjugate vaccine for pneumonia developed by the Serum Institute of India Pvt. Ltd, Pune.
- The Serum Institute first obtained the DCGI approval to conduct Phase I, Phase II and Phase III clinical trials of **Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Conjugate Vaccine in India.** It has also conducted clinical trials in Gambia.

Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) is a department of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization of the Government of India responsible for approval of licences of specified categories of drugs such as blood and blood products, IV fluids, vaccines, and sera in India. Drugs Controller General of India comes under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. DCGI also sets standards for manufacturing, sales, import, and distribution of drugs in India.



ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT



Corbett has India's largest tiger population among 50 reserves: report

- **Uttarakhand's Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR) has reported the highest tiger density among India's 50 reserves with 14 tigers per 100 sq km, followed by Kaziranga, Nagarhole and Orang tiger reserves, according to the 656-page report 'Status of Tigers Co-predators and Prey in India', released by Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar on the eve of Global Tiger Day.**
- **According to the report, CTR has the highest tiger numbers with 231 inside the reserve and 266 using the reserve. CTR is followed by Nagarhole tiger reserve in Karnataka with 127 tigers, Bandipur Tiger Reserve (Karnataka) with 126 tigers and Bandhavgarh and Kaziranga tiger reserves with 104 tigers each.**
- **NTCA in collaboration with state forest departments, NGOs and coordinated by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), conducts national assessment for the 'Status of Tigers, Co-predators, Prey and their Habitat' every four years since 2006.**

Project Tiger is a tiger conservation programme launched in April 1973 by the Government of India during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's tenure. As the Bengal Tiger is the national animal of India, this project aims to stem the dwindling population of the big cats and work to increase their numbers. The monitoring system M-STrIPES was developed to assist patrol and protection of tiger habitats. Project Tiger was administered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) was established in December 2005.

Government has approved Zonal Master Plan of Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone

- **Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar informed that the Zonal Master Plan of Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone has been approved by the government.**
- **This will pave way for faster execution of the Chaardhaam Project and give a boost to conservation of the ecology and developmental activities. The Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone notification was issued by the Environment Ministry in 2012.**

Char Dham National Highway is an under construction two-lane express National Highway with a minimum width of 10 metres in the Indian state of Uttarakhand. The proposed highway will complement the under construction Char Dham Railway by connecting the four holy places in Uttarakhand states namely Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri. The project includes 900 km national highways which will connect whole of Uttarakhand state

The World's first sea cucumber conservation reserve coming up in Lakshwadeep

- **The world's first sea cucumbers conservation reserve is being set up in Lakshadweep and will be spread across a 239 km² area. Their numbers have been declining at an alarming rate thanks to the huge demand for sea cucumbers in places like China, Southeast Asia and Japan where it's considered a delicacy.**

- They are also **believed to have medicinal properties**, and are used in traditional Chinese medicine. Sea cucumbers fetch a high price and are **often smuggled from Lakshadweep by fishermen from the mainland who hunt the endangered species**. This is even after their harvesting was **deemed illegal under the Wildlife Protection Act**.
- Sea cucumbers are single-branched marine organisms which are found generally on the sea bed in tropical regions. They are an integral part of the coral ecosystem as one of the main by-products of the sea cucumbers digestion of sand is calcium carbonate and this is essential for the survival of the coral reefs.
- They act like **garbage collectors of the ocean world**, and they recycle nutrients, thus playing an important role in keeping coral reefs in good condition.

Researchers Find Supergiant ‘Sea Cockroach’ With 14 Legs

- **Researchers from Singapore have found a giant ‘sea cockroach’ at the bottom of the Indian Ocean** - and it may make you shudder. The peculiar creature was found during a marine survey conducted by Peter Ng of the National University of Singapore and colleagues.
- During the **14-day expedition to the deep sea off the coast of West Java in Indonesia**, the team collected over 12,000 deep-sea creatures - of which the gigantic cockroach was one. The cockroach has now been **identified as belonging to a new species**. It has been **given the name “Bathynomus raksasa”**. The discovery has created a buzz on social media, garnering a number of horrified reactions.

In a first, India to count snow leopards; process to start in September in Uttarakhand

- Uttarakhand forest department is **expected to start snow leopard estimation process** with the help of camera traps from September this year.
- The move has been labelled as the **first ever in the country** by experts awaiting the exercise. **Snow leopards are found in about 23% of the geographical area of the state** which is about 13,000 sq km and for preliminary investigation, this area will be divided into 80 grids of 15 sq km each,”

The snow leopard also known as the ounce is a large cat native to the mountain ranges of Central and South Asia. It is listed as **Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List** because the global population is estimated to number less than **10,000 mature individuals** and is expected to decline about 10% by 2040. It is threatened by poaching and habitat destruction following infrastructural developments.

Danone plant is first in world to become carbon neutral

- Danone has received carbon neutral certification for its plant in Wexford, making it the first baby food manufacturer in the world to achieve the standard.
- Danone which uses the slogan ‘One Planet, One Health’, has set itself an ambition to achieve zero net carbon emissions across the entire group by 2050. Wexford is the standard bearer having worked over the past decade to turn the plant into a zero waste to landfill facility powered by 100 per cent renewable electricity.

Danone S.A. is a **European multinational food-products corporation based in Paris and founded in Barcelona, Spain**. The company is listed on Euronext Paris where it is a component of the CAC 40 stock market index. Some of the company’s products are branded **Dannon** in the United States.

Ecologists ask Javadekar to stop rail line across Western Ghats

- A **20-year-old railway line project in the Western Ghats in Karnataka**, which was rejected by several statutory bodies in the past and remained shelved amid fears of the irreparable damage it could cause to primary forests and unique biodiversity, has got the **State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) authorities’ nod** on March 20, overturning its earlier decision 11 days ago.
- The **SBWL approval was granted after the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)**, under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), **started reviewing the rail project** and asked about the reasons behind the inordinate delay in implementing it, documents suggest. However, the SBWL’s approval has raised several serious environmental concerns that had held up the project for the past two decades.

- At least 110 scientists, ecologists and wildlife biologists have written to the NBWL member-secretary and Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar on July 2, raising several concerns about the Hubballi Ankola Railway Line Project (HARP) in Karnataka, including irreversibly damaging forests, fragmenting wildlife habitats in the Western Ghats, a global biodiversity hotspot and a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) world heritage site.

The Western Ghats, also known as Sahyadri (Benevolent Mountains), are a mountain range that covers an area of 140,000 square kilometres (54,000 sq mi) in a stretch of 1,600 kilometres (990 mi) parallel to the western coast of the Indian peninsula, traversing the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is one of the eight hot-spots of biological diversity in the world. It is sometimes called the Great Escarpment of India.

New freshwater fish species discovered from Western Ghats

- A team of scientists has discovered a new freshwater fish species and genus, *Waikhomia Hira*, from rivers in regions along the Western Ghats in north Karnataka.
- The genus, *Waikhomia*, has been named for Vishwanath Waikhom, a taxonomist from Manipur University who has discovered more than 100 freshwater fishes in India.
- The research was jointly conducted by scientists at Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER) and the Modern College of Arts, Science and Commerce in Pune.
- *Waikhomia Hira* is more commonly found in northern upstreams of the Western Ghats. Since its discovery first in 1953 in Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra, the popularly known Maharaja Barbs was represented by a single species, *Puntius sahyadriensis*. Thereafter, 44 species of freshwater fish of *Puntius* genus were traced in the wetlands and rivers of South and Southeast Asia.

Japanese-found Chinese butterfly is now Indian

- Lepidopterists in Arunachal Pradesh have helped add two species to India's expanding list of butterflies.
- One of them, the Striped Hairstreak, was first recorded by Japanese entomologists in Hainan province of China. The other, Elusive Prince, has a Vietnamese connect and was thought to be the more familiar Black Prince found in the Eastern Himalayas.
- "Our team has added the two butterfly species, which has been published in the April-June edition of the Bionotes journal. India now has 1,327 species, up from 1,318 in 2015".

Two Mumbai researchers discover new species of fan-throated lizard

- Two Mumbai researchers were part of a three-member team of Bengaluru-based National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) that discovered a new species of a fan-throated lizard, *Sitana dharwarensis*, from the barren lands of northern Karnataka's Bagalkot district.
- The new species is similar to a fan-throated lizard species *Sitana laticeps*. But *Sitana dharwarensis* bears a much larger throat fan or dewlap. Its distinctness was confirmed after comparing the DNA sequences and micro-CT-scans of the two species. Its name *Sitana dharwarensis* has been derived from the Dharwar craton — a piece of the Earth's crust formed 3.6-2.5 billion years ago.
- This is the second species to be discovered from the open scrub and rock terrain of northern Karnataka after *Hemidactylus vijayraghavanii*, a gecko. Many of these newly described species occur outside protected areas and are at risk of being wiped out.

India's 2018 Tiger census sets new Guinness World Record for being largest camera trap wildlife survey

- The fourth cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation 2018 has entered the Guinness World Record for being the world's largest camera trap wildlife survey. Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said in a tweet that this is a shining example of Atma nirbhar Bharat which was attained through sankalp se siddhi.

- The Environment Minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, **India has fulfilled its resolve to double the tiger numbers four years before the target. The country now has an estimated 2967 tigers as per the latest census. With this number, India is home to nearly 75 percent of the global tiger population and has already fulfilled its resolve of doubling tiger numbers; made at St. Petersburg in 2010, well ahead of the target year of 2022.**

Project Tiger is a tiger conservation programme launched in April 1973 by the Government of India during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's tenure. As the Bengal Tiger is the national animal of India, this project aims to stem the dwindling population of the big cats and work to increase their numbers. There are 50 tiger reserves in India which are governed by Project Tiger which is administrated by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

Coal Min 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.
- “To take environment clearance there is PARIVESH portal. We are linking our mining plan portal with PARIVESH portal.

Prakash Javadekar is the incumbent Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Minister of Information and Broadcasting and also served as the Union Minister of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India. He was elected to the upper house Rajya Sabha as a Member of Parliament from Maharashtra in 2018.

Students made the world's first 100% eco-friendly bamboo car that runs on electrical energy

- The group of students from an engineering college based in Thiruvananthapuram has one such inspiring story –they created the world's first 100% eco-friendly car, and it's made of bamboo!
- Their idea came to the fore at the Shell Eco-Marathon, an auto industry innovation competition conducted by the energy giant Shell for the last 70+ years. The competition marks student innovations in energy-efficient vehicle prototypes that can help the creators become leading scientists and engineers of the future.
- Through their incredible idea and innovation, **Team Pravega of Government Engineering College, Barton Hill, bagged the Circular Economy Award in this year's Asia competition for creating the first-ever 100% eco-friendly vehicle prototype in the world.**

Environment Impact Assessment Draft 2020 finalised after considering various suggestions

- Union Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change **Prakash Javadekar** has said that the government will finalise the proposed Environment Impact Assessment Draft 2020 after considering various suggestions.
- Environmental assessment (EA) is the assessment of the environmental consequences (positive negative) of a plan, policy, program, or actual projects prior to the decision to move forward with the proposed action. In this context, the term “environmental impact assessment” (EIA) is usually used when applied to actual projects by individuals or companies and the term “strategic environmental assessment” (SEA) applies to policies, plans and programmes most often proposed by organs of state. It is a tool of environmental management forming a part of project approval and decision-making. Environmental assessments may be governed by rules of administrative procedure regarding public participation and documentation of decision making, and may be subject to judicial review.

Mobile app KURMA helps save turtles in India

- On May 23, 2020, World Turtle Day, a number of conservation agencies launched a citizen science initiative, a mobile-based application called KURMA, aimed at turtle conservation.

- The application, developed by the Indian Turtle Conservation Action Network (ITCAN) in collaboration with the Turtle Survival Alliance-India and Wildlife Conservation Society-India, not only provides users a database to identify a species but also provides the location of the nearest rescue centre for turtles across the country.
- Tortoise and freshwater turtles are among the most trafficked in the country. A report released in 2019 by TRAFFIC, an international wildlife trade monitoring organisation, showed that at least 200 tortoises and freshwater turtles fall prey to illicit poaching and smuggling every week, or 11,000 each year.

Average global temperature could rise by 1.5 degrees Celsius in next 5 years: WMO

- At least one or more months during the next five years will be 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial levels, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) has warned.
- A 1.5 degrees Celsius rise in average temperature over pre-industrial times is the threshold beyond which many regions, including India, will record extreme temperatures; increases in frequency, intensity, and/or amount of heavy rainfall and an increase in intensity or frequency of droughts in some regions, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had flagged last year in its special report titled, “Global Warming of 1.5 Degrees”.
- WMO in its Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update for 2020-24, said the annual global temperature is likely to be at least 1 degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial levels (defined as the 1850-1900 average) in each of the coming five years and is very likely to be within the range of 0.91 – 1.59 degrees Celsius. This year, large land areas in the northern hemisphere are likely to be over 0.8 degrees Celsius warmer than the average temperature in the 29-year period between 1981 and 2010.

A third of the world's children poisoned by lead

- Lead poisoning is affecting children on a massive and previously unknown scale, according to a new report launched by UNICEF and Pure Earth. The report, the first of its kind, says that around 1 in 3 children – up to 800 million globally – have blood lead levels at or above 5 micrograms per deciliter (µg/dL), the level at which requires action. Nearly half of these children live in South Asia.
- The report, The Toxic Truth: Children's exposure to lead pollution undermines a generation of potential, is an analysis of childhood lead exposure undertaken by the Institute of Health Metrics Evaluation (IHME) and verified with a study approved for publication in Environmental Health Perspectives.

India's first snow leopard conservation centre to come up in Uttarakhand

- Uttarakhand state forest department will open India's first conversation centre for snow leopards in Uttarakashi district soon, said Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat. “The centre will come up at Lanka in Bhairoghhati area of Uttarkashi forest division. The decision will help to conserve the precious species,” added the CM after chairing a meeting with state forest minister.
- According to estimates, Uttarakhand has around 86 snow leopards. The state forest department is expected to start snow leopard estimation process with the help of camera traps from September this year. The exercise which is being termed as the first-ever in the country by experts got delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In Uttarakhand, snow leopards are found in Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, Gangotri National Park, Askot Wildlife Sanctuary and other places of altitude between 3000-4500 meters in total geographical area of around 13,000 square kilometres.

Environment Minister participates in 6th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting

- Environment Ministers of the five BRICS countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa participated in the 6th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting through a video conference under the presidency of Russia.
- Representing India, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said, India attaches great importance to the BRICS. Saying that the aspirations of the grouping are similar, the Minister called for sharing of best practices among the BRICS nations towards attainment of Sustainable Development Goals.

- Highlighting the efforts made by India in controlling Air pollution Shri Javadekar said that in 2015 India launched the Air Quality index monitoring in 10 cities, today it has been extended to 122 cities. He also informed that India last year 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..

Prakash Javadekar is the incumbent Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Minister of Information and Broadcasting and also served as the Union Minister of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India. He was elected to the upper house Rajya Sabha as a Member of Parliament from Maharashtra in 2018.

Engineers just debuted the first ‘non-cuttable’ material: a metal that turns tools against themselves

- Durham University engineers have been inspired by nature to create what they say is the first manufactured non-cuttable material. They got the idea for the new lightweight material from the tough cellular skin of the grapefruit and the fracture resistant shells of the abalone sea creature.
- The material – called Proteus after the shape-changing mythical god – could be used in the security and health and safety industries. It’s made from alumina ceramic spheres encased in a cellular aluminium, metallic foam structure and works by turning back the force of a cutting tool on itself. In tests Proteus could not be cut by angle grinders, drills or high-pressure water jets.

3-MW solar plant inaugurated at INA

- Southern Naval Command (SNC), commissioned a 3-MW solar power plant at the Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala. This is in line with the Central government’s initiative for achieving 100 GW of solar power by 2022, said a press release.
- The plant is the largest established by the Indian Navy and has an estimated lifespan of 25 years. The project was executed by the Kerala State Electronics Development Corporation Ltd (KELTRON).

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 has said. 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.
- 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.
- The Asian continent reported the highest net gain in forest area in 2010-2020, according to the report. It recorded 1.17 million hectares (ha) per year net increase in forests in the last decade.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security. Its motto is “let there be bread”. It was founded in October 1945. The FAO is headquartered in Rome, Italy.

SPORTS



Sports Personalities in News

India's Nitin Menon becomes youngest umpire to enter ICC Elite Panel

- The 36-year-old is **only the third from India to make it to the prestigious panel after S. Venkatraghavan and S. Ravi. India's Nitin Menon became the youngest ever to be included in the International Cricket Council's Elite Panel of Umpires** for the upcoming 2020-21 season, replacing England's Nigel Llong.
- The who has officiated in three Tests, 24 ODIs and 16 T20Is, is **only the third from India to make it to the prestigious group after former captain Srinivas Venkatraghavan and Sundaram Ravi, who was axed last year.**

Shashank Manohar steps down as ICC Chairman after four years

- Shashank Manohar stepped down as ICC Chairman after two, two-year tenures at the helm. **Imran Khwaja, who was the deputy chairman, is set to be the interim Chairperson until a successor is elected, the ICC Board meet decided.**

Ravindra Jadeja rated India's most valuable Test player in 21st century by Wisden

- Flamboyant all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has been **named as India's most valuable Test player in the 21st century by the Wisden magazine.**
- With an MVP rating of 97.3, the 31-year-old Jadeja was also rated as the second-most valuable Test player worldwide, behind Sri Lanka legend Muttiah Muralitharan.

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.**
- The 27-year-old 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.**

BCCI president Ganguly named as one of ATK-Mohun Bagan directors

- BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has been **named as one of the directors of the merged Indian Super League franchise ATK-Mohun Bagan** ahead of the upcoming season. Led by chairman Sanjiv Goneka, who has acquired a majority 80 per cent stake in the century-old Mohun Bagan club, the Board will meet on July 10 to finalise the club's name, jersey and logo.

Pravin Tambe retires set to become first Indian player to play in CPL

- The BCCI will **not stop veteran leg-spinner Pravin Tambe from playing for Trinbago Knight Riders in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL)** as it has been confirmed that he has officially retired, albeit second time having withdrawn on first occasion. **Tambe is set to become first Indian player to play in the CPL and as per BCCI rules, is now eligible having announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.**

Hockey stalwart Ashok Kumar to receive Lifetime Achievement Award

- **Ashok Kumar**, a key member of India's 1975 World Cup-winning hockey team, will be conferred with the **Lifetime Achievement Award** by city's iconic club Mohun Bagan on the occasion of its foundation day in a virtual ceremony in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Son of hockey wizard Dhyan Chand**, Kumar scored an important goal in the gold medal match for India against Pakistan in the 1975 World Cup in Kuala Lumpur. Besides the 1975 gold, the 70-year-old Kumar had also won bronze (1971) and silver (1973) medals in World Cups, along with a bronze medal in the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Hemang Amin appointed BCCI's interim CEO

- Days after relieving Rahul Johri from his services as CEO, the **Indian cricket board appointed its IPL chief operating officer Hemang Amin as the interim CEO**. The BCCI is expected to get a new CEO in the next two months. Amin, who used to report to Johri, has been handling operations division of IPL since 2017.

Lewis Hamilton wins Styrian GP

- **Lewis Hamilton won the Styrian Grand Prix from pole position to clinch an 85th career win and move within six of Michael Schumacher's Formula One record.**

Pentala Harikrishna wins ACCENTUS Chess960 event at Biel Festival

- **India's Grandmaster P Harikrishna finished on top in the ACCENTUS Chess960 tournament**, part of the 53rd Biel Chess Festival 2020, with 5.5 points from seven rounds.
- **Harikrishna (Elo 2690) remained unbeaten** through the seven rounds and benefitted from the loss of Poland's Radoslaw Wojtaszek in the final round to Swiss player Noel Studer to claim the top spot.

Lewis Hamilton wins 8th Hungarian GP to take back F1 championship lead

- **Lewis Hamilton won the Hungarian Grand Prix for the eighth time to equal Michael Schumacher's single-venue record** and take the championship lead.
- Hamilton's latest victory from pole position was as comfortable as the nearly 9-second margin over second-place Max Verstappen suggested. **The British driver's 86th GP win moved him just five behind the German great Schumacher's F1 record of 91.**
- **Schumacher won the French GP eight times when it was held at Magny-Cours**. Hamilton first won here in 2007 and his first success with Mercedes also came at the Hungaroring track in 2013, the year after replacing Schumacher on the Silver Arrows team.

Stuart Broad becomes second England cricketer to pick 500 Test wickets

- **Fast bowler Stuart Broad became only the second England cricketer to claim 500 Test wickets**. Broad joins fellow quick James Anderson as the only two England bowlers with 500 Test wickets or more.
- **Broad, playing his 140th Test**, however, is the slowest to reach the 500-wicket milestone. Muttiah Muralitharan completed the feat in 87 matches followed by Anil Kumble (105) and Shane Warne (108). Glenn McGrath picked up his 500th Test wicket in his 110th Test while Courtney Walsh and Anderson breached the mark in their 129th Test match respectively.

Princepal Singh First NBA Academy India Graduate to Land Professional Contract

- **Punjab forward Princepal Singh has signed to play in the NBA G League next season**. The six feet 10 inch tall hoopster thus becomes the first NBA Academy graduate to sign with the G League and first NBA Academy India graduate land a professional contract.

Legendary England all-rounder Ian Botham made member of House of Lords

- **Legendary England all-rounder Ian Botham has been made a member of the House of Lords of the British Parliament**. Botham, a former captain, was among 36 new peers announced by the government to join the unelected House.

- Botham, who played 102 Test matches for England between 1977 and 1992, is a prominent Brexit supporter. He was knighted in 2007 in recognition of his services to charity and cricket.

Sprinter Srabani Nanda becomes first Indian to compete in Jamaica

- Ace sprinter Srabani Nanda has become the first Indian track and field athlete to participate in a competition amid the COVID-19 pandemic, running in a meet in Jamaica alongside some of the world's best.
- The 29-year-old Nanda competed in the 100m race at the Velocity Fest meeting at Jamaica College representing the MVP Track club. She won heat two in 11.78 seconds for a third-place finish overall.



Career
Launcher

Sport Events

Liverpool wins Premier League title with seven games to spare

- **Thirty years of hurt came to an end for Liverpool** when they were **confirmed as Premier League champions of second-placed Manchester City's 2-1 defeat by Chelsea**. The result at Stamford Bridge means Liverpool have an unassailable 23-point lead over City with seven games left.
- **Liverpool were last champions of England when they won the old First Division title in 1989-90** after which a decline in fortunes saw Manchester United and Arsenal, then Chelsea and Manchester City seize power.

IOA adopts new identity on its 100-year milestone at Olympic Games

- **The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) adopted a new branding and visual identity**, including an institutional and a commercial logo, to celebrate a century of participation of the country's athletes at the Summer Olympics.
- The IOA said the decision to adopt a new identity was taken **"on the occasion marking 100 years of participation of Indian athletes at the Olympic Games"**, the new identity celebrates a century of passionate work, and contribution of the athletes.

Asia Cup postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic

- **The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) postponed the Asia Cup tournament**, scheduled for September this year, until June 2021 owing to an upsurge in COVID-19 cases in the region.

International Cricket Council finally postpones T20 World Cup due to Covid-19

- Ending months of suspense, the **International Cricket Council (ICC) announced postponement of the upcoming men's T20 World Cup**, which was **scheduled to kick off on October 18th in Australia**.
- The decision gives the Indian cricket board a clear window for the **13th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL)**, which was also deferred due the Covid-19 pandemic.

International Cricket is back in action; 1st test match between England, West Indies

- **The first cricket match of three Test series between England AND West Indies** was played at **Ageas Bowl, London**. With this, the International cricket is finally returning after a hiatus of 117-days caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Host England led by all-rounder Ben Stokes in the absence of regular Captain Joe Root while Windies led by Jason Holder – team's most experienced player. Holder, embarking on his 33rd Test as captain. **West Indies won the first test match.**

Haryana to host 4th Khelo India Youth Games

- **Haryana will host the 4th Khelo India Youth Games**. Khelo India Youth Games is scheduled to take place after Tokyo Olympics next year. **The Games will be held at Panchkula in Haryana.**

Qatar to kick off 2022 FIFA World Cup at Al Bayt Stadium

- **World Cup fans will be able to watch an unprecedented four games a day on television, spread out over 11 hours, during the group stage of the Qatar 2022 tournament** after the schedule was confirmed.
- With the relatively short travel distances for the venues in and around Doha, it **could be possible for fans who travel to the 32-team tournament** to attend multiple games each day. The tournament was switched from its usual June-July slot due to the heat in the Gulf state and is the first that will be held in the middle of the European season.

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports partners with UNICEF to strengthen resolve to mobilise 1 crore youth volunteers to achieve goals of Atmanirbhar Bharat

- In a step to realise the vision of Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Kiren Rijiju to mobilise 1 crore youth volunteers in India and contribute to Prime Minister's call for Atmanirbhar Bharat, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports signed a Statement of Intent with YuWaah (a multi-stakeholder platform

formed by the UNICEF) to work in partnership to promote volunteerism among the youth of India as well as to help them transition from education and learning to productive work, skilling and being active citizens.

IOA forms 11-member CGA of India for 2020-21 season

- The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) constituted an 11-member Commonwealth Games Association of India (CGA of India) under its president Narinder Batra for the 2020-21 season.
- Besides Batra, the committee also includes senior IOA officials R K Anand (senior vice president), Anil Khanna (senior vice president), Rajeev Mehta (secretary general), and Anandeshwar Pandey (treasurer). Union minister and Archery Association of India president Arjun Munda and National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) chief Raninder Singh are special invitees to the committee.

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) is the body responsible for selecting athletes to represent India at the Olympic Games, Asian Games and other international athletic meets and for managing the Indian teams at these events. It also acts as the Indian Commonwealth Games Association, responsible for selecting athletes to represent India at the Commonwealth Games.



Career
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AWARDS



Pulitzer winner Siddhartha Mukherjee, Prof Raj Chetty among '2020 Great Immigrants' honourees

- 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' honourees.
- Born in New Delhi, 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'.
- 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, the Corporation said.
- Every July 4, when America celebrates its Independence Day, the Carnegie Corporation honours the legacy of its founder Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish immigrant who rose from poverty to become a leading industrialist, by recognizing an eminent group of immigrants who have made notable contributions to the progress of the American society.

C Rangarajan was conferred with the first P C Mahalanobis Award

- Former Reserve Bank of India governor C Rangarajan, who was conferred with the first P C Mahalanobis Award in Official Statistics for lifetime achievements on the occasion of the National Statistics Day (20 October 2010) called upon the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) to put the controversies related to national income at rest. He also asked the government to accord statutory recognition to the National Statistical Commission (NSC).

Jharkhand author Kritika Pandey wins Commonwealth Short Story Prize

- Kritika Pandey, 29, is the overall winner of the Commonwealth Short Story Prize for her story, 'The Great Indian Tee and Snakes'. The author from Jharkhand won the Asia round earlier.
- The Commonwealth Foundation announced Kritika's win in an online award ceremony which featured readings from Booker Prize-winning author Bernardine Evaristo, and actors Swara Bhasker, Elizabeth McGovern, Kerry Fox, and Leila Bertand. Ghanaian author and Chair of the Judges Nii Ayikwei Parkes awarded her during a video call.

- She is the second Indian to win the overall prize after Parashar Kulkarni in 2016. She is also the recipient of the Harvey Swados Fiction Prize, the Cara Parravani Memorial Award, and the Charles Wallace Scholarship for Creative Writing at the University of Edinburgh.

Waste recycling app fetches Diana Award for 13-year-old Delhi girl

- Freya Thakral a 13-year-old student of the British School, New Delhi, has been named among the recipients of the 2020 Diana Award, which recognises young changemakers across the world.
- Thakral has been chosen for her Recycler App, a web-based mobile application to connect users with waste-handlers.
- The door-to-door pick up service helps in easy disposal of recyclable waste for those who may not have the means or time to travel to drop their waste.
- The app also claims to be helpful for waste handlers, whose earnings are usually low and are vulnerable to health issues because of improper handling of waste. Services are currently restricted to South Delhi with plans of extending operations to all parts of the national capital.

Indian-American composer Siddhartha Khosla wins ASCAP Award for 'This is Us'

- Indian-American composer Siddhartha Khosla has won an ASCAP Screen Music Award for his NBC's drama series 'This is Us'. Khosla, who was previously nominated for an Emmy award for the series, won the Top Network Television Series during a three-day virtual celebration held from June 23 to 25.
- The Screen Music Awards are organised by American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), a professional membership organisation of songwriters, composers and music publisher of every kind of music.
- ASCAP also hosted conversations featuring three of its top 2020 Screen Music Awards winners – Khosla, Michael Abels and Oscar-winning composer Hans Zimmer.
- Khosla has a BA from the University of Pennsylvania, where he composed and sang for the university's award-winning a cappella group, "Off the Beat." He now resides in Los Angeles with his wife and children.

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.

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.
- Born in New Delhi, 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, the Corporation said. **He helped launch a resource to monitor the real-time economic impact of COVID-19 on people, businesses and communities across the United States.**
- **Every July 4, when America celebrates its Independence Day, the Carnegie Corporation honours the legacy of its founder Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish immigrant who rose from poverty to become a leading industrialist,** by recognizing an eminent group of immigrants who have made notable contributions to the progress of the American society.

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.**
- **UNIFIL's Indian Battalion (INDBATT) was adjudged first for a project that seeks to "increase awareness and decrease waste generation by planting seedlings in their positions and areas of responsibility, preventing littering, reusing plastic bottles, building green houses and building compost pits.**

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 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.**

ISRO Chief Sivan Named As 2020 Von Karman Award Recipient By IAA

- **ISRO chief Dr Kailasavadivoo Sivan continues to make a name for his self as the space scientist has now been named as the recipient of the 2020 Von Karman Award of the International Academy of Astronautics. The award which is the highest distinction of the Academy will be conferred in March 2021 in Paris.**
- **Charles Elachi was the previous recipient of the award which has been named after Theodore von Karman who was an aerospace engineer and notably known for his key advances in aerodynamics.**
- **The International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) was also founded by von Karman who was the first President of the organization which is committed to expanding the frontiers in space.**
- **The von Karman award was established in 1982 and is the premier award of the Academy. It is given annually to recognize outstanding lifetime achievements in any branch of science without limit of nationality or gender.**
- **The award honours the memory of the Academy's founder and first President, a scientist of the highest international reputation. Prior to K Sivan, two Indians namely - Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan and U.R. Rao - have been recipients of the award.**

Arunachal Pradesh filmmaker bags Dada Saheb Phalke Award for documentary on honey-making

- **Honey hunting has been an integral part of Arunachal Pradesh's Shertukpen Community, but with modernisation—the indigenous practice of honey hunting is slowly slithering away with each passing day.**
- **However, to keep the tradition alive Kezang D Thongdok, an independent filmmaker, not only documented the process of honey hunting but has also bagged the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2020 for the same.**
- **Thongdok's short documentary 'Chi Lupo' artfully sketches the custom of honey hunting practised in the Shertukpen community wherein 'Chi' means honey and 'Lupo' means hunters.**

- **Honey is an integral part of this community and is used for preparing various delicacies and valued for medicinal properties.** The men of the community gather together for the hunting expedition during the winter in October and November. A local honey maker shared how the age-old tradition is losing its relevance, “Nowadays, the younger generations do not take interest in honey hunting. It is a part of our culture and Sang Chewang Dinglow is one of the best honey hunters alive now.

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. In an attempt 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.**

Award for Kannur shrimp farmer

- **T. Purushothaman, a shrimp farmer from Payyannur, has bagged the Jagjivan Ram Innovative Farmer Award instituted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).**
- **Union Minister of Agriculture Narendra Singh Tomar has declared the award online during the 92nd foundation day of the ICAR.**

Shahidul Alam among CPJ's 2020 International Press Freedom Awardees

- **The Committee to Protect Journalists has announced that the recipients of the 2020 International Press Freedom Awards include Shahidul Alam from Bangladesh, Mohammad Mosaed from Iran, Dapo Olorunyomi from Nigeria and Svetlana Prokopyeva from Russia.**
- **All four journalists have faced arrests or criminal prosecution in reprisal for their reporting.**
- **Human rights lawyer Amal Clooney will also be honoured by the New York-based watchdog with the Gwen Ifill Press Freedom Award.**
- **Dhaka-based photojournalist and social activist Shahidul Alam had been arrested in 2018 under a draconian section of the law on information and communication technology that carried a maximum jail term of 14 years for posting a video on social media about student protests in Dhaka. Alam was finally granted bail after 102 days in custody. Alam is also the founder of the Bangladeshi multimedia training organisation the Pathshala Media Institute and the Drik photo library.**

In a first – Indian Researcher Dr. Shinjini Das wins the John Pickstone Prize 2020

- **Dr. Shinjini Das of University of East Anglia has made history by becoming the first Indian to receive the British Society of History of Science's (BSHS) prestigious John Pickstone Prize for outstanding scholarly work in the history of science and medicine in English.**
- **Lecturer in Modern Extra-European History, School of History, University of East Anglia has been awarded the 2020 John Pickstone Prize for her book Vernacular Medicine in Colonial India: Family, Market and Homoeopathy by the British Society for History of Science.**

Sachin Awasthi adds another feather to his cap Honored as the Top Publicist in Global Humanitarian Award 2020 in London

- **Sachin Awasthi bagged Top Publicist honor under Global Humanitarian Award 2020. He is one of the 100 awardees nominated from 35 different countries and 9 continents.**

- The award was delivered in London via webinar in the presence of Former President of the Republic of Kosovo, Fatima Sejdić; Former Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Madhav Kumar and the President of National Assembly of Andalusia, Spain, Pendro I. Altamirano.

Marianna Vardinoyannis & Morissana Kouyaté won 2020 Nelson Mandela Prize

- This year's laureates of United Nations 2020 Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize are Marianna Vardinoyannis of Greece and Morissana Kouyate of Guinea. It was announced by General Assembly President Tijjani Muhammad-Bande.
- Vardinoyannis is a Greek philanthropist known for fighting childhood cancer and for a world without borders in health for about 30 years. He is also the world advocate for human rights and the protection of children's health and welfare.
- Kouyate is another Human rights activist known for her contribution towards violence against women and girls in Africa. He is a leading advocate in the fight against harmful traditional practices against women, particularly female genital mutilation.

Nobel Prize banquet cancelled for first time since 1956 due to COVID-19

- The Nobel Prize Banquet has been cancelled for the first time since 1956 due to coronavirus pandemic.
- The event hosts around 1,300 guests including the Swedish royal family and traditionally marks the conclusion of the Nobel Week.
- The banquet hosts winners of the coveted prize are invited to the Swedish capital Stockholm for talks and the award ceremony. This year's Nobel Prize winners will be announced, however, the event that is usually held on December 10 will not take place.

India's first solar-powered ferry Aditya wins global honour

- Aditya, India's first solar-powered ferry that commenced operations in 2017 in Kerala's Vembanad backwaters, has won the prestigious Gustave Troupe Award for Excellence in Electric Boats and Boating.
- The awards, handed out for the first time, is the world's only such honour given to individuals and companies building and innovating in state-of-the-art electric boats.
- It was instituted this year in honour of Frenchman Gustave Troupe for his groundbreaking work in mobility based on electric transport, moving away from conventional fossil fuels. In 1881, he invented the world's first outboard motor, connecting it to a rechargeable battery to sail a boat down the Seine river in silence.

IIT-B team first from India to win car design award in UK contest

- The Formula student team of the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B) became the first Indian team to win an engineering design competition when it won the best-designed car award at the Formula Student (FSUK), a student engineering competition held in the United Kingdom.
 - The IIT-B racing team announced that its car E-12 had won multiple awards at FSUK, which saw 73 teams participate from around the world.
 - The IIT-B racing team came first in the design category, third in the electronic vehicle category (domestic and international), and fourth overall at FSUK. The IIT-B racing team is a consortium of over 80 members, who aim to conceive, design and fabricate a formula-style race car through innovation to compete in different Formula student events such as FSUK and Formula Bharat. This year, FSUK was held online between July 22 and 26, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - "Our car E-12 is the 12th version of the team which has been made in conjunction with industry giants such as NRB Bearings and Mahle. The car has a tubular steel chassis with carbon fibre body panels. It is a rear-view drive design and the car produces 800 Nm of torque and weighs 230 kgs. The car accelerates from 0-100 km/hr in 2.9 sec," said Asit Karmakar, assistant team manager.
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PERSONS IN NEWS

Indra Mani Pandey appointed India's Permanent Representative to UN

- Senior diplomat **Indra Mani Pandey** has been appointed as the next **Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and other International Organisations** in Geneva.
- Mr Pandey, a 1990 batch IFS officer is presently additional secretary in the External Affairs ministry.

Vini Mahajan is Punjab's first woman Chief Secretary, her husband is the DGP

- A 1987-batch IAS officer, **Vini Mahajan**, became the first woman bureaucrat in the history of Punjab to be elevated to the top post of the state's Chief Secretary.
- With her elevation it is also for the first time in Punjab's history that both the civil and police administrations in the state are headed by an IAS-IPS couple. Mahajan is the wife of state DGP Dinkar Gupta.

Deepika Padukone launches mental health campaign #DobaraPoocho, urges people to be sensitive to emotional needs of others

- The tragic demise of Bollywood star Sushant Singh Rajput has sparked an important conversation around mental health on social media. **Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone**, who has been vocal about her struggles with depression in the past, took to Instagram to launch a campaign, **#DobaraPoocho**, urging people to discuss mental health.
- Padukone, who is known for her mental health foundation **TLLF (The Live Love Laugh Foundation)**, set up in 2015, posted a 4-minute-long video on IGTV, which showed four different and powerful stories of a family member or a loved one asking a person battling mental health issues if they are fine, urging them to discuss their problems.

Centre appoints new law officers, extends tenure of Attorney General, Solicitor General

- The Union government strengthened its top legal team by extending the term of **K.K. Venugopal** as the **Attorney General (AG)** for one year, **Tushar Mehta** as the **Solicitor General (SG)** for three years and appointing six new Additional Solicitors General (ASGs) besides extending the tenure of five existing ASGs.
- While the AG was reappointed by President Ram Nath Kovind, the other appointments were notified by the **Law Ministry after the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)**, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cleared them.
- The Centre's top law officer, **Mr. Venugopal**, who was appointed in July 2017 after his predecessor **Mukul Rohatgi** had resigned, has been appointed for a year at his own request because of his advanced age of 89 years.
- **Mr. Mehta** has been given a full three-year extension, beginning July 1, by the ACC. Serving ASGs **Vikramajit Banerjee**, **Aman Lekhi**, **Madhavi Goradia Divan**, **K.M. Nataraj** and **Sanjay Jain** also got three years' extension, a release from the Department of Personnel and Training said.
- To represent the Central government before the Supreme Court for three years, the Cabinet committee appointed six senior advocates **Balbir Singh**, **Suryaprakash V. Raju**, **Rupinder Singh Suri**, **N. Venkataraman**, **Jayant K. Sud** and **Aishwarya Bhati** have been appointed as ASGs.
- Besides reappointing **Anil C. Singh** as the ASG for the **Bombay High Court** and **Satya Pal Jain** for **Punjab and High Court**, five new ASGs have also been appointed for different High Courts. **Yezdezard Jehangir Dastoor** has been appointed for **Calcutta High Court**, **Chetan Sharma** for **Delhi HC**, **Sankaranarayanan** for **Madras HC**, **Krishna Nandan Singh** for **Patna HC** and **Devang Girish Vyas** for the **Gujarat HC**.

Sijo Kuruvilla George Appointed to Centre's Committee on Science and Tech Policy

- The first CEO of Startup Village and founder of Re-think Foundation, **Sijo Kuruvilla George**, has been selected as the member of central government's expert committee on the science and technology policy. He is the only person from Kerala to be the part of the eight-member panel.

- The Department of Science and technology and the principal scientific advisor of the Government of India jointly formulate the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020. The expert committee team is tasked with updating the 2013 policy with thrust on scientific innovations.

MCA extends term of Justice Bansi Lal Bhat as acting chairperson NCLAT by three months

- The ministry of corporate affairs (MCA) extended the term of Justice Bansi Lal Bhat as acting chairperson of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) by three months. The extension was applicable from June 15, the order said, or until a regular chairperson was appointed.
- He took over the appellate tribunal as acting chairperson on March 15, after Justice SJ Mukhopadhyaya completed his term in the office. Bhat was first appointed as a judicial member of the NCLAT in October 2017.

Former RBI governor Patel pens book on dealing with NPA issue

- Urjit Patel will be releasing a book later this month titled 'Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver', the book focuses on the non-performing assets (NPAs) issue that has afflicted Indian banking in recent years, its causes and Patel's efforts as the RBI Governor in dealing with it.

Dr. Bishnu Prasad Nanda takes over as DG Railway Health Services

- Dr. Bishnu Prasad Nanda has taken over as Director General Railway Health Services (DG RHS) Railway Board.
- He joined at the apex post of the Health Department in the Railway Board. Prior to this, Dr. Nanda was serving as Principal Chief Medical Director, Southern Railway. As Principal Chief Medical Director of Southern Railways, Dr. Nanda was instrumental in implementing e-Procurement of medicines and surgicals for the Zone.

Indian-American scientist appointed acting head of top US agriculture research organisation

- Prominent Indian-American scientist Dr Parag Chitnis has been appointed as the Acting Director of the prestigious National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), which drives all federally funded agricultural research in the US.
- Chitnis was named Associate Director for Programmes earlier this year and leads implementation of NIFA's approximately USD 1.7 billion research projects.

In A First, New Jersey Republicans Nominate Indian-American for Senate Seat

- Entrepreneur Rik Mehta has become the first Indian-American to win the Republican primary for the Senate seat from the US state of New Jersey.

Shiv Nadar steps down as chairman, daughter Roshni takes over, 1st female head of HCL

- In a change of guard at HCL Technologies, co-founder Shiv Nadar has stepped down from the position of the Chairman of the Board of directors. Roshni Nadar Malhotra, currently non-executive director has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.
- Shiv Nadar would continue to be the Managing Director of the company with the designation as the Chief Strategy Officer of the company.

Tina Dabi appointed BRICS honorary advisor

- IAS officer Tina Dabi, topper of the 2016 civil services examination, has been appointed honorary advisor to the steering committee for BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Young Leaders. The appointment is for the session 2020 to 2023.
- Dabi, currently posted as sub-divisional officer (SDO) in Rajasthan's Bhilwara, said BRICS CCI Young Leaders reached out to millions of youth across the country through its programmes and initiatives.

BJP appoints new chief whips in Parliament

- Former Union Minister Shiv Pratap Shukla and BJP MP Rakesh Singh have been appointed the party's Chief Whips in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, respectively.

- **Mr. Shukla, the Rajya Sabha MP from Uttar Pradesh will replace Narayan Panchariya** who recently retired from the upper house. While **Mr. Singh will replace Sanjay Jaiswal**, party's Bihar unit chief in compliance of the BJP's 'one person, one post' criterion.

International Union of Railways nominate DG of RPF, Arun Kumar as its security platform's Vice-Chairman

- **International Union of Railways, UIC, Paris, has nominated Director General of Railway Protection Force, Arun Kumar, as Vice-Chairman of its security platform.**
- **Mr Kumar will take over as chairman of the platform from July 2022 to July 2024.** The decision was taken in the 96th General Assembly of the Union.
- The Security Platform of the Union is **empowered to develop and formulate analysis and policy positions for matters relating to security, property and installation in the rail sector.**

Madhya Pradesh Governor Lalji Tandon dies at 85

- **Madhya Pradesh Governor Lalji Tandon passed away at the age of 85.** Tandon had been hospitalised in Lucknow in June with breathing problems, difficulty in urination and fever. He was put on ventilator support on June 11.

Rajesh Bhushan appointed as new Health Secretary

- **Rajesh Bhushan, IAS officer of 1987 Batch, Bihar Cadre has been appointed as the new Health Secretary in the Union Health Ministry.**
- **Ms. Sudan was granted an extension for three months as Health Secretary in April this year.**

IIMB professor to head advisory panel of National Financial Reporting Authority

- **The Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (IIMB) announced that its professor R. Narayanaswamy, faculty of the Finance & Accounting area, has been appointed as the Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee of the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), the independent accounting and auditing regulator set up by the Government of India under the Companies Act, 2013.**

Sahil Seth appointed as honorary adviser for BRICS CCI

- **Sahil Seth, Deputy Commissioner of Mumbai Customs, has been appointed as an honorary adviser to the steering committee for the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) young leaders for the period 2020-2023.** The role is on a voluntary basis, and no financials are involved, thus making it a no/zero remuneration appointment.

Virat Kohli becomes first Indian to cross 70 million followers on Instagram; fourth most followed sportsperson after Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi and Neymar

- **Indian captain Virat Kohli added another feather to his illustrious cap as he breached the unthinkable 70-million mark on popular social networking site Instagram.**
- **Known for his skill and passion towards the game – Kohli enjoys a massive fan base across several social media platforms. The Delhi-born cricketer is the fourth sportsperson to reach the number globally. Overall, the 31-year-old Kohli is behind Portugal's football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo (232 million), Barcelona legend Lionel Messi (161 million), and Brazil's footballer Neymar (140 million).** Kohli recently overtook NBA superstar LeBron James (69 million).

Indian climate activist Archana Soreng named by UN chief to new advisory group

- **A climate activist from India 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 mobilizes action as part of the COVID-19 recovery efforts.

- Archana Soreng joins six other young climate leaders from around the world who have been named by Guterres to his new Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change.
- The young activists, aged between 18 and 28 years, will advise the UN chief regularly on accelerating global action and ambition to tackle the worsening climate crisis.

Former Coal India chief Anil Kumar Jha appointed member of key green panel

- The government has appointed former chairman of Coal India Anil Kumar Jha, as a member of a key panel that deals with violation of environment rules.
- The Expert Appraisal Committee formed by the environment ministry appraises projects that are commissioned without obtaining prior environmental clearance and have been termed as cases of violation. The panel was earlier constituted in June 2017 for three years. Its tenure has now been extended till June 2021.



Career
Launcher

MISCELLANEOUS

J&K: ‘Community Schooling System’ to compensate academic losses due coronavirus pandemic

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the Education Department in Baramulla district has taken a novel initiative of ‘Community Schooling System’ solely aimed at compensating the academic losses in the wake of the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic. The initiative of the department is aimed to bridge the gap between a teacher and a student, through ‘Community Schooling System’.
- It is the most beneficial method wherein a teacher in a particular area will establish a community level school and all the students in that particular area shall be provided academic as well as psychological help irrespective of their types of schooling.
- These community schools shall be established with the help of local Auqaf Committees and Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and will run taking into account all the requisite advisories and SOPs so that the safety of the teachers as well as the students is secured.

Delhi govt to launch massive plantation drive from July 10

- In a bid to reduce air pollution in the national capital, the Delhi government is all set to launch a campaign to plant as many as thirty-one lakh plants, trees, and shrubs across the city by July 26. This holds significance as the national capital records high-level air pollution throughout the year.
- The “Podhe Lagao, Paryavaran Bachao” (Plant Trees, Save Environment) campaign will be launched from the National Highway (NH) 20 near ITO.
- In 2017, there was 299 square kilometres of green cover, which increased to 325 square kilometres in 2019 and will further enlarge to 350 square kilometres in 2021, the Environment Minister said. During the 17-day campaign, twenty lakh big trees and eleven lakh shrubs will be planted.

Naveen Patnaik Plans to Increase Green Cover Under ‘Sabuja Odisha’ Over 1.30 Lakh Hectares

- The Odisha Government planned to implement a new initiative ‘Sabuja Odisha’ to increase green cover through extensive plantation over 1,30,264 Hectares of land. This has been decided in a high-level meeting held under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy.
- The Divisional Forest Officer headquarters would work as Plantation Officer in the district. Chief Secretary directed all districts to have their own micro-level work plan for plantation.

Gujarat: Vadodara district sets up rainwater harvesting project at 1000 govt schools

- In Gujarat, Vadodara district has successfully set up the rainwater harvesting project at 1000 government schools in the district.
- Launching the project through video conferencing Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said, Vadodara has become the first district in the country to achieve this success.

In a first, India sends a parcel train to Bangladesh

- In a first ever cross-border movement for Indian Railways, a special parcel train was sent to Benapole, Bangladesh carrying dry chillies from Reddipalem in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. The Special Parcel Express train carried 384 tonnes of dried chillies in 16 parcel vans.

CM Swavalamban Yojana becomes integral part of life of educated unemployed in Himachal Pradesh

- In Himachal Pradesh, Chief Minister Swavalamban Yojana has become an integral part of the life of educated unemployed youth. After getting benefits under this scheme, the number of youth going out of the state in search of jobs has come down as they are moving towards self-employment. Instead of opting for government and private sector jobs, the educated unemployed youth of the state are adopting Swavalamban Yojana as self-employment and giving priority to setting up industry near their homes.

India's Vice President launches social media super app 'Elyments'

- Inspired by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, more than 1000 IT professionals have come together to create the homegrown Elyments app, the first social media super-app, made in India.
- The app was launched by the Honorable Vice President of India, Sh. M Venkaiah Naidu in the presence of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Humanitarian & Founder of the Art of Living.

Indian Railways will be the largest Railway in world to have 100 per cent electrification by 2030

- Railway Minister Piyush Goyal has said that Indian Railways will be the largest Railway in the world to have 100 per cent electrification replacing diesel. He expressed hope that it will be the world's first Green Railways running on 100 per cent clean energy by 2030.
- The government has opened up for bidding for additional 151 trains inviting private participation so the passengers can enjoy world-class facilities and high speed journeys.

Andhra Pradesh: Farmer's Day On YS Rajasekhara Reddy's Birth Anniversary

- Andhra Pradesh is celebrated Farmer's Day on the birth anniversary of former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy and father of Jagan Mohan Reddy. YS Rajasekhara Reddy, popularly called YSR, was known to be a great mass leader.
- Chief Minister Jagan Reddy paid homage to his father on his 71st birthday. "He (YS Rajasekhara Reddy) will live in the hearts of people through the health schemes, 104, 108 ambulance services and farmer-friendly schemes". In 2019, Mr Reddy had announced that every year July 8 will be observed as Farmer's Day in the state.
- As a tribute to YS Rajasekhara Reddy, the Andhra Pradesh government launched 412 new ambulances, replacing the older ones, under the 'Dial 108' emergency service and also introduced 656 new mobile medical units.
- The 108 and 104 services were first introduced in the state by YS Rajasekhara Reddy, during his tenure as Chief Minister of the erstwhile unified Andhra Pradesh, from 2004 to 2009.

Taapsee Pannu's Looop Lapeta may be India's first film to get Covid-19 special insurance

- Headlined by Taapsee Pannu, Looop Lapeta is likely to become first Indian movie to get a Covid-19 special insurance. Producers Atul Kasbekar told that the producers are in touch with a legal firm to formulate a Covid-19 insurance for all their future projects.

Armed forces get special powers to buy weapons of up to Rs 300 crore

- The defence ministry granted special powers to the three services for individual capital procurement programme worth Rs 300 crore to meet emergent operational requirements.
- They said there was no cap on the number of procurement programmes and that each acquisition under the emergency requirement category should not cost more than Rs 300 crore. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

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 will 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.

Shripad Naik inaugurates Conference on Aerospace and Defence Manufacturing Technologies

- Union Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik has said 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.

Cochin Shipyard Limited signs contract for construction of Autonomous electric vessels for ASKO maritime AS, Norway

- **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi signed contracts for construction and supply of two nos Autonomous Electric Ferry for ASKO Maritime AS, Norway with an option to build 2 more identical vessels.**
- **Union Minister of State (I/C) Shri Mansukh Mandaviya praised the CSL for grabbing contract to build world's first fully automatic electric vessel for ASKO Maritime, Norway & laying historic milestone in Shipbuilding Industry.**

All capitals cities of North-Eastern states to be connected with rail network by 2023

- **Railway Board Chairman VK Yadav has said that all capitals of North-Eastern states will be connected to the rail network by 2023. As of today, except Sikkim, all North-Eastern states are connected to the rail network. The capitals of Assam, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh are already connected. In Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Meghalaya, the capital connectivity work is in progress. Manipur will be connected in March 2022, Mizoram in March 2023, Nagaland in March 2023, Meghalaya in March 2022 and Sikkim in December 2022,"** Yadav said while interacting with media virtually.

Allu Arjun's Sarrainodu in dubbed Hindi version becomes first Indian film to hit 300 million views on YouTube

- **The dubbed Hindi version of Telugu superstar Allu Arjun's "Sarrainodu" has crossed 300 million views on YouTube, setting a record. Sarrainodu is a hit 2016 Telugu action-movie helmed by Boyapati Srinu. The movie was bankrolled by Allu Aravind under the banner of Geetha Arts. Sarrainodu features an ensemble cast which includes Allu Arjun, Aadhi Pinisetty, Rakul Preet Singh and Catherine Tresa in the lead roles.**

In a first, law student gets mother's name added to degree certificate

- **A law student has succeeded in getting her mother's name added to her provisional degree certificate after the private university, from which she graduated, originally provided her with a certificate that carried her father's name alone.**
- **The student, Samrita Shankar, who graduated with a BBA LLB (Hons.), originally received her provisional certificate on July 10 carrying her father's name alone as is the common practice.**

First cargo express of Indian Railways to run on Hyderabad-Delhi route

- **In an initiative aimed at increasing the market share of Indian Railways in the movement of general cargo across the nation, the South Central Railway (SCR) will be launching its first Cargo Express train on August 5. The SCR announced that under this concept, a time tabled freight train will be started from Sanath Nagar in Hyderabad to Adarsh Nagar in New Delhi.**

Transgenders in Odisha to get benefit under madhu babu pension yojana

- **The Odisha Government has included transgender community under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana, which aims at providing financial assistance to destitute elderly, differently-abled persons and widows in the state.**
- **Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY) is a social security scheme launched by the state government. Under this scheme, around 5,000 transgenders will receive Rs 500, Rs 700 and 900 per month as a pension under various categories depending on their age.**

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 late Arun Jaitley, which will be funded by the pension his family receives as he has been a member of the upper house.**

- The scheme seeks to benefit group “C” employees of the secretariat by awarding their children three scholarships for higher technical and professional education. Besides, the employees will be extended financial support in case of death and medical emergency.

MyGov initiative completes 6 years

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciated efforts of everyone who have enriched MyGov endeavour of the government by their maximum and active participation. MyGov initiative completed 6 years.
- The citizen-centric platform was started with an objective to empower people to connect with the Government and also to contribute towards good governance in the country.

Hyderabad is 16th most surveilled city in world

- Hyderabad with over three lakh surveillance cameras has been ranked 16th among the top 20 most surveilled cities in the world, according to an annual report published by the UK-based Comparitech, a firm that reviews technology services like VPN, anti-virus and apps.
- Interestingly, out of the 20 most surveilled cities, 18 were Chinese cities, with London and Hyderabad being the only cities outside of China to make the top 20.
- London took the third place and Hyderabad the 16th. Comparitech researchers collated a number of data resources and reports, including government reports, police websites, and news articles, to get some idea of the number of CCTV cameras in use in 150 major cities across the globe, focusing primarily on public CCTV — cameras used by government entities such as law enforcement.

After nearly 4-month hiatus, India-US international flights to resume via ‘air bubbles’

- The international flights will start operation to the US.
- India has established individual bilateral ‘air bubbles’ with France, Germany and the US that will allow airlines of each country in the pact to operate international flights.

An air bubble is a bilateral arrangement with a set of regulations and restrictions in which the carriers of the two countries can operate international flights. “Under this arrangement airlines from the concerned countries will be able to operate flights from & to India along with Indian carriers.

Central vista: Proposed LS chamber to be 3 times present size

- The current strength of Lok Sabha, the CPWD pointed out, has remained at 545 as per the delimitation carried out on the basis of 1971 Census. “It is likely to increase substantially after 2026 as the freeze on the total number of seats is only till 2026.
- To cope with this, the new Lok Sabha Chamber, the affidavit said, will be able to accommodate 876 members and 1224 members during joint sessions, while the new Rajya Sabha chamber will be able to accommodate 400 members.
- The proposed Parliament building has been designed in consultation with the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Secretariats, security agencies, Speakers and committees, and will not only help address the space requirements, but “will also facilitate to keep and maintain the existing iconic building intact as a symbol of vibrant democracy”.

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, said 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.

Khattar launches portal for online appointments with CM, others

- 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.

SpiceJet operates first long-haul flight to Amsterdam

- Airline major SpiceJet operated its first long -haul flight to Amsterdam. The airline was operated the non-stop flight from India to Amsterdam from August 1. The airline major was allowed to operate flights to the US and the UK. Accordingly, the Centre designated the airline as an Indian scheduled carrier to operate between India and the UK under the Air Services Agreement.

India, Indonesia Defence Ministers' Dialogue held in New Delhi

- Defence Ministers' Dialogue between India and Indonesia was 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. The dignitary is in India for strengthening the ties between the two maritime neighbours.

MyGov to organise AatmaNirbhar Bharat logo design contest

- Government is looking to have a distinct identity for 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' by developing a logo based on creative and innovative inputs from the citizens of the country.
- MyGov.in platform has started the AatmaNirbhar Bharat Logo Design Contest on its website where Indian Citizens can submit their entries without any hassle through online medium.
- MyGov is a citizen engagement platform launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to promote the active participation of Indian citizens in the Nation's governance and development. MyGov has crowdsourced many logos of various departments and initiatives like Swachh Bharat, DekhoApnaDesh, Lokpal and many more.

Guwahati gets Northeast's first manhole cleaning robot

- Guwahati is the first city in the entire Northeast region to get a manhole cleaning robot. Named 'BANDICOOT', the automatic sewer cleaning device has been procured by the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) along with six Skid Steer Loaders (mini loaders) from JCB.

New RS members assigned to committees; Scindia gets HRD, Ranjan Gogoi to foreign affairs

- New Rajya Sabha members have been assigned to various parliamentary committees. Jyotiraditya Scindia has been assigned in HRD panel. Former CJI Ranjan Gogoi in foreign affairs panel. Sharad Pawar in defence panel.

Arvind Kejriwal Launches Portal for Job-Seekers, Employers

- Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched a job portal and appealed to the traders, industrialists and people to join hands to revive Delhi's economy. The portal – jobs.delhi.gov.in – will serve as a "Rozgar Bazaar" for the recruiters and job aspirants.

Bombay Flying Club becomes India's first DGCA approved drone training school

- In a first, India's civil aviation regulator, the Director-General of Civil Aviation has approved the Bombay Flying Club (BFC) as a drone training school. The Bombay Flying Club is a DGCA approved Flying Training Organisation, involved in flying training since 1928.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day

- **Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day** is observed globally on 27th June every year since 2017. This day is observed by the United Nations to raise public awareness of their contribution to sustainable development and the global economy.
- The Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has organized an international convention on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises based on the theme “Indian MSMEs, Global Aspirations” to observe the International MSME day on 27th June.

World Allergy Week 2020

- The World Allergy Organization is proud to announce that World Allergy Week 2020 is being occurred 28 June - 4 July 2020 and will focus on the theme of “Allergy care does not stop with COVID-19.”
- Each year, the World Allergy Organization (WAO) addresses a different topic that has a need for greater awareness. To accomplish this, WAO provides physicians and the general public with a webinar, infographic, and additional information to educate and spread awareness on the topic.

International Asteroid Day 30 June

- In December 2016 the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution declaring 30 June International Asteroid Day in order to “observe each year at the international level the anniversary of the Tunguska impact over Siberia, Russian Federation, on 30 June 1908, and to raise public awareness about the asteroid impact hazard.”
- International Asteroid Day aims to raise public awareness about the asteroid impact hazard and to inform the public about the crisis communication actions to be taken at the global level in case of a credible near-Earth object threat.

National Fish Farmers Day 2020 celebrated

- On the occasion of National Fish Farmers Day, a webinar was hosted by the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying in association with the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB).
- National Fish Farmers Day is celebrated on 10th July every year in remembrance of scientists Dr. K. H. Alikunhi and Dr. H.L. Chaudhury who successfully demonstrated the technology of induced breeding (Hypophysation) in Indian Major Carps on 10th July, 1957 at the erstwhile ‘Pond Culture Division’ of CIFRI at Cuttack, Odisha (presently Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, CIFA, Bhubaneswar).
- The event aims to draw attention to changing the way the country manages fisheries resources to ensure sustainable stocks and healthy ecosystems.

World Population Day 11 July

- World Population Day, which seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues, was established by the then-Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989, an outgrowth of the interest generated by the Day of Five Billion, which was observed on 11 July 1987.
- The theme for this year is “How to safeguard the health and rights of women and girls now” amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Malala Day 2020

- Malala Day is commemorated on July 12, the birthday of Malala Yousafzai, to honour women and children’s rights around the world.
- On October 9, 2012, Malala was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen after she publicly advocated for the education of girls.

World Youth Skills Day 15 July

- The importance of developing skilled youth is at the core of **this year's message for World Youth Skills Day**. Several virtual events focused on the theme of “Skills for a Resilient Youth” will take place.
- **On 15 July, join an online panel discussion organized by the Permanent Missions of Portugal and Sri Lanka to the United Nations**, together with UNESCO, ILO and the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

Nelson Mandela International Day 18 July

- **Nelson Mandela International Day is an annual international day in honour of Nelson Mandela, celebrated each year on 18 July, Mandela's birthday. The day was officially declared by the United Nations in November 2009, with the first UN Mandela Day held on 18 July 2010.**

World Crocodile day

- **World Crocodile Day is celebrated on 17th June.** The day is a global awareness campaign to highlight the plight of endangered crocodiles and alligators around the world.

World Chess Day: 20 July

- **On 12 December 2019, the General Assembly proclaimed 20 July as World Chess Day** to mark the date of the establishment of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) in Paris in 1924.
- **Under initiative of FIDE, July 20 has been observed as International Chess Day** by chess players around the world since 1966.

National Broadcasting Day being observed today

- **National Broadcasting Day is celebrated every year on 23rd July.**
- **On this day in 1927, the first ever radio broadcast in the country went on air from the Bombay Station** under a private company, the Indian Broadcasting Company.

International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem

- **The International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2015 and celebrated each year on 26 July, aims to raise awareness of the importance of mangrove ecosystems as “a unique, special and vulnerable ecosystem” and to promote solutions for their sustainable management, conservation and uses.**

World Hepatitis Day: 2020

- **World Hepatitis Day, 28 July, is an opportunity to step up national and international efforts on hepatitis, encourage actions and engagement by individuals, partners and the public and highlight the need for a greater global response as outlined in the WHO's Global hepatitis report of 2017.**
- **The date of 28 July was chosen because it is the birthday of Nobel-prize winning scientist Dr Baruch Blumberg, who discovered hepatitis B virus (HBV) and developed a diagnostic test and vaccine for the virus.**
- **This year's theme is “Hepatitis-free future,” with a strong focus on preventing hepatitis B among mothers and newborns.**

World Day against Trafficking in Persons 30 July

- **To mark World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on 30 July, the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking, Especially Women and Children, managed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).**

World Nature Conservation Day 2020

- **Observed every year on July 28, World Nature Conservation Day came into practice as the day to educate people about the best practices to protect our natural resources as our planet Earth has only a limited amount of resources left that we hugely rely on each day like water, air, soil and trees.**

World Sanskrit Day

- **First ever Special Programme in Sanskrit to mark World Sanskrit Day to be broadcast by All India Radio on 3 August.** The 20-Minute Program titled “Bahujan Bhasha-Sanskrit Bhasha” will be broadcast at on 100.1 FM - AIR News Live 24x7 FM Channel. **The Sanskrit organisation Samskrita Bharati is involved in promoting the day. In the year 2020, this day is celebrated on August 03.**
 - **Under Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat segment,** the program features translation of five commonly used words in Sanskrit, Hindi and Gujarati. The special edition by All India Radio is expected to give a fillip to the outreach of Sanskrit language among the people.
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Career
Launcher

QUESTIONS

1. Who has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of Ireland recently by Irish Parliament?
(a) Micheal Martin (b) Leo Varadkar (c) Enda Kenny (d) Brian Cowen
2. Indian government has decided to launch Floating Rate Savings Bonds 2020 (Taxable) from _____ giving an opportunity to invest in secured government instruments.
(a) July 1 (b) August 1 (c) August 15 (d) September 7
3. Recently, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs _____ launched through a video conference the tribes India products on Government e-Marketplace - GeM and a new website of TRIFED.
(a) Arjun Munda (b) Madhu Koda (c) Kien Rijiju (d) Kariya Munda
4. Which is the only Indian city to feature in the list by 'The Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2020' by Startup Genome?
(a) Hyderabad (b) Bengaluru (c) Lucknow (d) Madurai
5. Recently, the leaders of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia agreed to return to talks aimed at reaching an accord over the filling of Ethiopia's new hydroelectric dam on the _____.
(a) Blue Nile (b) White Nile (c) Benue River (d) Congo River
6. Who among the following inaugurated India's largest and first Virtual Healthcare & Hygiene EXPO 2020?
(a) Shri Prahlad Patel (b) Shri Mahendra Nath Pandey
(c) Shri Mansukh Mandaviya (d) Shri Amit Shah
7. The first woman bureaucrat in the history of Punjab to be elevated to the top post of the state's Chief Secretary is
(a) Dipti Rana (b) Mallika Gupta (c) Manisha Suri (d) Vini Mahajan
8. Which of the following African countries electoral commission declared opposition leader Lazarus Chakwera winner of a re-run presidential election recently?
(a) Uganda (b) Angola (c) Malawi (d) The Gambia
9. Every year since 2017, Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day is observed globally on:
(a) 11th June (b) 19th June (c) 23rd June (d) 27th June
10. Name the technique which enables to measure the tiny back and forth wobbles of the star caused by the gravitational pull of the planets.
(a) Doppler wobble (b) Hevler technique (c) Stephan wobble (d) Bob Martin wobble
11. Which is the first country to control locusts by using drones?
(a) Pakistan (b) India (c) Germany (d) Bangladesh
12. Which of the following states recently announced the launch of 'Godhan Nyay Yojana'?
(a) Haryana (b) Punjab (c) Bihar (d) Chhattisgarh
13. The first Joint Venture Hydroelectric Project between India and Bhutan signed is
(a) Kholongchhu Hydroelectric Project (b) Kurichhu Hydroelectric Project
(c) Chukha Hydroelectric Project (d) Tala Hydroelectric Project
14. Recently, Indian Government has banned 59 mobile apps which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order. These apps belonged to:
(a) China (b) South Korea (c) Japan (d) Russia

15. Name the Indian state which will be the first state in the country to conduct an overarching trial on convalescent plasma therapy trial for Covid 19.
(a) Maharashtra (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Karnataka
16. Recently, a commemorative declaration marking the 75th anniversary of the signing of the U.N. Charter was delayed as member states could not reach an agreement on:
(a) Agenda (b) Date of Meeting (c) Phraseology (d) Motto
17. Recently, three communities got domicile certificates from the Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) administration after years of being denied equal rights. Which of the following is not among the three?
(a) Valmiki Samaj (b) Hindu refugees from erstwhile West Pakistan
(c) Labana Sikhs (d) Gurkhas
18. Who is the youngest ever Cricket umpire to be included in the International Cricket Council's Elite Panel of Umpires for the upcoming 2020-21 season?
(a) Dara Khan (b) William Cottisbow (c) Nitin Menon (d) Tim Matthew
19. Which of the following states panchayati raj department has won first prize under the e-Panchayat Puraskars-2020, to be given by the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj recently?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Assam (c) Himachal Pradesh (d) Rajasthan
20. Which has recently become the first district in the country to set up the rainwater harvesting project at 1000 government schools in the district?
(a) Cuttack (b) Bhubaneswar (c) Vadodara (d) Rewari
21. Recently, 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:
(a) Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Kharagpur
(b) Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Madras
(c) Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Bombay
(d) Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Delhi
22. Recently, the Union government strengthened its top legal team by extending the term of _____ as the Attorney General (AG) for one year.
(a) K.K. Venugopal (b) Mukul Rohtagi (c) Tushar Mehta (d) Venugopal Aiyenger
23. Which of the following countries recently canceled its plans to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum next year because of the coronavirus, opting instead to lead a virtual summit?
(a) Australia (b) New Zealand (c) India (d) Myanmar
24. Who among the following launched Pradhan Mantri Scheme for Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises as a part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan?
(a) Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani (b) Shri Ram Vilas Paswan
(c) Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal (d) Shri Narendra Modi
25. Recently, Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led the state government constituted Madhya Pradesh State Migrant Labour Commission. The commission will have tenure of _____ and its term could be extended.
(a) one year (b) two years (c) three years (d) five years
26. Recently, Mon District Administration has been conferred the SKOCH Awards under three different categories at the 65th SKOCH Summit. Mon District is in:
(a) Manipur (b) Mizoram (c) Nagaland (d) Tripura

27. Who among the following has launched the inflation expectations survey of households and responses of the participants will be gathered over telephone in view of the coronavirus pandemic?
(a) NSSO (b) RBI
(c) Ministry of Corporate Affairs (d) SIDBI
28. Recently, India and Bangladesh signed an agreement for the formation of a _____ Joint Venture Company (JVC) for LPG business in Bangladesh.
(a) 50:50 (b) 60:40 (c) 70:30 (d) 80:20
29. Which of the following teams emerged as the recent winner of Premier League football title?
(a) Liverpool (b) Chelsea (c) Manchester City (d) Arsenal
30. Recently, International Zinc Association (IZA), in collaboration with Madhav KRG Group launched Asia's first-ever Continuous Galvanized Rebar (CGR) manufacturing facility in:
(a) Haryana (b) Punjab (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Kerala
31. Who was conferred with the first P C Mahalanobis Award in Official Statistics for lifetime achievements on the occasion of the National Statistics Day called upon the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)?
(a) Raghuram Rajan (b) C Rangarajan (c) Urjit Patel (d) Bimal Jalan
32. Which of the following countries has created the world's first plant-based steak using industrial 3D-printing?
(a) Canada (b) USA (c) Russia (d) Israel
33. Which of the following states has launched the ambitious piped water project "Har Ghar Jal" that means water to every house?
(a) Haryana (b) Rajasthan (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Madhya Pradesh
34. In a first for India, which of the following state/ union territories launched a plasma bank for treating covid-19 patients?
(a) Delhi (b) Puducherry (c) Lakshadweep (d) Goa
35. Who has been appointed as the next Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva?
(a) Rachit Sharma (b) Chetan Netram (c) Indra Mani Pandey (d) Deepak Bharadwaj
36. Recently, The World Bank has approved a five-year loan to the Namami Gange project worth _____ to develop and improve infrastructure projects to abate pollution in the river basin.
(a) Rs. 2,000 crore (b) Rs. 3,000 crore (c) Rs. 5,000 crore (d) Rs. 10,000 crore
37. India's Artificial Intelligence, AI enabled _____ has bagged two awards at the Global Leadership Summit and Festival of AI and Emerging Technology, CogX 2020.
(a) India Corona Helpdesk (b) BharatCorona Helpdesk
(c) MyGov Corona Helpdesk (d) MySarkar Corona Helpdesk
38. Recently, The Science and Engineering Research Board has launched a new scheme called _____ to provide a single platform for research internships, capacity building programs and workshops across the country.
(a) 'Accelerate Vigyan' (b) 'Gatij Vigyan'
(c) 'Wastvik Vigyan' (d) 'Sarnath Vigyan'
39. Who among the following stepped down as ICC Chairman after two, two-year tenures at the helm?
(a) Dave Richardson (b) Shashank Manohar (c) Ehsan Mani (d) George Llyod

40. A team of scientists has discovered a new freshwater fish species and genus, Waikhomia Hira, from rivers in regions along the Western Ghats in _____.
(a) North Karnataka (b) North Kerala (c) South Karnataka (d) West Maharashtra
41. Name the country which will fund world's first full-scale testing of ammonia-fuelled four-stroke engine.
(a) Finland (b) Norway (c) Sweden (d) Ireland
42. In the Union Territory of _____ the Education Department in Baramulla district has taken a novel initiative of 'Community Schooling System' solely aimed at compensating the academic losses in the wake of the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic.
(a) Ladakh (b) Jammu and Kashmir (c) Puducherry (d) Andaman & Nicobar
43. Recently, President Vladimir Putin has won a resounding victory in his bid to stay in power of Russia until the middle of the next decade. The vote paves the way for Putin, who has ruled for two decades, to remain President until _____.
(a) 2033 (b) 2035 (c) 2036 (d) 2037
44. Who made history upon her appointment as the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta, the first-ever Muslim with roots in the Indian subcontinent to occupy the post in Canada?
(a) Aelia Lukman (b) Salma Lakhani (c) Parveen Sultana (d) Rehana Sulaiman
45. Name the country which claimed to have developed the world's first quantum phase battery.
(a) France (b) Germany (c) Spain (d) Iceland
46. Recently, The Union Government has launched the Special Liquidity Scheme of _____ crore rupees to improve the liquidity position for Non-Banking Finance Companies- NBFCs and Housing Finance Companies- HFCs.
(a) 20 thousand (b) 30 thousand (c) 40 thousand (d) 50 thousand
47. Name the Indian author who is overall winner of the Commonwealth Short Story Prize.
(a) Deepika Misra (b) Kritika Pandey (c) Meenakshi Gupta (d) Mayuri Diwakar
48. Name the Indian-American composer who has won an ASCAP Screen Music Award for his NBC's drama series 'This is Us'.
(a) Siddhartha Khosla (b) Atul Vayaskar (c) Siddhant Chaturvedi (d) Meen Jayarajan
49. Name the woman officer who has been appointed as the lieutenant general for the first time by Pakistan Army.
(a) Major General Nagma Khan (b) Major General Salma Afridi
(c) Major General Nigar Johar (d) Major General Aelina Sulaiman
50. Name two agricultural experts from India who are named by UN chief to scientific group for 2021 food summit.
(a) Prof. Diwakar Gupta and Dr. Durga Khote (b) Prof. Mayank Paranjape and Dr. Reema Bhaskar
(c) Prof. Rattan Lal and Dr. Uma Lele (d) Prof. Deepak Misra and Dr. Laxmi Vayaran
51. Which of the following IIT's has developed an innovative virtual classroom aid titled 'Mobile Masterjee'?
(a) IIT Delhi (b) IIT Kanpur (c) IIT Kharagpur (d) IIT Madras
52. Which of the following Indian States/ Union territories is set to launch "Podhe Lagao, Paryavaran Bachao" (Plant Trees, Save Environment) campaign?
(a) Puducherry (b) Delhi (c) Assam (d) Uttar Pradesh
53. Which of the following Private Banks will offer ZipDrive instant auto loans to customers in 1,000 cities across India?
(a) ICICI Bank (b) HDFC Bank (c) Axis Bank (d) RBL Bank

54. The International Day of Cooperatives is an annual celebration of the cooperative movement that takes place on the first _____ of July since 1923.
(a) Monday (b) Wednesday (c) Thursday (d) Saturday
55. Who has been recently named as India's most valuable Test player in the 21st century by the Wisden magazine?
(a) Anil Kumble (b) Ravichandran Ashwin (c) Ravindra Jadeja (d) Kapil Dev
56. Recently, Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) in its meeting held accorded approval for Capital acquisitions of various platforms and equipment required by the Indian Armed Forces. Proposals for an approximate cost of _____ Crore rupees were approved.
(a) 25400 (b) 29700 (c) 38900 (d) 44500
57. Which of the following joined the Central Banks and Supervisors Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) as an observer?
(a) NDB (b) Asian Development Bank
(c) World Bank (d) IMF
58. Which of the following is in the process of setting up an Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) to facilitate investment in the highways sector?
(a) CPWD (b) RITES Ltd. (c) NHAI (d) AAI
59. Recently, Researchers at the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) have identified _____ drugs, some of them approved by the US Food and Drug Administration, that could potentially be used to treat patients with Covid-19 symptoms.
(a) 12 (b) 19 (c) 25 (d) 33
60. Name the two renowned Indian-Americans who have been named by the Carnegie Corporation of New York as '2020 Great Immigrants' honourees.
(a) Amardeep Singh and Vidhu Bhushan Rai (b) Deepak Vishwas and Rajeev Chaddha
(c) Vipul Narang and Vidit Tyagi (d) Siddhartha Mukherjee and Raj Chetty
61. According to Global E-waste Monitor 2020 report, which of the following countries was the biggest contributor to e-waste?
(a) India (b) USA (c) China (d) Australia
62. Name the State Government which decided to cover around seven lakh landless cultivators under 'Balaram', a special designed scheme.
(a) Assam (b) Odisha (c) West Bengal (d) Assam
63. The theme of World Allergy Week 2020 was:
(a) Allergy, care with COVID-19 (b) Allergy: Be Safe Be Preventive
(c) Allergy care does not stop with COVID-19 (d) Allergy Don't Panic
64. Name the Bollywood actress who started a campaign, #DobaraPoocho, urging people to discuss mental health?
(a) Alia Bhatt (b) Aishwarya Rai Bachchan
(c) Deepika Padukone (d) Swara Bhaskar
65. Who among the following launched the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge'?
(a) Amit Shah (b) Nirmala Sitharaman (c) Narendra Modi (d) Ramnath Kovind
66. Recently, A rocky planet 39 times as massive as Earth has been spotted orbiting a distant star at breakneck speed. Name the planet?
(a) ROI-661m (b) TOI-849b (c) TOI-555b (d) JOL-009n

67. Name the state / union territory which government launched an online portal, LEAD with over 10,000 instructional material and course content available on it for classes 1 to 12.
(a) Puducherry (b) Delhi (c) Assam (d) Madhya Pradesh
68. The Chambal Expressway could be a game changer for the poor and the tribal community living in far-flung areas of few Indian states. Which of the following state is not part of Chambal Expressway?
(a) Rajasthan (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Madhya Pradesh
69. The Mars Colour Camera (MCC) onboard ISRO's Mars Orbiter Mission has captured the image of _____ the closest and biggest moon of Mars.
(a) Mosose (b) Phobos (c) Leobos (d) Sunbos
70. Who has been recently named among the recipients of the 2020 Diana Award, which recognises young changemakers across the world?
(a) Shivani Javedkar (b) Freya Thakral (c) Poorvi Saha (d) Apoorva Yadav
71. Which of the following union territories e-launched Mission Organic Development Initiative (M.O.D.I) and a Greenhouse Project to steer the Union Territory on a sustainable path?
(a) Ladakh (b) Jammu & Kashmir (c) Lakshadweep (d) Puducherry
72. Swedish Institute of Space Physics is going to help Indian space agency, ISRO in order to return to Venus on the first Indian Venus Mission named _____.
(a) Venus -\$T (b) Shukrayaan-1 (c) Shukrayaan—AAA 1 (d) Venus -E1
73. Recently, Insurance regulator IRDAI has formed a panel under _____ to assess the suitability of the Indian insurance industry or any other sector to offer Surety Bonds for road contracts in the country.
(a) G Srinivasan (b) Mahesh Deshmukh
(c) Dibakar Bannerjee (d) Amitabh Bhattacharya
74. Recently, Central Board of Secondary Education-CBSE has partnered with _____ to launch free and comprehensive training program for teachers and students of its affiliated schools in the first phase from August to November this year in virtual mode.
(a) Google (b) Facebook (c) Instagram (d) Yahoo
75. Recently, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Covid Hospital built by DRDO in record time of 12 days becomes operational in:
(a) Delhi (b) Gujarat (c) Bihar (d) Madhya Pradesh
76. In the latest Sustainable Development Index (SDG) for the year 2020. The rank of Bangladesh is:
(a) 67th (b) 88th (c) 103rd (d) 109th
77. Recently, Indian Railways has started constructing the first pillar in the sea for the country's first vertical lift railway sea bridge _____.
(a) Chenab Rail Bridge (b) Pamban Rail Bridge
(c) Gomban Rail Bridge (d) Indus Rail Bridge
78. Name the former RBI governor who will be releasing a book later this month titled 'Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver', the book focuses on the non-performing assets (NPAs).
(a) Raghuram Rajan (b) C Rangarajan (c) Bimal Jalan (d) Urjit Patel
79. Name the former Indian cricketer who been named as one of the directors of the merged Indian Super League franchise ATK-Mohun Bagan ahead of the upcoming season.
(a) Saurav Ganguly (b) Rahul Dravid (c) Virendra Sehwag (d) Yuvraj Singh

80. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)'s National Institute of Virology (NIV) is located in:
(a) New Delhi (b) Pune (c) Mumbai (d) Guwahati
81. Recently, Inspired by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, more than 1000 IT professionals have come together to create the homegrown _____ the first social media super-app, made in India.
(a) Elyments app (b) Tele app (c) Melent app (d) Application app
82. Name the private bank which has launched Called Loan in Seconds a solution for instant disbursement of retail loans for the bank's pre-approved liability account holders.
(a) Yes Bank (b) Axis Bank (c) HDFC Bank (d) ICICI Bank
83. Which of the following states Chief Minister Swavalamban Yojana has become an integral part of the life of educated unemployed youth?
(a) Haryana (b) Himachal Pradesh (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Rajasthan
84. Which of the following countries promoted SBM Bank India and global payments technology major have joined hands to facilitate cross-border payments and remittances services?
(a) Government of Mauritius (b) Government of Maldives
(c) Government of Indonesia (d) Government of Malaysia
85. Indian Railways is taking decisive steps to transform itself as a 'Net Zero' Carbon Emission Mass Transportation Network by _____.
(a) 2022 (b) 2024 (c) 2025 (d) 2030
86. In a significant development, Indian Railways has set up a solar power plant in _____ to power the Railway overhead lines that power the electric locomotives.
(a) Gorakhpur in Madhya Pradesh (b) Faridabad in Haryana
(c) Bina in Madhya Pradesh (d) Hubli in Karnataka
87. Which of the following IIT's researchers have developed a disinfection box that can be used to sterilize personal belongings, medical equipment, PPE, apparels among others, against coronavirus?
(a) IIT Delhi (b) IIT Roorkee (c) IIT Kharagpur (d) IIT Kanpur
88. Recently, 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:
(a) Dr K S Reddy (b) Dr M N Roy (c) Dr Deepak Luthra (d) Vijayant Sekhawat
89. Name the second artist to be honoured by Britain's Royal Mint with a commemorative coin paying tribute to the decorated British singer-songwriter?
(a) Johnson Key (b) Andrew Matthew (c) Elton John (d) Keith Thomson
90. Recently, International Asteroid Day 2020 was celebrated on:
(a) 2nd July (b) 4th July (c) 30th June (d) 25th June
91. Who was first appointed as a judicial member of the NCLAT whose term was recently extended by three months?
(a) M K Khurana (b) Vikas Dudeja (c) Aniket Vajpayee (d) Bansi Lal Bhat
92. Which of the following Indian states recently passed the State Employment of Local Candidates Ordinance, 2020, to provide 75% reservation to residents of the State in jobs in the private sector?
(a) Punjab (b) Haryana (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Madhya Pradesh
93. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is doubling the lane of the world's highest motorable road at _____ which provides connectivity to the Siachen Glacier as well as the China border.
(a) Khardung La (b) Mana Pass (c) Bomdila Pass (d) Niti Pass

94. Which of the following payments banks announced the launch of a savings account scheme “Bhavishya” for minors aged between 10-18 years?
(a) Paytm Payment Bank (b) India Post Payments Bank
(c) Airtel Payment Bank (d) Fino Payments Bank Limited
95. In the 11th Jones Lang LaSalle’s (JLL) biennial Global Real Estate Transparency Index (GRET), what is the rank of India in this index?
(a) 7th (b) 14th (c) 21st (d) 34th
96. Which of the following Indian companies market valuation crossed Rs 11.5 lakh crore mark, the first by any domestic company?
(a) Wipro (b) HCL (c) RIL (d) BHEL
97. Who has been recently appointed as the chairman of the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)?
(a) Mahesh Burman (b) Injeti Srinivas (c) TCA Raghavan (d) Deepak Luthra
98. Which among the following has decided to undertake performance assessment and ranking of the highways in the country?
(a) NHAI (b) RITES Limited (c) BRO (d) Bhoomi Rashi
99. Which of the following IIT’s researchers have developed a nano-coated filter media for healthcare workers treating Covid-19 patients?
(a) IIT Delhi (b) IIT Bombay (c) IIT Hyderabad (d) IIT Madras
100. Recently, the first CEO of Startup Village and founder of Re-think Foundation _____ has been selected as the member of central government’s expert committee on the science and technology policy.
(a) Abiya Michel (b) Sijo Kuruvilla George
(c) Deepak Lele (d) Anuj B
101. Recently, Asia’s Largest Data Centre with 210MW Overall Capacity was inaugurated at:
(a) Mumbai (b) Hyderabad (c) Indore (d) Bengaluru
102. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi delivered the inaugural address of India Global Week 2020. A three - day virtual conference is themed as:
(a) Be the Revival: India and a Better New World
(b) Revival of India: A better One
(c) Be attentive Be Alert
(d) India and the virtual world
103. Recently, Union Cabinet gave its approval to a new pan India Central Sector Scheme- Agriculture Infrastructure Fund. Under the scheme _____ will be provided by banks and financial institutions.
(a) Fifty thousand crore rupees (b) One lakh crore rupees
(c) Two lakh crore rupees (d) Five lakh crore rupees
104. Recently, Union Cabinet has given approval for extending Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Ann Yojana for five more months. Under the scheme _____ of Wheat or Rice will be given to every member of the beneficiary.
(a) Five kilogram (b) Ten kilogram (c) Fifteen kilogram (d) Twenty kilogram
105. Which of the following are the first two countries in WHO South-East Asia Region to achieve measles and rubella elimination ahead of the 2023 target?
(a) Malaysia and Myanmar (b) Maldives and Sri Lanka
(c) Maldives and Mauritius (d) Seychelles and Indonesia

106. Name the country which has formally notified the United Nations (UN) of its decision to withdraw from the World Health Organization (WHO).
(a) Canada (b) USA (c) Mexico (d) Brazil
107. The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved the capital infusion for an overall value of _____ in the three Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs).
(a) Rs. 10,900 crore (b) Rs. 12,450 crore (c) Rs. 15,055 crore (d) Rs. 18,075 crore
108. Recently, two Mumbai researchers discover new species of fan-throated lizard, *Sitana dharwarensis* in:
(a) Karnataka (b) Kerala (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Tamil Nadu
109. Which of the following Indian states is celebrated Farmer's Day on the birth anniversary of former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy?
(a) Telangana (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Karnataka (d) Kerala
110. Recently, International Cricket is back in action; the 1st test match between _____ to be played at Ageas Bowl, London.
(a) England and West Indies (b) West Indies and India
(c) England and New Zealand (d) Pakistan and England
111. The first state in India to tap space technology and artificial intelligence for safeguarding government lands is
(a) Odisha (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Haryana (d) Punjab
112. The 15th meeting of the India-European Union Summit was held in virtual mode on 15th July. The Summit was co-chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President of European Council _____ and President of European Commission Ursula von der Leyen.
(a) Charles Michel (b) Anderson Michael (c) Mitchell Santner (d) Meenal Kithar
113. Recently, The Ministry of Culture has taken up the project of reprinting of 108 volumes of _____ under the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM).
(a) Japanese Kanjur (b) Mongolian Kanjur (c) Indonesian Kanjur (d) Malaysian Kanjur
114. Which of the following Indian states has so far raised Rs. 30,500 crore in the fiscal 2020-21 and has topped market borrowings among States in the country?
(a) Maharashtra (b) Haryana (c) Gujarat (d) Tamil Nadu
115. Which of the following IIT's 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?
(a) The Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD)
(b) Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH)
(c) The Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB)
(d) The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK)
116. The World Population Day seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues is celebrated every year on:
(a) 4th July (b) 8th July (c) 11th July (d) 14th July
117. The IIT Alumni Council is setting up the world's largest molecular diagnostic lab _____.
(a) 'MegaLab Mumbai' (b) 'MegaLab Delhi'
(c) 'MegaLab Hyderabad' (d) 'MegaLab Ahmedabad'

118. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) report on “Cancer preparedness in Asia-Pacific: Progress towards universal cancer control”, sponsored by Roche, “India ranks _____ for cancer preparedness in the region.
(a) Fourth (b) Fifth (c) Eighth (d) Tenth
119. Recently, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) announced that it has constituted a working group to study the possibility of creating a ‘pandemic risk pool’ to come up with a long term solution to deal with economic fallouts of a future such pandemic. The nine-member working group is headed by:
(a) Mahesh Dasani (b) Rahul Bhatia (c) Kanakjeet Tripathy (d) Suresh Mathur
120. Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation a 750 MW Solar project set up at:
(a) Gonda in Uttar Pradesh (b) Gorakhpur in Haryana
(c) Rewa in Madhya Pradesh (d) Lalitpur in Uttar Pradesh
121. Which of the following airports introduced India’s first fully contact-less airport car parking in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic?
(a) GMR Hyderabad International Airport (b) GMR Lucknow International Airport
(c) GMR Mumbai International Airport (d) GMR Bengaluru International Airport
122. Recently, Singapore’s ruling party _____ retained a firm grip on power but suffered its weakest performance in 55 years in office in an election with the economy badly hit by the Covid-19 pandemic.
(a) SAP (b) PAP (c) DAP (d) MAP
123. Who among the following released a white paper on “Focused Interventions for ‘Make in India’: Post COVID 19”?
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Dr. Harsh Vardhan
(c) Smt Smriti Zubin Irani (d) Shri Prahlad Patel
124. According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, the Chairman of Reliance Industries Ltd. is now worth \$68.3 billion, surpassing _____ \$67.9 billion.
(a) Jack Ma (b) Larry Ellison (c) Warren Buffett (d) Amancio Ortega
125. Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has allowed 29 general and health insurers to launch short-term _____ health insurance policies. The policy will cover medical expenses occurred due to coronavirus disease.
(a) ‘Corona Suraksha’ (b) ‘Corona Kavach’ (c) ‘Corona Raksha’ (d) ‘Corona Me Sathi’
126. Name the Digital Asset Management (DAM) platform that will be launched for Indian users on 15th August 2020 to address this growing need in the market?
(a) DigiLock (b) DigiBox (c) DigiMov (d) DigiLocker
127. WHO Director-General announced the initiation of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR) to evaluate the world’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Panel will be co-chaired by:
(a) Former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark and former President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
(b) Former Prime Minister of Australia Julia Gillard and former President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
(c) Former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark and former President of USA Barak Obama
(d) Former Prime Minister of United Kingdom Theresa May and former President of India Pranab Mukherjee
128. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is gearing up to lift off _____ Amazonia-1 satellite next month onboard the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).
(a) Mexico’s (b) Canada’s (c) Brazil’s (d) France’s
129. Who is set to become first Indian player to play in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL)?
(a) Dilip Sanghvi (b) Pravin Tambe (c) Suresh Raina (d) Mohammad Kaif

130. Which of the following is set to become first Indian movie to get a Covid-19 special insurance?
(a) Looop Lapeta (b) Singham 3 (c) Sadak 2 (d) Jhalaa Walla
131. Recently, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal has said that Indian Railways will be the largest Railway in the world to have 100 per cent electrification replacing diesel by year:
(a) 2023 (b) 2025 (c) 2030 (d) 2033
132. Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana had been launched with highest ever investment of over _____ thousand crore rupees during next five years.
(a) 10 (b) 20 (c) 30 (d) 45
133. Which of the following countries is positioning itself as a financial-technology hub for start-ups, rolled out the world's first crypto coin for collectors?
(a) Slovenia (b) Lithuania (c) Switzerland (d) France
134. In a first ever cross-border movement for Indian Railways, a special parcel train was sent to _____ carrying dry chillies from Reddipalem in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.
(a) Karachi, Pakistan (b) Benapole, Bangladesh
(c) Kathmandu, Nepal (d) Colombo, Sri Lanka
135. Which of the following launched Gold Mini Options after receiving the regulatory nod from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi)?
(a) National Stock Exchange (b) Bombay Stock Exchange
(c) Multi Commodity Exchange (d) Gift City Commodity Exchange
136. 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:
(a) Usha Thorat (b) H R Khan
(c) Saumya Swaminathan (d) Raghuram Rajan
137. Which of the following has received carbon neutral certification making it the first baby food manufacturer in the world to achieve the standard?
(a) Johnson & Johnson (b) Dabur (c) Danone (d) Patanjali
138. Which of the following companies delivered world's first hydrogen-powered trucks?
(a) Hyundai (b) Ashok Leyland (c) Tata (d) Swaraj
139. Recently, The world's first CIIE-themed airplane flew from _____ performing the airplane's first overseas flight with 245 passengers.
(a) Beijing to Munich (b) Shanghai to Paris
(c) Seoul to Shanghai (d) Singapore to Melbourne
140. National Fish Farmers Day is celebrated on _____ every year in remembrance of scientists Dr. K. H. Alikunhi and Dr. H.L. Chaudhury.
(a) 5th July (b) 7th July (c) 10th July (d) 13th July
141. Which of the following states organized India's first e-Lok Adalat in July 2020?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Chhattisgarh (c) Haryana (d) Assam
142. 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 _____ in 2019, according to new UK government figures.
(a) USA (b) Mauritius (c) Maldives (d) South Africa

143. Name the Prominent Indian-American scientist who has been appointed as the Director of the prestigious National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), which drives all federally funded agricultural research in the US.
(a) Dr Parag Chitnis (b) Dr Prashant Mohite
(c) Dr Anurag Mohapatra (d) Dr Ravi Parashari
144. Which of the following companies has developed the world's first network operating system NOS?
(a) Samsung (b) Apple (c) Huawei (d) Facebook
145. Honey hunting has been an integral part of _____ Shertukpen Community.
(a) Sikkim (b) Arunachal Pradesh (c) Haryana (d) Meghalaya
146. Which of the following has launched the ATL App Development Module for school children across the country?
(a) NITI Aayog (b) Ministry of HRD
(c) Ministry of Science & Technology (d) CSIR
147. Which of the following countries has become the first nation to complete clinical trials of Covid-19 vaccine on humans, and the results have proven the medication's effectiveness?
(a) Canada (b) Brazil (c) France (d) Russia
148. Recently, Boeing handed over the last of the five AH-64E Apache attack helicopters to the Indian Air Force (IAF), completing the contract for 22 Apaches. Boeing is an aerospace company of:
(a) Russia (b) USA (c) France (d) Canada
149. The _____ cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation 2018 has entered the Guinness World Record for being the world's largest camera trap wildlife survey.
(a) Second (b) Third (c) Fourth (d) Seventh
150. Recently, Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launched _____ portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.
(a) ROZGAR (b) VRIHAD (c) ASEEM (d) VYAPAK
151. Recently, World's largest COVID Care Centre was inaugurated in:
(a) West Bengal (b) Delhi (c) Assam (d) Uttar Pradesh
152. Recently, Andrzej Duda has won five more years as President in power on a socially conservative, religious platform in a closely fought election in:
(a) Iceland (b) Spain (c) Poland (d) Germany
153. Name the Central PSU which has won the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Award 2019, under Outstanding Accomplishment in Corporate Excellence Category.
(a) BHEL (b) SAIL
(c) National Thermal Power Corporation (d) GAIL
154. Which of the following Gulf countries has built a nuclear power programme and sent a man to space, and now plans to join another elite club by sending a probe to Mars?
(a) United Arab Emirates (b) Bahrain (c) Kuwait (d) Oman
155. Malala Day is commemorated every year on _____ the birthday of Malala Yousafzai, to honour women and children's rights around the world.
(a) 5th July (b) 7th July (c) 10th July (d) 12th July
156. Name India's engineering major company who has finished building the world's largest steel vacuum chamber.
(a) Larsen & Toubro (b) RITES ltd. (c) IRCON (d) Tata Energy

157. Recently, Entrepreneur Rik Mehta has become the first Indian-American to win the Republican primary for the Senate seat from the US state of:
(a) California (b) New Jersey (c) South Dakota (d) Alabama
158. Recently, Visa, a global leader in payments technology, has entered into a partnership with _____ to roll out Visa Secure to the bank's cardholders.
(a) Federal Bank (b) Axis Bank (c) HDFC Bank (d) RBL Bank
159. Recently, Technology giant _____ will invest \$10 billion (₹75,000 crore) in India over the next five-seven years with a focus on digitising the economy and building India-first products and services.
(a) Google (b) Oracle (c) Microsoft (d) Apple
160. Who won the Styrian Grand Prix from pole position to clinch an 85th career win and move within six of Michael Schumacher's Formula One record?
(a) Lewis Hamilton (b) Max Verstappen (c) Alexander Albon (d) Vettari Bottas
161. UNICEF INDIA announced its partnership with _____ to jointly develop UNICEF's #Reimagine Campaign to support the most vulnerable populations and children during the COVID-19 response and its aftermath in India.
(a) FICCI (b) SIDBI (c) RBI (d) NABARD
162. Which of the following states government ambitious 'Suraji Gaon Yojna' has been awarded "Elites Excellence Awards-2020" at the national level?
(a) Jharkhand (b) Odisha (c) Karnataka (d) Chhattisgarh
163. In a boost to the fledgling domestic small arms industry, two latest _____ assault rifles — the Arad and the Carmel — are set to be manufactured in India.
(a) UAE (b) Israeli (c) Lebanoni (d) Egyptian
164. Which of the following countries recently dropped India from Chabahar rail project, citing funding delay?
(a) Afghanistan (b) Egypt (c) Iran (d) Iraq
165. Who inaugurated and laid foundation stones for various new economic corridor projects worth over Rs 20,000 crore in Haryana?
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Amit Shah
(c) Shri Nitin Gadkari (d) Shri Ramnath Kovind
166. Who has been named as the recipient of the 2020 Von Karman Award of the International Academy of Astronautics?
(a) Dr. Shobhit Bhatnagar (b) Dr. Amardeep Sriram
(c) Dr. Vinod Gupta (d) Dr Kailasavadivoo Sivan
167. Recently, The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Ltd (HSBC) has got in-principle approval from the GIFT SEZ Authority to set up an IFSC Banking Unit (IBU) at GIFT City. The Headquarters of HSBC bank is in:
(a) Hongkong (b) Beijing (c) London (d) New York
168. Which of the following IIT's developed UV sanitizing device 'SHUDDH' to make your room COVID free?
(a) IIT Delhi (b) IIT Kanpur (c) IIT Madras (d) IIT Bombay
169. The group of students from an engineering college based in Thiruvananthapuram had created the world's first 100% eco-friendly car, and it's made of _____.
(a) Bamboo (b) Cardboard (c) Straw (d) Rugs and Paper

170. WMO in its Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update for 2020-24, said the annual global temperature is likely to be at least _____ degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial levels (defined as the 1850-1900 average) in each of the coming five years.
(a) 0.5 (b) 1 (c) 1.5 (d) 2
171. India's first police force drawing civilians as domain experts in IT/Digital, Legal Forensics and Finance to give a high-quality cutting edge to its investigation functions is
(a) Haryana Police (b) Punjab Police (c) Karnataka Police (d) Kerala Police
172. N Chandrasekaran and Lockheed Martin CEO Jim Taiclet will receive the USIBC Global Leadership Award this year. N Chandrasekaran is chairman of:
(a) Tata Group (b) Wipro (c) Reliance Energy (d) Videocon
173. India's "first cable-stayed" Indian Railways bridge is in:
(a) Arunachal Pradesh (b) Sikkim (c) Jammu & Kashmir (d) Himachal Pradesh
174. Which of the following countries Prime Minister Elyes Fakhfakh stepped down plunging the country into a political crisis as it tries to weather the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic?
(a) Syria (b) Lebanon (c) Iraq (d) Tunisia
175. The coal ministry plans to link the mining plan portal with _____ website.
(a) PRAKHAR (b) PARIVESH (c) KHANIJ (d) PRAVESH
176. Poba Reserve Forest in Dhemaji district will be upgraded to a wildlife sanctuary. Poba Reserve Forest is located in:
(a) Arunachal Pradesh (b) Meghalaya (c) Assam (d) Tripura
177. Who will be conferred with the Lifetime Achievement Award by city's iconic club Mohun Bagan on the occasion of its foundation day in a virtual ceremony in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic?
(a) Baichung Bhutia (b) Sunil Khatri (c) Ashik Kumar (d) D Ratttan Kumar
178. Union Human Resource Development Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' released _____ Guidelines on Digital Education through online medium in New Delhi.
(a) PRAGYATA (b) PRADDATA (c) AARADHYA (d) PRADAN
179. According to the latest 2019 assessment by the United Nations Development Programme, at the current rate of growth, India's population is likely to peak by year _____ at about 1.61 billion.
(a) 2030 (b) 2033 (c) 2039 (d) 2047
180. World Youth Skills Day is celebrated every year on:
(a) 10th July (b) 13th July (c) 15th July (d) 17th July
181. India and Bhutan have opened a new trade route between Jaigaon in _____ and Pasakha in Bhutan.
(a) Sikkim (b) West Bengal (c) Arunachal Pradesh (d) Assam
182. Recently, Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda was appointed as the first woman Prime Minister of:
(a) Gabon (b) Zambia (c) Liberia (d) Suriname
183. As per World Intellectual Property Indicators-2019 Report, India has emerged as the top _____ nation in the ranking of the total (resident and abroad) Intellectual Property (IP) filing activity.
(a) Five (b) Ten (c) Twenty (d) Fifty
184. Recently, Government launched the implementation guidelines for Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund, AHIDF worth _____ thousand crore rupees.
(a) 10 (b) 15 (c) 20 (d) 25

185. Which of the following countries recently has announced the launch of the world's first "Digital Nomad Visa"?
(a) Lithuania (b) Estonia (c) Latvia (d) Oman
186. Recently, who inaugurated the fifth edition of the conference on Aerospace and Defence Manufacturing Technologies in New Delhi?
(a) Shri Rajnath Singh (b) Shri Shripad Naik
(c) Shri Narendra Modi (d) Shri Nityanand Rai
187. According to property consultant Cushman & Wakefield, India ranks _____ in the list of most-suitable locations for global manufacturing among 48 countries in terms of cost competitiveness and operating conditions.
(a) First (b) Third (c) Sixth (d) Ninth
188. Recently, FamPay, India's first Neobank for teenagers that brings cashless convenience to millions of teens and their parents announced the launch of India's first numberless card _____.
(a) FamCard (b) FamMaster (c) FamCardless Offer (d) Original One
189. Recently, A team of researchers from the _____ has used an innovative method to produce biofuels from non-edible seeds.
(a) Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi (b) Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati
(c) Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur (d) Indian Institute of Technology-Madras
190. Nelson Mandela International Day is an annual international day in honour of Nelson Mandela, celebrated each year on _____.
(a) 9th July (b) 12th July (c) 18th July (d) 19th July
191. Which of the following railway zones has bagged the WATER HEROES AWARD, from Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India?
(a) North Central Railway (b) South Central Railway
(c) Western Railway (d) North West Frontier Railway
192. Which of the following Indian shipyards got contract to build world's first fully automatic electric vessel for ASKO Maritime, Norway & laying historic milestone in Shipbuilding Industry?
(a) Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam
(b) Mazagon Dock Limited, Mumbai
(c) Cochin Shipyard Limited
(d) Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust Mumbai
193. Who among the following took over as first female head of HCL Technologies?
(a) Anamika Roy (b) Arundhati Natrajan (c) Meenakshi Nadar (d) Roshni Nadar Malhotra
194. The defence ministry granted special powers to the three services for individual capital procurement programme worth _____ crore to meet emergent operational requirements.
(a) Rs 100 (b) Rs 200 (c) Rs 300 (d) Rs 500
195. Which of the following places began world's first WHO-listed stage 3 clinical trial of COVID-19 vaccine?
(a) Sharjah (b) Abu Dhabi (c) Beirut (d) Ottawa
196. Which of the following country's wind farm on the North Sea will become the first in the world to grow seaweed between its wind turbines?
(a) Belgium (b) Ireland (c) Sweden (d) Denmark
197. Which of the following countries Lourdes Roman Catholic shrine organised its first ever e-pilgrimage following the coronavirus crisis, drawing a virtual audience of 80 million from around the world?
(a) Germany (b) France (c) Italy (d) Spain

198. The Committee to Protect Journalists has announced that the recipients of the 2020 International Press Freedom Awards include _____ from Bangladesh, Mohammad Mosaed from Iran, Dapo Olorunyomi from Nigeria and Svetlana Prokopyeva from Russia.
(a) Shahid Khan (b) Muzib Ur Rahman (c) Hamid Khan (d) Shahidul Alam
199. Which of the following will be the first helicopter to fly on Mars?
(a) Integrity (b) Ingenuity (c) Netrity (d) Bestrit
200. Recently, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar informed that the Zonal Master Plan of _____ has been approved by the government.
(a) Alaknanda Eco-Sensitive Zone (b) Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone
(c) Ganga Eco-Sensitive Zone (d) Mandakini Eco-Sensitive Zone
201. According to Railway Board Chairman all capitals of North-Eastern states will be connected to the rail network by:
(a) 2021 (b) 2022 (c) 2023 (d) 2025
202. Who among the following bagged the Jagjivan Ram Innovative Farmer Award instituted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) recently?
(a) Amit Bhadana (b) T. Purushothaman (c) N. Natrajan (d) K. Murthy
203. Recently, Indian Navy conducted drill near the _____ with several warships, destroyers, frigates and submarines taking part in the exercise.
(a) Panaji (b) Paradip
(c) Andaman & Nicobar Islands (d) Lakshadweep
204. According to a UN report, about _____ Indians moved out of multidimensional poverty between 2005-2006 and 2015-2016.
(a) About 273 million (b) About 308 million
(c) About 346 million (d) About 378 million
205. International Centre of Automotive Technology (ICAT) has announced the launch of the automotive technology e-portal _____ which stands for Automotive Solutions Portal for Industry, Research and Education.
(a) EXPERT (b) INSPIRE (c) INTEGRITY (d) ASPIRE
206. Name the comet which has caught the attention of the stargazers in India as they have been and able to get a glimpse of the celestial event from July 14 onwards.
(a) NEOWISE (b) HALLEY (c) NETREW (d) LIKEWISE
207. Recently, The first Arab space mission to Mars blasted aboard a rocket from _____ after weather delays set back the launch of the probe dubbed “Hope.”
(a) China (b) Israel (c) India (d) Japan
208. India’s Grandmaster _____ finished on top in the ACCENTUS Chess960 tournament, part of the 53rd Biel Chess Festival 2020.
(a) P Harikrishna (b) Parthasarthy Shome (c) Mahesh Deshukh (d) Amit Nangia
209. The first Indian to receive the British Society of History of Science’s (BSHS) prestigious John Pickstone Prize for outstanding scholarly work in the history of science and medicine in English is
(a) Dr. Deepika Rajan (b) Dr. Shinjini Das (c) Dr. Meenakshi Jha (d) Dr. Anubha Chhatterjee
210. The first Indian film to hit 300 million views on YouTube is
(a) Aaj Ka Arjun (b) Kabir Singh (c) Sarraïnodu (d) Arjun Reddy

211. The first city to get the crucial Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) certification for the Raiya Smart City is
(a) Rajkot (b) Varanasi (c) Vellore (d) Surat
212. Who has been appointed honorary advisor to the steering committee for BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Young Leaders?
(a) Tina Dabi (b) Athar Amir Khan (c) Artika Dubey (d) Vibhuti Meena
213. Ambitiously aiming to attract private investments to help establish renewable power projects of 120 gigawatts (GWs) using the available land bank, which state has notified the Renewable Energy Export Policy, 2020?
(a) Telangana (b) Karnataka (c) Kerala (d) Andhra Pradesh
214. The AIIMS Ethics Committee gave its nod for a human clinical trial of the indigenously developed COVID-19 vaccine candidate _____ following which the premier hospital is likely to begin the exercise by enrolling healthy volunteers.
(a) Corado (b) Covaxin (c) Cobokher (d) CoVarine
215. Name the law student who has been succeeded in getting her mother's name added to her provisional degree certificate after the private university, from which she graduated.
(a) Sujata Dinkar (b) Manisha Karmakar
(c) Meenakshi Kaustubh (d) Samrita Shankar
216. Recently, 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. Hybrid Blockchain firm XinFin is based in:
(a) Japan (b) Singapore (c) USA (d) South Korea
217. Who among the following launched the world's first hypertension awareness symbol, in collaboration with Association of Physicians of India (API) and Hypertension Society of India (HSI)?
(a) Sun Pharma (b) Glaxo Smithline
(c) Glenmark Pharmaceuticals (d) Piramal Laboratories
218. The world's first sea cucumbers conservation reserve is being set up in _____ and will be spread across a 239 km² area.
(a) Andaman & Nicobar Islands (b) Lakshadweep
(c) Daman & Diu (d) West Bengal
219. Under initiative of FIDE, which of the following dates has been observed as International Chess Day by chess players around the world since 1966?
(a) July 8 (b) July 10 (c) July 15 (d) July 20
220. United Nations 2020 Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize laureates are:
(a) Theresa May of United Kingdom and Helen Clark of New Zealand
(b) Malal Yousufzai of Pakistan and Mohammad Yunus of Bangladesh
(c) Marianna Vardinoyannis of Greece and Morissana Kouyate of Guinea
(d) Elena Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and Kailash Satyarthi of India
221. Recently, Minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh inaugurated India's first public EV (Electric Vehicle) charging plaza in _____.
(a) Mumbai (b) Surat (c) New Delhi (d) Pune
222. Which of the following state governments has included transgender community under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana, which aims at providing financial assistance to destitute elderly, differently-abled persons and widows?
(a) West Bengal (b) Odisha (c) Jharkhand (d) Bihar

223. Which of the following Indian northeastern state's first mega food park was inaugurated by Food Processing Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal recently?
(a) Manipur (b) Meghalaya (c) Arunachal Pradesh (d) Mizoram
224. Which of the following Indian states launched "Navin Rojgar Chhatri Yojana" for an all-round development of the Scheduled Castes?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Odisha (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Haryana
225. Which of the following ministries has launched Manodarpan initiative to provide psychosocial support to students?
(a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (b) Ministry of Labour and Employment
(c) Ministry of Human Resource Development (d) Ministry of Law and Justice
226. According to a new report by a US-based private non-profit organization, which of the following countries is among the top two fastest growing countries in the South Asian region with an annual fertility rate of 3.6 children per couple?
(a) India (b) Sri Lanka (c) Bangladesh (d) Pakistan
227. According to a report by World Federation of Direct Selling Associations (WFDSA), India ranks _____ in 2019.
(a) Second (b) Fifth (c) Ninth (d) Fifteenth
228. Recently, A number of conservation agencies launched a citizen science initiative, a mobile-based application called KURMA, aimed at _____ conservation.
(a) Tiger (b) Turtle (c) Lion (d) Elephant
229. Recently, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced postponement of the upcoming men's T20 World Cup, which was scheduled to kick off in _____.
(a) West Indies (b) Australia (c) Sri Lanka (d) New Zealand
230. Recently, Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman participated in the 3rd G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting under the _____ Presidency through Video Conferencing.
(a) Canada (b) USA (c) Japan (d) Saudi Arabia
231. Who has been awarded with the First Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity?
(a) Greta Thunberg (b) Priyanka Chopra (c) Ivanka Trump (d) Malala Yousufzai
232. Recently, Indian naval ships conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the _____ Navy's USS Nimitz carrier strike group near the Andaman and Nicobar (A&N) islands as it is transiting the Indian Ocean.
(a) USA (b) France (c) UK (d) Germany
233. The first of its kind scheme in India 'Godhan Nyay Yojana' has been commenced in:
(a) Jharkhand (b) Bihar (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Chhattisgarh
234. Recently, who has been appointed as the Bhartiya Janta Party's Chief Whip in Rajya Sabha?
(a) Smt. Roopa Ganguly (b) Shri G.V.L. Narasimha Rao
(c) Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla (d) Shri Harnath Singh Yadav
235. Which of the following Asian countries is planning to file a World Trade Organisation (WTO) case against the European Union over its restrictions on palm oil biofuel by this year?
(a) Indonesia (b) India (c) Malaysia (d) Myanmar
236. Recently, Lalji Tandon passed away at the age of 85. He was the Governor of:
(a) Rajasthan (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Bihar (d) Karnataka

237. Recently, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports signed a Statement of Intent with YuWaah, a multi-stakeholder platform formed by the _____ to work in partnership to promote volunteerism among the youth of India.
(a) BCCI (b) UNICEF (c) ICC (d) ILO
238. Recently, SpaceX successfully launched _____ first military satellite and a rocket landing, too, to mark its 12th launch of the year.
(a) South Korea's (b) Japan's (c) China's (d) North Korea's
239. The World Crocodile Day is celebrated on:
(a) 20th July (b) 21st July (c) 17th June (d) 17th July
240. Recently, Researchers from Singapore have found a giant 'sea cockroach' at the bottom of the _____.
(a) Java Sea (b) Pacific Ocean (c) Indian Ocean (d) Sumatra Sea
241. Recently, Shantharama Budna Siddi, a social worker, has become the first lawmaker from his community as Governor has nominated him to the _____.
(a) Tamil Nadu Legislative Council. (b) Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council.
(c) Karnataka Legislative Council (d) Kerala Legislative Council.
242. In an initiative aimed at increasing the market share of Indian Railways in the movement of general cargo across the nation, the _____ will be launching its first Cargo Express train on August 5.
(a) South Central Railway (SCR) (b) Central Railway (CR)
(c) North Eastern Railway (NER) (d) North East Frontier Railway (NFR)
243. Recently, Rajya Sabha Secretariat has launched an employees' welfare scheme in the name of _____ which will be funded by the pension his family receives as he has been a member of the upper house.
(a) Late Arun Jaitley (b) Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee
(c) Late Sushma Swaraj (d) Late Ram Jethmalani
244. Recently, International Union of Railways, UIC, Paris, has nominated Director General of Railway Protection Force _____ as Vice-Chairman of its security platform.
(a) Ajith Kumar (b) Arun Kumar
(c) Devendra Kumar Sikri (d) Amarendra Pradhan
245. Recently, Which of the following countries has for the first time conducted flight tests of the MGTD-20 gas turbine engine made by 3D-printing?
(a) Canada (b) Russia (c) Japan (d) China
246. The world's first-ever shaft hydropower plant, a hydropower plant consisting of a turbine hidden in a shaft in the riverbed of Loisach River in _____.
(a) France (b) Canada (c) Germany (d) Finland
247. Recently, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and _____ after its amalgamation with Corporation Bank and Andhra Bank, have announced a corporate agency agreement to distribute LIC policies.
(a) Canara Bank (b) Bank of Baroda (c) Union Bank of India (d) Punjab National Bank
248. Recently, India has successfully conducted three flight tests of its indigenously developed anti-tank guided missile _____ from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in Odisha.
(a) Dhruvastra (b) Brahmastra (c) Ramastra (d) Shivastra
249. Name the Ace sprinter who has become the first Indian track and field athlete to participate in a competition amid the COVID-19 pandemic, running in a meet in Jamaica.
(a) Meenakshi Rana (b) Anamika Jaiswal (c) Deepika Rana (d) Srabani Nanda

250. In Maharashtra, who among following bollywood actors has launched a free online platform called 'Pravasi Rojgar' to help migrants find job opportunities in various sectors across the country?
(a) Manoj Vajpayee (b) Sonu Sood (c) Ashutosh Rana (d) Sanjay Dutt
251. Recently, Punjab got its first plasma bank at _____.
(a) Jalandhar (b) Patiala (c) Amritsar (d) Kapoorthala
252. Which of the following States/ Union Territories recently announced that his government has approved 'Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana'?
(a) Delhi (b) Puducherry (c) Haryana (d) Delhi
253. India League, a diaspora group which dates back to 1916 announced the launch of a first-ever _____ Indian Census to collate data of around 1.5 million Indian-origin population.
(a) France (b) Germany (c) Britain (d) Netherland
254. Which of the following Central Asian countries has been recently granted Observer status by the World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council?
(a) Kazakhstan (b) Kyrgyz Republic (c) Tajikistan (d) Turkmenistan
255. The Azad Pattan project is one of five hydropower schemes on the _____.
(a) Indus (b) Jhelum (c) Beas (d) Chenab
256. Which of the following countries recently successfully launched its first Mars probe using Long March-5 rocket aiming to complete orbiting, landing and roving in a single mission?
(a) Japan (b) India (c) China (d) France
257. Recently, Researchers in the UK and Germany have engineered a metal that they describe as the world's first human-made "non-cuttable" material. What is the name of the material?
(a) Proteus (b) Nortun (c) Meitus (d) Lactus
258. Which of the following teams recently won the Football Premier League trophy in a muted presentation ceremony in front of an empty Kop?
(a) Liverpool (b) Chelsea (c) Manchester United (d) Juventus F.C
259. National Broadcasting Day is celebrated every year on:
(a) 14th July (b) 17th July (c) 19th July (d) 23rd July
260. The Nobel Prize Banquet has been cancelled for the first time since _____ due to coronavirus pandemic.
(a) 1921 (b) 1937 (c) 1949 (d) 1956
261. Who has been recently appointed as the new Health Secretary in the Union Health Ministry?
(a) Amit Panghal (b) Rajesh Bhushan (c) Ananya Jha (d) Shreyash Pilgaonkar
262. Which of the following countries recently has announced \$220,000 in funding for a pilot project in which charitable organization the Salvation Army will run the world's first solar-energy on-selling PPA?
(a) New Zealand (b) Australia (c) USA (d) Canada
263. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciated efforts of everyone who have enriched MyGov endeavour of the government by their maximum and active participation. MyGov initiative completed _____.
(a) Two Years (b) Three Years (c) Five Years (d) Six Years
264. The HRD Ministry has set up a committee to form guidelines and suggest measures to ensure that more students study in India. Who will be the head of this committee?
(a) Secretary of the HRD Ministry (b) Chairman of NEET
(c) Chairman of the University Grants Commission (d) Chairman of the CBSE

265. Who among the following recently launched www.restartindia.in, a mentoring platform primarily aimed at aiding the sector to restart businesses across the country?
(a) Amit Shah (b) Rajnath Singh (c) Narendra Modi (d) Nitin Gadkari
266. In the latest Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) brought out by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, India has ranked _____ among the top 10 countries that have gained in forest areas in the last decade.
(a) Second (b) Third (c) Fifth (d) Seventh
267. According to the special bulletin on Maternal Mortality in India 2016-18, released by the Office of the Registrar General's Sample Registration System (SRS), The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in India has declined to _____ in 2016-18 from 122 in 2015-17.
(a) 120 (b) 117 (c) 113 (d) 102
268. Who among the following recently released the Financial Stability Report (FSR) that "reflects the collective assessment of the sub-committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) on risks to financial stability?"
(a) Ministry of Corporate Affairs (b) Reserve Bank of India
(c) Ministry of Finance (d) NABARD
269. In a bid to establish and implement strong legal frameworks to manage the coronavirus pandemic across the globe, the _____ launched COVID-19 Law Lab.
(a) ICMR (b) World Health Organization
(c) Health Services of USA (d) UNO
270. Recently, India and _____ signed a contract for setting up Neighbourhood Fish Processing Plants at two of the islands in the neighboring country.
(a) Maldives (b) Mauritius (c) Sri Lanka (d) Bangladesh
271. Which of the following states 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?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Haryana (d) Bihar
272. Who has been recently appointed as the Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee of the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), the independent accounting and auditing regulator set up by the Government of India under the Companies Act, 2013?
(a) Sukirti Kandpal (b) Muneesh Jain (c) Mrinal Bhatia (d) R. Narayanaswamy
273. Recently, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare inaugurated the 'World Class State of Art Honey Testing Laboratory' established by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in _____ with support of National Bee Board (NBB).
(a) Karnal (Haryana) (b) Latur (Maharashtra)
(c) Anand (Gujarat) (d) Sehore (Madhya Pradesh)
274. Which of the following companies recently 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?
(a) Reliance Industries (b) Facebook (c) Samsung (d) Alibaba
275. Who among the following launched a new Jet Zero Council to tackle aviation emissions as part of a wider 350-million pound plan to step up efforts to tackle climate change?
(a) Canada Prime Minister (b) UK Prime Minister
(c) USA President (d) China President

276. Which of the following is set to become the first 'net-zero campus' in India?
(a) Institute of Management Calcutta (b) Institute of Management Ahmedabad
(c) Institute of Management Bangalore (d) Institute of Management Indore
277. The world's first electrified rail tunnel fit to run double-stack containers will be operational in the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor. The tunnel is located in:
(a) Rajasthan (b) Haryana (c) Himachal Pradesh (d) Uttarakhand
278. According to an annual report published by the UK-based Comparitech, Hyderabad with over three lakh surveillance cameras has been ranked _____ among the top 20 most surveilled cities in the world.
(a) 2nd (b) 7th (c) 13th (d) 16th
279. Recently, 'Puttapaka Telia Ruma' has been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag. Puttapaka Telia Ruma belong to:
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Kerala (c) Karnataka (d) Telangana
280. Which among the following recently launched its one-stop fintech payment solution- UPI AutoPay in a virtual event of Global Fintech Fest?
(a) VISA (b) Paytm
(c) Ministry of Finance (d) National Payments Corporation of India
281. Which of the following countries has become the first country outside the South China Sea region to approach the United Nations over China's territorial claims?
(a) India (b) New Zealand (c) Australia (d) Canada
282. Recently, Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda inaugurated an e-Symposium on _____ organized by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Centre for Policy Research and Analysis, Indian Institute of Management, Shillong.
(a) Bamboo (b) Handicrafts (c) Culture (d) Education
283. Recently, Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah launched the Tree Plantation Campaign "Vriksharopan Abhiyan" of the Ministry of Coal. During the launch the Union Home Minister inaugurated and laid the Foundation stone of _____ Ecoparks/ Tourism sites.
(a) 2 (b) 4 (c) 6 (d) 8
284. ReTuna is world's first second-hand mall. The mall is located in:
(a) Denmark (b) Sweden
(c) USA (d) Japan
285. Who has been recently appointed as the Governor of Madhya Pradesh?
(a) Ramapati Ram Shastri (b) Anandiben Patel
(c) Om Prakash Kohli (d) Motilal Vohra
286. Who has been recently appointed as an honorary adviser to the steering committee for the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) young leaders for the period 2020-2023?
(a) Sahil Seth (b) Umang Rajawat
(c) Vaibhav Tripathi (d) Nishant Arya
287. The Reserve Bank of India has placed on its website the 'Report of the Committee for Analysis of QR (Quick Response) Code'. The Committee was constituted by RBI under the Chairmanship of:
(a) Prof. Amulya Patwardhan (b) Prof. M.L.Nadkarni
(c) Prof. D.B. Phatak (d) Prof. U.C. Chatterjee

288. Recently, New Rajya Sabha members have been assigned to various parliamentary committees. Who has been made a member of the Parliament's standing committee on external affairs on July 23?
(a) Shri Ranjan Gogoi (b) Shri Jyotiraditya Scindhia
(c) Shri Sharad Pawar (d) Smt Priyanka Chaturvedi
289. World Hepatitis Day 2020 is celebrated on:
(a) 21st July (b) 24th July (c) 28th July (d) 1st August
290. Recently, Saffron grown in _____ has received the geographical indication (GI) tag.
(a) Araku Valley (b) Kashmir (c) Western Ghat (d) Valley of Flowers, Uttarakhand
291. Recently, Ministry of Earth Sciences launched the mobile App _____ for India Meteorological Department on its Foundation Day celebrations.
(a) "Mausam" (b) "Watavaran" (c) "Paridrishya" (d) "Weather"
292. Who among the following launched the Bureau of Indian Standard's Mobile App BIS-Care?
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal
(c) Shri Ram Vilas Paswan (d) Shri Amit Shah
293. Who among the following addressed the Grand Finale of the largest ever online hackathon in the world on 1st of August 2020 through video-conference?
(a) President Ramnath Kovind
(b) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(c) Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank
(d) Home Minister Amit Shah
294. Recently, Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister Sadananda Gowda launched _____ schemes of Department of Pharmaceuticals for promotion of domestic manufacturing of bulk drugs and medical devices parks in the country.
(a) Two (b) Three (c) Four (d) Seven
295. Recently, Defence Ministers' Dialogue between India and Indonesia was held in _____.
(a) Jakarta (b) New Delhi (c) Hyderabad (d) Hanoi
296. Which of the following states forest department is expected to start snow leopard estimation process with the help of camera traps from September 2020?
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand (c) Arunachal Pradesh (d) Sikkim
297. Which of the following states will host the 4th Khelo India Youth Games?
(a) Punjab (b) Nagaland (c) Goa (d) Haryana
298. Who among the following became first Indian to cross 70 million followers on Instagram?
(a) Amitabh Bachchan (b) Narendra Modi (c) Virat Kohli (d) Deepika Padukone
299. Name India's first solar-powered ferry which won the prestigious Gustave Troupe Award for Excellence in Electric Boats and Boating.
(a) Surya (b) Aditya (c) Bhaskar (d) Diwakar
300. Recently, The Ziyuan III 03 satellite was launched by a Long March-4B rocket. The Ziyuan III satellite belongs to:
(a) South Korea (b) North Korea (c) Vietnam (d) China
301. Name the Indian-origin politician who was designated as the Leader of the Opposition in Singapore, the first such appointment in the history of the city-state.
(a) Amit Nagpal (b) Pritam Singh (c) Virat Deshwal (d) Mohan Jitender

302. Who among the following Chief Minister chaired India's first virtual Cabinet session from Hospital?
(a) Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shivraj Singh Chauhan
(b) Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Uddhav Thackeray
(c) Chief Minister of Bihar, Nitish Kumar
(d) Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath
303. Recently, The Centre, in collaboration with the _____ has decided to convert large area of ravines in Gwalior-Chambal belt of Madhya Pradesh into arable land.
(a) Reserve Bank of India (b) New Development Bank
(c) AIIB (d) World Bank
304. Recently, The government has notified changes in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) norms on civil aviation. It will permit non-resident Indian nationals to own _____ per cent stake of Air India.
(a) 51 (b) 65 (c) 75 (d) 100
305. India and UK held the 14th Joint Economic and Trade Committee meeting virtually. It was co-chaired by _____.
(a) Minister for Finance Nirmala Sitharaman
(b) Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal
(c) Minister for Textiles Smriti Irani
(d) Minister for Home Amit Shah
306. Recently, IRCTC and _____ together launched their new Co-branded Contactless Credit Card on RuPay Platform.
(a) SBI Card (b) Citi Card (c) HDFC Card (d) ICICI Card
307. Name the climate activist from India who 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.
(a) Archana Soreng (b) Deepa Shahi (c) Mohini Vishkarma (d) Amrita Nagpal
308. According to the report 'Status of Tigers Co-predators and Prey in India', which of the following tiger reserves has reported the highest tiger density among India's 50 reserves with 14 tigers per 100 sq km?
(a) Corbett Tiger Reserve (b) Kaziranga Tiger Reserve
(c) Nagarhole Tiger Reserve (d) Orang Tiger Reserve
309. Name the second England cricketer who claimed 500 Test wickets in Test cricket recently.
(a) Chris Woakes (b) Stuart Broad (c) Jofra Archer (d) James Anderson
310. World Nature Conservation Day is observed every year on _____.
(a) July 21 (b) July 23 (c) July 26 (d) July 28
311. Recently, The first batch of five Rafale jets landed in _____.
(a) Jodhpur (b) Jammu (c) Ambala (d) Chandigarh
312. Recently, Cabinet Approves National Education Policy 2020, New Policy aims for Universalization of Education from pre-school to secondary level with 100 % GER in school education by year _____.
(a) 2022 (b) 2025 (c) 2027 (d) 2030
313. SABIC chemical plant in _____ is to become world's first-of-its-kind to operate on 100 per cent renewable power.
(a) Portugal (b) France (c) Germany (d) Spain

314. Recently, India's largest power generation utility NTPC Ltd plans to set up a solar power project under the aegis of International Solar Alliance (ISA) in:
(a) Mauritius (b) Maldives (c) Sri Lanka (d) Bangladesh
315. Recently, Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a _____ million US dollar grant to India from its Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund (APDRF).
(a) Two (b) Three (c) Five (d) Nine
316. Recently, Power Finance Corporation, PFC, a PSU under Ministry of Power has signed an agreement with _____ for Training, Research, and Entrepreneurship Development in Smart Grid Technology.
(a) Indian Institute of Technology- Kharagpur (b) Indian Institute of Technology- Kanpur
(c) Indian Institute of Technology- Bombay (d) Indian Institute of Technology- Delhi
317. Name the first NBA Academy graduate who signed with the G League and first NBA Academy India graduate to land a professional contract.
(a) Amrit Pal Dagar (b) Sushil Kumar (c) Chand Mohammad (d) Princepal Singh
318. Which of the following becomes India's first DGCA approved drone training school?
(a) Delhi Flying Club (b) Bombay Flying Club
(c) Madras Flying Club (d) Calcutta Flying Club
319. Recently, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) constituted an 11-member Commonwealth Games Association of India (CGA of India) under its president _____ for the 2020-21 season.
(a) Narinder Batra (b) VD Nanavati (c) Kuldeep Vats (d) Adille Sumariwala
320. The International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem is celebrated on _____.
(a) 17th July (b) 21st July (c) 23rd July (d) 26th July
321. Which of the following countries has launched the world's first hydrogen filling station for passenger trains?
(a) Germany (b) Portugal (c) Ireland (d) Japan
322. Recently, who among the following has launched dedicated Web-Portal for National AYUSH Mission?
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Ramnath Kovind
(c) Dr. Harshvardhan (d) Shri Shripad Yesso Naik
323. Which is the first city in Northeast region to get a manhole cleaning robot named 'BANDICOOT'?
(a) East Kameng (b) Guwahati (c) Shillong (d) North Sikkim
324. Which of the following districts recently topped the list of aspirational districts ranked by government think-tank Niti Aayog for the February-June 2020 period?
(a) Ri-Bhoi (b) West Kameng (c) Bijapur (d) Mandsaur
325. Which is the first company globally to be certified to the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Security Standards Council's Contactless Payments on COTS Security?
(a) MYPINPAD (b) MYNOTEPAD (c) MYCARD (d) MYEFFORT
326. The first country in the world to produce a set of standards for how public agencies should use the algorithms that increasingly drive decision-making by officials about every area of public life is
(a) France (b) New Zealand (c) Germany (d) Canada
327. According to new data from research company Canalys, which is the world's No. 1 supplier of smartphones?
(a) Samsung Electronics (b) Huawei Technologies Co
(c) Google Inc (d) Apple PLC

328. Which of the following countries will become the first country to require Facebook and Google to pay for news content provided by media companies under a royalty-style system?
(a) New Zealand (b) Germany (c) Canada (d) Australia
329. Union Government has appointed former chairman of Coal India _____ as a member of a key panel that deals with violation of environment rules.
(a) Anil Kumar Jha (b) Deependra Wadhwa (c) Brijesh Kumar Kalia (d) Ambuj Sxaena
330. To mark World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on _____ the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking, Especially Women and Children, managed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
(a) 21st July (b) 23rd July (c) 27th July (d) 30th July
331. The first Central Armed Police Force CAPF to have supplies from the Khadi & Village Industries Commission is
(a) Indo Tibetan Border Police
(b) Central Reserve Police Force
(c) Indo-Tibetian Border Police Force
(d) Border Security Force
332. Recently, China conducted “high-intensity” naval exercises in the South China Sea. Which of the following countries is not included in the South China Sea dispute?
(a) Vietnam (b) Philippines (c) New Zealand (d) Taiwan
333. The first state in India to have three capital cities is Andhra Pradesh. Which of the following cities is not among the three?
(a) Vishakhapatnam (b) Warangal (c) Kurnool (d) Amaravati
334. Recently, In a major initiative to encourage and enable holistic progress in the incubator ecosystem across the country, NITI Aayog’s Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), has launched _____ an Incubator Capabilities enhancement program for a Robust Ecosystem focused on creating high performing Startups.
(a) AIM iCREST (b) AIM iCLASS (c) AIM iROCK (d) AIM iTHRUST
335. The Small Industries Development Bank of India in association with Trans Union CIBIL has launched a comprehensive financial education and knowledge platform for micro, small and medium enterprises. What is the name of one-stop knowledge portal?
(a) MSME Saksham (b) MSME Samarth (c) MSME Suvidha (d) MSME Sarthak
336. Which of the following FinTech Companies launched mpay.me - a UPI payment link service to send and receive money from any UPI payment app?
(a) MobiKwik (b) Paytm (c) PhonePe (d) Amazon Pay
337. Recently, Reliance Power and Japanese energy major JERA have inked a pact with a group of banks for full financing, totalling USD 642 million for their new gas-fired thermal power generation project in _____.
(a) Sri Lanka (b) Bhutan (c) Myanmar (d) Bangladesh
338. According to a new report launched by UNICEF and Pure Earth, _____ poisoning is affecting children on a massive and previously unknown scale.
(a) Mercury (b) Cadmium (c) Lead (d) Arsenic
339. Name the England all-rounder who has been made a member of the House of Lords of the British Parliament.
(a) Ian Botham (b) Andrew Flintoff (c) Tony Greig (d) Moeen Ali
340. In India, “Muslim Women Rights Day” has been organised on:
(a) 25th July (b) 28th July (c) 30th July (d) 1st August

341. Which of the following Indian states forest department will open India's first conversation centre for snow leopards?
(a) Uttarakhand (b) Himachal Pradesh (c) Sikkim (d) Arunachal Pradesh
342. Recently, As the Barakah Nuclear Plant's 1st Unit got operational; _____ became the first country in the Arab World to produce nuclear energy.
(a) UAE (b) Kuwait (c) Oman (d) Qatar
343. Which of the following IIT's formula student team became the first Indian team to win an engineering design competition when it won the best-designed car award at the Formula Student (FSUK), a student engineering competition held in the United Kingdom?
(a) Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (b) Indian Institute of Technology Bombay
(c) Indian Institute of Technology Madras (d) Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur
344. Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated a two-day international webinar on the theme of ' _____ Swaraj to Self-reliant India' organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations on the 100th death anniversary of the great freedom fighter.
(a) Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (b) Gopal Krishna Gokhale
(c) Gopal Hari Deshmukh (d) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
345. Recently, International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has constituted a seven-member committee to suggest ways to enhance international retail participation in IFSC. The committee will be headed by:
(a) Amandeep Singla (b) Bhaskar Chhattopadhyaya
(c) Pradip Shah (d) Deepak Rana
346. Recently, HLEG was set up to recommend measurable performance incentives for states to encourage _____.
(a) Sanitization (b) Women Self Help Groups
(c) Agricultural exports (d) Financial Inclusion
347. Recently, Environment Ministers of the five BRICS countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa participated in the 6th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting through a video conference under the presidency of _____.
(a) Brazil (b) Russia (c) South Africa (d) China
348. In 2020, World Sanskrit Day was celebrated on:
(a) 31st July (b) 1st August (c) 29th July (d) 3rd August
349. Which of the following banks Credit Card customers get unique offering in terms of convenient and affordable EMI options, as it ties up with Innoviti Payment Solutions?
(a) State Bank of India (b) Bank of Baroda
(c) Punjab National Bank (d) Union Bank of India
350. Recently, Scientists have succeeded in reviving microbes retrieved from sediment deep under the seafloor in the heart of the _____ that had survived in a dormant state for 101.5 million years in research illustrating the resiliency of life on Earth.
(a) Mid Arctic (b) Java Sea (c) South Pacific (d) South Atlantic

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. a Ireland's Parliament appointed Micheal Martin, a center-right politician, as prime minister as the country deals with the coronavirus and fallout from a housing crisis.
2. a The government has decided to launch Floating Rate Savings Bonds 2020 (Taxable) from July 1, giving an opportunity to invest in secured government instruments.
3. a Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda launched through a video conference the tribes India products on Government e-Marketplace - GeM and a new website of TRIFED.
4. b Indian's startup capital Bengaluru has been ranked in the world's top 30 startup ecosystems. Topped by the Silicon Valley in California, Bengaluru is at the 26th spot and the only India city to feature in the list by 'The Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2020' by Startup Genome.
5. a The leaders of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia agreed to return to talks aimed at reaching an accord over the filling of Ethiopia's new hydroelectric dam on the Blue Nile.
6. c The Minister of State for Shipping (Independent charge) and Chemicals & Fertilisers Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated the country's largest and first Virtual Healthcare & Hygiene EXPO 2020.
7. d A 1987-batch IAS officer, Vini Mahajan, became the first woman bureaucrat in the history of Punjab to be elevated to the top post of the state's Chief Secretary.
8. c Malawi's electoral commission declared opposition leader Lazarus Chakwera winner of a re-run presidential election a dramatic reversal of the incumbent's discredited win in a process that has been seen as a triumph for African democracy.
9. d Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day is observed globally on 27th June every year since 2017.
10. a The RedDots team of astronomers monitored the red dwarf, using the HARPS spectrograph at the European Southern Observatory in Chile. They used a technique known as "Doppler wobble," which enables them to measure the tiny back and forth wobbles of the star caused by the gravitational pull of the planets.
11. b The Union Ministry of Agriculture said that India is the first country to control locusts by using drones.
12. d The 'Godhan Nyay Yojana' was launched through an online press conference. According to Chhattisgarh Chief Minister, the scheme was launched to promote animal husbandry and make it a profitable practice.
13. a The Concession Agreement for the 600 MegaWatt Kholongchhu (Joint Venture) Hydroelectric Project between Bhutan government and Kholongchhu Hydro Energy Limited was signed in Thimphu, in virtual presence of External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar and his Bhutanese counterpart Dr. Tandi Dorji.
14. a The IT ministry has banned 59 Chinese-owned applications, including TikTok, ShareIt, UC Browser, Likee, WeChat, and Bigo Live. The Ministry stated they were "prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of india, security of state and public order."
15. a The Maharashtra government launched the largest plasma therapy trial for Covid-19. Launching the programme, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said Maharashtra will be the first state in the country to conduct an overarching trial on convalescent plasma therapy.
16. c In a battle of and for words, a commemorative declaration marking the 75th anniversary of the signing of the U.N. Charter was delayed as member states could not reach an agreement on phraseology.

17. c Members of the Valmiki Samaj, the Hindu refugees from erstwhile west Pakistan and the Gurkhas, got domicile certificates from the Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) administration after years of being denied equal rights.
18. c India's Nitin Menon became the youngest ever to be included in the International Cricket Council's Elite Panel of Umpires for the upcoming 2020-21 season, replacing England's Nigel Llong.
19. c The Himachal Pradesh panchayati raj department has won first prize under the e-Panchayat Puraskars-2020, to be given by the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
20. c In Gujarat, Vadodara district has successfully set up the rainwater harvesting project at 1000 government schools in the district.
21. b The programme has been prepared and offered by the Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Madras.
22. a The Union government strengthened its top legal team by extending the term of K.K. Venugopal as the Attorney General (AG) for one year, Tushar Mehta as the Solicitor General (SG) for three years and appointing six new Additional Solicitors General (ASGs) besides extending the tenure of five existing ASGs.
23. b New Zealand canceled its plans to host a major meeting of the U.S. and Asian leaders next year because of the coronavirus, opting instead to lead a virtual summit.
24. c Food Processing Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal launched Pradhan Mantri Scheme for Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises as a part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
25. b The commission will have tenure of two years and its term could be extended. The government will soon name the chairman and two members.
26. c In Nagaland, Mon District Administration has been conferred the SKOCH Awards under three different categories at the 65th SKOCH Summit.
27. b The Reserve Bank of India has launched the inflation expectations survey of households and responses of the participants will be gathered over telephone in view of the coronavirus pandemic.
28. a India and Bangladesh signed an agreement for the formation of a 50:50 Joint Venture Company (JVC) for LPG business in Bangladesh.
29. a Thirty years of hurt came to an end for Liverpool when they were confirmed as Premier League champions of second-placed Manchester City's 2-1 defeat by Chelsea.
30. b International Zinc Association (IZA), in collaboration with Madhav KRG Group launched Asia's first-ever Continuous Galvanized Rebar (CGR) manufacturing facility in Punjab.
31. b Former Reserve Bank of India governor C Rangarajan, who was conferred with the first P C Mahalanobis Award in Official Statistics for lifetime achievements on the occasion of the National Statistics Day called upon the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) to put the controversies related to national income at rest.
32. d For the first time ever, an Israeli start-up has created the world's first plant-based steak using industrial 3D-printing.
33. c Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath launched the ambitious piped water project "Har Ghar Jal" that means water to every house for Bundelkhand region.
34. a In a first for India, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led government in Delhi launched a plasma bank for treating covid-19 patients. Delhi was one of the first states to give the go-ahead for plasma therapy in April.

- 35. c** Senior diplomat Indra Mani Pandey has been appointed as the next Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva.
- 36. b** The World Bank has approved a five-year loan to the Namami Gange project worth Rs. 3,000 crore (\$400 million) to develop and improve infrastructure projects to abate pollution in the river basin.
- 37. c** 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.
- 38. a** 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.
- 39. b** Shashank Manohar stepped down as ICC Chairman after two, two-year tenures at the helm.
- 40. a** A team of scientists has discovered a new freshwater fish species and genus, Waikhomia Hira, from rivers in regions along the Western Ghats in north Karnataka.
- 41. b** Norway to fund world's first full-scale testing of ammonia-fuelled four-stroke engine
- 42. b** In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the Education Department in Baramulla district has taken a novel initiative of 'Community Schooling System' solely aimed at compensating the academic losses in the wake of the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic.
- 43. c** The vote paves the way for Putin, who has ruled for two decades, to remain President until 2036.
- 44. b** A community advocate and businessperson Salma Lakhani made history upon her appointment as the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta, the first-ever Muslim with roots in the Indian subcontinent to occupy the post in Canada.
- 45. c** In what could be a massive step for quantum computing, researchers from the University of the Basque Country claim to have developed the world's first quantum phase battery.
- 46. b** The Union Government has launched the Special Liquidity Scheme of 30 thousand crore rupees to improve the liquidity position for Non-Banking Finance Companies- NBFCs and Housing Finance Companies- HFCs.
- 47. b** Kritika Pandey, 29, is the overall winner of the Commonwealth Short Story Prize for her story, The Great Indian Tee and Snakes.
- 48. a** Indian-American composer Siddhartha Khosla has won an ASCAP Screen Music Award for his NBC's drama series 'This is Us'.
- 49. c** Major General Nigar Johar, who got the coveted post of a three-star general, has also been appointed as the first female surgeon general of the Pakistan Army.
- 50. c** 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 Guterres.
- 51. b** In the backdrop of the disruption in normal classroom teaching owing to Covid-19 lockdown, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur has developed an innovative virtual classroom aid titled 'Mobile Masterjee'.
- 52. b** In a bid to reduce air pollution in the national capital, the Delhi government is all set to launch a campaign to plant as many as thirty-one lakh plants, trees, and shrubs across the city by July 26.

- 53. b** HDFC Bank said it will offer ZipDrive instant auto loans to customers in 1,000 cities across India. ZipDrive is HDFC Bank's instant auto loan disbursement product for customers with pre-approved offer.
- 54. d** The International Day of Cooperatives is an annual celebration of the cooperative movement that takes place on the first Saturday of July since 1923.
- 55. c** Flamboyant all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has been named as India's most valuable Test player in the 21st century by the Wisden magazine.
- 56. c** Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) in its meeting held 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.
- 57. b** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) joined the Central Banks and Supervisors Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) as an observer.
- 58. c** The NHAI is in the process of setting up an Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) to facilitate investment in the highways sector.
- 59. d** Researchers at the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) have identified 33 drugs, some of them approved by the US Food and Drug Administration, that could potentially be used to treat patients with Covid-19 symptoms.
- 60. d** 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' honourees.
- 61. c** China, with 10.1 million tons, was the biggest contributor to e-waste, and the United States was second with 6.9 million tons. India, with 3.2 million tons, was third. Together these three countries accounted for nearly 38% of the world's e-waste last year.
- 62. b** As commercial banks are showing least interest to extend credit facilities to landless farmers and sharecroppers for agricultural activities, the Odisha Government decided to cover around seven lakh landless cultivators under 'Balaram', a special designed scheme.
- 63. c** The World Allergy Organization is proud to announce that World Allergy Week 2020 will occur 28 June - 4 July 2020 and will focus on the theme of "Allergy care does not stop with COVID-19."
- 64. c** Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone, who has been vocal about her struggles with depression in the past, took to Instagram to launch a campaign, #DobaraPoocho, urging people to discuss mental health.
- 65. c** Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge'.
- 66. b** 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).
- 67. b** The Delhi government launched an online portal, LEAD (Learning through E-Resources Made Accessible for Delhi), with over 10,000 instructional material and course content available on it for classes 1 to 12.
- 68. c** Chambal Expressway is a proposed Six-lane expressway in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The proposed highway will connect the historic towns of Kota in Rajasthan to Etawah in Uttar Pradesh alongside of Chambal River which will cover towns like Sheopur Morena, Shampur, Ater and Gohad.

- 69. b** The Mars Colour Camera (MCC) onboard ISRO's Mars Orbiter Mission has captured the image of Phobos, the closest and biggest moon of Mars.
- 70. b** Freya Thakral a 13-year-old student of the British School, New Delhi, has been named among the recipients of the 2020 Diana Award, which recognises young changemakers across the world.
- 71. a** Ladakh Lieutenant Governor RK Mathur has e-launched Mission Organic Development Initiative (M.O.D.I) and a Greenhouse Project to steer the Union Territory on a sustainable path. Mr Mathur held a special meeting to discuss the roles and functioning of Leh and Kargil Hill Councils.
- 72. b** Swedish Institute of Space Physics is going to help Indian space agency, ISRO in order to return to Venus on the first Indian Venus Mission- Shukrayaan-1.
- 73. a** 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.
- 74. b** The Central Board of Secondary Education-CBSE has partnered with Facebook to launch free and comprehensive training program for teachers and students of its affiliated schools in the first phase from August to November this year in virtual mode.
- 75. a** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh along with Home Minister Amit Shah and Health Minister Harsh Vardhan visited the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel COVID hospital in Delhi. The one thousand -bedded hospital with 250 ICU beds became operational.
- 76. d** 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.
- 77. b** The Indian Railways has started constructing the first pillar in the sea for the country's first vertical lift railway sea bridge – the Pamban rail bridge. The development work on the advanced bridge is underway at Pamban in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu.
- 78. d** Urjit Patel will be releasing a book later this month titled 'Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver', the book focuses on the non-performing assets (NPAs) issue that has afflicted Indian banking in recent years, its causes and Patel's efforts as the RBI Governor in dealing with it.
- 79. a** BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has been named as one of the directors of the merged Indian Super League franchise ATK-Mohun Bagan ahead of the upcoming season.
- 80. b** The National Institute of Virology, Pune is an Indian virology research institute, and one of the translational science cells part of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- 81. a** Inspired by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, more than 1000 IT professionals have come together to create the homegrown Elyments app, the first social media super-app, made in India.
- 82. a** 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.
- 83. b** In Himachal Pradesh, Chief Minister Swavalamban Yojana has become an integral part of the life of educated unemployed youth.
- 84. a** Government of Mauritius-promoted SBM Bank India and global payments technology major has joined hands to facilitate cross-border payments and remittances services.

- 85. d** Indian Railways is taking decisive steps to transform itself as a 'Net Zero' Carbon Emission Mass Transportation Network by 2030.
- 86. c** In a significant development, Indian Railways has set up a solar power plant in Bina in Madhya Pradesh to power the Railway overhead lines that power the electric locomotives.
- 87. b** Researchers at IIT Roorkee have developed a disinfection box that can be used to sterilize personal belongings, medical equipment, PPE, apparels among others, against coronavirus.
- 88. a** 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.
- 89. c** Elton John became the second artist to be honoured by Britain's Royal Mint with a commemorative 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.
- 90. c** In December 2016 the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution declaring 30 June International Asteroid Day in order to "observe each year at the international level the anniversary of the Tunguska impact over Siberia, Russian Federation, on 30 June 1908, and to raise public awareness about the asteroid impact hazard."
- 91. d** The ministry of corporate affairs (MCA) extended the term of Justice Bansi Lal Bhat as acting chairperson of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) by three months.
- 92. b** The Haryana Cabinet approved a proposal for drafting the Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Ordinance, 2020, to provide 75% reservation to residents of the State in jobs in the private sector.
- 93. a** The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is doubling the lane of the world's highest motorable road at Khardung La which provides connectivity to the Siachen Glacier as well as the China border.
- 94. d** 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.
- 95. d** The country ranks 34th globally on the index, with higher levels of transparency observed in India due to regulatory reforms, enhanced market data, and sustainability initiatives.
- 96. c** Reliance Industries Limited added another feather to its cap as its market valuation crossed Rs 11.5 lakh crore mark, the first by any domestic company.
- 97. b** The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved the appointment of Injeti Srinivas as chairman of the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA).
- 98. a** National Highways Authority of India under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has decided to undertake performance assessment and ranking of the highways in the country.
- 99. d** Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) researchers have developed a nano-coated filter media for healthcare workers treating Covid-19 patients.
- 100. b** The first CEO of Startup Village and founder of Re-think Foundation, Sijo Kuruvilla George, has been selected as the member of central government's expert committee on the science and technology policy.
- 101. a** 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.

- 102. a** A three - day virtual conference themed ‘Be The Revival : India and a Better New World’, India Global Week 2020 will have 5000 global participants from 30 nations being addressed by 250 global speakers across 75 sessions.
- 103. b** Under the scheme, one lakh crore rupees will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans to Primary Agricultural Credit Societies, Marketing Cooperative Societies, Farmer Producers Organizations, Self Help Group, Farmers, Startups and Centre and State agency among others.
- 104. a** 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.
- 105. b** Maldives and Sri Lanka were verified for having eliminated rubella, making them the first two countries in WHO South-East Asia Region to achieve measles and rubella elimination ahead of the 2023 target.
- 106. b** The US has formally notified the United Nations (UN) of its decision to withdraw from the World Health Organization (WHO).
- 107. b** The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved the capital infusion for an overall value of Rs.12,450 crore; (including Rs. 2,500 crore infused in FY 2019-20) in the three Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs) namely Oriental Insurance Company Limited (OICL), National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) and United India Insurance Company Limited (UIICL) but of which Rs.3,475 crore will be released immediately; while the balance Rs.6,475 crore will be infused later.
- 108. a** Two Mumbai researchers were part of a three-member team of Bengaluru-based National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) that discovered a new species of a fan-throated lizard, *Sitana dharwarensis*, from the barren lands of northern Karnataka’s Bagalkot district.
- 109. b** Andhra Pradesh is celebrated Farmer’s Day on the birth anniversary of former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy and father of Jagan Mohan Reddy.
- 110. a** The first cricket match of three Test series between England AND West Indies will be played at Ageas Bowl, London.
- 111. a** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik unveiled BLUIS which would monitor changes in all government lands in Bhubaneswar by leveraging high resolution satellite imagery, thus making Odisha the first state in the country to tap space technology and artificial intelligence for safeguarding government lands.
- 112. a** The 15th meeting of the India-European Union Summit was held in virtual mode on 15th July. The Summit was co-chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President of European Council Charles Michel and President of European Commission Ursula von der Leyen.
- 113. b** The Ministry of Culture has taken up the project of reprinting of 108 volumes of under the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM).
- 114. d** 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.
- 115. b** 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.
- 116. c** World Population Day, which seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues, was established by the then-Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989, an outgrowth of the interest generated by the Day of Five Billion, which was observed on 11 July 1987.

- 117. a** 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'.
- 118. c** "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 said.
- 119. d** The nine-member working group is headed by IRDA's executive director Suresh Mathur and has representatives from regulators, reinsurers and insurance companies.
- 120. c** Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation a 750 MW Solar project set up at Rewa in Madhya Pradesh.
- 121. a** The GMR Hyderabad International Airport (GHIAL) introduced India's first fully contact-less airport car parking in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.
- 122. b** Singapore's ruling party retained a firm grip on power but suffered its weakest performance in 55 years in office in an election with the economy badly hit by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 123. b** Union Minister for Science & Technology, Health and Family Welfare and Earth Sciences Dr. Harsh Vardhan released a white paper on "Focused Interventions for 'Make in India': Post COVID 19" and "Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients: Status, Issues, Technology Readiness and Challenges", prepared by Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC), at a virtual function in New Delhi.
- 124. c** The chairman of Reliance Industries Ltd. is now worth \$68.3 billion, surpassing Buffett's \$67.9 billion according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.
- 125. b** Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has allowed 29 general and health insurers to launch short-term 'Corona Kavach' health insurance policies. The policy will cover medical expenses occurred due to coronavirus disease.
- 126. b** DigiBox is a Digital Asset Management (DAM) platform that will be launched for Indian users on 15th August 2020 to address this growing need in the market.
- 127. a** The Panel will be co-chaired by former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark and former President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Prime Minister Clark went to on lead the United Nations Development Programme and President Sirleaf is a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.
- 128. c** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is gearing up to lift off Brazil's Amazonia-1 satellite next month onboard the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).
- 129. b** The BCCI will not stop veteran leg-spinner Pravin Tambe from playing for Trinbago Knight Riders in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) as it has been confirmed that he has officially retired, albeit second time having withdrawn on first occasion.
- 130. a** Headlined by Taapsee Pannu, Loop Lapeta is likely to become first Indian movie to get a Covid-19 special insurance.
- 131. c** He expressed hope that it will be the world's first Green Railways running on 100 per cent clean energy by 2030.
- 132. b** The Minister said, Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana had been launched with highest ever investment of over 20 thousand crore rupees during next five years.

- 133. b** Lithuania, which is positioning itself as a financial-technology hub for start-ups, rolled out the world's first crypto coin for collectors.
- 134. b** In a first ever cross-border movement for Indian Railways, a special parcel train was sent to Benapole, Bangladesh carrying dry chillies from Reddipalem in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.
- 135. c** The Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) launched Gold Mini Options after receiving the regulatory nod from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).
- 136. a** The 20-member advisory committee on mutual funds is headed 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.
- 137. c** Danone has received carbon neutral certification for its plant in Wexford, making it the first baby food manufacturer in the world to achieve the standard.
- 138. a** Hyundai has begun delivering the first of 10 ground-breaking, commercially available, hydrogen-powered trucks to Switzerland.
- 139. b** The world's first CIIE-themed airplane flew from Shanghai to Paris Charles de Gaulle International Airport, performing the airplane's first overseas flight with 245 passengers.
- 140. c** National Fish Farmers Day is celebrated on 10th July every year in remembrance of scientists Dr. K. H. Alikunhi and Dr. H.L. Chaudhury who successfully demonstrated the technology of induced breeding (Hypophysation) in Indian Major Carps.
- 141. b** Amid the restricted judicial functioning owing to Covid-19 outbreak, an e-Lok Adalat is held in Chhattisgarh to ensure the administration of justice continues where the virtual hearings are to be conducted through video conferencing.
- 142. a** 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.
- 143. a** Prominent Indian-American scientist Dr Parag Chitnis has been appointed as the Acting Director of the prestigious National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), which drives all federally funded agricultural research in the US.
- 144. b** A new network operating system has received the name SR Linux NOS. A Nokia developer, together with colleagues from other Internet companies has created a platform for entrepreneurs FSP. Now Apple is using a new OS in cloud data processing center. Nokia SR Linux created on the new microservices.
- 145. b** Honey hunting has been an integral part of Arunachal Pradesh's Shertukpen Community, but with modernisation—the indigenous practice of honey hunting is slowly slithering away with each passing day.
- 146. a** NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission launched the ATL App Development Module for school children across the country.
- 147. d** Russia has become the first nation to complete clinical trials of Covid-19 vaccine on humans, and the results have proven the medication's effectiveness.
- 148. b** The Boeing Company is an American multinational corporation that designs, manufactures, and sells airplanes, rotorcraft, rockets, satellites, telecommunications equipment, and missiles worldwide.

- 149. c** The fourth cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation 2018 has entered the Guinness World Record for being the world's largest camera trap wildlife survey.
- 150. c** Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launched Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employee-Employer Mapping (ASEEM) portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- 151. b** The Sardar Patel COVID Care Centre in Delhi was inaugurated. It has been built on the Radha Soami Satsang Beas campus in Chhatarpur.
- 152. c** Polish President Andrzej Duda has won five more years in power on a socially conservative, religious platform in a closely fought election that is likely to deepen Warsaw's isolation in the European Union (EU).
- 153. c** National Thermal Power Corporation, NTPC Limited, a Central PSU under Ministry of Power has won the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Award 2019, under Outstanding Accomplishment in Corporate Excellence Category.
- 154. a** The oil-rich United Arab Emirates has built a nuclear power programme and sent a man to space, and now plans to join another elite club by sending a probe to Mars.
- 155. d** Malala Day is commemorated on July 12, the birthday of Malala Yousafzai, to honour women and children's rights around the world.
- 156. a** India's engineering major Larsen & Toubro has finished building the world's largest steel vacuum chamber.
- 157. b** Entrepreneur Rik Mehta has become the first Indian-American to win the Republican primary for the Senate seat from the US state of New Jersey.
- 158. a** 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.
- 159. a** Technology giant Google will invest \$10 billion (₹75,000 crore) in India over the next five-seven years with a focus on digitising the economy and building India-first products and services.
- 160. a** Lewis Hamilton won the Styrian Grand Prix from pole position to clinch an 85th career win and move within six of Michael Schumacher's Formula One record.
- 161. a** 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.
- 162. d** The Mukhyamantri Darpan and mobile App which contains the details of all the flagship schemes of the Chhattisgarh government including the ambitious 'Suraji Gaon Yojna' has been awarded "Elites Excellence Awards-2020" at the national level.
- 163. b** In a boost to the fledgling domestic small arms industry, two latest Israeli assault rifles — the Arad and the Carmel — are set to be manufactured in India.
- 164. c** Four years after India and Iran signed an agreement to construct a rail line from Chabahar port to Zahedan, along the border with Afghanistan, the Iranian government has decided to proceed with the construction on its own, citing delays from the Indian side in funding and starting the project.
- 165. c** Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari will inaugurate and lay foundation stones for various new economic corridor projects worth over Rs 20,000 crore in Haryana in a web based function.

- 166. d** ISRO chief Dr Kailasavadivoo Sivan continues to make a name for his self as the space scientist has now been named as the recipient of the 2020 Von Karman Award of the International Academy of Astronautics.
- 167. c** HSBC traces its origin to a hong in British Hong Kong and its present form was established in London by the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation to act as a new group holding company in 1991.
- 168. b** To solve this problem Imagineering Laboratory department of IIT Kanpur has developed an Ultraviolet (UV) sanitizing product named SHUDH.
- 169. a** This group of students from an engineering college based in Thiruvananthapuram has one such inspiring story – they created the world's first 100% eco-friendly car, and it's made of bamboo!
- 170. b** WMO in its Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update for 2020-24, said the annual global temperature is likely to be at least 1 degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial levels (defined as the 1850-1900 average) in each of the coming five years.
- 171. b** The Captain Amarinder Singh led Council of Ministers paved the way for Punjab Police to become India's first police force drawing civilians as domain experts in IT/Digital, Legal Forensics and Finance to give a high-quality cutting edge to its investigation functions.
- 172. a** Tata group Chairman N Chandrasekaran and Lockheed Martin CEO Jim Taiclet will receive the USIBC Global Leadership Award this year.
- 173. c** Indian Railways' Anji Khad Bridge Project: A big milestone for a better and more connected India! The country's "first cable-stayed" Indian Railways bridge – the magnificent Anji Khad Bridge will soon connect Katra and Reasi in Jammu and Kashmir.
- 174. d** Tunisian Prime Minister Elyes Fakhfakh stepped down plunging the country into a political crisis as it tries to weather the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic.
- 175. b** 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.
- 176. c** Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal announced that Poba Reserve Forest in Dhemaji district would be upgraded to a wildlife sanctuary.
- 177. c** Ashok Kumar, a key member of India's 1975 World Cup-winning hockey team, will be conferred with the Lifetime Achievement Award by city's iconic club Mohun Bagan on the occasion of its foundation day in a virtual ceremony in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 178. a** Union Human Resource Development Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' released PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education through online medium in New Delhi.
- 179. d** At the current rate of growth, India's population is likely to peak by 2047 at about 1.61 billion
- 180. c** World Youth Skills Day is observed on 15 July with an aim to raise awareness about the importance of technical, vocational education training and the development of other skills relevant to both local and global economies.
- 181. b** India and Bhutan have opened a new trade route between Jaigaon in West Bengal and Pasakha in Bhutan.
- 182. a** Gabon President Ali Bongo promoted his defence minister, Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda, to prime minister, the first time a woman has held the role in the country.

- 183. b** 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.
- 184. b** Government launched the implementation guidelines for Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund, AHIDF worth 15 thousand crore rupees.
- 185. b** Estonia has announced the launch of the world's first "Digital Nomad Visa."
- 186. b** Union Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik has said 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.
- 187. b** 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.
- 188. a** FamPay, India's first Neobank for teenagers that brings cashless convenience to millions of teens and their parents announced the launch of India's first numberless card – FamCard.
- 189. b** A team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati (IIT-G) has used an innovative method to produce biofuels from non-edible seeds.
- 190. c** Nelson Mandela International Day is an annual international day in honour of Nelson Mandela, celebrated each year on 18 July, Mandela's birthday.
- 191. b** The Ongole Sub-Division Office of South Central Railway has bagged the WATER HEROES AWARD, from Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India.
- 192. c** Union Minister of State (I/C) Shri Mansukh Mandaviya praised the CSL for grabbing contract to build world's first fully automatic electric vessel for ASKO Maritime, Norway & laying historic milestone in Shipbuilding Industry.
- 193. d** In a change of guard at HCL Technologies, co-founder Shiv Nadar has stepped down from the position of the Chairman of the Board of directors. Roshni Nadar Malhotra, currently non-executive director has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.
- 194. c** The defence ministry granted special powers to the three services for individual capital procurement programme worth Rs 300 crore to meet emergent operational requirements.
- 195. b** Abu Dhabi began phase three of clinical trials for a COVID-19 vaccine, the emirate's government media office said.
- 196. a** A Belgian wind farm on the North Sea will become the first in the world to grow seaweed between its wind turbines.
- 197. b** France's Lourdes Roman Catholic shrine organised its first ever e-pilgrimage following the coronavirus crisis, drawing a virtual audience of 80 million from around the world.
- 198. d** The Committee to Protect Journalists has announced that the recipients of the 2020 International Press Freedom Awards include Shahidul Alam from Bangladesh, Mohammad Mosaed from Iran, Dapo Olorunyomi from Nigeria and Svetlana Prokopyeva from Russia.
- 199. b** When NASA's Perseverance rover launches at the end of this month, an experiment named Ingenuity will be safely tucked beneath the rover for the seven-month journey. Ingenuity will be the first helicopter to attempt flight on another planet.

- 200. b** Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar informed that the Zonal Master Plan of Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone has been approved by the government.
- 201. c** Railway Board Chairman VK Yadav has said that all capitals of North-Eastern states will be connected to the rail network by 2023.
- 202. b** T. Purushothaman, a shrimp farmer from Payyannur, has bagged the Jagjivan Ram Innovative Farmer Award instituted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- 203. c** Indian Navy conducted drill near the Andaman & Nicobar Islands with several warships, destroyers, frigates and submarines taking part in the exercise.
- 204. a** About 273 million Indians moved out of multidimensional poverty between 2005-2006 and 2015-2016.
- 205. d** 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.
- 206. a** The C/2020 F3 comet aka NEOWISE has caught the attention of the stargazers in India as they have been and will be able to get a glimpse of the celestial event from July 14 onwards.
- 207. d** The first Arab space mission to Mars blasted aboard a rocket from Japan, after weather delays set back the launch of the probe dubbed “Hope.”
- 208. a** India’s Grandmaster P Harikrishna finished on top in the ACCENTUS Chess960 tournament, part of the 53rd Biel Chess Festival 2020
- 209. b** Dr. Shinjini Das of University of East Anglia has made history by becoming the first Indian to receive the British Society of History of Science’s (BSHS) prestigious John Pickstone Prize for outstanding scholarly work in the history of science and medicine in English.
- 210. c** The dubbed Hindi version of Telugu superstar Allu Arjun’s “Sarrainodu” has crossed 300 million views on YouTube, setting a record.
- 211. a** After bagging the prestigious title of ‘National Capital of India 2019-20’ by winning the global climate challenge last month, Rajkot has added another feather to its cap by becoming the first city to get the crucial Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) certification for the Raiya Smart City.
- 212. a** IAS officer Tina Dabi, topper of the 2016 civil services examination, has been appointed honorary advisor to the steering committee for BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Young Leaders.
- 213. d** Ambitiously aiming to attract private investments to help establish renewable power projects of 120 gigawatts (GWs) using the available land bank, the state government has notified the Andhra Pradesh Renewable Energy Export Policy, 2020, which the state Cabinet approved a couple of days ago.
- 214. b** The AIIMS Ethics Committee gave its nod for a human clinical trial of the indigenously developed COVID-19 vaccine candidate Covaxin following which the premier hospital is likely to begin the exercise by enrolling healthy volunteers.
- 215. d** The student, Samrita Shankar, who graduated with a BBA LLB (Hons.), originally received her provisional certificate on July 10 carrying her father’s name alone as is the common practice.
- 216. b** 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.

- 217. c** Glenmark Pharmaceuticals launched the world's first hypertension awareness symbol, in collaboration with Association of Physicians of India (API) and Hypertension Society of India (HSI).
- 218. b** The world's first sea cucumbers conservation reserve is being set up in Lakshadweep and will be spread across a 239 km² area.
- 219. d** Under initiative of FIDE, July 20 has been observed as International Chess Day by chess players around the world since 1966.
- 220. c** This year's laureates of United Nations 2020 Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize are Marianna Vardinoyannis of Greece and Morissana Kouyate of Guinea. It was announced by General Assembly President Tijjani Muhammad-Bande.
- 221. c** Minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh inaugurated India's first public EV (Electric Vehicle) charging plaza at Chelmsford Club in New Delhi.
- 222. b** The Odisha Government has included transgender community under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana, which aims at providing financial assistance to destitute elderly, differently-abled persons and widows in the state.
- 223. d** 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.
- 224. c** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched "Navin Rojgar Chhatri Yojana" for an all round development of the Scheduled Castes.
- 225. c** Union Human Resource Development Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal will launch the Manodarpan initiative of the HRD Ministry.
- 226. d** Pakistan, whose total population is approximately 220.9 million, is among the top two fastest growing countries in the South Asian region with an annual fertility rate of 3.6 children per couple, according to a new report by a US-based private non-profit organisation.
- 227. d** Indian direct selling industry records \$2.47 billion sales in 2019, ranks 15th globally.
- 228. b** A number of conservation agencies launched a citizen science initiative, a mobile-based application called KURMA, aimed at turtle conservation.
- 229. b** The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced postponement of the upcoming men's T20 World Cup, which was scheduled to kick off on October 18th in Australia.
- 230. d** 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.
- 231. a** The first edition of the Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity has been awarded to Greta Thunberg. The young Swedish environmental activist was selected among 136 nominees (corresponding to 79 organizations and 57 personalities) from 46 different countries.
- 232. a** Indian naval ships conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the United States Navy's USS Nimitz carrier strike group near the Andaman and Nicobar (A&N) islands as it is transiting the Indian Ocean.
- 233. d** In Chhattisgarh, first of its kind scheme of the country- Godhan Nyay Yojana has been commenced.
- 234. c** Former Union Minister Shiv Pratap Shukla and BJP MP Rakesh Singh have been appointed the party's chief whips in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, respectively.

- 235. c** Malaysia is planning to file a World Trade Organisation (WTO) case against the European Union over its restrictions on palm oil biofuel by this year.
- 236. b** Madhya Pradesh Governor Lalji Tandon passed away at the age of 85.
- 237. b** In a step to realise the vision of Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Kiren Rijiju to mobilise 1 crore youth volunteers in India and contribute to Prime Minister's call for Atmanirbhar Bharat, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports signed a Statement of Intent with YuWaah (a multi-stakeholder platform formed by the UNICEF) to work in partnership to promote volunteerism among the youth of India as well as to help them transition from education and learning to productive work, skilling and being active citizens.
- 238. a** SpaceX successfully launched South Korea's first military satellite and a rocket landing, too, to mark its 12th launch of the year.
- 239. c** World Crocodile Day is celebrated on 17th June.
- 240. c** Researchers from Singapore have found a giant 'sea cockroach' at the bottom of the Indian Ocean - and it may make you shudder.
- 241. c** Shantharama Budna Siddi, a social worker, has become the first lawmaker from his community as Governor Vajubhai Vala has nominated him to the Karnataka Legislative Council.
- 242. a** In an initiative aimed at increasing the market share of Indian Railways in the movement of general cargo across the nation, the South Central Railway (SCR) will be launching its first Cargo Express train on August 5.
- 243. a** The Rajya Sabha Secretariat has launched an employees' welfare scheme in the name of late Arun Jaitley, which will be funded by the pension his family receives as he has been a member of the upper house.
- 244. b** International Union of Railways, UIC, Paris, has nominated Director General of Railway Protection Force, Arun Kumar, as Vice-Chairman of its security platform.
- 245. b** "Russia has for the first time conducted flight tests of the MGTD-20 gas turbine engine made by 3D-printing."
- 246. c** The world's first "shaft hydropower plant," with the turbine concealed in a shaft in the river bed, is now operating in Germany.
- 247. c** 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.
- 248. a** India has successfully conducted three flight tests of its indigenously developed anti-tank guided missile 'Dhruvastra' from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in Odisha.
- 249. d** Ace sprinter Srabani Nanda has become the first Indian track and field athlete to participate in a competition amid the COVID-19 pandemic, running in a meet in Jamaica alongside some of the world's best.
- 250. b** 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.
- 251. b** Punjab got its first plasma bank at Patiala's Rajindra Hospital where those who have recovered from the novel coronavirus can donate their blood plasma to help treat COVID-19 patients.
- 252. a** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced that his government has approved 'Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana'.

- 253. c** The India League, a UK-based diaspora group which dates back to 1916 announced the launch of a first-ever British Indian Census to collate data around Britain's estimated 1.5 million Indian-origin population.
- 254. d** Turkmenistan has been granted Observer status by the World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council.
- 255. b** The Azad Pattan project is one of five hydropower schemes on the Jhelum.
- 256. c** China successfully launched its first Mars probe aiming to complete orbiting, landing and roving in a single mission, taking an ambitious step towards planetary exploration of the solar system.
- 257. a** The material, called Proteus, causes sharp tools to "turn against themselves" by creating dust that acts like sandpaper, blunting blades.
- 258. a** Liverpool's players finally got their hands on the Premier League trophy in a muted presentation ceremony in front of an empty Kop after a thrilling 5-3 victory over Chelsea in their last home game of the season.
- 259. d** National Broadcasting Day is celebrated every year on 23rd July.
- 260. d** The Nobel Prize Banquet has been cancelled for the first time since 1956 due to coronavirus pandemic.
- 261. b** Rajesh Bhushan, IAS officer of 1987 Batch, Bihar Cadre has been appointed as the new Health Secretary in the Union Health Ministry.
- 262. b** The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) has announced \$220,000 in funding for a pilot project in which charitable organization the Salvation Army will run the world's first solar-energy on-selling PPA, using Allume Energy's groundbreaking behind-the-meter electricity distribution technology to become a solar-energy retailer to tenants of its City Corps building in Glenorchy Tasmania.
- 263. d** Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciated efforts of everyone who have enriched MyGov endeavour of the government by their maximum and active participation. MyGov initiative completed 6 years.
- 264. c** The committee headed by chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) is also supposed to recommend a mechanism to increase the intake in well-performing universities.
- 265. d** Nitin Gadkari, the minister for micro, small and medium enterprise sector launched www.restartindia.in, a mentoring platform primarily aimed at aiding the sector to restart businesses across the country.
- 266. b** India has ranked third among the top 10 countries that have gained in forest areas in the last decade.
- 267. c** The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in India has declined to 113 in 2016-18 from 122 in 2015-17 and 130 in 2014-2016.
- 268. b** The Reserve Bank of India released the Financial Stability Report (FSR) that "reflects the collective assessment of the sub-committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) on risks to financial stability and the resilience of the financial system in the context of contemporaneous issues relating to development and regulation of the financial sector."
- 269. b** In a bid to establish and implement strong legal frameworks to manage the coronavirus pandemic across the globe, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched COVID-19 Law Lab.
- 270. a** India and Maldives signed a contract for setting up Neighbourhood Fish Processing Plants at two of the islands in the neighboring country.

- 271. c** 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.
- 272. d** The Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (IIMB) announced that its professor R. Narayanaswamy, faculty of the Finance & Accounting area, has been appointed as the Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee of the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), the independent accounting and auditing regulator set up by the Government of India under the Companies Act, 2013.
- 273. c** Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the 'World Class State of Art Honey Testing Laboratory' established by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in Anand (Gujarat) with support of National Bee Board (NBB).
- 274. a** 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.
- 275. b** UK Prime Minister launched a new Jet Zero Council to tackle aviation emissions as part of a wider 350-million pound plan to step up efforts to tackle climate change.
- 276. a** The Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIM-C), established in 1961, is set to become the first 'net-zero campus' in India.
- 277. b** WDFC's one-kilometer long tunnel through the Aravallis near Sohna in Haryana. This will be the world's first electrified rail tunnel fit to run double-stack containers."
- 278. d** Hyderabad with over three lakh surveillance cameras has been ranked 16th among the top 20 most surveilled cities in the world.
- 279. d** People who acquired skill in this dying art took the lead to introduce this in Puttapaka village of Nalgonda district in Telangana. Recently Puttapaka Telia Rumal was accorded with Geographical indication (GI) tag.
- 280. d** National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), launched its one-stop fintech payment solution- UPI AutoPay in a virtual event of Global Fintech Fest.
- 281. c** Australia has become the first country outside the South China Sea region to approach the United Nations over China's territorial claims and development of artificial islands in the area – a gateway for global trade including India.
- 282. b** Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda inaugurated an e-Symposium on Handicrafts organized by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Centre for Policy Research and Analysis, Indian Institute of Management, Shillong.
- 283. c** During the launch event at his residence, the Union Home Minister inaugurated and laid the Foundation stone of 6 Ecoparks/ Tourism sites.
- 284. b** ReTuna is world's first second-hand mall. The mall is located in a small Swedish town called Eskilstuna.
- 285. b** President Ram Nath Kovind appointed Smt. Anandiben Patel the Governor of Madhya Pradesh.
- 286. a** Sahil Seth, Deputy Commissioner of Mumbai Customs, has been appointed as an honorary adviser to the steering committee for the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) young leaders for the period 2020-2023.
- 287. c** The Committee was constituted by RBI under the Chairmanship of Prof. D.B. Phatak (Professor Emeritus, IIT-Bombay) to review the prevalent system of QR Codes in India for facilitating digital payments and submit recommendations.

- 288. a** Former CJI Ranjan Gogoi has been made a member of the Parliament's standing committee on external affairs on July 23.
- 289. c** World Hepatitis Day, 28 July, is an opportunity to step up national and international efforts on hepatitis, encourage actions and engagement by individuals, partners and the public and highlight the need for a greater global response as outlined in the WHO's Global hepatitis report of 2017.
- 290. b** Saffron grown in Kashmir has received the geographical indication (GI) tag.
- 291. a** Ministry of Earth Sciences launched the mobile App "Mausam" for India Meteorological Department on its Foundation Day celebrations.
- 292. c** Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan launched the Bureau of Indian Standard's Mobile App BIS-Care.
- 293. b** Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Grand Finale of the largest ever online hackathon in the world on 1st of August 2020 through video-conference.
- 294. c** 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.
- 295. b** Defence Ministers' Dialogue between India and Indonesia was held in New Delhi.
- 296. b** Uttarakhand forest department is expected to start snow leopard estimation process with the help of camera traps from September this year.
- 297. d** Haryana will host the 4th Khelo India Youth Games.
- 298. c** Indian captain Virat Kohli added another feather to his illustrious cap as he breached the unthinkable 70-million mark on popular social networking site Instagram.
- 299. b** Aditya, India's first solar-powered ferry that commenced operations in 2017 in Kerala's Vembanad backwaters, has won the prestigious Gustave Troube Award for Excellence in Electric Boats and Boating.
- 300. d** Ziyuan 3-01 or ZY 3-01 is a Chinese Earth observation satellite.
- 301. b** Indian-origin politician Pritam Singh was designated as the Leader of the Opposition in Singapore, the first such appointment in the history of the city-state.
- 302. a** Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shivraj Singh Chauhan chaired India's first virtual Cabinet session from Chirayu hospital.
- 303. d** The Centre, in collaboration with the World Bank, has decided to convert large area of ravines in Gwalior-Chambal belt of Madhya Pradesh into arable land.
- 304. d** 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.
- 305. b** India and UK held the 14th Joint Economic and Trade Committee meeting virtually. It was co-chaired by Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal.
- 306. a** IRCTC and SBI Card together launched their new Co-branded Contactless Credit Card on RuPay Platform.
- 307. a** Archana Soreng joins six other young climate leaders from around the world who have been named by Guterres to his new Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change.

- 308. a** Uttarakhand's Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR) has reported the highest tiger density among India's 50 reserves with 14 tigers per 100 sq km, followed by Kaziranga, Nagarhole and Orang tiger reserves, according to the 656-page report 'Status of Tigers Co-predators and Prey in India', released by Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar on the eve of Global Tiger Day.
- 309. b** Fast bowler Stuart Broad became only the second England cricketer to claim 500 Test wickets. Broad joins fellow quick James Anderson as the only two England bowlers with 500 Test wickets or more.
- 310. d** World Nature Conservation Day is observed every year on July 28.
- 311. c** The first batch of five Rafale jets landed in Ambala. It was a historic moment as they were greeted with water cannon salute at Ambala Air Force base.
- 312. d** New Policy aims for Universalization of Education from pre-school to secondary level with 100 % GER in school education by 2030.
- 313. d** SABIC's polycarbonate facility in Spain is set to become the world's first large scale chemical production plant which will run entirely on renewable power after a major agreement was signed with Iberdrola, an electricity utility company.
- 314. c** India's largest power generation utility NTPC Ltd plans to set up this project in Sri Lanka under the aegis of International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- 315. b** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a three million US dollar grant to India from its Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund (APDRF).
- 316. b** Power Finance Corporation, PFC, a PSU under Ministry of Power has signed an agreement with Indian Institute of Technology- Kanpur for Training, Research, and Entrepreneurship Development in Smart Grid Technology.
- 317. d** Punjab forward Princepal Singh has signed to play in the NBA G League next season.
- 318. b** In a first, India's civil aviation regulator, Director-General of Civil Aviation has approved the Bombay Flying Club (BFC) as a drone training school.
- 319. a** The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) constituted an 11-member Commonwealth Games Association of India (CGA of India) under its president Narinder Batra for the 2020-21 season.
- 320. d** The International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2015 and celebrated each year on 26 July.
- 321. a** The town of Bremervörde in Lower Saxony, Germany, has broken ground on the world's first hydrogen filling station for passenger trains. ?
- 322. d** 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.
- 323. b** Guwahati is the first city in the entire Northeast region to get a manhole cleaning robot. Named 'BANDICOOT', the automatic sewer cleaning device has been procured by the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) along with six Skid Steer Loaders (mini loaders) from JCB.
- 324. c** Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh has topped the list of aspirational districts ranked by government think-tank Niti Aayog for the February-June 2020 period.

- 325. a** MYPINPAD, a provider of secure personal authentication for payment solutions on smartphones and tablets, is the first company globally to be certified to the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Security Standards Council's Contactless Payments on COTS Security and Testing Requirements for its MYPINPAD Soft POS solution.
- 326. b** New Zealand's government says it is the first in the world to produce a set of standards for how public agencies should use the algorithms that increasingly drive decision-making by officials about every area of public life.
- 327. b** For the first time, Huawei Technologies Co. has passed Samsung Electronics as the world's No. 1 supplier of smartphones.
- 328. d** Australia will become the first country to require Facebook and Google to pay for news content provided by media companies under a royalty-style system that will become law this year.
- 329. a** The government has appointed former chairman of Coal India Anil Kumar Jha, as a member of a key panel that deals with violation of environment rules.
- 330. d** To mark World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on 30 July, the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking, Especially Women and Children, managed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
- 331. a** Indo Tibetan Border Police, ITBP became the first Central Armed Police Force CAPF to have supplies from the Khadi & Village Industries Commission, KVIC.
- 332. c** Vietnam, China, and Taiwan over waters west of the Spratly Islands. Some or all of the islands themselves are also disputed between Vietnam, China, Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia, and the Philippines.
- 333. b** The decks have been cleared for the formation of three capital cities for Andhra Pradesh – the executive capital at Visakhapatnam, the legislative capital at Amaravati and the judicial capital at Kurnool.
- 334. a** In a major initiative to encourage and enable holistic progress in the incubator ecosystem across the country, NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), has launched AIM iCREST – an Incubator Capabilities enhancement program for a Robust Ecosystem focused on creating high performing Startups.
- 335. a** The one-stop knowledge portal- MSME Saksham, will guide MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) seeking seamless and quick access to finance and will also support them in managing their credit obligations.
- 336. a** FinTech company MobiKwik launched mpay.me - a UPI payment link service to send and receive money from any UPI payment app.
- 337. d** Reliance Power and Japanese energy major JERA have inked a pact with a group of banks for full financing, totalling USD 642 million (approx Rs 4,798 crore), for their new gas-fired thermal power generation project in Bangladesh.
- 338. c** Lead poisoning is affecting children on a massive and previously unknown scale, according to a new report launched by UNICEF and Pure Earth.
- 339. a** Legendary England all-rounder Ian Botham has been made a member of the House of Lords of the British Parliament.
- 340. d** "1st August is a day which made Muslim women free from social evil of Triple Talaq; 1st August has been recorded in the country's history as "Muslim Women Rights Day".
- 341. a** Uttarakhand state forest department will open India's first conversation centre for snow leopards in Uttarakashi district soon, said Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat.

- 342. a** As the Barakah Nuclear Plant's first Unit got operational, UAE became the first country in the Arab World to produce nuclear energy.
- 343. b** The Formula student team of the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B) became the first Indian team to win an engineering design competition when it won the best-designed car award at the Formula Student (FSUK), a student engineering competition held in the United Kingdom.
- 344. a** Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated a two-day international webinar on the theme of 'Lokmanya Tilak - Swaraj to Self-reliant India' organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations on the 100th death anniversary of the great freedom fighter Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak.
- 345. c** The committee, headed by Indasia Fund Advisors Pvt Ltd Chairman Pradip Shah, may invite industry experts as special invitees on need basis under intimation to IFSCA.
- 346. c** The HLEG was set up to recommend measurable performance incentives for states to encourage agricultural exports and to promote crops to enable high import substitution.
- 347. b** Environment Ministers of the five BRICS countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa participated in the 6th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting through a video conference under the presidency of Russia.
- 348. d** World Sanskrit Day or Sanskrit Diwas is also known as Vishvasamskritadinam. It is celebrated on Shraavana Poornima, which is the Poornima day that is on full moon day in the month of Shraavana in the Hindu calendar. This year Sanskrit Day falls on August 3rd.
- 349. b** Bank of Baroda Credit Card customers get another unique offering in terms of convenient and affordable EMI options, as BOB Financial Solutions Limited ties up with Innoviti Payment Solutions.
- 350. c** Scientists have succeeded in reviving microbes retrieved from sediment deep under the seafloor in the heart of the South Pacific that had survived in a dormant state for 101.5 million years in research illustrating the resiliency of life on Earth.

