

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

Team CL



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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

National



Maharashtra becomes first state in country to provide free and cashless insurance premium to people of the state

- Amid the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the Maharashtra Government announced that cent per cent inclusion of population from the state will be provided free health treatment under the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Aarogya Yojana.
- Health Minister Rajesh Tope said, with this Maharashtra has become the first state in the country to provide free and cashless insurance premium to the people of the state. “The government has signed a MoU with the General Insurance Public Sector Association (GIPSA) for treatment of COVID-19 patients at private hospitals in Pune and Mumbai.

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.

WIHG reveals 35 thousand-year history of river erosion in Ladakh Himalayas

- Scientists and students from Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of India studied rivers in Ladakh Himalaya, bringing out 35 thousand-year history of river erosion and identified hotspots of erosion and wide valleys that act a buffer zones.
- The scientists have traced where the rivers draining Himalaya and its foreland erode the most and identify the zones that receive these eroded sediments and fill up.
- The Ladakh Himalaya forms a high altitude desert between Greater Himalayan ranges and Karakoram Ranges. The Indus and its tributaries are major rivers flowing through the terrain.
- The Zaskar River is one of the largest tributaries of the upper Indus catchment, draining orthogonally through highly deformed Zaskar ranges. Two prominent tributaries of Zaskar River are the Doda and Tsrappingti Chu, which confluence at Padam village in the upper valley to form the Zaskar River.

The Himalayas or Himalaya is a mountain range in Asia separating the plains of the Indian subcontinent from the Tibetan Plateau. The range has many of Earth's highest peaks, including the highest, Mount Everest (Nepal/China). The Himalayas are inhabited by 52.7 million people and are spread across five countries: Bhutan, China, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

Environment Ministry gives nod for new Parliament project

- The Environment Ministry's expert appraisal committee (EAC) has cleared the construction of an additional Parliament building, a part of the government's controversial Rs 20,000-crore Central Vista project.
- The Central Public Works Department's (CPWD) proposal for "expansion and renovation of the existing Parliament building at Parliament Street" was among the projects considered by the EAC at its meetings on April 22-24.
- The Centre's proposal to construct a new Parliament building next to the existing heritage structure was approved by the Environment Ministry's expert appraisal committee (EAC). The EAC, however, said the approval was subject to the outcome of a legal challenge to the change of land-use of the plot, according to the minutes of the meeting.

The Sansad Bhavan (Parliament House) is located in New Delhi. It was designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, who were responsible for planning and construction of New Delhi by British government. The construction of buildings took six years and the opening ceremony was performed on 18 January 1927 by the then Viceroy and Governor-General of India, Lord Irwin. The Indian Parliament consists of two houses called the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha with the President of India acting as their head.

India is the third biggest spender on military last year: Report

- India was the world's third-biggest military spender last year, trailing only the United States and China, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri) said in a report released.
- This is the first time that India and China have featured among the top three military spenders. Russia and Saudi Arabia were the fourth and fifth largest spenders last year.
- New Delhi's defence spending grew 6.8% to reach \$71.1 billion in 2019, said the report on Trends in World Military Expenditure. "India's tensions and rivalry with both Pakistan and China are among the major drivers for its increased military spending," Sipri senior researcher Siemon T Wezeman said in the report.
- The Sipri report said India's military expenditure grew 259% over a 30-year period (1990-2019) and by 37% over decade (2010-19). "However, its (India's) military burden fell from 2.7% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2010 to 2.4% in 2019," the report said.
- The world military burden — global military expenditure as a share of GDP — in 2019 was 2.2%, a marginal increase over the previous year, the report said.
- The US topped the list of military spenders with \$732 billion in 2019 accounting for 38% of the total global defence expenditure. It spent almost as much on its military last year as the next 10 highest spenders combined, the report said. Sipri said China allocated around \$261 billion to the military in 2019, which is roughly equivalent to 14% of the global military expenditure.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) is an international institute based in Sweden, dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public. SIPRI is based in Stockholm.

Ranganayaka Sagar project inaugurated which is part of the world's largest multi-stage multi-purpose Kaleswaram irrigation project

- Telangana ministers K T Rama Rao and T Harish Rao inaugurated the Ranganayaka Sagar project in Siddipet district, which is part of the world's largest multi-stage, multi-purpose lift irrigation project Kaleswaram on Godavari River. They switched on a motor to release the water at the Ranganayaka Sagar project, according to official sources. The Ranganayaka Sagar project would provide irrigation facility to more than 1.10 lakh acres in Siddipet region.

- **World's largest multi-stage, multi-purpose lift irrigation project Kaleshwaram** was dedicated to the nation by **Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao** in July 2019. The **Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project**, to harness the flood waters of the **Godavari**, is aimed at making **Telangana drought-proof**. The **Kaleshwaram project** will support **Mission Kakatiya** and **Mission Bhagiratha** schemes designed to provide drinking water to many villages and improve the capacities of tanks.

Till date, the biggest lift schemes in the world were the **Colorado lift scheme in America** and **Great Man-Made River**, which is a network of pipes that supplies fresh water obtained from the **Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System fossil aquifer across Libya**. It is the **world's largest irrigation project**.

PM Modi addresses Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

- On May 4, 2020, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** addressed the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) virtual summit for the first time** since assuming office in 2014. Calling the COVID-19 the “most serious crisis” humanity has faced in decades and underlining the need for NAM to help promote global solidarity, Modi argued that “NAM has often been the world’s moral voice” and in order “to retain this role, NAM must remain inclusive.”
- The **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** was created and founded during the collapse of the colonial system and the independence struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions of the world and **at the height of the Cold War**. The Cold War was a period of geopolitical tension between the **Soviet Union** and the **United States** and their respective allies, the Eastern Bloc and the Western Bloc, after World War II. The period is generally considered to span the 1947 Truman Doctrine to the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union.
- The principles that would govern relations among large and small nations, known as the “**Ten Principles of Bandung**”, were proclaimed at **Bandung Conference**.
- A key role was played in this process by the then Heads of State and Government **Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt**, **Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana**, **Shri Jawaharlal Nehru of India**, **Ahmed Sukarno of Indonesia** and **Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia**, who later became the founding fathers of the movement and its emblematic leaders. **Six years after Bandung, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries was founded on a wider geographical basis at the First Summit Conference of Belgrade, which was held on September 1-6, 1961. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a forum of 120 developing world states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc.**

In 2019 Colombia and Peru suspended their participation in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) under the presidency of Venezuela because their governments did not recognize the legitimacy of **Nicolás Maduro's regime**. **India hosted the summit for the first time in 1983. A chairperson is elected at each summit meeting.** The Coordinating Bureau, also based at the UN, is the main instrument for directing the work of the movement's task forces, committees and working groups. In 2019, **Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro officially handed the presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev**, during the inaugural ceremony of Leaders' Meeting. **Azerbaijan will hold the NAM presidency for 3 years until the 19th summit in 2022.**

Rural Development Minister launches Saras collection on GeM portal

- **Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar** has launched the **Saras collection on Government e Marketplace (GeM) portal** in New Delhi. The **Saras collection showcases daily utility products made by rural self-help groups. It aims to provide market in rural areas with access to Central and State Government buyers.**
- **Under the initiative, sellers from Self Help Group will be able to list their products in five product categories.** These five categories are handicrafts, handloom and textiles, office accessories, grocery and pantry and personal care and hygiene.

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.

CAIT to launch national e-commerce marketplace ‘bharatmarket’ for retail traders

- Traders’ body **Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT)** has announced to **launch a national e-commerce marketplace ‘bharatmarket’** soon for all retail traders in collaboration with several technology partners.
- **CAIT National President BC Bhartia** said the **trader’s body is looking to enroll about one crore retailers** on this e-marketplace in 2020 and make it the world’s largest and most-unique e-marketplace ever. **CAIT Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal** said the **e-commerce portal** will include a **nationwide participation by retailers** and aims to bring **95 per cent of retail traders onboard the platform**, who would exclusively run the portal.

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) is an apex body of trading community of India comprising of prominent Trade Bodies of different States and having an access to more than 20 thousands such Trade Federations/Associations/Chambers across the Country. The CAIT came into existence in 1990 with an aim and objective of the development of trade and traders in the country and has brilliantly evolved the understanding and co-ordination amongst traders throughout the Country. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

Tamil Nadu’s own peanut candy, Kovilpatti kadalai mittai, gets coveted GI tag

- After a five-year wait, **Kovilpatti kadalai mittai – peanut candy from the southern part of Tamil Nadu – was granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag**. Deputy Registrar of the Registry, Chennai, Chinnaraja G Naidu, said the coveted status was granted to **Kovilpatti Regional Kadalaimittai Manufacturers and Retailers Association in Kovilpatti** in Thoothukudi district.
- In the 1940s, Ponnambala Nadar, a grocery store owner in the town, **decided to use sugarcane jaggery and peanuts to make the kadalai mittai**. He also introduced the cutting of the candy into rectangular shapes instead of the traditional balls.
- The association filed the **petition in 2014 submitting that Kovilpatti is synonymous with kadalai mittai**. The candy is produced from groundnuts and organic jaggery obtained from specific locations. Water from the Thamirabarani is used to enhance its taste.

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.

Niti Aayog starts campaign to ‘protect’ senior citizens during COVID-19

- **Government think tank Niti Aayog in association with Piramal Foundation – the philanthropic arm of the Piramal Group launched a campaign ‘Surakshit Dada-Dadi & Nana-Nani Abhiyan’** focussed on ensuring well-being of senior citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **“The campaign will reach over 2.9 million senior citizens** in 25 Aspirational Districts across Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, MP, Maharashtra, Rajasthan & UP; focusing on behaviour change, access to services, early detection & tracking of COVID19 symptoms.

The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015. 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.

Jharkhand launches schemes for job creation

- The Jharkhand government launched three labour intensive programmes to restore the rural economy. These three schemes have been devised in convergence with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.
- According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CIME) data, the State is reeling under severe joblessness with unemployment rate pegged at 47.1% — double that of the national average (23.5%). The arrival of an estimated 5 lakh to 6 lakh migrant workers is likely to worsen the situation.
- In Ranchi, Chief Minister Hemant Soren unveiled three schemes — Birsa Harit Gram Yojana (BHGY), Neelambar Pitambar JAL Sammridhi Yojana (NPJSY) and Veer Sahid Poto Ho Khel Vikas Scheme (VSPHKVS) — to create wage employment for workers in rural areas.
- The BHGY is envisaged at bringing over two lakh acres of unused government fallow land under the afforestation programme. About five lakh families will be provided 100 fruit-bearing plants. The initial plantation, maintenance, land work and afforestation will be taken up through MNREGA.

Jharkhand is a state in eastern India, carved out of the southern part of Bihar on 15 November 2000. The city of Ranchi is its capital and Dumka its sub capital. Draupadi Murmu is the current and first woman Governor of Jharkhand. Hemant Soren is the current Chief Minister of Jharkhand. Previously, he had also served as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand from July 2013 to December 2014. He is the son of Shibu Soren, former Chief Minister of Jharkhand. The word “Jhar” means ‘bush’ and “Khand” means ‘land’ in various Indo-Aryan languages. Thus “Jharkhand” means ‘land of bush or forest’.

‘Houses for all’ launch on July 8, MSMEs to get dues on May 22

- The prestigious Navaratnalu - Pedalandariki Illu (houses for all the poor) will be launched on July 8. In all, 27 lakh house site pattas will be distributed across the State. It was announced by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy during a high-level review meeting with district collectors.
- Matsyakara Bharosa would be held on May 6 and Rythu Bharosa on May 15. The first installment of dues to MSMEs will be released on May 22. CMAPP (Comprehensive Monitoring of Agriculture, Price, and Procurement), a mobile application, was brought in to monitor the agriculture needs of the farmers.

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.

Indians stranded in 13 countries to be brought home

- The Union government is launching India’s biggest evacuation plan to bring back its citizens stranded in foreign countries since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. To start with the Indian Navy and Air India are bringing back around 16,000 Indians struck in 13 countries. This massive evacuation plan was kicked off with the Indian Navy launching Operation Samudra Setu (Sea Bridge) by sending two ships to the Maldives to bring back 1,000 Indians stranded on the island nation after COVID19 pandemic.
- It is the Indian Navy’s first massive evacuation exercise amid the covid outbreak and part of ‘Samudra Setu’ program under the Vande Bharat mission to rescue stranded Indians, billed as the world’s largest repatriation activity. India is operating many flights as part of Vande Bharat Mission. The Indian Navy ship INS Jalashwa enters into Male’ port for the 1st phase under Operation Samudra Setu to repatriate Indians from the Maldives.

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.

Himachal Pradesh to launch 'Nigah' to aware family members of migrant returnees

- In Himachal Pradesh, the state government is planning to launch a new programme Nigah, in order to sensitize and educate the family members of the people coming to the state from other parts of the country.
- Under this programme Asha, health and anganwadi workers would be deployed to create general awareness in maintaining social distancing during home quarantine.
- Under the Nigah programme a team of ASHA, health and Anganwadi workers would sensitize the family members of persons arriving from other States regarding the importance of social distancing, so that they could be saved from any possible infection.

Himachal Pradesh state's name was coined from the Sanskrit—Him means 'snow' and achal means 'land' or 'abode'—by acharya Diwakar Datt Sharma. Shimla is the capital and the largest city of the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. In 1864, Shimla was declared as the summer capital of British India. Dharamshala is the second winter capital of the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. Jai Ram Thakur is the 13th and the current Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh. Bandaru Dattatreya is the current Governor of Himachal Pradesh.

MP becomes first state in country to provide mid-day meal ration

- Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to provide mid-day meal ration. The Central Government has also appreciated the successful efforts and innovation in the implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Madhya Pradesh.

Vande Bharat Mission begins to bring back stranded Indians from abroad

- In one of the largest evacuation exercises named the Vande Bharat Mission, the government is operating 64 flights till 13th May to bring home nearly 14,800 Indian nationals stranded abroad due to the coronavirus lockdown. Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar urged the stranded individuals to stay in touch with the Indian embassies in their countries.

Uttar Pradesh suspends major labour laws for 3 years to attract investors

- Uttar Pradesh government has suspended most of its labour laws for three years to attract investment and help both existing and new industrial units. The recommendations on the labour laws were presented by a group of state ministers comprising labour minister Swami Prasad Maurya and MSME minister Sidharth Nath Singh. With the approval to the ordinance, more than 30 clause of labour laws would now stand suspended in the state.
- These include the Bonded Labour Act of 1976, Employee Compensation Act of 1923 and Building and Other Construction Workers' Act of 1996. Laws pertaining to women and children, like Maternity Act, Equal Remuneration Act, Child Labour Act and Section 5 of the Payment of Wages Act which provides that wages of a person earning less than Rs 15,000 a month cannot be deducted, are also being retained.

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in the Republic of India. It was created on 1 April 1937 as the United Provinces during British rule, and was renamed Uttar Pradesh in 1950. Lucknow is the capital of Uttar Pradesh. Anandiben Patel is currently the Governor of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath is the current Chief Minister of UP. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India as well as the most populous country subdivision in the world.

Indian Government rejects Nepal protest on Lipulekh

- Opening up of Lipulekh pass for Kailash Mansarovar has led Nepal lodge protest with India claiming Kalapani area in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand as its own territory. The new route passes through Kalapani.
- It is the second big Indo-Nepal border controversy since 1997, when Nepal first objected to Kalapani area being under Indian governance. Kalapani is a strategically important tri-junction between India, China and Nepal in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.
- In 1997, Nepal raised objections after India and China agreed to open the Lipulekh pass to facilitate a travel route to Mansarovar. Nepal says Kalapani is part of its Darchula district in Sudur Paschim Pradesh. Kalapani is largely a valley formed by a mess of Himalayan Rivers, contributing to what is known as Kali, Mahakali or Sharda River at various points in Nepal and India.
- Indian Government rejected Kathmanu's protest against the construction of a road to Lipulekh on the border with China, saying the region is "completely within the territory of India" and both sides can resolve boundary issues through diplomatic dialogue.
- "The government of Nepal has consistently maintained that as per the Sugauli Treaty (1816), all the territories east of Kali (Mahakali) River, including Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipu Lekh, belong to Nepal."

Lipulekh sits atop the Kalapani Valley and forms a tri-junction between India, Nepal and China. It is an ancient trade and pilgrimage route made famous locally by the Bhutiya people who have inhabited the region for centuries. India closed this route in the aftermath of the Chinese aggression in 1962. But earlier this month, India reopened the Lipulekh pass for Kailash Mansarovar following construction of a new 22 km road. It opens from a village called Gunji. Nepal claims the village and the road to be its territory. In the 1700's Nepal had an ambitious king named Prithvi Narayan Shah, credited for solidification and unification of Nepal. He expanded his territories to the west in Uttarakhand. On the Indian side, Britain was the master. The two armies clashed in a war that ended with the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816. Among other things, it demarcated Kumaon in Uttarkhand from Nepal with River Kali serving as the boundary line between India and Nepal.

Tamil Nadu constitutes panel to assess COVID-19 impact

- Tamil Nadu constituted a 24-member committee headed by former RBI Governor C Rangarajan to assess the "immediate and medium-term" impact of the coronavirus pandemic on different sectors that contribute to the state's economy.
- The panel has industrialists Venu Srinivasan, TVS Group chairman, N Srinivasan of The India Cements, A Vellayyan of the Murugappa Group, Indian Bank Managing Director Padmaja Chunduru and Equitas Bank MD and CEO, P N Vasudevan as members.

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.

Government sends aid to Indian Ocean states

- India has dispatched a warship with two medical teams and medical supplies to help authorities in the Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles combat Covid-19, symbolising the importance attached by New Delhi to its maritime neighbourhood.
- The Indian Navy's INS Kesari, a 5,600-tonne landing ship, was deployed following requests for assistance from the Indian Ocean countries. The name of Mission Sagar was inspired by the prime minister's vision of "Sagar" – Security and Growth for All in the Region. It is also in line with India's "time-tested role as the first responder in the region", the external affairs ministry said.

- In April 2020, **India activated a currency swap arrangement with the Maldives** and said it would **provide \$150 million to help the country mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic**. The facility is part of the \$400 million currency swap agreement signed in July 2019.

The Indian Ocean is the third-largest of the world's oceanic divisions, covering 70,560,000 km² or 19.8% of the water on the Earth's surface. Three continents have coastlines on the Indian Ocean; these are Asia, Africa, and Australia to the north, west, and east respectively. The Indian Ocean meets the Southern Ocean to the south. The Indian Ocean is home to hundreds of islands. Six island nations are located in the Indian Ocean, namely Comoros, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Sri Lanka.

MHRD announces modifications in PMRF Scheme to boost research in country

- The HRD Ministry announced amendments in the Prime Minister's Research Fellowship (PMRF) scheme including **reduction in the required GATE score** and introduction of a lateral entry option to attract more students.
- Most of the seats **under the fancied scheme, under which a 1000 seats were created**, have been going vacant every year. The HRD ministry now hopes the changed rules would ensure that more seats get filled up. "To boost research in the country various amendments have been carried out in Prime Minister's Research Fellowship Scheme. Now for the students from any recognised institute or university (other than IISc, IITs, NITs, IISERs, IIST and IIITs), the requirement of GATE Score is reduced to 650 from 750 apart from minimum CGPA of 8 or equivalent".

In order to attract these meritorious students into research, **Government of India, in 2018 launched Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF) Scheme, which offers direct admission to such students in the Ph.D programmes** in the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc) with **attractive fellowship of Rs.70,000/- to Rs.80,000/- per month**. In addition, a research grant of Rs.2 lakh per year is provided to the selected fellows for a period of five years to present research papers.

India's Infant Mortality at 32 per 1,000 Live Births, Kerala in Single Digits

- **India's infant mortality rate (IMR) has improved very marginally from 33 per 1,000 live births in 2017 to 32 in 2018**, according to data released by the Registrar General of India. The IMR has declined significantly over the years; in 1971, it was 129.
- **Madhya Pradesh continues to have the worst IMR in the country at 48 while Nagaland has the best at 4**. In fact, MP's IMR has worsened slightly from 2017 when it stood at 47. **The urban rural differential in MP is huge with the rural IMR at 51, while the urban IMR at 32**. Among large states, **Kerala is the best performer being the only state with an IMR in single digits at 7**. It is also the **only state which has now achieved the United Nations' sustainable development goal in this regard**.

Infant mortality rate (IMR) is the number of deaths per 1,000 live births of children under one year of age. Maternal death or maternal mortality is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes."

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister launches country's first ever 'FIR Aapke Dwar' Yojana

- **Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Dr Narottam Mishra launched India's first ever 'FIR Aapke Dwar Yojana' in Bhopal**. Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country to implement such an innovative scheme. Launching the scheme at the new Police Control Room.
- **'FIR Aapke Dwar' scheme has been started as a pilot project in 23 Police Stations including one urban and one rural Police Station at 11 Divisional Headquarters**. The Minister also **launched helpline 'Dial 112' on the occasion**, to facilitate immediate availability of ambulance, police and fire fighting services wherever needed.

SC sets up panel to look into J&K Internet curbs

- The Jammu and Kashmir government's orders do not reveal any reason for making mobile 4G Internet inaccessible across the Union Territory (UT). Besides, the government orders snipping the Internet speed to 2G were meant to operate for only a limited time.
- "Although the present orders indicate that they have been passed for a limited period of time, they do not provide any reasons to reflect that all the districts of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir require the imposition of such restrictions. At the same time, we do recognise that the Union Territory has been plagued with militancy, which is required to be taken into consideration," a three-judge Bench led by Justice N.V. Ramana observed in the 19-page order.
- The apex court appointed a special committee led by the Union Home Secretary to "immediately" determine the necessity of continuing the restrictions in J&K. The court directed the panel to examine the "appropriateness" of the petitioners; suggestion to limit the Net restrictions to areas where it was necessary and allow faster Internet (3G or 4G) on a trial basis in certain geographical areas and advise the J&K government on it.

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.

Vijay Rupani launches India's first PPE kit seam sealing machine in Rajkot

- Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani launched the first indigenous seam sealing machine, which helps in manufacturing PPE kits.
- After launching the machine via video conference, Chief Minister Mr Rupani congratulated the producers of the machine and the doctors of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) for this invention and said that medical staff is currently battling against the coronavirus and it is important to keep them safe.

Gujarat is a state on the western coast of India with a longest coastline of India 1,600 km (990 mi). Its capital city is Gandhinagar, while its largest city is Ahmedabad. Gujarat International Finance Tec-City is a business district promoted by the Government of Gujarat through a joint venture company. GIFT City is India's first operational smart city in the Ahmedabad and international financial services centre. Acharya Devvrat is Governor of Gujarat and Vijay Rupani is the current Chief Minister of Gujarat. Gujarat has become the first state to implement newly-introduced 10 per cent reservations in government jobs and higher education for the economically weaker sections in the general category and followed by Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

GI tag for Sohrai Khovar painting, Telia Rumal

- Jharkhand's Sohrai Khovar painting and Telangana's Telia Rumal were given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry headquartered in Chennai. The application for the painting was made by Sohrai Kala Mahila Vikas Sahyog Samiti Limited while the application for Telia Rumal was made by the Consortium of Puttapaka Handloom Cluster-IHDS.
- The Sohrai Khovar painting is a traditional and ritualistic mural art being practised by local tribal women during local harvest and marriage seasons using local, naturally available soils of different colours in the area of Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand.
- The Sohrai Khovar painting is primarily being practised only in the district of Hazaribagh. Telia Rumal cloth involves intricate handmade work with cotton loom displaying a variety of designs and motifs in three particular colours — red, black and white," said Chinnaraja G. Naidu, Deputy Registrar of Geographical Indications.

PM Modi announces special economic package worth Rs 20 lakh crore to kick-start economy

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a special economic package worth ‘20 lakh crore rupees for an ‘Atma-Nirbhar Bharat’ or self-reliant India’, saying that self-reliance is the only way to ensure that 21st Century belongs to India.
- Prime Minister noted that this package, together with earlier announcements by the government during COVID crisis and decisions taken by RBI, is to the tune of 20 lakh crore rupees. This is equivalent to almost 10 percent of India’s GDP. Mr Modi said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will announce details of this special economic package. The Prime Minister observed that the package will also focus on land, labour, liquidity and laws.
- It will cater to various sections including cottage industry, MSMEs, labourers, middle class, and industries, among others. The Prime Minister said several bold reforms are needed to make the country self-reliant, so that the impact of crisis such as COVID, can be negated in future. These reforms include supply chain reforms for agriculture, rational tax system, simple and clear laws, capable human resource and a strong financial system. These reforms will promote business, attract investment, and further strengthen Make in India.

Stimulus package is a package of tax rebates and incentives used by the governments of various countries to stimulate economy and save their country from a financial crisis. India too used its first stimulus package in 2008 to ensure the safety of bank deposits and stability of the financial system. The government took necessary steps to infuse liquidity into the banking system. In an effort to infuse liquidity into the banking system, RBI reduced the CRR as well as repo and reverse repo rates. Also, the problems faced by non-banking financing companies were addressed.

Uttarakhand CM launches portal to help unemployed youth get jobs

- Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat launched a portal aimed at creating employment avenues for the trained youth as well as offering them skill development opportunities to increase their employability.
- The portal, ‘HOPE’ - Helping Out People Everywhere, has already begun collecting data on the youths staying in the state as well as migrant youths who have returned recently from outside.
- The portal will not only provide a platform to the youths for job hunting and skill development through its database but will also help potential employers find human resources as per their requirements.

Uttarakhand is often referred to as the Devbhumi, due to many Hindu temples and pilgrimage centres found throughout the state. On 9 November 2000, Uttarakhand became the 27th state of the Republic of India, being created from the Himalayan and adjoining northwestern districts of Uttar Pradesh. Trivendra Singh Rawat is the eighth and current Chief Minister of Uttarakhand. Baby Rani Maurya is serving as the seventh governor of Uttarakhand since 26 August 2018.

Delhi Police gets new thermal headgear for safe functioning

- In a bid to provide safety to frontline warriors, Delhi Police launched ‘Thermal Corona Combat Headgear’ through which police personnel will be able to detect temperature of a large number of people from a distance of 10-15 metres.
- The initiative has been launched by the police in collaboration with Indian Robotics Solution (IRS). “It is a first of its kind equipment to ensure the safety of the frontline warriors and enforce social distancing. With the help of this equipment, live imagery can also be sent to a centralised control centre.

Anil Baijal is the current Lieutenant Governor 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. Arvind Kejriwal is the current Chief Minister of Delhi.

Tribal Affairs Minister launches 'GOAL' programme to provide online mentorship to tribal youth

- Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda has launched the "GOAL - Going Online As Leaders" - programme of his Ministry in partnership with Facebook at a Webinar in New Delhi.
- The GOAL programme is designed to provide mentorship to tribal youth through digital mode. The digitally enabled programme envisages acting as a catalyst to explore hidden talents of the tribal youth, which will help in their personal development as well as contribute to all-round upliftment of their society.

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.

Madhya Pradesh relaunches Sambal scheme for Dalits, tribals and poor

- The Madhya Pradesh government has re-launched the ambitious Sambal Yojana aimed to strengthen the lives of the poor and the SC and ST communities by providing them social security cover, right from birth to death.
- CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan transferred Rs 41.33 crores into the accounts of the beneficiaries of Sambal Yojana at one click. Later, in a discussion with the beneficiaries, the CM said that though the previous government had discontinued the scheme, the cards meant for the scheme can now be used again.

Centre approves modified DPR of Ujh Multipurpose Project in J&K

- The Centre has given approval to a modified detailed project report (DPR) of the Ujh Multipurpose Project (MPP) in Jammu and Kashmir at an estimated cost of 9,167 crore.
- The Central Advisory Committee for consideration of techno-economic viability of major and medium irrigation, flood control and multipurpose project proposals accepted the project proposal subject to certain conditions, keeping in view its strategic importance from Indus Waters Treaty angle for utilisation and regulation of waters flowing across the border.
- The modified Ujh MPP is located on river Ujh, one of the main tributaries of river Ravi, in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir. A 116.00 metre high dam is proposed at the river with full reservoir level (FRL) at 608 metre.

The Ujh River (or Ujjh River) is a tributary of the Ravi River that flows through the Kathua district in the Indian union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The Ujh River originates in Kailash mountains (near Bhaderwah hills, part of the Pir Panjal Range). It flows a distance of nearly 100 kilometres, some of it in Pakistani Punjab, before joining Ravi near Chak Ram Sahai in Indian state of Punjab.

Government to launch Rs 20000 crore Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana for development of marine & inland fisheries

- Indian Government will also launch a 20,000 crore rupees Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana for the development of marine and inland fisheries.
- Of this, 11,000 crore rupees will be earmarked for activities in marine, inland fisheries and aquaculture while 9,000 crore rupees for infrastructure creation such as fishing harbours, cold chain and markets. This will provide employment to over 55 lakh persons and double exports to one lakh crore rupees. In addition to this, a 15,000 crore rupees Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund was announced to support private investment in dairy processing, value addition and cattle feed infrastructure.

- The Finance Minister said the ongoing **National Animal Disease Control Programme for Foot and Mouth Disease and Brucellosis** will look at **100 per cent vaccination** of cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats, and pigs against **Foot and Mouth Disease** at an outlay of 13,343 crore rupees.
- The government has launched a **4,000 crore rupees fund** to promote herbal cultivation in about **10 lakh hectares of area**. The scheme will help generate 5,000 crore rupees income for farmers. Along the bank of Ganga, a corridor of medicinal plants will be developed over 800 hectares area.
- The government extended **Operation Greens** from tomato, onion and potato to all fruits and vegetables by providing an additional fund of 500 crore rupees. Another 500 crore rupees has been earmarked for beekeeping initiatives, helping 2 lakh beekeepers.

FM Nirmala Sitharaman announces fifth and final tranche of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Package

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled the final tranche of financial stimulus and policy measures for various sectors to **help build a self-reliant India under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Campaign**. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the nation announced a **special economic package equivalent to 10 per cent of India's GDP, amounting to Rs 20 lakh crore**.
- Finance Minister in her announcement of the fifth tranche of measures to address the economic situation in the country amid COVID-19, outlined structural reforms with focus on **seven areas of MNREGA, Health and Education, Business during COVID, Decriminalisation of Company Act, Ease of doing business, Policy related to Public Sector Units, State government and resources** related to it.
- Nirmala Sitharaman said, **under the MNREGA scheme, an additional Rs 40 thousand crore will be allocated for employment generation in the rural parts of the country**. She said, this will help to generate nearly 300 crore person days to provide relief to the migrant workers.

HRD Minister e-launches seven titles on “Psycho-Social Impact of Pandemic & Lockdown and How to Cope With”

- The Human Resources Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank e-Launched print as well as e-editions of the set of seven titles on **“Psycho-Social impact of pandemic and lockdown and how to Cope With”** under the corona studies series **published by National Book Trust, NBT India**. Mr Nishank said, to counter the formidable circumstances that the world is facing these days, NBT has brought out these remarkable and unparalleled set of books.

Government makes education accessible with PM e-VIDYA; to launch dedicated TV channels

- Special TV channels will be started for the students of the country. Under this proposal, **one dedicated TV channel per class from class 1 to class 12 will be started for students to study online**. This has been launched under a comprehensive initiative called **Pradhan Mantri e-VIDYA**.
- Union Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said, “On behalf of the students, parents and teachers of the country, I thank **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, for launching Pradhan Mantri e-VIDYA** which is a **comprehensive e-learning platform**.” Nishank said in a tweet, “**Radio, community radio and CBSE podcast ‘Shiksha Vani’ will be widely used to make education more accessible**.”

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.

India-China conflict in Ladakh

- **The recent incidents at the Pangong Tso lake area between Indian and Chinese soldiers on the Line of Actual Control (LAC)** involve a picturesque lake, mountains, helicopters, fighter jets, boats, eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation, fisticuffs and injuries.
- **The disputed boundary between India and China, also known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC), is divided into three sectors: western, middle and eastern.** The countries disagree on the exact location of the LAC in various areas, so much so that India claims that the LAC is 3,488 km long while the Chinese believe it to be around 2,000 km long. The two armies try and dominate by patrol to the areas up to their respective perceptions of the LAC, often bringing them into **conflict and leading to incidents such as those witnessed in Naku La in Sikkim** earlier this month.
- **India opposed a move by Pakistan and China to build a major hydropower plant in the Gilgit-Baltistan region,** saying it has shared its concerns regarding such projects with both countries. The Pakistan government signed a Rs 442-billion contract with a joint venture formed by China Power and the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO), a commercial arm of the Pakistani military, **for constructing the Diamer-Bhasha dam. Doklam is an area disputed between China and Bhutan located near their tri-junction with India.**
- **The Ladakh sector of India's disputed boundary with China** continued to be on alert as reports came in that the Chinese PLA had set up tents **close to the Galwan River, an old 1962 flashpoint, and started construction across the Demchok area.** Wular Lake is the **largest fresh water in India and one of the largest fresh water lakes in Asia.** It is sited in Bandipora district in Jammu and Kashmir, India

McMahon Line is the demarcation line between the Tibetan region of China and the North-east region of India proposed by British colonial administrator Henry McMahon at the 1914 Simla Convention signed between British and Tibetan representatives. The **Macartney–MacDonald Line** is a proposed boundary in the disputed area of **Aksai Chin**. It was proposed by British Indian Government to China in 1899 via its envoy to China, Sir Claude MacDonald. The **Ardagh–Johnson Line** is a proposed boundary of **Kashmir abutting Chinese Turkestan and Tibet**. It was formally proposed to the British Indian government by Major General John Ardagh, chief of military intelligence in London, in 1897, based on the surveys conducted by William Johnson in 1865. **Upon independence in 1947, the government of India fixed its official boundary in the west, which included the Aksai Chin, in a manner that resembled the Ardagh–Johnson Line.** India shares borders with several sovereign countries; it shares land borders with **Afghanistan (de jure), China, Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan in the north or north-west, and Bangladesh and Myanmar in the east.** India also shares water borders with **Sri Lanka and Maldives.** India shares its longest international border with **Bangladesh** which about 4,096 kilometres followed by **China (3,488 kilometres)** and **Pakistan (3,323 kilometres).**

Madhya Pradesh launches Charan Paduka initiative for migrant labourers

- **In Madhya Pradesh, in a first of its kind of initiative, Charan Paduka campaign has been started for the migrant labourers passing through the state.**
- **Under this campaign, the migrant labourers going barefoot are being providing shoes and slippers to reduce their pain.** The most notable thing is that this campaign is being conducted by the police at most places. **The Charan Paduka campaign started from the Rau Police Station of Indore.**

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. **Shivraj Singh Chauhan** is the current Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh.

E-NAM reaches milestone of 1000 Mandis across 18 States, 3 UTs

- The pan-India electronic agriculture trading portal, **e-NAM** has **reached milestone of one thousand Mandis across 18 States and three Union Territories**. Agriculture Ministry said, 38 additional Mandis were integrated with the e-NAM platform.
- The 38 new Mandis include 19 from Madhya Pradesh, 10 Mandis from Telangana, four from Maharashtra and one each in Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Kerala and Jammu and Kashmir.
- **e-NAM has become a tool for social distancing during lockdown. States are promoting virtual trading platform like e-NAM** thereby reducing human intervention in handling of the produce and trading ensured through online mode. **E-NAM was launched in 2016, with the aim of networking the existing Mandis on a common online market platform as One Nation, One Market for agricultural commodities in the country.**

E-NAM i.e. National Agriculture Market is a pan-India electronic trading (e-trading) portal which seeks to **network the existing physical regulated wholesale market (known as APMC market)** through a virtual platform to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities. E-NAM platform promotes better marketing opportunities for the farmers to sell their produce through online competitive and transparent price discovery system and online payment facility. **It also promotes prices commensurate with quality of produce. The e-NAM portal provides single window services for all APMC related information and services.** This includes commodity arrivals, quality & prices buy & sell offers & e-payment settlement directly into farmers' account, among other services. **The electronic market pilot across India was launched on 14 April 2016** by Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. **The Portal is managed by Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)** with the technology provider, NFCL's iKisan division.

Government implements Shekatkar Committee recommendations creating border infrastructure

- **Union Government has implemented Lt. General D B Shekatkar Committee's recommendations related to creating border infrastructure.** These were related to speeding up road construction leading to socio-economic development in the border areas. On the matter related to creating border infrastructure, the Centre has implemented recommendation to outsource road construction work beyond optimal capacity of Border Roads Organization.
- It has been made **mandatory to adopt Engineering Procurement Contract (EPC) mode for execution of all works costing more than 100 crore rupees.**

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.**

Birth centenary celebrations of master auteur Satyajit Ray

- **The office of Development of Museums and Cultural Spaces, Ministry of Culture, Government of India has kick started the birth centenary celebrations of master auteur Satyajit Ray** by releasing a tribute film 'A Ray of Genius' on May 2, 2020.
- **'A Ray of Genius' film also features stunning photographs of noted Indian photographer Nemai Ghosh (Padma Shri Awardee)** showcasing the great filmmaker at work, sourced with the help of the Collection DAG. He started with Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne (1969) till Ray's last film Agantuk (1991). National Award-winning director **Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury** and National Award-winning editor **Arghya Kamal Mitra** created this film with the help of Ray Society, Shri Sandip Ray and the producers of Ray's films.

The Government of India honored Satyajit Ray with the Bharat Ratna, its highest civilian award, in 1992. **Nastanirh (The Broken Nest)** is a 1901 Bengali novella by **Rabindranath Tagore**. It is the basis for the **noted 1964 film Charulata, by Satyajit Ray.**

Indian Railways runs its most powerful ‘Made in India’ locomotive

- The Indian Railways became the sixth country in the world to join the elite club of producing high horsepower locomotive indigenously. It was the first time; a high horsepower locomotive was operationalised on a broad gauge track in the world.
- The locomotive has been produced under the Make in India programme. The project was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 10, 2018. The first 12000 HP made in India Locomotive, manufactured by Madhepura Electric Loco Factory situated in Bihar, was put into operation by Indian Railways from Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn Station.

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.

Government of India & AIIB sign agreement for USD 145 million to improve irrigation services and flood management in West Bengal

- The Government of India, the Government of West Bengal and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) signed a loan agreement for a US\$145 million project to improve irrigation services and flood management in the Damodar Valley Command Area (DVCA) in West Bengal.
- The West Bengal Major Irrigation and Flood Management Project will benefit about 2.7 million farmers from five districts of West Bengal across 393,964 ha area with better irrigation services and improved protection against annual flooding to mitigate the impact of climate change.

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development bank that aims to support the building of infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific region. The bank currently has 78 members as well as 24 prospective members from around the world. The starting capital of the bank was \$100 billion, equivalent to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the capital of the Asian Development Bank and about half that of the World Bank. Jin Liqun is currently the President of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). It is based in Beijing.

Kolkata also known as Calcutta (the official name until 2001) is the capital of the Indian state of West Bengal. It is located on the east bank of the Hooghly River. According to the 2011 census, it is the third-most populous metropolitan area in India. The city is widely regarded as the “cultural capital” of India, and is also nicknamed the “City of Joy”. Under the British Raj, Calcutta served as the capital of British-held territories in India until 1911, when its perceived geographical disadvantages, combined with growing nationalism in Bengal, led to a shift of the capital to New Delhi. Mamata Banerjee is serving as the 8th and current Chief Minister of West Bengal since 2011 being the first woman to hold the office.

Punjab promulgates ‘Punjab Good Conduct Prisoners Amendment Ordinance, 2020’

- Punjab Government promulgated ‘The Punjab Good Conduct Prisoners (Temporary Release) Amendment Ordinance, 2020.
- As per new provisions, the temporary release of the prisoners has been allowed beyond the maximum period of 16 weeks in a calendar year.

The state capital of Punjab is Chandigarh, a Union Territory and also the capital of the neighboring state of Haryana. The five rivers from which the region took its name were Sutlej, Ravi, Beas, Chenab and Jhelum; Sutlej, Ravi and Beas are part of the Indian Punjab. Vijayendrapal Singh Badnore is the current Governor.

Karnataka launches first accelerator for cyber security start-ups

- Karnataka launched its first cyber security-specific accelerator programme 'H.A.C.K' for start-ups recently. Karnataka's centre of excellence in cyber security (CySecK) has launched an accelerator programme for cyber security start-ups.
- The programme is implemented by CySecK, which is state's CoE (Centre of Excellence) in Cyber Security meant for creating a cyber-safe environment for industry collaboration. It is housed at Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. This programme will support mature Indian start-ups to accelerate their growth through government and market connections, and nascent start-ups to mature through an innovative incubation eco-system and marquee mentorship," it stated, giving impetus to 'Atma-Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan'.

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.

Jammu and Kashmir promotes e-learning under Samagra Shiksha programme

- In Jammu and Kashmir, the Union Territory Administration has initiated a slew of measures under Samagra Shiksha programme to facilitate students with complete access to education through technological interventions and other viable means in wake of COVID-19 lockdown.
- Online Career Guidance Portal "Manzelein" was launched for students in association with UNICEF which is a structured and well programmed portal developed to help students in choosing a right career after completing their secondary or higher secondary education.
- It will have complete information on careers, colleges and 262,000 programmes in 16 countries. About 2,500 Tabs were distributed among students for attending online classes, accessing online content available on e-Pathshala/ DIKSHA and other activities.

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.

Centre declares six cities as five-star garbage free cities

- Centre has declared Ambikapur, Rajkot, Surat, Mysore, Indore and Navi Mumbai as five-star garbage free cities. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry announced the results of star rating of garbage free cities. Six cities have been rated 5 Star, 65 Cities rated 3 star and 70 cities rated 1 Star.
- Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, Hardeep Singh Puri also launched the revised protocol for the star rating of garbage free cities. The importance of sanitation and effective solid waste management has been brought to the forefront now due to the corona virus crisis.
- The star rating protocol was launched by the Ministry in January 2018 to institutionalize a mechanism for cities to achieve garbage free status and to motivate cities to achieve higher degrees of cleanliness. Since its launch in 2014, Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban has made significant progress in the area of both sanitation and solid waste management. 4 thousand 324 urban local bodies have been declared open defecation free.

Army proposes 3-year stint for civilians

- In a first of its kind proposal, Indian Army plans to take civilians on a three- year 'Tour of Duty' (ToD) or 'three-year short service' on a trial basis to serve in the force as both officers and other ranks initially for a limited number of vacancies and then expanded later.

- **At present, the Army recruits young people under short service commission for an initial tenure of 10 years which is extendable up to 14 years.** According to the proposal, the people to be recruited under the ToD will be eligible to be deployed as combatants in key forward locations and there will be no restrictions in their roles.

The **Indian Army** is the land-based branch and the **largest component of the Indian Armed Forces**. The **President of India** is the **Supreme Commander of the Indian Army** and it is **commanded by the Chief of Army Staff (COAS)**, who is a four-star general. The Indian Army **originated from the armies of the East India Company**, which eventually **became the British Indian Army**, and the armies of the princely states, which **finally became the national army after independence**. **General Bipin Rawat** was appointed as the **first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** of India and assumed office from **1 January 2020**. **General Manoj Mukund Naravane** is the **current and 28th Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army**.

Chhattisgarh launched cash transfer scheme for farmers

- The Chhattisgarh government launched a scheme named after **Rajiv Gandhi** on the late former Prime Minister's **19th death anniversary** for direct cash transfers to around 2 million farmers in four instalments.
- A five-member committee was constituted to **study how Rs 2,500 per quintal for paddy could be ensured for the farmers** as per the Congress pledge in its manifesto ahead of the 2018 assembly elections.
- The panel was constituted after the **government procured paddy from farmers at the rate fixed by the Centre—~1,835 per quintal—in November 2019** and promised to pay the balance amount later.
- “The committee recommended that **Rs.10, 000 per acre should be given to farmers**, who sold the paddy at the Centre's rate and added the benefit should also be provided for maize and sugarcane crops”.
- The **beneficiaries of the Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojna**, which was **approved by the Chhattisgarh cabinet** on May 14, will be chosen on the basis of registered land under cultivation during the kharif crop season 2019. **Rs.10, 000 per acre will be deposited in the bank accounts of each beneficiary as agriculture assistance grant for cultivation.**

Chhattisgarh was formed on **1 November 2000** by partitioning **10 Chhattisgarhi** and **6 Gondi** speaking southeastern districts of **Madhya Pradesh**. The **capital city is Raipur**. **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**.

Army's only cavalry unit to replace horses with tanks

- One of the world's last remaining horse-mounted cavalry regiments may be riding into the sunset. **The Indian Army's only mounted cavalry regiment** is set to say goodbye to its horses, with the **government approving a proposal to equip the 61st Cavalry with tanks**.
- The famous **61st Cavalry** is being converted into a regular armoured regiment on the **basis of a recommendation made by the Lieutenant General DB Shekatkar (retd) committee** in a report on sharpening the army's combat edge and trimming its revenue expenditure.
- The **Jaipur-based 61st Cavalry** is likely to be equipped with **T-72 tanks**, said the **second officer cited above**. “Three independent squadrons of other regiments are being amalgamated under the **headquarters of the 61st Cavalry to form the new tank unit**”. The **61st Cavalry** was **raised in Jaipur in October 1953** by putting together mounted elements of cavalry regiments of the erstwhile princely states of India.

Centre launches scheme to solarise entire Konark Temple, Konark town

- The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** has launched a scheme for **100 per cent solarisation of Konark Sun Temple and Konark town in Odisha**.

- The scheme envisages a 10-megawatt (MW) grid-connected solar project and various solar off-grid applications such as solar trees and solar drinking water kiosks.
- “The Government of India launched the scheme with an objective to take forward Prime Minister (Narendra Modi)’s vision to develop the historical Sun temple town of Konark in Odisha as ‘Surya Nagri’, to convey a message of synergy between the modern use of solar energy and the ancient Sun Temple and the importance of promoting solar energy.”

Tripura gets its first international waterway

- Tripura got its first ever international waterway as five new protocol routes were announced between India and its eastern neighbour Bangladesh, with Chief Minister Biplab Deb expressing hope that the state will emerge as ‘gateway of Northeast’ in future by tapping into bilateral connectivity and trade potential.
- As per the revised protocol, a 93 km stretch of River Gomti in Tripura’s Sepahijala district connecting Sonamura on the Indian side and Daudkandi in Bangladesh and Rajahi-Dhulian route would be in effect.

Tripura is the third-smallest state in the country; Agartala is the capital of Tripura as well as the second largest city in North-east India after Guwahati. Biplab Kumar Deb is the first the CM of the BJP government in Tripura. The BJP win ended the 25-year-old Left rule in the state.

India, Bangladesh sign pact to operationalise 5 more ports of call, 2 new routes

- India and Bangladesh signed an agreement to operationalise five new ports of call and two new protocol routes to boost the bilateral trade. India and Bangladesh during Standing Committee on the Protocol and Shipping Secretary-level talks in October 2018 and December 2019 had decided to extend protocol routes, include new routes and increase ports of call.
- Ports of call are intermediate stops for a ship on its scheduled journey for taking on supplies or fuel. With the signing of the pact, the ports of call between India and Bangladesh have increased to 11 from six earlier while two more extended ports of call have been added.
- “Inclusion of Jogigopha in India and Bahadurabad in Bangladesh as new Port of Call will provide connectivity to Meghalaya, Assam and Bhutan. Jogigopha also becomes important, since, a Multimodal Logistics Park is proposed to be established there.
- The new routes included are Sonamura- Daudkhandi stretch of Gumti river (93 Km) as IBP (Indo Bangladesh Protocol) route No. 9 & 10 to improve the connectivity of Tripura and adjoining States with Indian and Bangladesh’s economic centres and will help the hinterland of both the countries, the release said adding this route shall be connecting all existing IBP routes from 1 to 8.
- As a path-breaking development, both sides have agreed to introduce trade between Chilmari (Bangladesh) and Dhubri (India) through the use of shallow draft mechanized vessels, provided these are registered under Inland Shipping Ordinance 1976 of Bangladesh or Inland Vessels Act, 1917 of India as per provisions of the Protocol and conform to safety requirements.

Bangladesh is a country in South Asia. It shares land borders with India and Myanmar (Burma). Nepal, Bhutan and China are located near Bangladesh but do not share a border with it. Dhaka is its capital and largest city, followed by Chittagong, which has the country’s largest port. Bangladeshi taka is the currency of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh. Mohammad Abdul Hamid is the 16th and current President of Bangladesh, in office since April 2013. Sheikh Hasina is the current Prime Minister of the Bangladesh.

“Hunar Haat” to restart from September 2020 with the theme of “Local to Global”

- After a gap of about 5 months due to the Corona pandemic, “Hunar Haat”, which has become “Empowerment Exchange” of artisans and craftsmen from across the country, will restart from September 2020 with the theme of “Local to Global” and comparatively larger participation of artisans.

- It is to be noted that **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi**, during his instantaneous visit to “Hunar Haat”, **organised at India Gate**, New Delhi in February 2020, had encouraged and lauded indigenous handmade products of artisans and craftsmen.
- **Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi** said that “Hunar Haat”, which has provided **employment and employment opportunities to more than 5 lakh Indian artisans, craftsmen, culinary experts and other people associated with them in the last 5 years**, have become popular among the people.

“Hunar Haat”, which provides market and opportunity to master artisans and craftsmen from remote areas of the country, has become a credible brand of rare exquisite indigenous handmade products. India’s Largest Haat Bazaar is Gohpur Haat Bazaar from Gohpur in Assam. For the first time, Union Minister for Minority Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi formally inaugurated “Hunar Haat” in 2018 at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. Which has become a “Credible Brand” for empowerment of artisans and craftsmen.

India’s first dolphin observatory coming up in Bihar

- The Bihar government is setting up India’s first observatory for the mammals in Bhagalpur district. Construction at the **Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS)** in the state’s Bhagalpur district is scheduled to be completed by early next year.
- The observatory is being **built on the Sultanganj-Aguwani Ghat Bridge over the Ganga**. The four-storey observatory will be 40 feet high, with the bridge passing through its middle. “The observatory building will be transparent, with glass from all sides to ensure people can watch the dolphins”.

River Dolphin is the National Aquatic Animal of India. This mammal is also said to represent the purity of the holy Ganga as it can only survive in pure and fresh water. They are locally known as susu, because of the noise it makes while breathing. This species inhabits parts of the Ganges, Meghna and Brahmaputra rivers in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, and the Karnaphuli River in Bangladesh. **River dolphin is a critically endangered species in India and therefore, has been included in the Schedule I for the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The main reasons for decline in population of the species are poaching and habitat degradation** due to declining flow, heavy siltation, construction of barrages causing physical barrier for this migratory species.

India, Australia signed pact at ‘virtual summit’

- **India and Australia are made bilateral diplomatic history by signing an agreement for reciprocal access to military logistics facilities** and other pacts aimed at developing alternative supply chains when the **two sides held their first “virtual summit”** on June 4, 2020.
- The **Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA)** will allow **militaries of the two countries to use each other’s bases for repair and replenishment of supplies** besides facilitating scaling up of overall defence cooperation.
- It was **India’s first virtual bilateral summit with any other country and the first time several bilateral agreements were concluded virtually** since the Covid-19 outbreak, two people familiar with development.
- The **Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA), finalised at the “2+2” or combined dialogue of the foreign and defence secretaries in New Delhi** in December 2019, was to be signed during Morrison’s visit in January, 2020, which was called off due to the Australian bushfires.

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.

Kargil's first Solar Lift Irrigation Plant inaugurated

- In Ladakh, Director of Animal, Sheep Husbandry and Fisheries Dr Mohammad Raza **inaugurated the first Solar Lift Irrigation Plant of Kargil with five KW Solar Plant** and three HP Submersible Pump at Yak Breeding Farm, Bodh Kharboo keeping in view the protocols of social distancing and Standard Operating Procedures.
- **This prototype will help others to solve the shortage of water to irrigate**, particularly those lands which are at the banks of river. It will also help in solve the drinking water issue as well. He also directed Project Director, KREDA to install another three HP Pump at the same location.

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**. Ladakh has been the subject of dispute between India, Pakistan, and China since 1947.

United N kudos for LGBTQI initiative in Manipur

- The **United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth** has listed **Manipur's Khudol (gift)** among the **top 10 global initiatives** for an inclusive fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Khudol** is a **crowdfunded initiative of Ya_All**, an **Imphal-based NGO** that had **created India's first transgender football team**. The initiative entails ensuring food, health and hygiene of the LGBTQI+ community, people living with HIV, daily-wage earners, children and adolescents.

Manipur is a state in northeastern India, with the city of **Imphal** as its capital. **Najma Akbar Ali Heptulla** is the **current Governor** of Manipur and the **Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia**. **Nongthombam Biren Singh** is the **current Chief Minister of Manipur**.

IAF launched its squadron Number-18 - Flying Bullets with a fleet of LCA Tejas

- The **Indian Air Force** has **operationalized its squadron called the Number-18 - Flying Bullets** with a fleet of the **Light Combat Aircraft, LCA Tejas** at its **Sulur base** near Coimbatore. It was **launched by the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhadauria**. It was the **second Indian Air Force squadron to operate** with the modern multi-role light fighter aircraft.
- A release from the Defence Ministry says the **No.18 Squadron** was **formed in 1965** and has the distinction of being the **first to land and operate from Srinagar**. It has also **produced a Param Veer Chakra awardee** during the **1971 war with Pakistan**. It has been **revived on the 1st April this year** at the Sulur base.
- The **LCA Tejas** is a **tailless, fourth generation, compound delta-wing aircraft** developed by the **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited**. It is equipped with fly-by-wire flight control system, integrated digital avionics and multi-mode radar. Its structure is made of composite material. The **supersonic combat aircraft** is **considered the lightest and the smallest of its kind**.

Indian Air Force (IAF) is the **air arm of the Indian Armed Forces**. Its **complement of personnel and aircraft assets ranks fourth amongst the air forces of the world**. Its primary mission is to **secure Indian airspace and to conduct aerial warfare during armed conflict**. It was **officially established on 8 October 1932** as an **auxiliary air force of the British Empire** which honoured India's aviation service during **World War II** with the prefix **Royal**. After **India gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1947**, the name **Royal Indian Air Force** was kept and served in the name of **Dominion of India**. With the government's transition to a Republic in **1950**, the prefix **Royal** was removed. The **President of India** holds the rank of **Supreme Commander of the IAF**. Since 1950 the IAF has been involved in four wars with neighboring Pakistan and one with the **People's Republic of China**. Other major operations undertaken by the IAF include **Operation Vijay, Operation Meghdoot, Operation Cactus** and **Operation Poomalai**. **Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria** is the **current Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force**. IAF is headquartered in **New Delhi**.

Himachal Pradesh first with SOP for barbers

- **Introducing new standard operating procedures (SOP) for salon owners, Himachal Pradesh has prohibited direct communication between barbers and customers.** “Direct communication between barber and customer is not permitted. Discussion about hairstyling and colour must be done via a mirror and kept to a minimum,” state the SOPs, which were hailed for their safety parameters after Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur presented them at a virtual meeting with Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan.
- **Among the first of their kind in the country, the SOPs lay down stringent social distancing and safety measures inside salon spaces mandating face shields, triple-layered masks, hand gloves and head covers for barbers; sterilised equipment and 1.5 metre distance between chairs.**

Himachal Pradesh state's name was coined from the Sanskrit—Him means ‘snow’ and achal means ‘land’ or ‘abode’—by acharya Diwakar Datt Sharma. Shimla is the capital and the largest city of the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. In 1864, Shimla was declared as the summer capital of British India. Dharamshala is the second winter capital of the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. Jai Ram Thakur is the 13th and the current Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh. Bandaru Dattatreya is the current Governor of Himachal Pradesh.

Uttar Pradesh to form commission to map skills of migrant labourers

- **The Uttar Pradesh government released its first skill map of migrant workers who returned to the State during the lockdown.** The government has said it will provide them jobs in the State as per their skills and experience and will constitute a Migrant Commission for it.
- **So far, around 23-24 lakh migrant workers have returned to Uttar Pradesh during the lockdown,** the government said. “Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, while reviewing the lockdown situation in the state, directed that a migration commission be set up.

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.

Former SC judge Justice Sikri inaugurates Indian Dispute Resolution Centre

- **Former Supreme Court judge Justice A K Sikri has inaugurated the Indian Dispute Resolution Centre (IDRC), which provides a paperless dispute resolution environment. The e-inauguration of IDRC took place adding that the centre offers offline as well as e-alternate dispute resolution (ADR) facility through its state-of-the-art e-arbitration, e-mediation and e-conciliation software portal.**
- **“It provides a completely paperless dispute resolution environment. Its arbitration panel has former judges of the Supreme Court, High Courts, district courts apart from senior advocates, former bureaucrats, chartered accountants, architects, corporate leaders among others”. The e-inauguration was followed by a panel discussion on “Adhoc v. Institutional Dispute Resolution”. Justice Sikri, who is also the International Judge, Singapore International Commercial Court. IDRC is first of its kind Institutional Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Center which will provide an offline and e-ADR facility through e-Arbitration, e-Mediation and e-Conciliation software portal.**

Arjan Kumar Sikri was sworn in as a Supreme Court judge in 2013. Earlier, he had served as the Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court. Presently, he is an International Judge, at the Singapore International Commercial Court, [SICC] Singapore Supreme Court, he was sworn in to the post on the 2nd of August 2019, by the President of Singapore.

Tamil Nadu begins work on implementing Solar Fence Farmland Protection Programme

- The Tamil Nadu government has started preliminary works for implementing the unique Solar Fence Farmland Protection Programme, under the Central Agriculture Improvement Scheme.
- Against this background, the electric fences powered by eco-friendly, non-polluting solar panels are being set up in various parts of the state. Under the Central Agriculture Improvement Scheme, 50% of the cost of constructing the electric fence, including setting up of the power generating solar panels, will be provided as subsidy to farmers. A maximum limit of 2.18 lakh rupees has been fixed for availing subsidy.

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.

TDP holds India's first digital political conclave

- Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has become the first political outfit in India to hold a two-day digital conclave in which over 25,000 party activists and leaders are participated through Zoom digital platform.
- The conclave began on May 27 and is being addressed by its party chief N Chandrababu Naidu. Coincidentally, Naidu has completed 25 years as the party's president. Since its formation in 1982, in united Andhra Pradesh, the TDP has been organising its annual conclave titled Mahanadu around this time to galvanise party cadres and leaders. Mahanadu coincides with the birthday of TDP's founder NT Rama Rao on May 28.

As per latest publication from Election Commission of India, the total number of parties registered was 2599, with 8 national parties (INC, BJP, BSP, CPI, CPI-M, NCP, AITC, and NPP), 53 state parties and 2538 unrecognised parties. All registered parties contesting elections need to choose a symbol from a list of available symbols offered by the EC. All 28 states of the country along with the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, National Capital Territory of Delhi and Puducherry have elected governments unless President's rule is imposed under certain conditions.

In a first in India, Karnataka to launch Health Register

- Karnataka will soon launch a 'State Health Register' that will maintain the health records of all the citizens. "The initiative will be the first of its kind in the country as the proposed register will act as a robust and standardized health repository of 6.5 crore citizens. There is an urgent need to focus on better healthcare for all.

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.

Center approves for implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in Chhattisgarh during 2020-21

- Chhattisgarh State presented their Annual Action Plan for 2020-21 for consideration and approval of Ministry of Jal Shakti. Significantly, Jal Jeevan Mission launched under the Ministry of Jal Shakti is aimed to provide adequate potable drinking water of prescribed quality on regular and long-term basis to every rural household of the country by the 2024.
- A budget of whopping Rs 3.60 lakh Crore has been allocated for this scheme. Under this life changing Mission, Chhattisgarh State has planned to have 100% Functional Tap Water Connection (FHTC) by 2023-24. While planning for universal coverage of households, priority is being given to water scarce areas, quality-affected areas, SC/ ST dominated habitations/ villages, aspirational districts, Sansad Adarsh Gramin Yojana villages. Center approved Rs 445 Crore for implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in the State in 2020-21.

Lok Sabha Speaker nominates 15 MPs to the Delimitation Commission

- **Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla** has **nominated 15 MPs** from Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh to assist the **Delimitation Commission** in redrawing the Lok Sabha and the Assembly constituencies of the northeastern States and the Union Territory.
- **Jammu and Kashmir** at present has no Assembly. It is a Union Territory with a provision of a legislature. The Commission, constituted on **March 6, 2020** headed by former Supreme Court judge **Ranjana Prakash Desai**, met to review its work. **Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra** and **State Election Commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir** and the **four northeastern States** will be its **ex-officio** members.

Delimitation commission or Boundary commission of India is a commission established by the Government of India under the provisions of the **Delimitation Commission Act**. The main task of the commission is redrawing the boundaries of the various assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies based on a recent census. The representation from each State is not changed during this exercise. However, the number of SC and ST seats in a state are changed in accordance with the census. The present delimitation of constituencies has been done on the basis of 2001 census under the provisions of **Delimitation Act, 2002**. The Commission is a powerful and independent body whose orders cannot be challenged in any court of law. The orders are laid before the Lok Sabha and the respective State Legislative Assemblies. However, modifications are not permitted. **Delimitation commissions** have been set up four times in the past — 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002 — under **Delimitation Commission Acts of 1952, 1962, 1972 and 2002**.

Madhya Pradesh launches ‘Rozgar Setu’ scheme for skilled workers

- **Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan** has announced the launch of the ‘**Rozgar Setu**’ scheme, saying it would help secure employment for skilled workers who have returned. “The State is the first to devise such a work plan.
- This would fulfil the manpower requirement of industries as well as provide employment to workers during the **COVID-19 pandemic**. Moreover, **Mr. Chouhan** hailed the Centre’s ‘**Swamitva yojana**’ under which rural areas would be surveyed to help prepare land records.

Odisha announces Rs 17,000 crore programme to generate employment

- **Odisha** would spend **Rs 17,000 crore** over the next 10 months, including **Rs 6,640 crore** under **NREGA**, to generate employment through sectors like agriculture, fisheries and animal resources development, forest and handlooms and handicrafts in rural areas as part of a special plan.
- For the migrant workers who have returned to **Odisha**, **Rs 1,000 crore** would be spent for creation of **1.05 lakh farm ponds** under “**Mo Pokhari**” initiative. The state council of ministers, which met approved the special livelihood intervention plan that will help the spend to tide over the economic crisis triggered by the coronavirus pandemic. The state would generate employment of 20 crore person-days under **NREGS**, while **Rs 140 crore** will be spent for skill development of 40,000 migrant workers.

The modern state of **Odisha** was established on **1 April 1936**, as a province in **British India**. The ancient kingdom of **Kalinga**, which was invaded by the **Mauryan emperor Ashoka** in **261 BCE** resulting in the **Kalinga War**, coincides with the borders of modern-day **Odisha**. **Konark Sun Temple** is a **13th-century CE** sun temple at **Konark** about 35 kilometres northeast from **Puri** on the coastline of **Odisha**, India. The temple is attributed to king **Narasimhadeva I** of the **Eastern Ganga Dynasty** about 1250 CE. **Professor Ganeshi Lal** is current **Governor** of **Odisha**. **Naveen Patnaik** is the current **Chief Minister** of **Odisha**.

International



G-20 launches access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator” Initiative

- The Saudi G20 Presidency has welcomed the launch of “Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator”, a **landmark, global and timely collaboration** for the accelerated development, production and equitable access to new COVID-19 tools.
- The ACT Accelerator initiative will be a **global platform for action to enhance connections** and leverage interdependencies for collective partnership, problem-solving, mobilizing and guiding investments, and driving equitable access for new COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.
- Saudi Arabia, as the Chair of the G20 in 2020, **pledged USD 500 million** to support such global efforts and calls on all countries, non-governmental organizations, philanthropies, and the private sector to take part in the global efforts to close the required financing gap in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, which is **estimated to be USD 8 billion** according to the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB).

The G20 or Group of Twenty is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union. It was founded in 1999; the G20 aims to discuss policy pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability. Membership of the G20 consists of 19 individual countries plus the European Union (EU).

American Academy of Arts and Sciences elects three Indians

- Three Indians have been elected for the prestigious membership of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences this year. Two of them are in the sciences: **Biman Bagchi** from the Solid State and Structural Chemistry Unit of the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, and **Shobhana Narasimhan** from the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru.
- **Kavita Singh**, from the School of Arts and Aesthetics at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, has been selected for the Humanities and Arts stream. The prestigious International Honorary Membership counts **Albert Einstein, Akira Kurosawa, Nelson Mandela and Charles Darwin** among some of its past members, and the elected members aim to work together to solve problems faced by the world at large.

US Navy to host world’s largest maritime exercises in Hawaii again this year

- The United States Navy has said that it will **host the world’s largest maritime exercises in Hawaii** again this year, but the drills will **only be held at sea because of the Corona virus**.
- The Navy has **held the Rim of the Pacific exercises in Hawaii every two years since the early 1970s. RIMPAC-2020 would not include social events on shore**. Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam will host a minimal footprint of staff for logistics and support functions.
- RIMPAC is **held biennially during June and July of even-numbered years from Honolulu, Hawaii**. It is hosted and administered by the United States Navy’s Indo-Pacific Command, headquartered at Pearl Harbor, in conjunction with the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, and Hawaii National Guard forces under the control of the Governor of Hawaii.

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 to launch first satellite to monitor Arctic climate this year

- Russia will launch first Arktika-M satellite for monitoring Arctic climate this year at the end of the year, General Director of Lavochkin aerospace company Vladimir Kolmykov told sputnik news agency. He said as of now first satellite is developed and the launch is planned for 2020.
- The satellite will be launched by Soyuz -2.1b carrier rocket with frigate booster. The remote sensing Arktika-M will monitor the meteorological conditions in the polar region. In February, a space industry source said that the launch of the first Arktika-M satellite from the Baikonur space centre was planned for 9 December 2020. According to the source, the satellite will be launched using a Soyuz-2.1b carrier rocket with the Fregat booster.
- The launch of the second Russian satellite for weather forecasting and monitoring climate and the environment in the Arctic region, Arktika-M, has been postponed to 2023 from 2021, according to documents of Russia space corporation Roscosmos published on the public procurement website.

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.

President Trump nominates Indian-American diplomat Manisha Singh as OECD envoy

- United States President Donald Trump has nominated senior Indian-American diplomat Manisha Singh as his envoy to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). She will be the US Representative to OECD with the rank of an Ambassador.
- Paris-based OECD is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries to stimulate economic progress and world trade. Ms Singh was the Senior Fellow for International Economic Affairs at the American Foreign Policy Council and was a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations

Germany designates Hezbollah as terrorist group, conducts raids on suspects

- Germany has banned all Iran-backed Hezbollah activity on its soil and designated it a terrorist organisation, the Interior Ministry said. Police also conducted early morning raids on mosque associations in four cities across Germany. Security officials believe up to 1,050 people in Germany are part of Hezbollah's extremist wing.
- Israel and the United States had been pushing Germany to ban the organisation. Germany had previously distinguished between Hezbollah's political arm and its military units, which have fought alongside President Bashar al-Assad's army in Syria.

Berlin is the capital and the largest city of Germany. Frank-Walter Steinmeier is currently serving as President of Germany. Angela Dorothea Merkel has been serving as Chancellor of Germany since 2005. The euro is the currency of Germany.

UNICEF urges Middle East countries to greenlight vaccination campaigns

- The UN children's agency urged six Middle East countries to greenlight special polio and measles vaccination campaigns put on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic. UNICEF says the polio campaigns are on hold in Syria, Sudan, Yemen and Iraq, while measles vaccinations are suspended in Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen and Djibouti.

- **UNICEF says nearly 10.5 million children under the age of five risk missing their polio vaccinations. Nearly 4.5 million children under 15 could miss their measles vaccinations.** Routine vaccinations for other diseases like rubella and diphtheria are continuing, but special campaigns were put on hold because of overwhelmed health systems or governments wanting to avoid crowding at clinics.

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.

China launches new rocket, spacecraft

- **China successfully launched a new rocket and prototype spacecraft** in a major test of the country's ambitions to operate a permanent space station and send astronauts to the Moon.
- **'The Long March 5B' rocket took off from the Wenchang launch site in the southern island of Hainan and eight minutes later an unmanned prototype spaceship successfully separated and entered its planned orbit. A test version of a cargo return capsule also separated from the rocket, Xinhua added.**

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.

First Hindu youth joins Pakistan Air Force

- **In a first, a Pakistani Hindu youth has become the first person from the minority community to join the Pakistan Air Force. Rahul Dev has been recruited as a General Duty Pilot Officer.**
- **Last year, Kainat Junaid became the first woman from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province to have been selected for fighter pilot training. Junaid not only secured the top position in PAF's test for General Duty Pilot, but also became Pakistan's first female fighter pilot to serve the country alongside her father.**

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

Iran approves plan to cut four zeros from falling currency

- **Iran's parliament has passed a bill allowing the government to slash four zeros from the rial, after a sharp fall in the value of the currency as a result of crippling U.S. sanctions. Iran's national currency will be changed from the rial to the Toman, which is equal to 10,000 rials, under the bill.**

Iran also called Persia is a country in Western Asia. Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei is the current Supreme Leader of Iran, in office since 1989. Hassan Rouhani is serving as the current and seventh President of Iran since 3 August 2013. The Rial is the currency of Iran.

Former Iraqi Spy Chief Approved as New Prime Minister

- **Iraq's former spy chief was sworn in as prime minister by lawmakers after weeks of tense political negotiations as the country faces a severe economic crisis spurred by plummeting oil prices and the coronavirus pandemic.**

- The majority of 255 legislators attending the session approved the government plan and the majority of cabinet ministers proposed by Mustafa al-Kadhimi, officially inaugurating him as Iraq's sixth premier since 2003 and ending five months of a leadership void.
- Al-Kadhimi, who gave up the intelligence post when he became the prime minister-designate, assumes the premiership as Iraq faces unprecedented crises amid falling oil revenues that will likely prompt unpopular austerity measures, a rising daily tally of coronavirus cases, and expected US-Iraq talks.

Iraq is a country in Western Asia, capital, and largest city, is Baghdad. The “Cradle of Civilization” is thus a common term for the area comprising modern Iraq as it was home to the earliest known civilisation, the Sumerian civilisation, which arose in the fertile Tigris-Euphrates river valley of southern Iraq in the Chalcolithic (Ubaid period). Dinar is the currency of Iraq.

Netanyahu secures backing to form new Israeli government

- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu formally received the support of a majority of lawmakers to lead a new government paving the way for a controversial power-sharing deal with rival-turned-partner Benny Gantz.
- The Likud and Blue and White parties issued a statement saying they had given President Reuven Rivlin the signatures of 72 Parliament members recommending Mr. Netanyahu as Prime Minister. Once approved by the President, Mr. Netanyahu will have two weeks to form a government.

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.

WHO, UN postal agency release commemorative postage stamp on 40th anniversary of eradication of smallpox

- World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN's postal agency have released a commemorative postage stamp on the 40th anniversary of the eradication of smallpox. The head of the global health body expressed gratitude to a top Indian-origin UN official.
- In May 1980, the 33rd World Health Assembly issued its official declaration that the world and all peoples have won freedom from smallpox. It ended after a 10-year WHO-spearheaded global effort that involved thousands of health workers around the world to administer half a billion vaccinations to stamp out smallpox.
- Tedros Adhanom expressed his gratitude to a top Indian-origin Atul Khare for creating this commemorative stamp possible. Born in India, Khare is that the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Operational Support (DOS) and therefore the UN Postal Administration is within the DOS Division of Administration.

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.

Operation Warp Speed: The race to save US prestige and find Covid-19 vaccine

- President Donald Trump is putting everything he's got into a research effort dubbed Operation Warp Speed, which pulls together pharmaceutical companies, government agencies and the military. So is China, which has a head start at a time the two countries are already engaged in a fight for dominance impacting everything from trade to the roll-out of 5G communications networks. The stakes in finding a vaccine against the coronavirus couldn't be higher.

- When the Soviet Union put the first man into space in 1961, the shock to America's self-confidence was electric. If China should be first to produce a successful vaccine against the coronavirus, US prestige is likely to suffer a similar blow.

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.

Global energy demand to plunge this year as a result of the biggest shock since World War II

- The Covid-19 pandemic represents the biggest shock to the global energy system in more than seven decades, with the drop in demand this year set to dwarf the impact of the 2008 financial crisis and result in a record annual decline in carbon emissions of almost 8%.
- A new report released by the International Energy Agency provides an almost real-time view of the Covid-19 pandemic's extraordinary impact across all major fuels.
- Based on an analysis of more than 100 days of real data so far this year, the IEA's Global Energy Review includes estimates for how energy consumption and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions trends are likely to evolve over the rest of 2020.
- The report projects that energy demands will fall 6% in 2020 – seven times the decline after the 2008 global financial crisis. In absolute terms, the decline is unprecedented – the equivalent of losing the entire energy demand of India, the world's third largest energy consumer. Advanced economies are expected to see the biggest declines, with demand set to fall by 9% in the United States and by 11% in the European Union.

International Energy Agency (IEA) is a Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organization established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis.

Laos to press ahead with 'destructive' new dam on Mekong

- Laos is pressing ahead with plans for another "destructive dam" on the Mekong River.
- Two dams the Xayaburi and Don Sahong have been built in Laos, which wants to construct seven more as it strives to live up to its billing as the "Battery of Asia".

The Mekong is a trans-boundary river in Southeast Asia. From the Tibetan Plateau the river runs through China's Yunnan Province, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. In 1995, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam established the Mekong River Commission (MRC) to assist in the management and coordinated use of the Mekong's resources.

WHO Warns of Severe Global Shortage of Nurses

- The World Health Organization warns a severe global shortage of nurses is putting the lives of millions of people at risk and is particularly worrisome at a time when the world is doing battle with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To mark World Health Day, the first ever State of the World's Nursing Report, produced jointly by WHO and the International Council of Nurses, is being launched. Data from 191 countries show the critical work performed by nurses is frequently undervalued.
- The report reveals there are just under 28 million nurses worldwide, which leaves a global shortfall of nearly six million nurses. The greatest gaps are found in countries in Africa, South East Asia, the Eastern Mediterranean region and some parts of Latin America.

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 current Director-General of WHO is Tedros Adhanom, who started his five-year term on 1 July 2017.

Saudi Aramco Debuts as World's Largest Oil Company

- This year the Forbes Global 2000 saw a new entry at the top of the list of oil and gas firms with the debut of Saudi Aramco. It appeared at tied for fifth overall and #1 in the oil and gas industry.
- While Aramco sales are only ranked fourth-highest overall, it achieved the most profit of all public businesses in 2019. It also boasts the highest market value of any company in the world. However, holding it back from a higher overall ranking were its assets, which are ranked only 90th. Though Aramco has a concession to produce oil and gas in Saudi Arabia, the government actually owns the reserves in the ground.

Saudi Aramco is a Saudi Arabian multinational petroleum and natural gas company based in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. It is one of the largest companies in the world by revenue, and according to accounts seen by Bloomberg News, the most profitable company in the world. Saudi Aramco has both the world's second-largest proven crude oil reserves, at more than 270 billion barrels and largest daily oil production of all oil producing companies.

Slovenia becomes first European nation to proclaim end to coronavirus epidemic at home

- Slovenia has become the first European country to proclaim an end to the coronavirus epidemic at home. The government said, the COVID-19 spread is under control and there is no longer a need for extraordinary health measures.
- Prime Minister Janez Jansa said, Slovenia has the best epidemic situation in Europe, which enables us to call off the general epidemic.

Borut Pahor is the current President of Slovenia; **Ljubljana** is the capital and largest city of Slovenia. The euro is the official currency of the Slovenia.

Israel Names Street after Rabindranath Tagore on the Poet's 159th Birthday

- Israel has named a street in Tel Aviv after celebrated Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore as a tribute on his 159th birthday. The Israeli Embassy in India tweeted a photo of a signboard where the street was named Rehov Tagore; 'rehov' means street.
- Tagore, who wrote his poetry, novels, stories and plays in Bengali, in 1913 he, won the prestigious Nobel Prize in literature and till now, he is the only poet from India to have done so.
- The poet also composed the poem that later became the national anthem of India. Interestingly, the national anthem of Bangladesh, 'Amar Sonar Bangla', was also written by the same Bengali poet. The decision to name a street after Tagore was taken by the Tel Aviv Municipality in 1961. This was done to commemorate the centenary of his birth.

Rabindranath Tagore Every year, Rabindra Jayanti is celebrated on the 25th day of the Bengali month of Boishakh. Rabindranath Tagore was born on this particular day in 1268 of the Bengali calendar. Rabindranath Tagore also known by his pen name Bhanu Singha Thakur (Bhonita), and also known by his sobriquets Gurudev, Kabiguru, and Biswakabi, was a polymath, poet, musician, artist and ayurveda-researcher from the Indian subcontinent. Author of the "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse" of Gitanjali, he became in 1913 the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. He is sometimes referred to as "the Bard of Bengal". He was awarded a knighthood by King George V in the 1915 Birthday Honours, but Tagore renounced it after the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

Zero turnout as Poland holds bizarre ghost election

- **Presidential election in Poland** had a **record low turnout of 0%**. The vote was **not officially cancelled but polling stations stayed closed**, leading to a strange ghost election after weeks of legal wrangling over whether or not it should go ahead.
- The **PiS-allied incumbent, Andrzej Duda**, was the **firm favourite to win**, and the opposition accused the government of trying to push through the vote now to make it easier for him to win in the first round.
- The **EU member of 38 million people found itself in this bizarre “Twilight Zone” predicament** in which the presidential ballot was formally neither postponed nor cancelled, because the government and opposition were unable to agree on a constitutional and safe solution.

Poland is a country located in Central Europe. Poland's capital and largest metropolis is Warsaw. Poland is a member state of the Schengen Area, the United Nations, NATO, the OECD, the Three Seas Initiative, the Visegrád Group, and guested at the G20. Mateusz Jakub Morawiecki has been the Prime Minister of Poland since December 2017. Andrzej Duda is the current President of Poland, holding the office since 6 August 2015. The **złoty** is the official currency and legal tender of Poland.

International tourism to decline 60-80% in 2020: UNWTO report

- The **COVID-19 pandemic has caused a 22% fall in international tourist arrivals during the first quarter of 2020**, the latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) shows.
- According to the **United Nations specialized agency**, the crisis could lead to an **annual decline of between 60% and 80%** when compared with 2019 figures. This places millions of livelihoods at risk and threatens to roll back progress made in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Nepal to publish new political map

- In a tit for tat move, **Nepal will publish a new political map** asserting its **claim over the Kalapani region** that has been **at the centre of a simmering territorial dispute with India**. Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh belong to Nepal and appropriate diplomatic measures will be **adopted to resolve existing issues with India**.
- The **announcement of a new map** is being viewed as a response to India's publication of a new political map in 2019, which depicted the **newly formed Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh**. The same map had triggered the border row with Nepal as it showed the **tri-junction territory of Kalapani as part of the state of Uttarakhand**.

The **Kalapani territory** is an area **under Indian administration as part of Pithoragarh district in the Uttarakhand state**, but is **also claimed by Nepal since 1998**. According to Nepal's claim, it lies in **Darchula district, Sudurpashchim Pradesh**. The valley of Kalapani, with the **Lipulekh Pass at the top**, forms the Indian route to **Kailash–Manasarovar, an ancient pilgrimage site**. It is also the traditional trading route to Tibet for the **Bhotiyas of Uttarakhand and Tinkar valley**. The **Treaty of Sugauli** established the boundary line of Nepal, was signed on **2 December 1815 and ratified by 4 March 1816** between the **East India Company and Raj Guru Gajaraj Mishra** with **Chandra Shekhar Upadhaya** for Nepal following the **Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16**.

The ‘travel bubble’ idea

- The **Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania** started what is being referred to as a **‘travel bubble’** to help put their economies back on track post-Covid lockdowns.
- With the pandemic throwing both international and domestic trade and travel out of gear since earlier this year, **such ‘travel bubbles’ are now being recommended to keep at least parts of the global economy afloat**.
- **Creating a travel bubble involves reconnecting countries** or states that have shown a good level of success in containing the novel coronavirus pandemic domestically. Such a bubble would allow the members of the group to **rekindle trade ties with each other, and kickstart sectors such as travel and tourism**.

The Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania started what is being referred to as a ‘travel bubble’ to help put their economies back on track post-Covid lockdowns. Creating a travel bubble involves reconnecting countries or states that have shown a good level of success in containing the novel coronavirus pandemic domestically. Such a bubble would allow the members of the group to rekindle trade ties with each other, and kickstart sectors such as travel and tourism. Denmark and Sweden are not referred as Baltic countries but these countries are referred as Scandinavia countries. Scandinavia countries cover the three kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

Israel swears in unity government

- Israel’s Parliament swore in its new unity government led by Prime Minister Netanyahu and his former rival Benny Gantz, ending the longest political crisis in the nation’s history. Lawmakers in the 120-person parliament, the Knesset, formally approved the three-year coalition government with 73 voting for and 49 against.
- Under a power-sharing deal agreed in April, right-wing PM Benjamin Netanyahu will serve for another 18 months. His centrist rival Benny Gantz will serve as deputy PM, before taking over. The two men have agreed to press ahead with a controversial plan to annex part of the occupied West Bank - a process that could get under way from 1 July.

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.

Benjamin Netanyahu heads to court as first sitting Israeli PM on trial

- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was heading to court to face corruption charges in the first criminal trial ever against a sitting Israeli leader.
- Netanyahu is set to appear at the opening hearing at a Jerusalem district court, after his request to have his lawyers represent him instead was rejected.

Moeketsi Majoro sworn in as Lesotho’s new Prime Minister

- Moeketsi Majoro has been sworn in as Lesotho’s Prime Minister following the resignation of his embattled predecessor, Thomas Thabane.
- Thabane’s decision to step down came amid mounting pressure over a case in which he and his current wife are suspected of involvement in the 2017 murder of his estranged wife.

Lesotho is an enclaved country within the border of South Africa. Along with the Vatican City and San Marino, it is one of only three independent states completely surrounded by the territory of another country, and the only one outside the Italian peninsula or that is not a microstate. Its capital and largest city is Maseru. The Loti is the currency of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Trump Will Withdraw From Open Skies Arms Control Treat

- United States will withdraw from the Treaty on Open Skies, a nearly 30-year-old pact designed to reduce the chances of an accidental war by allowing mutual reconnaissance flights for members of the 34-country agreement.
- The planned withdrawal marks another example of the erosion of a global arms-control framework that Washington and Moscow began hashing out painstakingly during the Cold War. The Trump administration pulled out of a 1987 pact with Russia governing intermediate-range missiles, citing violations by Moscow, and withdrew from a 2015 nuclear accord with Iran, saying Tehran wasn’t living up to the spirit of it.

- **Open Skies** emerged out of a proposal that **President Dwight D. Eisenhower** initially suggested to the Soviets to promote transparency about military surveillance overflights.
- The Soviet Union rejected his offer, but **President George H.W. Bush** revived the idea, and the **multicountry pact** was signed in 1992 after the fall of the Soviet Union. It came into force in 2002, after the 20th nation ratified the agreement.
- At present, the treaty includes **34 countries** and allows each to carry out **reconnaissance flights** over one another's territory on short notice to gather information about military activities.

Open Skies Treaty was first proposed in 1955 by former US President **Dwight Eisenhower** as a means to deescalate tensions during the Cold War, the landmark treaty was eventually signed in 1992 between **NATO members** and former **Warsaw Pact countries** following the demise of the Soviet Union. It went into effect in 2002 and currently has **35 signatories** along with one non-ratifying member (**Kyrgyzstan**).

US Navy successfully tests a laser weapon that can destroy aircraft mid-flight

- A US Navy warship has successfully tested a new **high-energy laser weapon** that can **destroy aircraft mid-flight**, the Navy's Pacific Fleet has announced. Images and videos provided by the Navy show the **amphibious transport dock ship USS Portland** executing "the first system-level implementation of a **high-energy class solid-state laser**" to disable an aerial drone aircraft.
- It did not give a specific location of the **laser weapons system demonstrator (LWSD)** test, saying only that it occurred in the Pacific on May 16. Navy ships face an increasing number of threats in conducting their missions, including **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles**, armed small boats, and adversary intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems.
- The US Navy has been developing **directed-energy weapons (DEWs)**, to include lasers, since the 1960s. DEWs are defined as **electromagnetic systems capable of converting chemical or electrical energy to radiated energy and focusing it on a target**, resulting in physical damage that degrades, neutralises, defeats, or destroys an adversarial capability, the statement said.

Thirty countries launch alliance to share COVID-19 tools

- **Thirty countries** led by **Costa Rica** and the **World Health Organization** launched an initiative aimed at sharing **vaccines, medicines and diagnostic tools** to tackle the global coronavirus pandemic.
- While the developing nations' push, called the **COVID-19 Technology Access Pool**, was welcomed by groups including **Doctors Without Borders**, a drug industry alliance questioned if it would really boost collaboration or broaden access to COVID-19 medicines.

European Union unveils €750 billion economy rescue plan

- The **European Union (EU)**'s executive unveiled a **€750 billion plan to prop up economies** hammered by the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, hoping to end months of squabbling over how to fund a recovery that has **exposed fault-lines across the 27-nation bloc**.
- Under the proposal, which could still be blocked by more frugal northern nations, the **European Commission** would **borrow the funds from the market and then disburse two-thirds in grants and the rest in loans** to cushion the unprecedented slump expected this year due to the coronavirus lockdowns.

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**.

Russia announces postponement of BRICS and SCO Summits in wake of Covid-19

- **Russia announced that summit meetings of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (Brics) grouping and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which it was to host in July, has been postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic.**
- **In view of the coronavirus pandemic and the related restrictions, the Organising Committee to Prepare and Support Russia's SCO Presidency in 2019-2020 and BRICS Chairmanship in 2020 decided to postpone the BRICS leaders' meeting and the meetings of the SCO Heads of State Council, initially scheduled to take place on July 21-23, 2020, in St Petersburg," said an official statement from the Kremlin.**
- **The SCO currently comprises eight Member States (China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan).**

China develops world's first 3D AI news anchor which mimics human voice

- **China develops world's first 3D AI news anchor which mimics human voice, Xinhua a Chinese news agency added an AI 3D news anchor to its lineup of virtual presenters reported the daily mail. The AI 3D news anchor named Xin Xiaowei was jointly developed by Xinhua and search engine Sogou which is a Chinese technology company specialising in web search.**
- **As per the company claims the AI news anchor can imitate human voices, facial expressions, lip movements, and mannerisms using only text inputs. Xinhua launched its first AI anchor in 2018 and had introduced four 2D digital newsreaders before bringing in the latest creation.**

China's first home-built aircraft carrier begins sea trials to test weapons

- **China's first domestically built aircraft carrier has begun sea trials to test weapons and equipment capabilities and sharpen training for its crew.**
- **The aircraft carrier, Shandong, named after a coastal province in eastern China, left its docking port Dalian in Liaoning province to start the first trials since being commissioned in December, 2019. The trials come amid rising tension with the US over weapon sales to Taiwan and a strong assertion by a Chinese PLA general that reunifying Taiwan by force is an option for Beijing.**

Donald Trump announces America is terminating its relationship with WHO

- **United States President Donald Trump has announced that America is terminating its relationship with World Health Organization over its handling of the Corona virus. He blamed WHO and China for the deaths and destruction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic across the globe.**
- **The US President said, because they have failed to make the requested and greatly needed reforms, the United States will be terminating its relationship with WHO forthwith and redirecting those funds to other worldwide and deserving, urgent global public health needs.**
- **Stating that the funding of the WHO would now be diverted to other global public health organisations, Trump announced a series of decisions against China including issuing proclamation to deny entry to certain Chinese nationals and tightening of regulations against Chinese investments in America. Trump also announced that the US will end special treatment of Hong Kong in response to Chinese imposition of new controls.**

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. Currently, it has 194 member countries, while at the time of its founding only 61 countries signed its constitution.

ECONOMY AND FINANCE



Economy News

India placed at 53rd in budget transparency, accountability in IBP survey

- India has been placed at 53rd position among 117 nations in terms of budget transparency and accountability, according to the Open Budget Survey.
- The survey, conducted by International Budget Partnership (IBP), has provided India's Union Budget process a transparency score of 49 out of 100, which is higher than the global average of 45. New Zealand tops the chart with a score 87.
- However, the survey observed that absence of a published Pre-Budget Statement and not bringing out a Mid-Year Review in 2018-19 pulled down the transparency score for the Union Budget of India.
- Some of the other large developing countries, with the exception of China, have got much higher transparency scores compared to India.

The survey, covering 117 countries, rates the level of budget transparency across countries on a scale of 0-100, based on several normative, internationally comparable indicators. It evaluates for each country, the availability of eight key budget documents of the Central or Federal Government, and assesses whether these are made public, in a timely manner, and provide comprehensive information.

AYURAKSHA-Corona Se Jung-Delhi Police Ke Sang launched by All India Institute of Ayurveda

- The All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), under Ministry of AYUSH and Delhi Police organised AYURAKSHA programme for Delhi Police personal at New Delhi.
- The joint programme titled AYURAKSHA “Corona Se Jung- Delhi Police Ke Sang” aims to fight against corona through simple and time tested Ayurveda immunity boosting measures.
- These measures are as per the advisory issued by the Ministry of AYUSH. The recommended formulations like Chyawanaprasha (Amla as main content), Anu Taila and Sanshamani Vati (prepared from Guduchi) have simple herbs which are time tested and scientifically proven for enhancing the immunity.

200 new mandis from seven states join e-NAM for marketing of agricultural produce

- Two hundred new mandis from seven states joined the e-NAM platform for marketing of Agricultural produce. They include 94 Mandis of Rajasthan, 27 Mandis of Tamil Nadu, 25 Mandis each from Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, 16 Mandis of Odisha, 11 Mandis of Andhra Pradesh and two Mandis of Karnataka.
- This will bring the total number of e-NAM mandis in the country to 785. It is for the first time that Karnataka has been added to the list of e-NAM states.

National Agriculture Market or eNAM is an online trading platform for agricultural commodities in India. The market facilitate farmers, traders and buyers with online trading in commodities. It was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. The electronic market pilot across India was launched on 14 April 2016 by Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. The Portal is managed by Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) with the technology provider, NFCL's iKisan division. A similar project was initiated by the Congress government in the State of Karnataka, during UPA tenure and had been a great success. NDA government has rolled it out nationally.

Nitin Gadkari Launches Portal for Innovative MSME Ideas

- Union Minister Nitin Gadkari launched a portal for uploading ideas and innovations regarding the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector. The 'MSME Bank of Ideas, Innovation and Research' portal was launched via video-conference.
- Registered users on the portal can share ideas, innovation and research, which will be reviewed by the officer concerned and published for public view. The users can rate these ideas for crowd sourcing and venture capitalists can also connect with the users.

Gadkari sets road construction target for next two years at Rs 15 lakh crore

- Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and MSMEs Shri Nitin Gadkari held meeting via video conferencing with the members of SIAM (Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers) Institute on impact of COVID-19 on auto sector.
- Shri Gadkari also said that industry should focus more on innovation, technology and research skill to become competitive in global market. He has set a target of constructing roads worth Rs 15 lakh crore in the next two years. He said, his ministry is working overtime to clear all arbitration cases with concessionaires. On the question of BS-IV vehicles, he said the government is bound by the Supreme Court verdict on the same. India migrates to BS-VI emission standards on April 1, 2020. The standards, based on European regulations were first introduced in 2000.

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.

President Trump nominates Indian-American as US representative to IBRD

- US President Donald Trump has nominated Indian-American Ashok Michael Pinto as a representative to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Pinto was nominated as US Alternate Executive Director of IBRD for a term of two years.
- If confirmed by the Senate, Pinto would replace Erik Bethel, who has resigned from the post. Pinto currently serves as Counselor to the Under Secretary for International Affairs at the United States Department of the Treasury. Pinto was Special Assistant and Associate Counsel to President George W Bush during private practice at two international law firms. Trump had announced his intent to nominate Pinto for this position on April 9.

US places India on priority watch list for intellectual property protection

- The US placed India on the 'Priority Watch List' for lack of sufficient measurable improvements to its intellectual property framework on the "long-standing" and "new challenges" that have negatively affected American right holders over the past year.
- The US placed 10 countries, including some of its major trading partners like India and China, on the list, alleging that enforcement of the intellectual properties have deteriorated or remained at inadequate levels and the Americans who rely on their protection have difficulty with fair and equitable market access.

- The countries placed on the list by the Trump administration on **intellectual property (IP) related issues** are **Algeria, Argentina, Chile, China, India, Indonesia, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine and Venezuela.**

IRDAI Sets up Panel to Draft Standard Professional Indemnity Policy for Insurance Intermediaries

- The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has **set up a panel to frame standard professional indemnity policy for insurance intermediaries** that can be issued by all the insurers.
- The development came after the regulator witnessed several instances where policies taken by insurance intermediaries did not comply with the regulatory provisions. It is being **headed by Yegnapriya Bharat, CGM (Non-Life), IRDAI.** Its members are Umesh Rathod (The New India Assurance Co), Kasturi Sengupta (National Insurance Co), Surbhi Goel (HDFC ERGO General Insurance Co), and Najim B (TATA AIG General Insurance Co).

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.

Enhancing audit independence: Ministry sets up 7-member panel

- The **Corporate Affairs Ministry (MCA)** has **constituted a seven-member committee to examine the comments received on the consultation paper floated** by it for enhancing audit independence and accountability in the country.
- The committee will examine the comments and make recommendations requiring any amendments in law, rules and standards **to achieve the objective of enhancement of audit independence and accountability.** The panel has been asked to submit its report by June 30.
- **The committee members are: Amarjit Chopra, Past President of CA Institute; KVR Murty, Joint Secretary, MCA; PR Ramesh, former Deloitte India Chairman; Ajay Bahl, Co-Founder & Managing Partner, AZB Partners; Sridhar Pamarthi, Joint Director, MCA; NK Dua, Joint Director, MCA, and Atma Sah, Deputy Director, MCA.**

India has more internet users in rural areas than urban: IAMAI report

- **Internet users in rural areas surpassed those in urban areas for the first time**, according to the **'Digital in India'** report by the Internet & Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).
- As of last November, **there were 227 million active internet users in rural areas which is 10% more than around 205 million in urban areas.** In total, India had 504 million active internet users.
- The report showed that in rural India, the number of people actively accessing the internet **on a daily basis increased by 30 million** since March last year. However, the time spent on the internet is higher in urban India compared to the rural areas.
- **Almost 70% of the active internet users in India are daily users** where nine out of 10 in urban India access it at least once a week, the report added.

India's unemployment rate soars to 27.11% amid Covid-19 crisis: CMIE

- The Covid-19 crisis has led to a spike in the **country's unemployment rate to 27.11 per cent for the week ended May 3, up from the under 7 per cent level before the start of the pandemic in mid-March**, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) has said.
- The Mumbai-based think tank said the **rate of unemployment was the highest in the urban areas**, which constitute the most number of the red zones due to the Covid-19 cases, at 29.22 per cent, as against 26.69 per cent for the rural areas.

Cooperative banks come under SARFAESI Act: SC

- The Supreme Court held that cooperative banks established under a State law or multi-State level societies come within the ambit of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act of 2002. The Act prescribes a procedure for faster recovery of dues.
- “Parliament has legislative competence to provide additional procedures for recovery under Section 13 of the Act with respect to cooperative banks,” the 159-page judgment by a Constitution Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra observed. A court held that recovery was an essential part of banking. Co-operative banks come within the definition of “Banking Company” under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

Nirmala Sitharaman launches Rupee-Dollar F&O Contracts on BSE, NSE

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched Rupee-Dollar (INR-USD) futures and options contracts on the two international exchanges BSE's India INX and NSE's NSE-IFSC at GIFT International Financial Services Centre in Gandhinagar through video conference.
- Over the last decade or so, a significant market share in financial services related to India has moved to other international financial centres. Bringing this business to India is clearly beneficial in terms of economic activity and employment gains for India. The launch of INR-USD contracts at the exchanges in GIFT-IFSC is a step in this direction. This will be available 22 hours across all time zones for all global participants from GIFT IFSC.

Government announces collateral free loan worth 3 lakh crore rupees benefiting 45 lakh MSMEs

- Indian Government has announced the first tranche of stimulus packages, under the Atma-Nirbhar Bharat Yojana. The Union Cabinet approved additional funding of up to Rs 3 lakh crore at a concessional rate of 9.25 per cent through the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to help Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector reeling under the impact of coronavirus pandemic. The ECLGS was unveiled as part of the Rs 20 lakh crore comprehensive package announced by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- Under this scheme, MSMEs will get guaranteed emergency credit at interest rates of up to 9.25 per cent from banks. Similarly, interest rates on collateral-free loans have been capped at 12 per cent for loans extended by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) to MSMEs. 100 per cent guarantee coverage will be provided for the borrowers under the scheme by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC).
- All MSMEs with an annual turnover of up to Rs 100 crore and having outstanding credit of up to Rs 25 crore as on February 29 this year would be eligible under the scheme. The loans will have a moratorium of a year on the principal amount, and must be repaid in four years thereafter.

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 20 crore and turnover up to Rs 100 crore will be termed medium enterprises.

Concessional credit of Rs 2 lakh cr announced for 2.5 cr farmers through Kisan Credit Cards

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announces two lakh crore concessional credit boost through the Kisan Credit Card Special drive benefiting over 2.5 crore farmers in the country.

- **Fishermen and animal husbandry farmers** will also be **included in this special drive** which will enable the farmers to gain access to the institutional credit at concessional interest rates. **Referring to the swift government response to address the COVID situation**, Finance Minister informed about the agricultural loans worth four lakh crore rupees availed by marginal farmers as agricultural loans.

Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme is a credit scheme introduced in August 1998 by Indian banks. This model scheme was prepared by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) on the recommendations of R.V.GUPTA committee to provide term loans for agricultural needs.

Government announces reforms in 8 key sectors; FDI in defence production hiked, coal & mineral mining opened for private players

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled structural reforms for various sectors to **help build a self-reliant India under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Campaign**. Finance Minister in her announcement of the fourth tranche of measures outlined structural reforms with **focus on eight sectors of coal, minerals, defence production, civil aviation, power distribution companies, space sector and atomic energy**. In a major announcement, Ms Sitharaman informed that, **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in defence manufacturing under automatic route will be raised from 49 per cent to 74 per cent**.
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced **private sector participation in coal sector through a revenue sharing mechanism**. This will also enable bidding for a coal block and selling it in the open market by private entities. **Ms. Sitharaman informed that 50 blocks will be available for bidding at the earliest**. A detailed roadmap for investment of Rs 50 thousand crore towards development of Infrastructure for evacuation of coal has also been outlined.
- Finance Minister added that **six more airports will be put up for auction under the PPP model for their operation and management**. Ms. Sitharaman announced that an **additional investment of Rs 12 thousand crore** is expected in the **12 airports** already proposed for development by the private players.
- She also announced the proposal to **privatise the power departments in Union Territories** ensuring better **services and efficiency in power distribution**. Finance Minister announced that, the government will boost private sector investments in social-infrastructure projects, like hospitals. **The total outlay for this has been projected to be at Rs 8 thousand crore after an increase in the Viability Gap Share to 30 per cent in all such projects**.
- A major push to the decision is aimed at by **allowing private sector to use ISRO facilities and other relevant assets to improve their capabilities**. Future projects for planetary exploration and outer space travel has also been opened to the private sector. **In a major sectoral reform for the atomic energy sector**, Finance Minister announced **establishment of research reactors on PPP basis for production of medical isotopes**.

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.

Defence Ministry signs contract with Tata Power SED for infra modernisation at 37 airfields

- The Defence Ministry signed a contract with Tata Power SED for **modernisation of infrastructure at 37 airfields** of the Indian Air Force, Coast Guard and the Navy at a cost of around Rs 1,200 crore.

- This is the phase two of the **Modernisation of Airfield Infrastructure (MAFI)** programme, the ministry said, adding that airfields of the Indian Air Force were upgraded in the first phase. “**The airfields modernised under MAFI phase-1 have been of immense benefit to both military and civil users**”. The modern equipment around the airfield will also be directly connected to Air Traffic Control (ATC), thereby providing excellent control of the airfield systems to the air traffic controllers.

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.

AIIB approves \$500 million loan to support India's Covid-19 operations

- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's (AIIB) approved a \$500 million loan to support India's Covid-19 operations.
- Co-financed by the World Bank, the funds were aimed at enabling the government to scale up its containment efforts and to strengthen the health system to manage future outbreaks as well.

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development bank that aims to support the building of infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific region. The bank currently has 78 members as well as 24 prospective members from around the world. Jin Liqun is currently the President of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). It is headquartered in Beijing, China.

Atal Pension Yojana achieves 2.23 crore enrolment in 5 years

- The government's flagship social security scheme, Atal Pension Yojana (APY), has achieved the milestone of **2.23 subscribers** as it completes five years of its implementation. Under the scheme, the government provides the guarantee of minimum pension after 60 years of age.
- Launched on May 9, 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with an objective of delivering old age income security, particularly to the workers in the unorganised sector, the scheme still remains relevant for addressing the challenges of the rapidly increasing aging population of India.
- In its sixth year, the scheme has now been implemented comprehensively across the country covering all the states and Union Territories with male to female subscription ratio of 57:43.

MSME Ministry launches CHAMPIONS portal

- Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, MSME Ministry has launched CHAMPIONS portal www.Champions.gov.in, a technology driven control room-cum-management information system. The initiative is aimed at assisting Indian MSMEs to march into big league as national and global champions.
- The CHAMPIONS stands for Creation and Harmonious Application of Modern Processes for Increasing the Output and National Strength. The portal is basically for making the smaller units big by solving their grievances, encouraging, supporting, helping and handholding.
- The system is enabled by Artificial Intelligence, Data Analytics and Machine Learning. It is also fully integrated on real time basis with GOI's main grievances portal CPGRAMS and MSME Ministry's web based mechanisms. As of now, 66 State Level Control Rooms are created as part of the system.

BRICS' New Development Bank provides USD 1 billion loan to India to fight COVID-19

- The New Development Bank of the BRICS countries has fully disbursed USD one billion emergency assistance loan to India to help it contain the spread of COVID-19 and reduce human, social and economic losses caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

- The Shanghai-based New Development Bank (NDB) was established by the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries in 2014 and is headed by veteran Indian banker K V Kamath.
- The purpose of the bank is to mobilise resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS countries and other emerging economies and developing nations, complementing the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development.
- The ‘Emergency Assistance Program Loan’ to India was approved by the NDB Board of Directors on April 30, and it is aimed at supporting the Indian government to contain the spread of COVID-19. The NDB Board of Governors welcomed the establishment of an Emergency Assistance Facility to meet the emergency needs of the member countries of the bank.

BRICS is the acronym for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Originally the first four were grouped as “BRIC” (China, Brazil, Russia and India), before the induction of South Africa in 2010. In 2009, the first BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia.

India up at 74th place on WEF’s global energy transition index

- India has moved up two positions to rank 74th on a global ‘Energy Transition Index’ with improvements on all key parameters of economic growth, energy security and environmental sustainability, the World Economic Forum (WEF) said.
- Releasing the annual rankings, the Geneva-based international organisation for public-private cooperation said Covid-19 will compromise the transition to clean energy without an urgent stakeholder action as unprecedented disruptions due to the pandemic threaten this transition.
- In its report, the WEF said its study measuring readiness for clean energy transition in 115 economies showed that 94 have made progress since 2015, but environmental sustainability continues to lag.
- Sweden has topped the Energy Transition Index (ETI) for the third consecutive year and is followed by Switzerland and Finland in the top three.

For India, gains have come from a government-mandated renewable energy expansion programme, now extended to 275 GW by 2027. India has also made significant strides in energy efficiency through bulk procurement of LED bulbs, smart meters, and programs for labelling of appliances. Similar measures are being experimented to drive down the costs of electric vehicles, the WEF said. India’s improvements have come across all three dimensions of the energy triangle – economic development and growth, energy access and security, and environmental sustainability.

Bengaluru airport voted as best regional airport in India & Central Asia

- The Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru has won this year’s SKYTRAX Award for Best Regional Airport in India and Central Asia, said Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL).
- The airport was voted by customers as the Best Regional Airport in India & Central Asia for the third time in four years at the 2020 World Airport Awards. In the previous SKYTRAX Awards, the Bengaluru airport was adjudged the best airport in India in 2011 and the second best airport in India in 2012.

Kempegowda International Airport is an international airport serving Bangalore, the capital of the Indian state of Karnataka. The airport opened in May 2008. It is named after Kempe Gowda I, the founder of Bangalore. Airport became Karnataka’s first fully solar powered airport developed by CleanMax Solar.

Third tranche of Rs 20 lakh cr economic package; focus on agriculture & allied activities

- Government has announced a 1.63 lakh crore rupee package for agriculture and allied sectors aimed at strengthening infrastructure, logistics and capacity building at farm gate.

- Announcing the **third tranche of an overall package of 20 lakh crore rupees to deal with the economic situation arising of COVID-19 pandemic**, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a **one lakh crore rupees Agri Infrastructure Fund** that will **finance projects at farm-gate and aggregation point for efficient post-harvest management of crops**. Besides, schemes for micro food enterprises, cattle vaccination, dairy sector, herbal plantation, beekeeping, and fruits and vegetables were also announced.

Govt introduces new scheme of interest subvention on working capital loans for dairy sector

- Union Government has introduced a new scheme of Interest Subvention on Working Capital Loans for Dairy sector for supporting Dairy Cooperatives and Farmer Producer Organizations** engaged in dairy activities for implementation during 2020-21.
- Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying** said, **due to higher milk procurement and lower sales during the COVID-19 lockdown**, the milk and dairy cooperatives have resorted to large scale conversion into high shelf-life products like milk powder, white butter and ghee.
- In order to meet the working capital needs of the Cooperatives and Farmer owned milk producer companies, interest subvention will be given on **working capital loan taken from banks and financial institutions between 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021**.

India's dairy sector provides livelihood to about 70 million households. A key feature of India's dairy sector is the predominance of small producers. In 2017, if the average herd size in a dairy farm was 191 in the U.S., 355 in Oceania, 148 in the U.K. and 160 in Denmark, it was just 2 in India. **Yet, due to Operation Flood after the 1960s, India's contribution to world milk production rose from 5% in 1970 to 20% in 2018.** Today, **India is largely self-sufficient in milk production.** It does not import or export milk in any significant quantity. **India is the largest milk producing country in the world.**

Andhra Pradesh launches mega restart package for MSMEs

- As a lockdown exit plan, **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy** announced a **mega boost for MSMEs with a Rs 1,110 crore restart package**.
- The government will be **immediately releasing Rs 450 crore as the first installment** which would benefit nearly 98,000 units. **These units employ more than 10 lakh people** who were facing hardships due to the lockdown.

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 20 crore and turnover up to Rs 100 crore will be termed medium enterprises.**

UN forecasts pandemic to shrink world economy by 3.2%

- The United Nations forecast that the COVID-19 pandemic will shrink the world economy by 3.2 per cent this year, the sharpest contraction since the Great Depression in the 1930s.** In January, before COVID-19 became a pandemic, the U.N. had forecast a modest acceleration in growth of 2.5 per cent in 2020.
- The U.N.'s mid-year report released said COVID-19 is expected to **slash global economic output by nearly \$8.5 trillion over the next two years**, wiping out nearly all gains of the last four years.

- The United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects report said the pandemic is also “exacerbating poverty and inequality,” with an estimated 34.3 million people likely to fall below the extreme poverty line in 2020 – 56 percent of them in Africa.

Jeff Bezos could be world’s first trillionaire, followed by Mukesh Ambani in 2033, says study

- Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos could potentially become the world’s first trillionaire as early as 2026, at which point he will be aged 62, says a study.
- Despite losing an estimated \$38 billion as part of his recent divorce, Bezos is still by far the world’s richest person and his net worth has grown by 34% on average over the last five years, said the study by Comparisun, a company which helps organisations compare different business products.
- Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg could gain trillionaire status almost a decade later than Bezos. But Zuckerberg’s current rate growth would see him worth \$1 trillion aged 51, said the study.
- India’s Mukesh Ambani could become a trillionaire in 2033 when he will be aged 75, according to the research which said that Chinese real estate tycoon Xu Jiayin will follow Bezos to become the second trillionaire in the world in 2027. Alibaba’s Jack Ma could become a trillionaire in 2030 when he will be aged 65.

Uttar Pradesh launches ‘Startup Fund’ to encourage youth for entrepreneurship

- Uttar Pradesh has launched the ‘Uttar Pradesh Startup Fund’ to encourage the youth of the state for entrepreneurship. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath handed over the first installment of 15 crore rupees to Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) at a function in Lucknow.
- He termed the MoU between the state government and SIDBI as a step in this direction, which will further strengthen the possibilities of job creation in state.

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.

India becomes world’s second largest manufacturer of PPE body coveralls, next to China

- India has become the world’s second largest manufacturer of personal protective equipment (PPE) body coveralls within a short time span of two months, the government said. China is the world’s leading producer of PPE body coveralls, crucial to safeguard against the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- The Ministry of Textiles said it has been taking several steps to ensure that both quality and quantity of PPE coveralls going up to the desired levels within a very short span of time of two months, “thereby catapulting India into the world’s second largest manufacturer of body coveralls, next only to China”.

Cabinet approves Scheme for Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises

- Union Cabinet gave its approval to a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme named Scheme for Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises for the Unorganized Sector on All India basis with an outlay of Rs. 10 thousand crore. The expenditure will be shared by Centre and the States in ratio of 60:40.
- The objectives of the scheme is to increase in access to finance by micro food processing units, increase in revenues of target enterprises, enhanced compliance with food quality and safety standards, strengthening capacities of support systems and transition from the unorganized sector to the formal sector, special focus on women entrepreneurs and aspirational districts, encourage Waste to Wealth activities and focus on minor forest produce in tribal districts.

- Scheme will be **implemented over a five-year period from 2020-21 to 2024-25** and two lakh micro-enterprises are to be assisted with credit linked subsidy. Micro enterprises will get credit linked subsidy at 35 per cent of the eligible project cost with ceiling of Rs. 10 lakh.

Cabinet approves additional funding of up to Rs. three lakh crore through introduction of ECLGS

- Union Cabinet has approved additional funding of up to Rs. three lakh crore through introduction of Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS).
- Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line (GECL) facility to help eligible Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) borrowers, including interested MUDRA borrowers.
- Cabinet also decided 100 per cent credit guarantee coverage by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC) to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs). For this purpose, a corpus of 41,600 crore rupees shall be provided by Government of India spread over the current and the next three financial years.

Edelweiss General usage-based motor cover

- In an industry first, Edelweiss General Insurance has launched a motor OD (own damage) floater policy that allows the insured to pay as he/she uses the vehicle.
- Called Edelweiss Switch, this driver-based motor insurance policy, launched under regulatory sandbox, allows the vehicle owner to switch the insurance “on” and “off” based on usage and covers multiple vehicles under a single policy. This driver-based policy means lower premium for policyholders, as they will only pay as per usage. Also, this policy covers multiple vehicles under one policy, adding to the savings, especially for those customers who own multiple vehicles.

IRDAI approves Union Bank to continue with its 30% holding in India First Life Insurance

- Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has approved Union Bank of India's proposal to continue with its 30% holding in India First Life Insurance with the caveat that the lender will exercise no control in the management of the insurer.
- The bank was earlier expected to divest either the entire stake in India First Life Insurance, or a sizable part of it, as IRDAI guidelines prohibit a lender to own more than 10% stake in two insurance companies.

Government notifies BS-VI emission norms for quadricycles

- Indian Government has notified BS-VI emission norms for quadricycles, paving the way for higher production of the new category of vehicle that was introduced less than two years ago.
- “The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued notification regarding the emission norms for L7 (quadricycle) category for BS-VI. These norms are applicable from the date of notification. This notification completes the process of BS-VI for all category vehicles in India,” the government said in a release. The emission norms are on the lines of the European Union's World Motorcycle Test Cycle (WMTC).

Bharat stage emissions standards are based on European regulations were first introduced in 2000. Since October 2010, Bharat Stage (BS) III norms have been enforced across the country. In 13 major cities, Bharat Stage IV emission norms have been in place since April 2010 and it has been enforced for entire country since April 2017. In 2016, the Indian government announced that the country would skip the BS-V norms altogether and adopt BS-VI norms by 2020.

REC ties up with TajSATS to provide meals to frontline healthcare workers

- State-owned shadow banking firm REC has tied up with TajSATS to provide food to frontline health workers fighting the COVID-19 battle.

- **REC (formerly known as Rural Electrification Corporation)** is spearheading the mission to feed the medical staff in key government hospitals as well as poor daily wage labourers across the nation, through collaborative efforts.
- **REC Foundation, the CSR arm of REC, has partnered with TajSATS (a joint venture of Indian Hotels Company Ltd and SATS Ltd)** to distribute specially-made nutritious meal packets for medical staff in Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi.

ITC to acquire 100% stake in Sunrise Foods

- **ITC has entered into a share purchase agreement (SPA) to acquire 100 percent of the equity share capital of Sunrise Foods Private Limited (SFPL),** a company primarily engaged in the business of spices under the trademark ‘Sunrise’, subject to fulfilment of various terms and conditions as specified in the SPA.

CIPET renamed as Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology

- **Central Institute of Plastics Engineering & Technology (CIPET)** has been renamed as **Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology (CIPET)**, a premier national institution under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Govt. of India.
- The changed name has been registered under the **Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act 1975 (Tamil Nadu Act 27 of 1975)**. **Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers DV Sadananda Gowda** has said that now CIPET will be in a position to fully devote itself for the growth of entire petrochemical sector with a focus on Academics, Skilling, Technology Support and Research. **The primary objective of CIPET has been contributing towards the growth of the plastics industry** through a combined program of education and research.

Meeting of BRICS Heads of Tax Authorities held on May 29

- **The meeting of the Heads of Tax Authorities of the BRICS countries, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa was held through video conference in Russia.** The meeting was hosted by the **Federal Tax Service of Russia, which currently holds the BRICS Presidency,** to discuss the response of **BRICS Tax Authorities to the COVID-19 pandemic** and to explore potential areas of cooperation in tax matters. The meeting was scheduled to be held in Moscow, but was held through video conference in view of COVID-19. Finance Secretary **Ajay Bhushan Pandey** represented India at the meeting.

Anish Kapoor tops 2020 Hurun India Art List; his artworks' auction valuation worth Rs 44.39 cr

- With the last auctions valuing his works at Rs 44.39 crore in 2019, **London-based Anish Kapoor topped the Hurun India Art List 2020 for the second year in a row.**
- **At the second place in the list of top 50 living artists** is the 76-year-old New Delhi painter **Rameshwar Broota,** jumping nine notches at Rs 11.89 crore and the **third richest is 95-year-old modernist painter Krishen Khanna** at Rs 6.87 crore.

ADB signs 177 million dollars loan to upgrade major roads, highways in Maharashtra

- **The Asian Development Bank -ADB signed a 177 million US dollars loan to upgrade 450 km of state highways and major district roads in Maharashtra.**
- **Under the Maharashtra state road improvement project,** two major district roads and 11 state highways, with combined length of 450 km will be upgraded to two-lane standard across seven districts.

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.**

NHAI to develop 57 stretches of National Highway in every State to educate Highway Engineers

- National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has planned to develop 57 stretches of National Highway in every State to educate the Highway Engineers, including State PWD Engineers.
- These model stretches will have all the required safety and aesthetic features like Road Signs, Road Markings, Road Furniture and Safety Items, pedestrian facilities, Street Lighting, Plantation and CCTV cameras at all vulnerable locations.

Singapore top source of FDI in FY20 with investments worth USD 14.67 billion

- Singapore was the top source of foreign direct investment into India for the second consecutive financial year, accounting for about 30 per cent of FDI inflows in 2019-20. In the past two financial years, FDI from Singapore has surpassed that from Mauritius.
- In the last financial year, India attracted USD 14.67 billion in FDI from Singapore, whereas it was USD 8.24 billion from Mauritius, according to the data of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIT).
- FDI in India rose by 13 per cent - the sharpest pace in the last four fiscals - to a record USD 49.97 billion in 2019-20, according to the data. Total FDI into India including re-invested earnings and other capital in the last fiscal grew by 18 per cent to USD 73.45 billion as against USD 62 billion in 2018-19. FDI helps in improving the country's balance of payments and strengthen the rupee value against other global currencies, especially the US dollar.

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.

Banks in News

Kotak Mahindra Bank becomes first Indian lender to allow video KYC

- Kotak Mahindra Bank has introduced video-KYC facility for customers opening savings account on Kotak 811 - the bank's digital banking platform. The private lender is the first Indian bank to offer video based "zero-contact" onboarding service.
- The initiative is presently being launched on a pilot basis for savings accounts, Kotak Mahindra said. "The video KYC process to onboard new customers will be extended to other products in a phased manner,".
- "In this context, Video KYC can prove to be a game changer where customer verification is completed from the comfort of one's home or office without the need for a physical interaction."
- In January 2020, the Reserve Bank of India amended the Know Your Customer (KYC) norms and introduced the video-based KYC option to onboard customers. Kotak is the first bank to integrate the Video KYC process.

In 1985 Uday Kotak founded what later became an Indian financial services conglomerate. In February 2003, Kotak Mahindra Finance Ltd. (KMFL), the group's flagship company, received a banking licence from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). With this, KMFL became the first non-banking finance company in India to be converted into a bank: Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited. The Bank is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. As of April 2019, it is the second largest Indian private sector bank by market capitalization.

Sovereign Gold Bonds, a substitute for physical gold

- Sovereign gold bond is a substitute for holding physical gold. The bonds are issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on behalf of the government and bonds are denominated in gold.
- The government issues such bonds in tranches at a fixed price that investors can buy through banks, post offices and also in the secondary markets through the stock exchange platform. These bonds are backed by a sovereign guarantee and can also be held in demat form. Further, they are priced as per the underlying spot gold prices.
- Hence, investors who want to invest in gold can buy the bonds without worrying about safekeeping of physical gold along with locker charges, making charges or purity issues. Plus, these bonds offer an interest at the rate of 2.5% per annum on the principal investment amount.
- While the interests on the bonds are taxable, the capital gains at the time of redemption are exempt from tax. These bonds can also be used as collateral for availing loans from banks and NBFCs.

SGBs are government securities denominated in grams of gold. They are substitutes for holding physical gold. Investors have to pay the issue price in cash and the bonds will be redeemed in cash on maturity. The Bond is issued by Reserve Bank on behalf of Government of India. The Bonds are issued in denominations of one gram of gold and in multiples thereof. Minimum investment in the Bond shall be one gram with a maximum limit of subscription of 4 kg for individuals, 4 kg for Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) and 20 kg for trusts and similar entities notified by the government from time to time per fiscal year (April – March). In case of joint holding, the limit applies to the first applicant. The scheme was launched in 2015.

World Bank names financial crisis expert Carmen Reinhart as chief economist

- The World Bank named former Bear Stearns executive Carmen Reinhart as its new vice president and chief economist, tapping an expert on financial crises who also serves on the advisory board of the New York Federal Reserve.

- Reinhart has a Ph.D. from Columbia University and currently teaches international economics at the Harvard Kennedy School. She has also worked at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, International Monetary Fund and the University of Maryland.

Canara Bank launches special gold loan business vertical

- Bengaluru-based Canara Bank has launched a special business vertical dedicated for gold loans.
- The Bank's gold loan products are aimed at providing quick, hassle-free experience for customers with low interest cost. The loans will help the customers with the much-needed liquidity to revive their business activities and bring back normalcy in their lives.

Canara Bank is one of the largest public sector banks owned by the Government of India. It is headquartered in Bengaluru. It was established at Mangalore in 1906 by Ammembal Subba Rao Pai. It is one of the oldest public sector banks in the country. The government nationalized the bank in 1969. The tagline of Canara Bank is "Together we Can". As per the announcement made by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on 30 August 2019, Manipal based Syndicate Bank merged from 1 April 2020, making it the third largest bank in the country.

Nabard disburses Rs 20,500 crore to cooperative banks, RRBs

- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) has disbursed Rs 20,500 crore to cooperative banks and regional rural banks (RRBs) for on-lending to farmers.
- This amount, is part of the Rs 25,000 crore of special refinance facility provided by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to Nabard for refinancing regional rural banks (RRBs), cooperative banks and micro finance institutions (MFIs). "We have extended Rs 20,500 crore with Rs 15,200 crore to cooperative banks and the balance of Rs 5,300 crore to RRBs as special liquidity facilities in various states".

Govinda Rajulu Chintala appointed Nabard chairman

- Union Government has appointed Govinda Rajulu Chintala as chairman of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, an official communication said. Chintala is currently chief general manager at Nabard.
- The appointments committee of the union cabinet cleared Chintala's appointment for two years till his superannuation in July 2022. It also cleared the appointment of Shaji KV, currently general manager at Canara Bank, as deputy managing director at Nabard for five 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 to launch digital platform for SMEs

- The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) is launching an SME service platform to facilitate the digitisation of small businesses and make access to credit easier for those caught in a cash crunch owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The platform would also include several features to help micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) resume their operations remotely. The tools will be available free of charge for a limited period for MSMEs that are in partnership with fintech companies, industry bodies, and corporates.

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 extends regulatory benefits under SLF-MF scheme to all banks

- The Reserve Bank of India extended regulatory benefits to all banks including those deploying their own resources to extend liquidity support to the mutual funds under the Special Liquidity Facility for Mutual Funds SLF-MF scheme.
- The Reserve Bank had announced Rs 50,000-crore SLF-MF scheme to bailout the mutual funds facing redemption pressure. The scheme was announced in the backdrop of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund deciding to shut several schemes.
- Funds availed under the SLF-MF shall be used by banks exclusively for meeting the liquidity requirements of MFs by extending loans, and undertaking outright purchase of and/or repos against the collateral of investment grade corporate bonds, commercial papers (CPs), debentures and certificates of Deposit (CDs) held by MFs.

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.

NABARD disburses Rs.12,767 cr to State Co-op Banks, RRBs

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has disbursed Rs 12,767 crore to State Co-operative Banks (StCBs) and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) across the country to augment their resources for extending credit to farmers during the ongoing lockdown.
- There are 33 StCBs and 45 RRBs in the country, and they are important intermediaries in the rural credit structure.

Federal Bank, MoneyGram tie up for direct-to-bank account credit service

- MoneyGram Payment Systems has tied up with Federal Bank to offer a cost-effective direct-to-bank account credit option for customers in India. “Through this partnership, millions will be able to receive deposits directly in their bank accounts without leaving the confines of their homes, which is imperative in the current situation”.
- Private sector Federal Bank has an over 15 per cent share of the country’s remittance market and expects that the tie-up with MoneyGram will give the business a further boost.

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.

Nabard sanctions Rs 1,500 cr for Punjab to ensure credit flow to farmers

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned Rs 1,500 crore for Punjab to ensure continuous credit flow to farmers, through state cooperative banks, amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

- This is part of Nabard's Rs 25,000 crore nationwide special liquidity facility (SLF), which has been made available to state cooperative banks, regional rural banks, and microfinance institutions (MFIs), to ensure flow of credit to farmers for agricultural operations during COVID-19 pandemic.
- "Nabard has sanctioned a sum of Rs 1,500 crore, out of which an amount of Rs 1,000 crore has been sanctioned to Punjab State Cooperative Bank and Rs 500 crore to Punjab Gramin Bank".

Centre borrows another \$1 billion from World Bank for COVID-19 relief

- The Centre is taking another \$1 billion loan from the World Bank to support its COVID-19 relief measures and financial assistance for the poorest and most vulnerable communities. The money will also be used for reforms in India's social security net, making it more integrated, portable and focussed on the urban poor.
- The loan was approved by the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors. The bank had already approved a \$1 billion loan to support India's health sector in April, taking its total commitment to India's COVID-19 response to \$2 billion.

The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. The World Bank Group comprises five institutions managed by their member countries. It was established in 1944, the World Bank Group is headquartered in Washington, D.C. David Robert Malpass is an American economic analyst and former government official serving as President of the World Bank Group since 2019. Together, IBRD and IDA form the World Bank, which provides financing, policy advice, and technical assistance to governments of developing countries. IDA focuses on the world's poorest countries, while IBRD assists middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries.

ICICI offers FD scheme for senior citizens

- Private sector ICICI Bank will offer 6.55% on fixed deposits of 5-year to 10-year tenure for senior citizens, which is 80 basis points (bps) higher than the ordinary deposits.
- "Named 'ICICI Bank Golden Years FD', the scheme offers senior citizens an interest rate of 6.55% per annum for deposits up to Rs. 2 crore with a tenure of more than five to 10 years".

ICICI Bank Limited is an Indian multinational banking and financial services company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra with its registered office in Vadodara, Gujarat. ICICI Bank was established by the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI), an Indian financial institution, as a wholly-owned subsidiary in 1994. ICICI Bank is one of the Big Four banks of India others banks are SBI, Bank of Baroda and HDFC. Sandeep Bakhshi is the current MD & CEO, ICICI Bank since October 2018.

Indian economist Abhas Jha appointed to key World Bank position in South Asia

- Abhas Jha, an Indian economist, has been appointed by the World Bank to a key position on climate change and disaster management in South Asia. Jha's appointment comes at a time when Cyclone Amphan has badly hit West Bengal, Orissa in India and Bangladesh.
- In his capacity as World Bank's Practice Manager for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management for South Asia, one of the top priorities of Jha will be to encourage and help the South Asia region (SAR) Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change team to connect and collaborate across Global Practice boundaries.

Brazil's Marcos Troyjo is NDB's new President, India's Anil Kishora is VP

- Marcos Prado Troyjo, former deputy economy minister of Brazil will replace KV Kamath as the president of the New Development Bank's (NDB), a multilateral financial institution set up to mobilise resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies.
- The board of governors also appointed Anil Kishora, an Indian, as vice president of the NDB. Kishora, a banker, has 38 years of experience at India's largest bank, State Bank of India (SBI).

- Before joining the NDB, he worked as the deputy managing director and chief risk officer of the state-run SBI. The board of governors of NDB unanimously elected Marcos Prado Troyjo as the president. He will take charge on July 7, 2020.

New Development Bank (NDB), formerly referred to as the **BRICS Development Bank**, is a **multilateral development bank established by the BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)**. According to the Agreement on the NDB, “the Bank shall support public or private projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments.” **The initial authorized capital of the bank is \$100 billion divided into 1 million shares having a par value of \$100,000 each. The bank is headquartered in Shanghai, China. The first regional office of the NDB is in Johannesburg, South Africa.**

World Bank supports USD 400 million to improve coastal resources in India

- The first process for Enhancing Coastal and Ocean Resource Efficiency (ENCORE) would include eight coastal states and three coastal Union Territories, with USD 180 million in financing.
- “...the ENCORE program will expand the World Bank’s direct support toward achieving the NDC targets of the Government of India by supporting longer-term coastal adaptation, including through ecosystem restoration and the sound management of mangrove forests and seagrass fields”.
- “The World Bank’s Board of Executive Director approved USD 400 million multi-year financing envelope to help India enhance its coastal resources, protect coastal populations from pollution, erosion, and sea-level rise, and improve livelihood opportunities for coastal communities”.

RBI cancels CKP Co-op Bank’s licence

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of Mumbai-based The CKP Cooperative Bank Ltd., with effect from the close of business on April 30, 2020, as the lender’s financial position had deteriorated and it was not in a position to repay depositors.
- It has cancelled the licence of The CKP Co-operative Bank Ltd for reasons including, the lack of any viable revival plan and functioning “in a manner detrimental to the public interest and interest of the depositors”.
- “The Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Pune, Maharashtra, has also been requested to issue an order for winding up the affairs of The CKP Cooperative Bank Ltd., Mumbai, and appoint a liquidator for the bank”.

A Co-operative bank is a financial entity which belongs to its members, who are at the same time the owners and the customers of their bank. **Co-operative banks in India are registered under the States Cooperative Societies Act. The Co-operative banks are also regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and governed by the Banking Regulations Act 1949 and Banking Laws (Co-operative Societies) Act, 1955.**

Alibaba’s Jack Ma to resign from SoftBank board

- SoftBank Group said that Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma will resign from its board, in the latest departure by a high-profile ally of CEO Masayoshi Son.
- The departure of Ma, who retired as Alibaba’s executive chairman in September, comes as he pulls back from formal business roles to focus on philanthropy. SoftBank will propose three new appointments to the board, including group Chief Financial Officer Yoshimoto Goto, at its annual general meeting on June 25. The number of board members will expand to 13.

SoftBank Group Corp is a **Japanese multinational conglomerate holding company headquartered in Tokyo**. The company is known for its leadership by founder Masayoshi Son. It operates in broadband, fixed-line telecommunications, e-commerce, internet, technology services, finance, media and marketing, semiconductor design, and other areas. It also runs **Vision Fund**, the world’s largest technology-focused venture capital fund, with over **\$100 billion in capital**.

Firms in News

Exploration beneath is no threat to Assam national park, says OIL

- Exploration major **Oil India Limited (OIL)** has **negated fears that a drilling project under Assam's Dibru-Saikhowa National Park** would spell doom for its flora and fauna, including the only population of feral horses in India.
- **OIL announced that it has received environmental clearance from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) for extension drilling and testing of hydrocarbons** at seven locations under the 765 sq. km. park straddling eastern Assam's Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts.
- This raised eyebrows with green activists and local organisations questioning the sanction to operate in an **ecologically sensitive park declared a biosphere reserve in 1997. Dibru-Saikhowa is an island bounded by the Brahmaputra, Lohit and Dibru rivers.**

Oil India Limited (OIL) is the **second largest hydrocarbon exploration and production Indian public sector company** with its operational **headquarters in Duliajan, Assam, India**. The company is a state-owned Navratna under the **administrative control of India's Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** with its corporate offices in Noida in the New Delhi-NCR region.

NTPC achieves 100 % PLF at three of its power stations

- **NTPC Limited, a central PSU under Ministry of Power and India's largest power generator, achieved 100 percent Plant Load Factor, PLF at three of its thermal power stations.**
- **NTPC Vindhyachal in Madhya Pradesh, NTPC Talcher Kaniha in Odisha and NTPC Sipat in Chhattisgarh achieved 100 percent PLF, demonstrating exceptional operational efficiency and optimum capacity utilisation despite lockdown on account of COVID-19 pandemic.** At the same time, **NTPC Koldam in Himachal Pradesh** is emerging as one of the best hydropower stations in the country for financial year 2020-21.

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.

CCI approves combination between BP Global Investments, Reliance BP Mobility

- **Fair trade regulator CCI has given nod to a proposed combination between BP Global Investments Ltd and Reliance BP Mobility Ltd (RBPML).**
- **The transaction involves transfer of Reliance Industries "and its group entities" entire undertaking related to owning, operating and conducting petroleum retail marketing and related activities in India to RBPML.**
- **It also involved transfer of certain specified mobile aviation business assets at certain airport locations, which are currently owned and used by Reliance Industries, to RBPML.**

Competition Commission of India is a **statutory body of the Government of India responsible for enforcing The Competition Act, 2002 throughout India and to prevent activities that have an appreciable adverse effect on competition in India.** The idea of Competition Commission was conceived and introduced in the form of The Competition Act, 2002 by the Vajpayee government. A need was felt to promote competition and private enterprise especially in the light of 1991 Indian economic liberalisation. It was **established on 14 October 2003.** It became fully functional in May 2009 with Dhanendra Kumar as its first Chairman. The Commission comprises a Chairperson and three members. Ashok Kumar Gupta is the current Chairperson of the CCI.

Tata Capital launches voicebot 'TIA' on Whatsapp

- **Tata Capital unveils the first – of - its kind VoiceBot 'TIA' within the Tata Capital Mobile App for Personal Loans.** Powered by Artificial Intelligence, TIA is designed to voice-assist the personal loan customer journey, check loan eligibility and aid the customer through the loan approval process in minutes. **TIA aims to create a whole new conversational experience for customers using speech recognition technology, natural language understanding and text-to-speech technology.**
- **Tata Capital has launched the voicebot "TIA" on WhatsApp.** The voicebot offers a range of services to its customers like **opting for a new loan or getting queries resolved** etc to provide seamless and interactive services on the widely used messaging platform, Whatsapp.
- **Tata Capital Limited is a financial and investment service provider in India.** It is **based in Mumbai** and has more than 100 branches across the country. **The company offers consumer loans, wealth management, commercial finance, and infrastructure finance, among others.**

Airtel Africa extends e-learning support to students with UNICEF

- **Bharti Airtel's Africa arm has teamed up with UNICEF to provide children with access to remote learning and cash assistance for their families via mobile cash transfers.**
- **"Under this partnership, UNICEF and Airtel Africa will use mobile technology to benefit an estimated 133 million school age children currently affected by school closures in 13 countries across sub-Saharan Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic,".** Airtel Africa will **zero-rate select websites hosting educational content,** which will provide children with remote access to digital content at no cost.

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.

US-Based General Atlantic to buy 1.3% stake in jio platforms for Rs 6,598 crore

- **Reliance Industries announced that US-based private equity firm General Atlantic will invest Rs 6,598.38 crore for a 1.34 per cent stake in Jio Platforms.**
- That marked **Jio Platforms' fourth major deal with a US-based technology investor** within a month, following Facebook announcing an investment of Rs 43,574 crore for a 9.99 per cent stake in Jio Platforms. In May, Silver Lake announced an investment of Rs 5,656 crore in Jio Platforms, which was followed Vista Equity Partners.

Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited (Jio) is an Indian telecommunications company and subsidiary of Reliance Industries, headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. It operates a national LTE network with coverage across all 22 telecom circles. It does not offer 2G or 3G service, and instead uses only voice over LTE to provide voice service on its 4G network. Mukesh Dhirubhai Ambani is founder of Reliance Jio.

Moody's slashes India's GDP growth to 'zero' in FY21

- **Amidst Covid-19 cases surging in seven populous States in India, including commercial capital Mumbai and national capital Delhi, global rating agency Moody's slashed India's GDP growth rate at Zero for the current fiscal –. 2020-21.**
- However, on a positive note, it has **forecast India's GDP growth rate to bounce back to 6.6 per cent in 2021-22.** Its previous estimate was 2.6 per cent. **The latest estimate is lower than Fitch's forecast of 0.8 per cent, IMF's 1.9 per cent, World Bank's 1.5-2.8 per cent and ADB's estimate of 4 per cent.**
- **There is no change in sovereign rating by Moody's, and it stands at 'Baa2' with 'Negative' outlook.** This outlook reflects increasing risks that economic growth will remain significantly lower than in the past.

Moody's Investors Service is a leading provider of **credit ratings, research, and risk analysis**. The company was **incorporated in 1914** and is **based in New York, New York**. Moody's Investors Service, Inc. operates as a subsidiary of Moody's Corporation.

Facebook introduces a new safety feature called 'Lock Your Profile' for India

- Facebook is **launching a new safety feature called 'Lock Your Profile'** that allows users to **restrict access to their photos, timelines and posts from non-friends in a single click**.
- Facebook said the new feature is **designed for people in India, especially women**, who want more control over their Facebook experience.
- The **'lock your profile' feature enables users to apply multiple existing privacy settings** plus several new features to their Facebook profile in one step.

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**.

NCDEX commences trading in India's first agri futures index

- The **National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX)** announced the **commencement of trading in the country's first agri futures index, NCDEX AGRIDEX**.
- The **NCDEX AGRIDEX futures contracts expiring** in the months of **June 2020, July 2020, September 2020 and December 2020** shall be available for trading from **May 26, 2020**.

National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX) is an **online commodity exchange based in India**. It has an independent board of directors and **provides a commodity exchange platform for market participants to trade in commodity derivatives**. NCDEX is headquartered in **Mumbai**.

Facebook buys popular GIF database GIPHY for \$400 million

- Facebook has **acquired GIPHY for \$400 million to integrate its GIF library into Instagram and other Facebook apps**. GIPHY is a popular library where users share and create billions of GIFs on a regular basis.
- **50 percent of all of GIPHY's traffic comes from its apps**, with half of that coming from Instagram alone. GIPHY as part of the Instagram team will make it easier to send GIFs and stickers in Instagram stories.

Maruti Suzuki ties up with Cholamandalam Investment & Finance; launches 'Buy-Now-Pay-Later Offer'

- **India's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India** announced **partnership with Cholamandalam Investment & Finance Company Ltd** to **provide customised auto retail financing solutions to retail buyers**. The new solution **'Buy-Now-Pay-Later Offer'** is aimed to provide customers with easy financing options.
- Under the partnership, the companies are also offering a two-month deferment of Equated Monthly Installment (EMI) to car customers who currently are under resource crunch amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Maruti Suzuki India Limited, formerly known as **Maruti Udyog Limited**, is an automobile manufacturer in India. It is a **56.21% owned subsidiary of the Japanese car and motorcycle manufacturer Suzuki Motor Corporation**. The company is **headquartered at New Delhi**. **R. C. Bhargava** is the **former C.E.O and current chairman of Maruti Suzuki**, the **largest automobile manufacturers in India**.

IRDAI panel for enhancing trade credit policy cover limit

- A working group of insurance regulator IRDAI that revisited guidelines on Trade Credit Insurance (TCI) has recommended an increase in the indemnity provided to the policyholders from existing 85% of the trade receivables from each buyer to 90%.
- While this will be for all the policyholders, for micro and small enterprises (MSEs) alone it has proposed a 95% cover for losses resulting from political risk. “90% cover is in line with global standards. 95% indemnity is proposed for political risk only for MSEs to provide relief in the event of loss which is beyond their control,” said the report of the nine-member working group headed by New India Assurance Company CMD Atul Sahai.

The 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.

NPCI launches AI virtual assistant PAI

- National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) has launched an artificial intelligence (AI) based chatbot, PAI, to create awareness around its products like FASTag, RuPay, UPI, AePS on a real time basis. This is yet another NPCI's initiative to improve digital financial inclusion in India.
- The AI virtual assistant, PAI is available round the clock helping users with access to accurate information on NPCI products. Customers can ask their queries in English and Hindi, via text or voice on the websites of NPCI, RuPay, and UPI Chalega. Through PAI, users get verified automated responses to their queries on all NPCI's products. PAI would also be accessible to global RuPay Cardholders as well.

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.

Maruti Suzuki partners ICICI Bank to offer retail financing schemes to customers

- India's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) has joined hands with ICICI Bank to offer retail financing schemes to its customers.
- As part of the tie up, ICICI Bank is offering flexi EMI scheme which enables customers to pay low EMI initially, in order to help them overcome the liquidity stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The EMI amount starts from Rs 899 on a loan of Rs 1 lakh for first three months. The bank is also offering similar other EMI plans for MSI customers.

ICICI Bank Limited is an Indian multinational banking and financial services company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra with its registered office in Vadodara, Gujarat. As of 2018, ICICI Bank is the second largest bank in India in terms of assets and market capitalisation. ICICI Bank was established by the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI), an Indian financial institution, as a wholly-owned subsidiary in 1994. ICICI Bank is one of the Big Four banks of India others banks are SBI, Bank of Baroda and HDFC. Sandeep Bakhshi is the current MD & CEO, ICICI Bank since October 2018.

LIC launches modified PM Vaya Vandana Yojana

- After the finance ministry modified PM Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY) pension scheme for senior citizens, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has launched the non-linked, non-participating, pension plan subsidized by the Centre. The finance ministry had recently extended the pension plan till 31 March, 2023 with assured interest rate of 7.40% p.a. for FY 2020-21. Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) announced the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (Modified- 2020) Scheme.

- “This plan will be available for sale commencing from May 26 **for three financial years – up to March 31, 2023. This scheme can be purchased offline as well as online from LIC of India**”. LIC is solely authorised to run the scheme that offers a total payout not exceeding Rs. 15 lakh.
- The policy has a 10-year tenure and for policies sold in the first financial ending March 2021, the scheme will provide an assured rate of return of 7.40% per annum, but will be payable monthly for the entire duration of 10 years. Senior citizens can draw a minimum pension of Rs.1, 000 per month depending on the amount invested in the scheme. The maximum pension amount is limited at Rs. 9,250 per month.
- Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY) is a Pension Scheme announced by the Government of India exclusively for the senior citizens aged 60 years and above which was available from 4th May, 2017 to 31st March, 2020. The scheme is now extended up to 31st March, 2023 for a further period of three years beyond 31st March, 2020.

Life Insurance Corporation of India (abbreviated as LIC) is an Indian state-owned insurance group and investment corporation owned by the Government of India. The Life insurance Corporation of India was founded on September 1, 1956, when the Parliament of India passed the Life Insurance of India Act that nationalized the insurance industry in India. Over 245 insurance companies and provident societies were merged to create the state-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India. LIC is headquartered in Mumbai.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Inventions/Discoveries

CSIR's Kisan Sabha App to connect farmers to supply chain

- India's ongoing lockdown has threatened the agriculture sector as it overlaps with the time of harvest. In the present situation of COVID-19, **farmers are looking for help in taking their produce to the market, as also in procuring seeds, fertilizer, etc. from the market.**
- A robust supply chain management is urgently required to facilitate the timely delivery of the produce at the best possible prices. **The Central Road Research Institute (CRRI), a CSIR lab, has come up with an app called Kisan Sabha to resolve the problems related to the agricultural supply chain.**

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research abbreviated as CSIR was established by the Government of India in September 1942 as an autonomous body that has emerged as the largest research and development organisation in India. The research and development activities of CSIR include aerospace engineering, structural engineering, ocean sciences, life sciences, metallurgy, chemicals, mining, food, petroleum, leather, and environmental science. Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary of DST took additional charge as director general of CSIR, with effect from August 24, 2018. Since 18 October 2018, Shekhar C. Mande is the Director General of CSIR-cum-Secretary DSIR. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

Unique vehicle developed at local level in Madhya Pradesh

- **In Madhya Pradesh, in a first of its kind initiative, a unique vehicle has been developed at the local level. With the help of this vehicle, health workers can investigate any suspected patients without coming in to the contact of him. This vehicle has been named Sanjeevani.**

UP becomes first state to provide facility of beds with ventilators in each district of state

- **Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in the country to provide the facility of beds with ventilators in hospitals of each and every district of state. Now, all 75 districts of state can provide higher level of care to the patients of COVID-19.**

DGCA launches 'GARUD' portal to fast-track exemptions of coronavirus-related drone operations

- **The Civil Aviation Ministry and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) launched GARUD portal for fast-track approval to COVID-19-related drone operations. The objective of the GARUD (Government Authorisation for Relief Using Drones) portal is to assist state-owned entities in seeking exemption from central government for coronavirus related drone operations. This will also help in addressing the challenges posed by COVID-19 and will remain in force until further orders.**

India's first Covid-19 test bus launches in Maharashtra

- With the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic throwing up challenges every day, **India's first test bus for the disease was flagged off on Maharashtra Day.**
- **The bus is an initiative by the C19 Taskforce of IIT Alumni Council, in support with the Health Department of MCGM, Dr Muffazal Lakadawala** (Chief Medical Officer and Mission Director at NSCI) and Krsnaa Diagnostics.
- **Covid-19 test bus facilitates access to affordable and rapid testing to people in dense urban areas** whilst isolating doctors and also does large scale testing during the monsoons, according to a statement issued by IIT Alumni Council.

DST launches programme on health & risk communication with focus on COVID-19

- **National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC), Department of Science & Technology (DST) has launched a programme on health and risk communication 'Year of Awareness on Science & Health (YASH)' with focus on COVID-19.**
- It is a comprehensive and effective science and health communication effort for **promoting grass-root level appreciation and response on health** and would **help saving and shaping the lives of people at large**, as well as build confidence, inculcate scientific temper and promote health consciousness among them.
- The current pandemic scenario has posed concerns and challenges all around, **where scientific awareness and health preparedness play a significant role to help combat the situation.**

NIT Trichy, six Central Universities selected for Prime Minister's Research Fellows scheme

- **National Institute of Technology, Trichy and six Central Universities have been selected for the prestigious Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF) scheme this year.**
- Under the scheme, announced in the 2018 -19 Budget, each Institute will **get around 20 PMRF scholars** who are **eligible to get a fellowship of 70,000 rupees per month for the first two years**, 75,000 rupees per month for the 3rd year and 80,000 rupees per month in the 4th and 5th year.
- Apart from this, a research grant of two lakh rupees per year will be **provided to each of the fellows for a period of five years.** The scholars will be selected by a rigorous process. The National Coordination Committee (NCC) will periodically review and monitor implementation of the scheme.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan launches the 'AYUSH Sanjivani' App

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Health & Family Welfare Minister **launched the 'AYUSH Sanjivani' App** and two **AYUSH based studies related to COVID-19 situation**, in the presence of Shri Shripad Yesso Naik, MoS (I/c), AYUSH who participated through Video Conferencing from Goa.
- **"The 'AYUSH Sanjivani' mobile app, which has been launched will help to generate data on acceptance and usage of AYUSH advocacies and measures among the population and its impact in prevention of COVID 19. It is developed by Ministry of AYUSH and MEITY and shall reach out to a target of 50 lakh people."**

Dr. Harsh Vardhan is the incumbent minister at Ministry of Science & Technology (India), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Earth Sciences in the BJP-led NDA government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He represents Chandni Chowk in Delhi as a Member of Parliament in the 17th Lok Sabha.

China's new spacecraft has successfully landed back on Earth with its cabin intact

- **China's new prototype spacecraft "successfully landed"** marking an important step in its ambitions **to run a permanent space station and send astronauts to the moon.** The spacecraft - which was **launched, arrived safely at a predetermined site**, the China Manned Space Agency, after a hitch in an earlier part of the key test.

- It said the cabin structure of the spacecraft had been confirmed on site as being intact. **The test vessel was launched with a cargo capsule aboard a new type of carrier rocket from the Wenchang launch site on the southern island of Hainan.**

IIT Delhi startup launches 'Reusable Antimicrobial Mask'

- With increasing demand for face masks to contain transmission of coronavirus, an **IIT-Delhi startup named 'Nanosafe Solutions'** has **launched an antimicrobial and washable face mask that can be reused up to 50 launderings.**
- "The mask has been designed to maximize durability and dimensional stability, so that the mask can be reused 50 times. Effective reusability is an important factor as single-use masks will cause huge disposal issues".**

China launches 2 satellites to test space-based communications technology

- China has successfully launched two satellites to test the space-based Internet of Things (IoT) communications technology.**
- The satellites, Xingyun-2 01 and 02, were launched by a Kuaizhou-1A (KZ-1A) carrier rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China.**

Pranavayu to monitor ILI patients launched

- Many COVID-19 patients have low oxygen levels that put them at risk of complications.** In a measure that it hopes will help early detection that will allow them to **monitor blood oxygen levels and heart rates of patients showing influenza-like illnesses (ILI)** in fever clinics.
- The initiative, christened 'Pranavayu', is aimed at helping patients monitor the progress of ILI to severe acute respiratory illness (SARI).** A pulse oximeter is a small device or probe that can be clipped onto a finger for reading of blood oxygen level and heart rate. **"With this, it is possible to detect respiratory distress well in advance and start treatment to mitigate the distress,** even possibly the use of ventilators. Those who have flu-like symptoms can monitor the oxygen saturation every three-four hours.

Now, a mobile app predicts COVID-19 incidence days in advance

- By repurposing an existing mobile application used for personal nutrition studies, a multinational collaboration — the **Coronavirus Pandemic Epidemiology (COPE)** — has **developed a COVID-19 Symptom Tracker mobile app.** The mobile app, which allows for epidemiologic data collection and analysis, was **launched in the U.K.**
- Not only do incidence, disease severity and outcomes vary with age, sex and underlying conditions, even symptoms vary widely. **Even as COVID-19 has spread to over 200 countries and infected over 3.5 million people,** the full spectrum of clinical presentation is yet to be characterised in the general patient population, leave alone patient subgroups.

India well-poised to reboot economy through Science & Technology

- The Union Minister of Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare, **Harsh Vardhan** said that India's fight against the COVID-19 is moving fast ahead strongly and steadily. He was addressing a **Digital Conference, RE-START – 'Reboot the Economy through Science, Technology and Research Translations', organised to celebrate the National Technology Day.**
- The Conference was organised by the Technology Development Board (TDB),** a statutory body of the Department of Science & Technology (DST) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

India may miss nutrition targets

- India is among 88 countries that are likely to miss global nutrition targets by 2025, according to the Global Nutrition Report 2020 released.** It also identified the country as one with the highest rates of domestic inequalities in malnutrition.

- In 2012, the World Health Assembly identified six nutrition targets for maternal, infant and young child nutrition to be met by 2025.
- These require governments to reduce stunting by 40% in children under 5 and prevalence of anaemia by 50% among women in the age group of 19-49 years, ensure 30% reduction in low-birth weight and no increase in childhood overweight, increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months up to at least 50% and reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%.
- According to the Global Nutrition Report 2020, India will miss targets, for all four nutritional indicators for which there is data available, i.e. stunting among under-5 children, anaemia among women of reproductive age, childhood overweight and exclusive breastfeeding.

MHRD launched e-Governance platform, SAMARTH

- SAMARTH ERP is an open source, open standard enabled robust, secure, scalable, and evolutionary process automation engine for Universities and Higher Educational Institutions.
- Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) refers to a type of software used to manage day-to-day business activities such as accounting, procurement, project management, risk management and compliance, and supply chain operations. ERP in a University can improve management and administration.
- The platform has been implemented at the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Kurukshetra, a participating unit under the World Bank-supported Technical Education Quality Improvement Program (TEQIP).
- It would automate the processes of the enhancement of productivity through better information management in the institute by seamless access to information and proper utilization of information.

JNCASR scientists develop injectable Silk Fibroin-based hydrogel for sustained Insulin delivery in diabetic patients

- Scientists at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), an autonomous research institute under the Department of Science and Technology, have recently developed an injectable Silk fibroin-based hydrogel for sustained insulin delivery in diabetic patients. A patent application has also been filed for this invention.
- Prof. T. Govindaraju and his research team from JNCASR have developed the silk fibroin (SF) formulation using biocompatible additives and prepared an injectable SF hydrogel (iSFH) that can ease insulin delivery in diabetic patients. The iSFH has demonstrated successful delivery of active insulin in rats, and the results have been published in the journal ACS Applied Bio Materials.
- The multiple subcutaneous insulin injections are associated with pain, local tissue necrosis, infection, nerve damage, and locally concentrated insulin amyloidosis responsible for inability to achieve physiological glucose homeostasis.
- This problem can be overcome with controlled and sustained insulin delivery. Thus, encapsulation and sustained delivery of insulin in its active form (without loss of activity) is the key to the development of such controlled and sustained in vivo delivery of Insulin.

Diabetes affects more than 70 million people in India, the second-highest in the world. It results from inadequate production of insulin due to loss of beta cells or insulin resistance within the body, which imbalances the glucose homeostasis is leading to an abrupt increase of blood glucose level.

Centre identifies 4 model cities for Covid handling

- Four cities – Jaipur, Indore, Chennai and Bengaluru – could serve as possible role models for other urban centres in handling the Covid-19 pandemic that India is striving to control while moving to restart the economy.

- In the last few days, the Centre has organized meetings between different municipal bodies to share their experiences in two **broad aspects of Covid19 management: effective practises in handling a very high number of positive cases** and keeping the mortality rates low, said officials aware of the developments.
- It identified Jaipur and Indore metropolitan areas for innovate ways of tackling a high caseload and Chennai and Bengaluru as examples of large cities that are able to keep their mortality rates low.

Covid-19: IIT Kanpur, BDL ink pact to make affordable ventilators

- To make affordable ventilators for Covid-19 treatment, **Bharat Dynamics Ltd. (BDL)**, a defence public sector undertaking, has come forward for large scale manufacturing of the ventilators developed by Nocca Robotics, an incubated start-up of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT-K) Kanpur.
- An MoU to this effect was signed recently between BDL, IIT Kanpur, IIT Kanpur's incubator Foundation for Innovation and Research in Science and Technology (FIRST) and Nocca Robotics Private Limited (NRPL).

King George Medical University in Lucknow becomes first government hospital in country to successfully launch Plasma Therapy Treatment for COVID-19

- The King George Medical University in Uttar Pradesh has become the first government hospital in the country to successfully launch the plasma therapy treatment for the COVID-19 patients. First dose of the plasma therapy was given to a 58-year old patient.

COVID-19: IIT Delhi team develops 'risk index' for implementing state-wise lockdown

- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi has come up with a data science driven identification and mitigation framework for implementing state-by-state lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19, suggesting that Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are at the highest risk.
- The framework in the form of a 'risk index' has been developed by the premiere institute's Department of Management Studies through a research based on proxy measures for severity, likelihood and delectability of the pandemic for each of the state.
- It has divided the country into five clusters which will be further sub-divided into the orange, red and green zones. The clusters are High Risk, Medium High-Risk, Medium Risk, Medium-Low Risk and Low Risk.
- Among the states identified as in the medium high-risk area by the IIT study are Gujarat, Bihar Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Punjab, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh have been identified in the medium-risk cluster.

Coronavirus impact: World Bank announces \$160 billion assistance to 100 countries

- The coronavirus pandemic is expected to throw into extreme poverty more than 60 million people globally, the World Bank said as it announced emergency operations worth USD 160 billion in 100 developing countries to fight this deadly virus.
- "The pandemic and shutdown of advanced economies could push as many as 60 million people into extreme poverty erasing much of the recent progress made in poverty alleviation, World Bank President David Malpass.

Cotton research bodies in India, Uganda to develop new seed variety

- The Cotton Development and Research Association (CDRA) of Southern India Mills' Association has signed an agreement with Cotton Development Organisation and National Agricultural Research Organisation of Uganda to develop a cotton seed variety that will help increase the income of farmers in both the countries.
- Uganda grows 100% organic cotton and cotton grown by the farmers in Uganda gives higher ginning out turn compared with Indian cotton. However, the yield from the varieties developed by the CDRA is higher compared with the Ugandan cotton seed. Scientists in the three organisations will work together and seed varieties will be tested in both India and Uganda. The aim is to develop a long-staple cotton seed variety that will increase the income for cotton farmers in Uganda.

South Central Railway develops robotic device to assist in patients care in hospitals

- South Central Railway zone has developed a robotic device, “RAIL-BOT” (R-BOT) to assist in hospital management functions towards patient care in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak. R-BOT is being used to provide medicines, medical accessories and to serve food to the patients, without any need for physical contact.
- This will enable doctors, nurses and other support medical staff to stay away from the risk of contracting infections. The R-BOT is operated through a unique mobile application developed as part of the Innovation, supported by Wi-Fi facility. The R-BOT holds sensor-based features to read the body temperature of patients and transmit the same for display on Mobile phones.

Researchers at IIT-M develop solar parabolic trough collector

- A new trough collector equipped with enhanced energy to serve industries has been developed by Indian Institute of Madras (IIT-M). The ‘Parabolic Trough Collector’ is a lightweight and low-cost system with high energy efficiency and can operate under the country’s varied climatic conditions.
- The ‘Trough Collector’ focuses sunlight on a small area where it is absorbed and then utilised for heating and subsequently into energy generation, the researchers said.
- The system can help manufacturers in solar energy devices with higher efficiency, they said. The concept also follows the Centre’s National Solar Mission which has set a target of providing 20,000 MW solar power by 2022.

Panel formed to suggest reforms in Drug Regulatory System

- A high-level committee of experts has been formed by the government to recommend reforms in India’s drug regulatory system so that approval processes can be fast-tracked. Faced with the ominous threat of the coronavirus infection, a number of steps such as fast-tracking the approval process for drugs, research and vaccine development were taken.
- The committee chaired by Rajesh Bhushan, the OSD to the Union health minister, comprises top drug and vaccine entrepreneurs of India along with officers nominated from the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Department of Biotechnology, Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission, Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance, ICMR along with public health expert from AIIMS.

Kangra Tea could lower coronavirus activity better than HIV drugs

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is likely to replace hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) with anti-HIV drugs to improve immunity and possibly reduce viral replication, in the revised protocol.
- However, the chemicals in Kangra tea could also be effective in boosting immunity as they can block coronavirus activity better than anti-HIV drugs, said Dr Sanjay Kumar, Director, Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), based in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh. Dr Kumar has revealed this fact during a webinar organized at IHBT on the occasion of the International Tea Day.

Strange ice formations may have tricked physicists into seeing mysterious particles that weren’t there

- Since March 2016, two mysterious signals from Antarctica have baffled researchers. Twice now, a high-energy particle has seemed to burst straight up out of the ice, tripping detectors on a balloon-borne experiment floating overhead.
- It’s as if the particles had passed through the entire Earth unscathed. But that should be all but impossible: None of the known particles, which collectively are described in a physics model known as the Standard Model, can make that trip at high-energy levels.
- Physicists termed the two detections the “ANITA anomaly,” after NASA’s Antarctic Impulsive Transient Antenna (ANITA), the airborne detector that picked up the signals.

Indian Navy's "breathable" PPE kit "NavRakshak"

- The Indian Navy's indigenously-made PPE kit, "NavRakshak", made for enhancing comforts of the health workers under Indian conditions, is helping fight the war against Covid-19 in a better and effective manner.
- It was made by a doctor who can understand the agony of his fraternity wearing a multi-layered coverall PPE while treating patients for upto 12 hours in hot and humid conditions. The "NavRakshak" with an innovative "breathable" fabric material, has brought new hopes to the medical world and healthcare professionals from whose perspective it has been designed.

IIT, North Texas varsity develop magnesium alloy which can replace steel, aluminium in automobiles

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, the University of North Texas and the US Army Research Laboratory have developed an engineered magnesium alloy which can replace steel and aluminium alloys in the automobile industry making vehicles more fuel efficient.
- The researchers say the current industrial application of wrought magnesium alloys in structural components is very limited due to their poor strength, poor ductility, yield strength asymmetry and lack of high strain rate super plasticity despite their density being two-third of aluminium and one-quarter of steel.

SKIMS in Srinagar gets its first of its kind Infectious Disease Block facility

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Adviser to Lieutenant Governor Baseer Ahmad Khan inaugurated a first of its kind Infectious Disease Block facility at Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) at Soura in Srinagar for the treatment of COVID-19 and other pathologies infected patients. He directed concerned to ensure that all kinds of facilities including PPE kits are provided to all frontline workers and other staff members for their safety.

China's survey team summits Mt Everest to remeasure its height

- A Chinese survey team reached Mount Everest through Tibet to remeasure the exact height of the world's tallest mountain. According to China's measurement the height of Mount Everest is 8844.43 meters which is four meters less than Nepal's calculations, the state media reported.
- On May 1, China, which differs with Nepal over the height of Mount Everest, began a new survey to measure the altitude of the world's highest peak. The event marked a crucial step in China's mission to remeasure the height of the world's highest peak, which scientists believe will enhance human knowledge of nature and help boost scientific development.

Mount Everest is Earth's highest mountain above sea level, located in the Mahalangur Himal sub-range of the Himalayas. The China-Nepal border runs across its summit point. The current official elevation of 8,848 m (29,029 ft), recognised by China and Nepal, was established by a 1955 Indian survey and subsequently confirmed by a Chinese survey in 1975. In 1865, Everest was given its official English name by the Royal Geographical Society, as recommended by Andrew Waugh, the British Surveyor General of India, who chose the name of his predecessor in the post, Sir George Everest, despite Everest's objections.

INST scientists find route to fabricate precisely controlled nanostructures of desired geometry & location on 2D materials

- Researchers at Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST) Mohali, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology (DST) have found a straightforward and unique route to fabricate precisely controlled nanostructures of desired geometry and location on 2D materials, through a rapid one-step low power laser writing process.
- Approaches used so far to achieve the controllability over hotspots distribution, which involves the synthesis of complex morphologies, limits their potential to be used for large area substrates. In order to overcome this, the

INST group developed a hybrid Surface-enhanced Raman spectroscopy(SERS) platform of Molybdenum disulfide (MoS₂) nanostructure decorated with gold nanoparticles, where direct laser writing is used to engineer the artificial edges on the surface of MoS₂.

Global carbon pollution falls by 17%

- The daily levels of carbon dioxide emissions in the world have reduced by 17% during the COVID-19 pandemic. A study based on this was carried out by the Global Carbon Project. An international team of scientists said the annual estimate of carbon dioxide emissions is estimated to end up between 4% and 7% lower than 2019 levels.
- This is the biggest annual drop in such emissions since World War II. It is expected to be at 7% if strict lockdown measures continue. Whereas, it will be 4% if the lockdown is lifted.

NASA renamed Its WFIRST Telescope after ‘Mother of Hubble’ Nancy Grace Roman

- NASA has renamed its Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope (WFIRST), a next-generation space telescope set to launch in 2025, in honor of Nancy Grace Roman, the US space agency’s first chief astronomer, who paved the way for space telescopes focused on the broader universe.
- The newly named Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope – or Roman Space Telescope, for short – will investigate long-standing astronomical mysteries, such as the force behind the universe’s expansion, and search for distant planets beyond our solar system.

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.

Missile Park ‘Agneeprastha’ to be set up at INS Kalinga

- Foundation Stone for a Missile Park “AGNEEPRASTHA” was laid at INS Kalinga by Cmde Rajesh Debnath, Commanding Officer, in the presence of Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain.
- The Missile Park “AGNEEPRASTHA” once completed will be dedicated to all the Officers, Sailors and Support Staff of INS Kalinga, who have served in this premier op-support Base of the ENC since its establishment in 1981. The Park also commemorates the award of the prestigious Unit Citation to INS Kalinga for the year 2018-19. ‘AGNEEPRASTHA’ aims to capture glimpses of Missile History of INS Kalinga since 1981 till date.
- The Missile Park has been set up with a replica of missiles and Ground Support Equipment (GSE) that showcase the evolution of missiles handled by the unit. The exhibits have been created from scrap/obsolete inventory which have been reconditioned in-house.
- The main attraction is P-70 ‘Ametist’, an underwater launched anti-ship missile from the arsenal of the old ‘Chakra’ (Charlie-1 submarine) which was in service with IN during 1988-91.

INS Kalinga is an Indian Navy establishment reporting to the Eastern Naval Command. It is responsible for preparing, storing and delivering advanced missiles to ships of the Eastern Fleet. INS Kalinga was commissioned on 21 November 1985. INS Kalinga is located on the Visakhapatnam - Bheemunipatnam beach road about 40 kilometers north east of the Visakhapatnam Naval Base.

Inventions/Discoveries

DRDO develops Ultra Violet Disinfection Tower for rapid and chemical free disinfection

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has developed an **Ultra Violet Disinfection Tower** for rapid and chemical free disinfection of high infection prone areas. Defence Ministry said, the equipment named **UV blaster** is an Ultra violet based area sanitiser designed and developed by **Laser Science and Technology Centre**.
- The **UV Blaster** is useful for high tech surfaces like electronic equipment, computers and other gadgets in laboratories and offices that are not suitable for disinfection with chemical methods. The product is also effective for areas with large flow of people such as airports, shopping malls, metros, hotels, factories and offices.
- The equipment has six lamps each with **43 watts of UV-C power**. For a room of about 12 x 12 feet dimension, the disinfection time is about 10 minutes and 30 minutes for 400 square feet area by positioning the equipment at different places within the room.

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.

Electrostatic Disinfection Technology Transferred for Commercialization

- **CSIR-Central Scientific Instruments Organisation (CSIR-CSIO)**, Chandigarh, has designed and developed an innovative technology for effective disinfection and sanitization to fight with corona pandemic. **CSIR-CSIO** has transferred this technology to a **Nagpur-based company**, Rite Water Solutions Pvt. Ltd., for commercialization and large-scale production. This technology has been found very efficient and effective to stop the spread of coronavirus and pathogens, say CSIR-CSIO scientists.
- **Electrostatic Disinfection Machine** is developed based on the electrostatic principle. It produces uniform and fine spray droplets of disinfectants in the size range of 10-20 micrometre to kill microorganisms and viruses. Due to the small size of droplets, the surface area of spray droplets increases thereby enhancing the interaction with harmful microorganisms and coronavirus. The machine uses very less disinfection material as compared to conventional methods, which helps to save natural resources with negligible increase of chemical waste in the environment.
- **Charged droplets emitted from the disinfection machine can cover the directly exposed and obscured surfaces uniformly with increased efficiency and efficacy** and the disinfectant reaches to any hidden areas of the target, where there is a maximum possibility to find the viruses. Therefore, it kills or inhibits the growth of pathogens very effectively", said by **Dr. Manoj K. Patel, Senior Scientist and Innovator of the technology**.

Incredibly rare new Super-Earth planet discovered

- **Astronomers at the University of Canterbury (UC)** have discovered new 'one in a million' **Super-Earth planet towards the center of the galaxy**. The planet is one of just a handful that has been found with both size and orbit equivalent to that of Earth.
- The planet would have a mass somewhere between that of Earth and Neptune. It would orbit at a location between Venus and Earth from the parent star. The host star is expected to have a smaller mass than our Sun, the planet would have a 'year' of approximately 617 days.
- Scientists observed this microlensing event during 2018 and designated **OGLE-2018-BLG-0677** using **Optical Gravitational Lensing Experiment (OGLE)** using a telescope in Chile, and the Korea Microlensing Telescope Network (KMTNet) to which the UC astronomers belong, using three identical telescopes in Chile, Australia, and South Africa.

CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), Bengaluru develop BiPAP Non Invasive Ventilator “SwasthVayu” in 36 Days for COVID -19.

- **CSIR - National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) Bangalore**, a constituent of lab of CSIR has **developed a Non Invasive BiPAP Ventilator in a record time of 36 days to treat COVID-19 patients**. BiPAP Non-Invasive ventilator is a microcontroller-based precise closed-loop adaptive control system with a built-in biocompatible “**3D printed manifold & coupler**” with **HEPA filter (Highly Efficient Particulate Air Filter)**. These unique features help to alleviate the fear of the virus spread.
- It has features like **Spontaneous, CPAP, Timed, AUTO BIPAP modes** with **provision to connect Oxygen concentrator or Enrichment unit externally**. The system has been certified for safety and performance by NABL accredited agencies.

TVS Group, IIT-M develop automated respiratory assist device

- The TVS group and IIT Madras (IIT-M) have **jointly developed a low-cost, automated respiratory assistance device called ‘Sundaram Ventago’** to provide breathing support to patients through controlled and automated squeezing of a self-inflating or Ambu bag.
- It includes functionalities to control respiratory rate (breaths per minute), tidal volume, pressure parameters and I:E ratios. ‘Sundaram Ventago’ **provides physicians a simple and cost-effective option to treat patients with respiratory difficulty in case of shortage of ventilators**, and is especially useful in remote areas where ventilator facilities are not available.

Bangladesh becomes first in the world to sell generic version of remdesivir to treat Covid

- **Bangladesh’s Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd.** said it has **become the world’s first company to start selling the generic version of Gilead Sciences Inc.’s antiviral drug** on mounting urgency to treat the infection caused by the deadly coronavirus across the developing world.
- The Dhaka-based Beximco, which counts **Norges Bank** as one of its investors, will sell remdesivir for about **6,000 taka (\$71)** a vial to private clinics but will give it free to state-run hospitals treating Covid-19 patients. A critically ill Covid-19 patient will need at least six vials.

Bangladesh is a country in South Asia. It shares land borders with India and Myanmar (Burma). Nepal, Bhutan and China are located near Bangladesh but do not share a border with it. Dhaka is its capital and largest city, followed by Chittagong, which has the country’s largest port. Bangladeshi taka is the currency of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh. Mohammad Abdul Hamid is the 16th and current President of Bangladesh, in office since April 2013. Sheikh Hasina is the current Prime Minister of the Bangladesh.

Indian start-up makes world’s first contactless visitor management software

- **Mumbai based start-up** has come up with **world’s first contactless Visitor Management Software** with temperature scanner and mask detection.
- **VAMS SafeGuard** as is it called **scans body temperature**, read faces with a mask on while monitoring social distancing on the premise. **The software uses ‘AI’ to allow entry of visitors**, only who are only complying to all COVID protection measures. Moreover, the embedded face and palm recognition sensors provide 100 per cent hands-free user authentication for various application including time and attendance, access control, visitor management, event management, contractor modules.”

Kochi startup develops decontamination device to fight Covid-19

- A **Kochi-based startup** has **launched a multipurpose decontamination device called ‘Lumos’** that can **sanitise items ranging from N95 masks to vegetables**, thereby keeping a check on the spread of Covid-19. Devaditek Innovations, a startup incubated by Maker Village, has already begun the production of Lumos, and is getting ready to supply the device to various institutions including hospitals across the state.

- Though Lumos has been designed specifically to tackle the coronavirus pandemic, the certified UVC medical-grade disinfection system can kill an array of pathogens. These include SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV, germs causing different types of influenza and MS2 bacteriophage, besides several strains of bacteria and fungus.

Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute develops magnetic nanoparticle-based RNA extraction kit for PCR and LAMP tests for COVID-19

- Chitra Magna, an innovative RNA extraction kit, has been developed by Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), an Institution of National Importance under the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India, as an innovative technology for isolating RNA from swabs for COVID 19 tests.
- SARS-COV-2, the causative virus of COVID-19 pandemic, is an RNA virus – a long single-stranded polymeric substance present in all living cells that carries the genetic information of the organism necessary for life. One of the critical steps in detecting this virus is by confirming the presence of the RNA of the virus in the sample taken from the throat or nose. The sample collected is transported under specified conditions in a viral transport medium to the testing laboratory.

IIT Ropar Designs ‘Wardbot’ To Deliver Food, Medicines to COVID-19 Patients

- A team of researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar in Punjab’s Rupnagar district has come up with a design of an autonomous ‘WardBot’ which can deliver medicines and food to COVID-19 patients in isolation wards without human intervention.
- Researchers working on the project said its deployment in hospitals will help in minimising the risk of the frontline health staff getting infected with the deadly virus. Based on the smart line following ‘WardBot’ fitted with sensors, can work on a known path and can carry food items and medicines for delivery at different beds to patients in a ward.

IIT professor develops software to detect COVID-19 within 5 seconds using X-ray scan

- An IIT-Roorkee professor claims to have developed a software which can detect COVID-19 within five seconds using X-ray scan of the suspected patient.
- The professor, who took over 40 days to develop the software, has filed a patent for the same and has approached the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for a review.
- Kamal Jain, a professor at the institute’s civil engineering department, claims that the software will not only reduce testing costs but will also reduce the testing costs but will also reduce the risk of exposure to healthcare professionals.

Astronomers Find Jupiter-Like Cloud Bands on Closest Brown Dwarf

- Using the technique of polarimetry, a team of astronomers has discovered that the closest known brown dwarf, Luhman 16A, shows signs of cloud bands similar to those seen on Jupiter and Saturn. A team of astronomers has discovered that the closest known brown dwarf, Luhman 16A, shows signs of cloud bands similar to those seen on Jupiter and Saturn.
- Brown dwarfs are objects heavier than planets but lighter than stars and typically have 13 to 80 times the mass of Jupiter. Luhman 16A is part of a binary system containing a second brown dwarf, Luhman 16B.
- At a distance of 6.5 light-years, it is the third closest system to our Sun after Alpha Centauri and Barnard’s Star. Both brown dwarfs weigh about 30 times as much as Jupiter.
- Despite the fact that Luhman 16A and 16B have similar masses and temperatures (about 1,900deg F or 1,000deg C), and presumably formed at the same time, they show markedly different weather. Luhman 16B shows no sign of stationary cloud bands, instead of exhibiting evidence of more irregular, patchy clouds. Luhman 16B, therefore, has noticeable brightness variations as a result of its cloudy features, unlike Luhman 16A.

- The polarimetry technique isn't limited to brown dwarfs. It can also be applied to exoplanets orbiting distant stars. However, this is for the first time, scientists used this technique to determine the properties of atmospheric clouds outside of the solar system or exoclouds.

Saturn has overtaken Jupiter as the planet with the most moons, according to US researchers. A team discovered a haul of 20 new moons orbiting the ringed planet, bringing its total to 82; Jupiter, by contrast, has 79 natural satellites. The moons were discovered using the Subaru telescope on Maunakea, Hawaii.

DRDO lab develops automated UV systems to sanitise electronic gadgets, papers & currency notes

- Hyderabad based Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) lab has developed automated Ultraviolet systems to sanitise electronic gadgets, papers and currency notes.
- Defence Ministry said, the device - Defence Research Ultraviolet Sanitiser, (DRUVS) has been designed to sanitise mobile phones, iPads, laptops, currency notes, cheque leafs, challans, passbooks, paper and envelopes. Bundles of currency notes can be sanitised using DRUVS.
- The DRUVS is having contactless operation which is very important to contain the spread of virus. It provides 360 degree exposure of Ultra Violet to the objects placed inside the cabinet. Once the sanitisation is done, the system goes in sleep mode hence the operator need not wait or stand near the device.

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.

Pune lab develops India's first indigenous Covid-19 testing kit named Elisa

- Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan announced that India has developed indigenous Covid-19 testing kit. Elisa, developed by Pune-based Institute of Virology, detects antibodies for Covid-19.
- "National Institute of Virology, Pune has successfully developed the first indigenous anti-SARS-CoV-2 human IgG ELISA test kit for antibody detection of #COVID19".

The enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) is a commonly used analytical biochemistry assay, first described by Engvall and Perlmann in 1971. The assay uses a solid-phase enzyme immunoassay (EIA) to detect the presence of a ligand (commonly a protein) in a liquid sample using antibodies directed against the protein to be measured. ELISA has been used as a diagnostic tool in medicine, plant pathology, and biotechnology, as well as a quality control check in various industries. Before the development of the ELISA, the only option for conducting an immunoassay was radioimmunoassay, a technique using radioactively labeled antigens or antibodies.

IISc develops antimicrobial composite material and testing protocols for PPEs

- A team from Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru (IISc) has developed a three-layered antimicrobial composite material of low-cost for making masks. And another team, including members from IISc, is involved in testing masks and developing a way of recycling them. The mask material consists of three layers.
 - The outermost layer is made of polyester fabric with polymeric nanofibre deposited on it to make it water-repellent. The middle layer is also a polyester fabric on both sides of which polymeric nanofibres containing antiviral and antibacterial agents are deposited. This layer inactivates both bacteria and virus when it comes into contact with it.
 - The middle layer also has positively charged polymer (polycations) which inactivate the microbes that come in contact with this layer. The innermost layer is a comfort layer consisting of cotton fabric.
-

Health/ Disease

ICMR, Bharat Biotech to develop a fully indigenous vaccine for Corona Virus

- **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** and a **Hyderabad based leading Vaccine manufacturing company Bharat Biotech International Limited** have **partnered to develop a fully indigenous vaccine for COVID-19.**
- **The vaccine will be developed using the virus strain which has been isolated at ICMR's National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune.** The details of the virus strain have been successfully transferred from NIV, Pune to Bharat Biotech. Work on developing the vaccine has been initiated by the two partner entities. NIV will provide continuous support to Bharat Biotech for vaccine development.

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.

Japan newborn gets liver stem cells in world first

- **Doctors in Japan have successfully transplanted liver cells derived from embryonic stem cells into a newborn baby, in a world-first** that could provide new treatment options for infants.
- But the six-day-old was too small to undergo a liver transplant, generally not considered safe until a child weighs around six kilogrammes (13 pounds) at around three to five months old. **Doctors at the National Center for Child Health and Development decided to try a "bridge treatment"** until the baby was big enough, injecting 190 million liver cells derived from embryonic stem cells (ES cells) into the blood vessels of the baby's liver. **The success of this trial demonstrates safety in the world's first clinical trial using human ES cells for patients with liver disease,** the institute said.

Coronavirus spares no major organ in the body

- As the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 crosses 2.7 million and that of deaths is fast approaching 192,000, physicians are beginning to realise that lungs are just the ground zero for the virus while the **virus spreads its lethal tentacles to multiple organs — heart and blood vessels, kidneys, gut, and brain —** not necessarily in one patient.
- While **about 80% of people infected with the virus either don't display any symptoms or only mild symptoms,** the remaining need hospitalisation and about 5% need ICU care. Who would need hospitalisation and even ICU care depends on how decisively the body strikes down the virus soon after infection. If not beaten back in the initial stage of infection, the virus invades the lower respiratory tract and enters the lungs, which very soon turns into a battle ground.

JNCASR scientists develop a natural product based Alzheimer inhibitor

- **Scientists from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre For Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)** an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Govt. of India have **modified the structure of Berberine, a natural and cheap product similar to curcumin, available commercially,** into Ber-D to use as a Alzheimer's inhibitor. Their research work has been published in the scientific journal iScience.
 - **Alzheimer's disease is the most prevalent neurodegenerative disorder and accounts for more than 70% of all dementia.** The multifactorial nature of the disease attributed to multifaceted toxicity has made it difficult for researchers to develop effective medication.
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ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT



Massive hole in ozone layer over Arctic now closed: UN

- **Ozone depletion over the Arctic hit a “record level” in March, the biggest since 2011, but the hole has now closed, the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said. The organization is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.**
- **The springtime phenomenon in the northern hemisphere was driven by ozone-depleting substances still in the atmosphere and a very cold winter in the stratosphere, WMO spokeswoman Clare Nullis told a UN briefing in Geneva. “These two factors combined to give a very high level of depletion which was worse than we saw in 2011. It’s now back to normal againthe ozone hole has closed,” she said.**

The ozone layer or ozone shield is a region of Earth’s stratosphere that absorbs most of the Sun’s ultraviolet radiation. It contains high concentration of ozone (O₃) in relation to other parts of the atmosphere, although still small in relation to other gases in the stratosphere. The ozone layer was discovered in 1913 by the French physicists Charles Fabry and Henri Buisson. In 1976, atmospheric research revealed that the ozone layer was being depleted by chemicals released by industry, mainly chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Concerns that increased UV radiation due to ozone depletion threatened life on Earth, including increased skin cancer in humans and other ecological problems, led to bans on the chemicals, and the latest evidence is that ozone depletion has slowed or stopped. The United Nations General Assembly has designated September 16 as the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer.

Tiger population in Sunderbans rises to 96

- **The latest estimation of tiger numbers in the Indian Sunderbans indicates an increase in the population of big cats. According to the West Bengal Forest Department, the tiger count for the year 2019-20 rose to 96, from 88 in 2018-19. The Sunderbans delta, spread over India and Bangladesh, is the only mangrove forest in the world inhabited by tigers.**

Hundred million-year-old ‘river monster’ with a powerful fin-like tail is discovered in the Sahara

- **The first ever evidence of a dinosaur which swam, lived and hunted underwater has been discovered in the now-barren wilderness of the Saharan desert.**
- **But 100 million years ago this region would have been a lush oasis interspersed with rivers and waterways teeming with life. And lurking beneath the surface, sitting atop the entire food chain, was a fearsome aquatic dinosaur.**

- **The river monster — called *Spinosaurus aegyptiacus* — powered through the water with a fin-like tail and captured slippery prey with six-inch long conical teeth. A fossilised tail of a juvenile of the species, which belongs to the theropod group, the same as the T-rex, was found in modern-day Morocco.**

Three new species of little horned frogs discovered in North-East India

- **A team of Indian and Irish biologists from Delhi University, University College Dublin and the Natural History Museum (UK) have discovered three new species of horned frogs from the jungles of North-East India. The scientists named two of the new species using words adapted from local tribal languages at their sites of discovery. The Naga Hills Horned Frog (*Megophrys awuh*), where the word “awuh” means “frog” in the Pochury language, the primary native tribe from the Melluri district of Nagaland.**
- **The Tamenglong Horned Frog (*Megophrys numhbumaeng*), where the name is derived from ‘nwmbwmaeng’ meaning “forest spirit” from the Rongmei (Ruangmei) language, the primary native tribe from the Tamenglong district of Manipur state.**
- **The third new species, the Dzükou Valley Horned Frog (*Megophrys dzukou*), was named after the only place where this potentially endangered new species was found. The location lies on the border of Nagaland and Manipur.**

Three new species of fishes found in Western Ghats

- **Scientists from the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) and the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune, have unravelled the diversity in the filament barbs of the Western Ghats.**
- **Filament barbs are a group of small freshwater fishes found in the rivers of peninsular India and Sri Lanka, where nine species are known under the genus *Dawkinsia*. They are popular among aquarium hobbyists and are wild-collected and captive-bred for trade.**

Oceans could rise up to 1.3 metres by 2100

- **Scientists have warned that oceans are likely to rise as much as 1.3 metres by 2100 if the Earth’s surface warms another 3.5 degrees Celsius. By 2300, ice sheets covering West Antarctica and Greenland will have shed trillions of tonnes in mass. Sea levels could then go up by more than five metres under that temperature scenario.**
- **This will redraw the planet’s coastlines reported scientists in a peer-reviewed survey of more than 100 leading experts in the international science journal, *Nature*. About ten percent of the world’s population on land less than five metres above the high tide line.**
- **Across the 20th century, sea level rise was caused mainly by melting glaciers and the expansion of ocean water as it warms. But over the last two decades, the main driver has become the melting and disintegrating of Earth’s two ice sheets.**
- **Greenland and West Antarctica are shedding at least six times more ice than during the 1990s. From 1992 through 2017 they lost some 6.4 trillion tonnes in mass. But if humanity succeeds in cutting carbon dioxide and holding the increase in temperature to the Paris climate treaty’s goal of below 2C, the rise would be a more manageable 0.5 metre.**

Sal forest tortoise habitat stretches over unprotected areas

- **The sal forest tortoise is widely distributed over eastern and northern India and Southeast Asia. However, it is not common in any of this terrain. In fact, 23 of the 29 species of freshwater turtle and tortoise species found in India come under the threatened category in the IUCN red list and are under severe existential threat due to human activities.**

- Also known as the elongated tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*), the sal forest tortoise, recently assessed as critically endangered, is heavily hunted for food. It is collected both for local use, such as decorative masks, and international wildlife trade.
- A recent study by ecologists in the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, finds that the area designated as a protected area network has only a small overlap with the actual habitat it roams around in. According to the authors of the study published in the journal Herpetological Conservation and Biology, over 90% of the potential distribution of the species falls outside current protected area's network.
- Also, in northeast India, the representation of the species in protected areas is least, and there is little to no connectivity among most of the protected areas where the species is present. The study also found that 29% of the predicted distribution of the species falls within high occurrence fire zones or areas where there is management burning.

Deforestation rate globally declined between 2015 and 2020: FAO report

- While forest area has declined all across the world in the past three decades, the rate of forest loss has decline due to the growth of sustainable management.
- The rate of forest loss in 2015-2020 declined to an estimated 10 million hectares (mha), down from 12 million hectares (mha) in 2010-2015, according to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 (FRA 2020).
- The FRA 2020 was released by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The FRA 2020 has examined the status of, and trends in, more than 60 forest-related variables in 236 countries and territories in the period 1990–2020. The world lost 178 mha of forest since 1990, an area the size of Libya.

Government of India launched five key initiatives to conserve biodiversity

- In a virtual celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity, Union Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar launched five key initiatives towards conservation of biodiversity.
- Stressing on this year's theme, Javadekar said that "Our solutions are in nature" and therefore, protecting it is very important, especially in the present context of Covid-19 as it is nature that shields us from various catastrophes including zoonotic diseases.
- On the occasion, he launched the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Programme which proposes to engage 20 students with postgraduate degrees for a period of one year through an open, transparent, online competitive process.
- The year 2020 which is also the "SUPER YEAR FOR BIODIVERSITY", as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity with 20 global Aichi targets adopted in 2010 ends in 2020 and all the countries together are in the process of preparation of Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- The Union Minister said that India, a mega biodiverse country, welcomes those countries who are interested in improving their bio diversity scenarios, and we are ready to share our experiences and best practices with them.

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.

A new species discovered on Twitter, named after Twitter

- A new species has just been discovered — on Twitter. It's a type of parasitic fungus, which researchers have described in the journal MycoKeys. Its name: *Troglomyces twitteri*. Reboleira and Enghoff found several specimens of the same fungus on a few of the American millipedes in the collection. These were fungi that had never before been documented before. Millipede specimens from the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle in Paris helped confirm the discovery of the new species.

Southern reaches of Western Ghats yield 3 new plant species

- A team of scientists of the **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** have reported the discovery of three new plant species from the evergreen forest patches of the southern end of the Western Ghats in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- The three new species — **Eugenia sphaerocarpa** of the Myrtaceae or Rose apple family; **Goniothalamus sericeus** of the Annonaceae family of custard apple and **Memecylon nervosum** of the Melastomataceae (Kayambo or Kaasavu in local parlance) family — were discovered during a recent exploration led by BSI scientist K.A. Sujana.

Botanical Survey of India (BSI), founded 13 February 1890, is Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change's organization for survey, research and conservation of plant resources, flora and endangered species of India, including by collecting and maintaining germplasm and gene bank of endangered, patent and vulnerable plant species. It is headquartered in Kolkata. BSI was formally instituted by East India Company (EIC) on 13 February 1890 under the direction of Sir George King who became first ex-officio Director.

Cyclone Amphan destroys one-third of world's largest mangrove delta, tiger habitat

- **Around one-third of the world's mangrove delta – the Sunderban** – has been damaged by Cyclone Amphan, according to a preliminary assessment of the West Bengal forest department.
- “Around 1500 sq km of forest area has suffered massive damage in the cyclone. The nylon net fencing that was set up to prevent tigers from straying into villages has also been damaged. The Sunderban delta comprises 102 islands of which 54 have human settlements while the rest have forests. It has around 4200 sq km of forests crisscrossed by rivers and creeks. This is the only mangrove in the world where tigers live. There are around 100 tigers in the Indian part of the Sunderban.

Sundarbans is a mangrove area in the delta formed by the confluence of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna Rivers in the Bay of Bengal. It spans from the Hooghly River in India's state of West Bengal to the Baleswar River in Bangladesh. Four protected areas in the Sundarbans are enlisted as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, viz Sundarbans National Park, Sundarbans West, Sundarbans South and Sundarbans East Wildlife Sanctuaries.

IIT Madras' dredging methodology helps Odisha's Chilika Lake to triple Irrawaddy Dolphin population

- A research project by the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras** has helped Odisha's Chilika lake, Asia's largest brackish water body, in tripling the population of the Irrawaddy dolphins.
- The searchers conducted geotechnical, hydraulic and satellite imagery studies and developed a dredging methodology with minimum impact on the lake ecosystem. The process of dredging consists of the excavation (loosening or dislodging) of the material from the bottom, removal of the loosened material to the dredge vessel and ultimately transportation of the material to the placement area.

Chilika Lake is a brackish water lagoon, spread over the Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of Odisha state on the east coast of India, at the mouth of the Daya River, flowing into the Bay of Bengal, covering an area of over 1,100 km. It is the largest coastal lagoon in India and the second largest brackish water lagoon in the world after The New Caledonian barrier reef. It has been listed as a tentative UNESCO World Heritage site. In 1981, Chilika Lake was designated the first Indian wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

In a first, Uttarakhand releases biggest report on plant species in India

- In one of a kind and biggest conservation programmes in the country, Uttarakhand state has identified total 1145 plant species ranging from state flower **Brahmkamal** to mythological 'Sanjivni Booti'. A report containing details of all these species was realised by research wing of Uttarakhand state forest department. Interestingly, 90% of these species are conserved ex-situ (out of their natural habitat) and only 10% are conserved in-situ (inside their natural habitat).

A ‘silver’ fish from Velankanni

- **Velankanni in Tamil Nadu** has thrown up a new species of small freshwater fish of the family Cyprinidae. The silver-hued fish has been christened **Puntius sanctus** — ‘sanctus’ is Latin for holy — after the popular pilgrim town. The fish has been identified and named by **Mathews Plamoottil**, head of the Department of Zoology, BJM Government College, Chavara, in Kollam. **Puntius sanctus** is small, it grows to a length of 7 cm. It found use both as food and as an aquarium draw.

Cyclone Amphan kills 72 in West Bengal, CM Mamata Banerjee announces compensation

- A powerful cyclone Amphan that tore into West Bengal has killed 72 people and completely devastated two districts, even as Kolkata and several parts of the State wore a battered look, a day after the storm left thousands of people homeless, washed away bridges and swamped low-lying areas.
- The fiercest cyclone to hit West Bengal in 100 years that destroyed mud houses and agriculture crops, and uprooted trees and electric poles also wreaked havoc in Odisha damaging power and telecom infrastructure in several coastal districts. Odisha government officials estimated it has affected around 44.8 lakh people in the State.

“Amphan”, pronounced as “Um-pun”, means sky. The name was given by Thailand in 2004, years ago. The name comes from a list by a grouping of countries, World Meteorological Organisation/United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific or WMO/ESCAP. The panel, which includes India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Maldives, Oman, Sri Lanka and Thailand, names cyclones in the region. “Amphan” was the last name on the current list before a new one starts. The last cyclone was named by Bangladesh – “Fani” which means snake. The first tropical cyclone of the 2020 North Indian Ocean cyclone season, Amphan originated from a low-pressure area persisting a couple hundred miles (300 km) east of Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 13 May 2020.

Chinese-origin frog species found in Arunachal Pradesh

- A team of zoologists from Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have found a frog species, with origins in the Tibet region of China, in Tawang area of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Details of the find and the rare species ‘**Nanorana conaensis**’ found at an elevation of 2844 metres above sea level was published in ZSI’s latest journal.
- “The species was first sighted in Tibet in 1981. There was a report of a sighting in Arunachal Pradesh in 2018 by some researchers, however, no details regarding the sighting was reported.”

ZSI lists 20 species of amphibians as “critically endangered”

- The Zoological Survey of India has posted an updated checklist of Indian amphibians on its website, listing 20 species as critically endangered and 35 as “endangered”. The 20 “critically endangered” amphibians include some species of frogs found in the Western Ghats of Kerala, Maharashtra and Karnataka and in some hills of the north east.
- The number of amphibian species recorded in the comprehensive checklist, uploaded on the Zoological Survey of India’s (ZSI) website has gone up from 284 in 2009 to 447 now. “Among the amphibians listed, 20 species are “critically endangered” and 35 species as “endangered”.

Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) was established on 1st July, 1916. It has its genesis in the establishment of the Zoological Section of the Indian Museum at Calcutta in 1875. It is headquartered at Kolkata. It functions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. It acts as the premier Indian organisation in zoological research and studies to promote the survey, exploration and research of the fauna in the country.

SPORTS



Sports Personalities in News

Chi Lupo was adjudged the best documentary at the 10th Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival Awards 2020

- **Kezang D. Thongdok's** 26-minute film **Chi Lupo** was adjudged the best documentary at the 10th Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival Awards 2020.
- But for the filmmaker from **Arunachal Pradesh's West Kameng district**, beneath the happiness is a deep sadness: The honey-hunting skill of the Sherdukpen community and the associated indigenous craftsmanship will fade away with the half-a-dozen subjects of his film.
- **Chi** means honey and **Lupo** is hunter in the dialect of the Buddhist Sherdukpen community, whose total population is estimated to be 4,500. They are concentrated in 12 villages in the district.

Sania Mirza Becomes 1st Indian to Win Fed Cup Heart Award, Donates Prize Money to CM's Relief Fund

- Tennis ace **Sania Mirza** became the first Indian to win the Fed Cup Heart Award for her successful return to the court post motherhood.
- **Sania** won the award for Asia/Oceania zone after securing a whopping 10,000 plus votes out of the total 16,985 cast for this year's three regional Group I nominees.

Kumar Sangakkara set to serve second term as MCC president

- Former Sri Lanka skipper **Kumar Sangakkara** is set to serve his second term as the president of Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) as the current activities have been postponed at the club.
- **Sangakkara** who is the first overseas president of MCC, took charge of the club at October 1 last year and he also recently participated in a successful club tour of Pakistan.

Kohli only Indian in 2020 Forbes World's Highest-Paid Athletes list with \$25 mn worth

- Cricket superstar **Virat Kohli** remains the only Indian in the Forbes' list of world's highest-paid athletes with total earnings of USD 26 million, jumping to the 66th spot from 100 in the 2020 standings.
- Kohli's earnings from endorsement stand at USD 24 million and USD 2 million from salary/winnings. The 31-year-old is also the only cricketer in the top-100 list. With earnings of USD 25 million, Kohli was ranked 100th in 2019 and 83rd in 2018 with USD 24 million.
- Tennis legend **Roger Federer** has topped the list for the first time with earnings of USD 106.3 million, rising from fifth place last year. Football icons **Cristiano Ronaldo** and **Lionel Messi** are second and third respectively with earnings of USD 105 and USD 104 million.

IOC appoints Batra as member of Olympic Channel Commission

- **Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president Narinder Batra** has been **appointed as a member of the Olympic Channel Commission**. The Olympic Channel Commission advises the IOC Session, the IOC Executive Board and the IOC president and provides guidance throughout the launch and operation of the Olympic Channel.

Sport Events

CGF Postpones 2021 Commonwealth Youth Games To 2023

- The **2021 Commonwealth Youth Games** was **postponed to 2023** because of **clash of dates with Tokyo Olympics**, which has been pushed back by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The **Tokyo Olympics** were originally scheduled to be held from **July 23 to August 8** this year but the quadrennial event was postponed by a year last month owing to the pandemic
- The **seventh Commonwealth Youth Games** were scheduled to take place from **August 1 to 7 2021** in **Trinidad and Tobago**. The CGF said the Caribbean nation will continue to remain the first preference for hosting the Games.

To generate employment, Mizoram gives sports industry status

- The **Mizoram Cabinet** has **granted industry status to sports**, a move aimed at **generating employment**. **Chief Minister Zoramthanga** said his Mizo National Front government **followed the sports policy in many countries for the approval** during a Cabinet meeting.
- “The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other industrial bodies have shown interest in our move. **Sports and its infrastructure will be eligible for availing of subsidy, loan and assistance from private and government sources**,” Mr. Royte said. Mizoram has a pool of footballers playing for premier clubs across the country. The State has also done well in hockey and weightlifting in recent years.

AWARDS



Pulitzer Prize for 3 photojournalists from J&K for their ‘striking images of life’

- Three photojournalists from Jammu and Kashmir have been awarded the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for their “striking images of life” in the valley.
- Channi Anand, Mukhtar Khan and Dar Yasin of the Associated Press won in the feature photography category. The journalist fraternity also hailed the first Pulitzer winners from Jammu and Kashmir.
- The United States author Colson Whitehead has become only the fourth writer ever to win the Pulitzer Prize for fiction twice.
- The 2020 awards, postponed for several weeks due to the coronavirus, were announced remotely this year in the living room of Pulitzer administrator Dana Canedy. She noted that the first Pulitzers were awarded in 1917 less than a year before the outbreak of the Spanish Flu. They are among the highest honours for US-based journalists and authors.
- For the first time in its history, the Pulitzer committee bestowed a prize in Audio Reporting, which was awarded to the staff of This American Life for its episode The Out Crowd, which examined US President Donald Trump’s policy requiring thousands of asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while their claims are adjudicated.

Pulitzer Prize is an award for achievements in newspaper, magazine and online journalism, literature, and musical composition in the United States. It was established in 1917 by provisions in the will of Joseph Pulitzer, who had made his fortune as a newspaper publisher, and is administered by Columbia University. Prizes are awarded yearly in twenty-one categories. Pulitzer Prizes are awarded in 22 categories from 2020 onwards. In twenty of the categories, each winner receives a certificate and a US\$15,000 cash award (raised from \$10,000 in 2017). The winner in the public service category is awarded a gold medal. Gobind Behari Lal was an Indian-American journalist and independence activist. In 1937, he became the first Indian to win the Pulitzer Prize.

Putin awards commemorative World War II medal to Kim Jong Un

- Russian President Vladimir Putin has awarded Kim Jong Un a commemorative war medal marking the 75th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany.
- The medal was awarded to the North Korean leader for his role in preserving the memory of Soviet soldiers who died on North Korean territory.
- Russia invited Kim to visit Moscow on May 9 and attend the military parade marking the 75th anniversary of the victory. Putin announced the decision to postpone the parade indefinitely last month because of the coronavirus pandemic. In 2015, the North Korean leader rejected a similar invitation to the 70th anniversary, citing domestic affairs.

Union Minister Giriraj Singh presents awards to the winners of “Startup India-Animal Husbandry Grand Challenge”

- Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, **Shri Giriraj Singh**, was the **chief guest at the Awards Ceremony for the winners of “Startup India-Animal Husbandry Grand Challenge”**.
- The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, in partnership with Startup India, had **launched the ‘Animal Husbandry Startup Grand Challenge’**, to scout for innovative and commercially viable solutions to address the problems faced by the Animal Husbandry and Dairy sector.
- The challenge was **launched by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 11th September 2019** at a national animal disease control programme in Mathura.

The Wire’s Founding Editor among 17 Winners of Deutsche Welle Freedom of Speech Award

- **The Wire’s founding editor Siddharth Varadarajan is among the 17 journalists from 14 countries** who are being **presented the Deutsche Welle’s Freedom of Speech Award** this year.
- The announcement comes on **World Press Freedom Day**, and in the aftermath of **Varadarajan** having been **served a summons notice by Uttar Pradesh police** amidst a nationwide lockdown, over criminal charges for running a news report which mentioned that UP chief minister Adityanath had violated lockdown rules.
- **Since 2015, DW has presented the Freedom of Speech Award annually to a person or initiative** that has shown outstanding commitment to human rights and freedom of expression in the media.
- With the coronavirus crisis at hand, this year’s awards to the **chosen 17 “represent all journalists worldwide** who have disappeared or been arrested or threatened **because of their reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic”**.

Devangi Dalal appointed as first Indian for (CGHH) who works with WHO

- **Devangi Dalal** an audiologist and Speech Therapist is a **Co-Founder of JOSH Foundation** with experience over 28 years. She is the **first Indian to win the Humanitarian Award from the American Academy of Audiology**.
- She is also the **first Indian to present the Learning Module “A Road map to Independence for Children with Hearing Impairment in Developing Countries”** at Audiology now- 2016—conference **organized by the American Academy of Audiology Phoenix, Arizona, USA**.
- She actively organizes and participates in events **where she can spread awareness about hearing-impaired children. So far, her foundation has distributed 1100+ hearing aids to underprivileged – hearing impaired children** and has been able to make children of 12 schools wear 100 % digital hearing aids.
- **Coalition for Global Hearing Health (CGHH)** who works with **WHO planning hearing and health advocacy for all the countries** has appointed Devangi as a member of Advocacy. **Only 10 audiologists** are been selected from all over the world and she is the **only Indian**.

The Coalition for Global Hearing Health seeks members who have an interest in ear and hearing healthcare work and services that reach low and middle income communities. Since 2010 we have convened an annual conference to bring together people from around the world who are interested in improving ear and hearing health care in low-resource communities.

Top UK award for India’s national hydrographer

- **Vice Admiral Vinay Badhwar** has been **presented the 2019 Alexander Dalrymple Award** in recognition of his “outstanding contribution” to Indian hydrography and across the wider Indian Ocean region.
- **First awarded by the UK Hydrography Office (UKHO) in 2006**, the award is **named after the first hydrographer of the Admiralty**. Recipients are selected for their efforts in raising the standards of hydrography, cartography and navigation around the world.

- **Vice Admiral Badhwar**, who joined the Indian Navy in 1982, has extensive hydrographic surveying experience, including work in the **Gulfs of Kutch and Khambhat**, and the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** – widely recognised as some of the most challenging environments to survey in the world.
- In his role as **India's national hydrographer**, Vice Admiral Badhwar has been a **key member of the International Hydrographic Organisation's capacity building sub-committee** since its creation. He also leads the **Indian Naval Hydrographic Office's regional capacity building programmes**.

Women peacekeepers from Brazil and India share UN military gender award

- For the first time, the **UN Military Gender Advocate award** has been awarded to two UN peacekeepers: **Commander Carla Monteiro de Castro Araujo**, a Brazilian Naval officer, and **Major Suman Gawani**, of the Indian Army.
- The award, created in 2016, recognizes the dedication and effort of individual military peacekeepers in promoting the UN principles on Women, Peace and Security in peace operations. Women peacekeepers are nominated by the heads and force commanders of peace operations.

Dr. Rajiv Joshi, Winner of the NYIPLA 2020 Inventor of the Year Award

- The IBM Academy of Technology is pleased to congratulate **Dr. Rajiv Joshi**, IBM Academy of Technology member, for winning The New York Intellectual Property Law Association (NYIPLA) 2020 Inventor of the Year Award.
- The Inventor of the Year Award is presented each year in recognition of the contribution that the invention has and/or will make towards society as a whole.
- For 2020, the association recognized Dr. Joshi for his pioneering work in advancing the electronic industry and improving artificial intelligence capabilities, and he accepted the award via an online interview.



PERSONS IN NEWS

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury reappointed PAC chairperson

- Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has been reappointed as chairperson of the Parliament's public accounts committee (PAC).
- Members for the public accounts committee are elected every year. The 22-member panel includes 15 members from the Lok Sabha and seven from the Rajya Sabha. Chowdhury was reappointed the chairman of the committee by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

UNEP extends Dia Mirza's term as Goodwill Ambassador till 2022

- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) extended environmentalist and actor-producer Dia Mirza's term as its National Goodwill Ambassador for another two years till the end of 2022.
- Dia, who is also a United Nations Sustainability Development Goals Advocate, said she views the extension as an opportunity to work towards championing nature.

Tarun Bajaj takes over as Economic Affairs Secretary

- Tarun Bajaj, a 1988-batch, Haryana cadre officer of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), assumed the charge of the economic affairs secretary after retirement of Atanu Chakraborty from the position.
- The economic affairs secretary also plays a crucial role in the country's monetary and market-related policies as he is the bridge between the Union government and regulators such as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

Govt appoints Tarun Bajaj as Director on RBI Central Board

- The government has appointed Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj as a director on the central board of Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Bajaj replaces Atanu Chakraborty, who retired on April 30.

Hindujas share second spot with Reuben brothers in UK rich list

- Two sets of Indian-origin siblings dominate the annual tally of Britain's wealthiest as the Hinduja and Reuben brothers share the second spot with a fortune of 16 billion pounds each, while British inventor-entrepreneur James Dyson tops 'The Sunday Times Rich List 2020' with 16.2 billion pounds.
- Srichand and Gopichand Hinduja, who run the Hinduja Group of companies, lost 6 billion pounds to slip from the top slot in last year's list. Mumbai-born David and Simon Reuben lost 2.66 billion pounds over the past year, but their second position in the tally remains unchanged from 2019.
- The coronavirus pandemic is seen as a major factor behind the fall in the overall wealth of the UK's richest people.

WTO Head to resign a year early

- In an unprecedented move, the Head of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Roberto Azevedo has decided to resign, a year before his term expires.
- Mr Azevedo, a former diplomat from Brazil, said, he will step down on August 31st, cutting short a seven-year tenure marked in recent years by intense pressure from US President Donald Trump.

Archaeological Survey of India gets new chief

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) got a new Director General with the appointment of IAS officer V. Vidyavathi. Ms. Vidyavathi is a 1991 batch Karnataka cadre officer, according to the order of the

Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. She will be serving in the rank of Additional Secretary to the Government of India.

Assam's Jahnabi Phookan appointed FICCI FLO National President

- Assam-based entrepreneur Jahnabi Phookan has been appointed as the National President of FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO), the women wing of the leading industry chamber of the country.
- Phookan took over from outgoing National President Harjinder Kaur Talwar at the 36th FLO Annual Session in presence of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

Harsh Vardhan takes over as chairman of WHO Executive Board

- Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan took over as the chairman of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Executive Board.
- Highlighting India's efforts in tackling COVID-19, he said that country faced COVID19 in a proactive and pre-emptive way, with unmatched scale and determination. He said, **India has a mortality of 3% only**. In a country of 1.35 billion, **there are only 0.1 million cases of COVID19**. The recovery rate is above 40% and doubling rate is 13 days.

Rashami Desai becomes first Indian TV actress to collaborate with Google

- Television actress Rashami Desai, last remembered for her stint in 'Bigg Boss 13', has now become the first Indian Television actress to collaborate with Google.

Amit Bhadana Hits 20 Million Subscribers, Becomes First Indian YouTuber To Achieve the Milestone

- Popular Indian YouTuber, Amit Bhadana, also known as the Desi YouTuber, has gained 20 million subscribers on his channel, making him the first individual Indian YouTuber to have achieved this milestone.
- Bhadana, who was born in Delhi in the year 1994, is reportedly a law graduate by profession. The idea of making YouTube videos struck him after a Dubsmash video of his friend, made by him went crazy viral.
- Amit Bhadana started his internet career in 2015 with the help of his younger brother, Sumit, Amit Bhadana used Adele's song "Hello" to make his first comedy video and he shared it on internet. Amit Bhadana was awarded the title of Best YouTuber at the Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival in Mumbai.

Keralite becomes India's first differently-abled priest

- In a historical and rare event, Joseph Thermadom, from the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese, has made his First Religious Profession at Holy Cross Novitiate, Yercaud (TN), becoming the first Indian from the hearing and speech impaired community to take religious vows.
 - Joseph, the first Holy Cross recruit from the hearing and speech impaired community, was born deaf to his hearing and speech impaired parents Thomas and Rosy Thermadom of Ernakulam.
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Obituaries

Hockey legend Balbir Singh Sr passes away in Mohali, Punjab

- **Balbir Singh Senior**, the three-time Olympic gold medal-winning hockey legend died in a private hospital at Mohali, Punjab.
- One of the country's greatest athletes, **Balbir Senior** was the **only Indian among 16 legends chosen by the International Olympic Committee across modern Olympic history**. His world record for most goals scored by an individual in the men's hockey final of the Olympics is still unbeaten.

Historian Hari Vasudevan dies at 68

- **Historian Hari Sankar Vasudevan**, who had tested positive for coronavirus, died at a private hospital in Kolkata. He was 68.
- Earlier, he served as director of **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata**, of the Ministry of Culture. Between 2003 and 2005, Vasudevan was a professor at Central Asian Studies and acting director at the Academy of Third World Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, and Delhi. Between 2011 and 2014, he was member the Indian Council of Historical Research.

Chhattisgarh's first CM Ajit Jogi passes away at 74

- **Chhattisgarh first Chief Minister Ajit Jogi** passed away at the age of 74 years. He breathed his last at a private hospital in state capital Raipur.

MISCELLANEOUS

West Bengal launches exit app for stranded people of other states

- The West Bengal government launched an app for people from other states who are stranded in the state due to the lockdown and want to return to their native place.
- Since a large number of people from other states are stuck in West Bengal due to the lockdown, they can access the app for online permission to leave the state. The app can be downloaded from the state government's 'Egiye Bangla' website.

Tripura CM launches online portal scholarships.gov.in

- In Tripura, Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb has launched an online portal scholarships.gov.in under 'Mukhyamantri Yuba Yogayog Yojana'. Mr. Deb while launching the online portal.
- Under the Yojana, the state government will provide Rs. 5,000 to 14,608 youths who are in final year in colleges or Universities as a grant for Smart Phones. He hoped that the students will be benefited by the scheme and students will use the smartphones in positive ways.

Vizag Styrene gas leak

- The Andhra Pradesh government announced a door-to-door survey in all villages close to LG Polymers India Limited to identify residents exposed to the leak of Styrene gas near this coastal city as hundreds of villagers staged a sit-in protest with bodies of the victims at the plant, demanding its immediate closure.
- LG Polymers, a unit of the Korean conglomerate offered an apology to the people affected by the gas leak.

Yogi Adityanath launches 'Pravasi Raahat Mitra' App for migrant workers

- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, launched the 'Pravasi Rahat Mitra' App that is aimed at aiding migrant citizens coming to Uttar Pradesh from other states so that they can take advantage of government schemes. The app will also help to monitor their health besides providing jobs and livelihood, related to their skills.
- The data collection of these migrant citizens will be done through the app that has been developed by the state revenue department in collaboration with United Nation Development Program.

IMD releases list of 169 names for tropical cyclones

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) released a new list containing 169 names of future tropical cyclones that would emerge in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. IMD is headquartered in Delhi and operates hundreds of observation stations across India and Antarctica.
- IMD, one of the six Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres (RSMC) in the world, is mandated to issue advisories and name tropical cyclones in the north Indian Ocean region. Globally, there are six RSMCs and five Tropical Cyclone Warning Centres performing similar duties.
- The Met office issues tropical cyclone advisories to 13 member countries of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)/ESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) including India, Bangladesh, Iran, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Uttar Pradesh CM Adityanath launches app to get tips on boosting immunity via ayurveda

- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the Ayush Kavach app that will provide health-related tips and information about ayurvedic medicines to people during the coronavirus crisis.

- The Ayush Kavach mobile app will help people access prescriptions to strengthen their bodies' resistance through an ancient mode of Yoga and Ayurveda of India”.

Gujarat CM announces Aatmanirbhar Gujarat Sahay Yojana

- In Gujarat, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced Aatmanirbhar Gujarat Sahay Yojana. The scheme for small shop keepers and self-employed hit by the lockdown.
- Under the scheme, one lakh rupees collateral free loan will be given at two per cent for the beneficiaries for three years. CM Vijay Rupani said the beneficiaries will have to make only one application to avail the loan from state and District Cooperative Banks and credit agencies.

Rural J&K households to get tap water connections by Dec 2022

- Kashmir plans to provide tap water connections to all rural households by December 2022 under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).
- During the current year, the Union Territory is planning for 100 per cent coverage of all 5,000 villages of three districts such as Ganderbal, Srinagar and Reasi, the Ministry of Jal Shakti said.

West Bengal govt launches ‘Matir Smristi’ scheme to utilise 50,000-acre barren land in 6 districts

- The West Bengal government on launched a scheme to utilise 50,000 acres of barren land in six districts for income-generating activities like horticulture and pisciculture.
- Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said her government had been working on the ‘Matir Smristi’ scheme, which will benefit around 2.5 lakh people in rural Bengal. “There is at least 50,000 acre of barren land in Bankura, Birbhum, Purulia, Jhargram, West Burdwan and West Midnapore districts, which cannot produce anything naturally nor can the farmers cultivate on the strip.

Union Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana

- Union Cabinet has approved Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana. The scheme aims to bring about Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development of fisheries section in the country.
- It will be implemented at a total investment over Rs. 20 thousand crore. The investment will comprise of Central share of nine thousand 407 crore rupees, State share of Rs. 4,880 crore and beneficiaries' share of Rs 5,763 crore.
- The scheme will be implemented during a period of five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25. The scheme will address the critical gaps in the fisheries sector and realize its potential. It will improve availability of certified quality fish seed and feed, traceability in fish and effective aquatic health management.

India's first state capital that has become free from Coronavirus Scare

- Odisha's capital city Bhubaneswar was declared free of Novel coronavirus, a highly contagious infectious disease that made an entry in the city two months ago. It is the India's first state capital to become free from COVID-19.

Mee Annapurna programe launched for farmers in Maharashtra

- The Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Maharashtra announced a three year empanelment of insurance companies and intermediaries for implementation of crop insurance scheme across the state. The tender was issued on the guidelines of Revamped Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.
- Post-launch of the guidelines, Integrated Risk Insurance, an IRDA Licensed insurance intermediary, announced ‘Mee Annapurna’, an initiative that integrates three critical aspects of livelihood and comprehensive engagement. “Mee Annapurna’ initiative revolves around the three commandments - Expertise, Engagement and Entitlement.

Madhya Pradesh CM inaugurated ‘Everybody will get employment’ scheme

- In Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the ‘Everybody will get employment’ scheme through video conferencing. Under this scheme, MNREGA job cards will be distributed to the labourers. The Chief Minister will also hold a discussion with the heads of village administrative committees through video conferencing.

J&K starts an initiative SUKOON’ - COVID-19 Beat the Stress

- In order to spread awareness about psychological impact of lockdown and measures to be adopted to overcome them, Department of Information and Public Relations, J&K has started an initiative ‘SUKOON’ - COVID-19 Beat the Stress”.

Hop On; My Adventures on Boats, Trains and Planes by Ruskin Bond

- Talking Cub (the children’s imprint of Speaking Tiger) is proud to announce the publication of Hop On: My Adventures on Boats, Trains and Planes by Ruskin Bond.
- The book was released in an e-book format on his 86th birthday on 19 May 2020. In his new book, India’s beloved children’s author narrates some marvellous travel adventures from his childhood. Studded with beautiful illustrations by Samrat Halder, Hop On takes us on a journey with young Ruskin that is as hilarious as it is wonderful.

Nitin Gadkari inaugurates 440 metre-long tunnel under Chardham Pariyojana in Chamba

Union Minister for Road Transport Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the 440 metre-long tunnel, constructed below the busy town of Chamba as part of the Chardham Connectivity Project. The tunnel will significantly reduce the time taken by travellers on the Rishikesh-Dharasu and Gangotri stretch of the Chardham Highway.

JK Rowling unveils ‘The Ickabog’, a new book for children; publishes first chapters free to read online

- JK Rowling is publishing a new story called ‘The Ickabog’, which will be free to read online to help entertain children and families stuck at home during the coronavirus pandemic. The ‘Harry Potter’ author said she wrote the fairy tale for her children as a bedtime story over a decade ago.
- Set in an imaginary land, it is a stand-alone story “about truth and the abuse of power” for children from 7 to 9 years old and is unrelated to Rowling’s other books.

‘Jayatu Jayatu Bharatam’: 200 singers including Asha Bhosle, Sonu Nigam join hands for one song

- More than 200 singers, including Asha Bhosle and Sonu Nigam, have come together to create a song titled “Jayatu Jayatu Bharatam, Vasudev Kutumbakkam”.
- ‘Jayatu Jayatu Bharatam’ – the historic anthem in 14 languages is dedicated as a salutation to each and every Indian who has stood together as a family in these difficult times. The time has now come to rise above all challenges and be a part of the new ‘Jagaa Hua Bharat’ – winning over one of the biggest crises to humanity”.

Uttar Pradesh govt to develop 800 km roads as Herbal roads

- Uttar Pradesh will develop 800 km roads as Herbal roads in the state. These herbal roads will have medicinal and herbal trees along with the land on their both sides.
- Deputy Chief Minister and PWD minister of the state Keshav Prasad Maurya told that these herbal roads will have trees like like Peepal, Neem, Sehjan along with other herb varieties like Brahmi, Ashvagandha and Jatropa.

Finance Minister launches free instant e-PAN card facility through Aadhaar

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman formally launched the facility for instant allotment of PAN on near to real time basis.
- This facility is now available for those PAN applicants who possess a valid Aadhaar number and have a mobile number registered with Aadhaar. The allotment process is paperless and an electronic PAN, e-PAN is issued to the applicants free of cost.

UP to launch programmes to attract women voters

- The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh is launching a series of programmes aimed at empowering women, which the ruling BJP hopes will help it win more votes from the “aadhi aabadi” (half the population, or women).
- The UP government’s latest initiative is the move to appoint ‘Banking Correspondent Sakhi’, or female banking agents, in all 5,8000 gram panchayats in the state. The sakhis will do door-to-door visits and are expected to become the main link between female customers, particularly those who are associated with self-help groups (SGHs), and the bank.



IMPORTANT DAYS

International Labour Day 2020

- **May 1 is observed as International Labour Day or May Day worldwide.** The day is **celebrated annually to acknowledge the labourers and working class.** The day which is declared a national holiday in numerous countries is also called Antarrashtriya Sharmik Diwas or Kamgar Din in India.
- The date had been chosen by the American Federation of Labor to continue an earlier campaign for the eight-hour day in the United States, which had culminated in the Haymarket affair, which occurred in Chicago on 4 May 1886. May Day subsequently became an annual event.

The Astronomy Day 2020

- **The Astronomy Day 2020 is celebrated on May 2.** The world will celebrate the next Astronomy Day on September 26. On this day, museums, societies, astronomical institutions and planetariums organise seminars, workshops and other fun-filled activities to spread awareness about the world of astronomy.

World Press Freedom Day being celebrated across globe on 3rd May

- **World Press Freedom Day is being celebrated across the globe on 3rd May.** As the entire world is going through COVID-19 pandemic, this year the theme of the day is “Journalism without Fear or Favour.”

World Asthma Day 2020: May 5

- **World Asthma Day is observed on May 5, 2020.** The day spread awareness about asthma disease and care around the world.
- Whilst the primary focus is supporting the person with asthma, support may also extend to family, friends and caregivers. **The theme for 2020 is ‘Enough Asthma Deaths’.**

International Day of Midwives 2020

- The **International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) celebrates the International Day of Midwives on May 5.** The day is observed to spread awareness about the status of midwives and the essential care they provide to mothers and their newborns.
- **The International Day of Midwives 2020 theme is ‘Celebrate. Demonstrate. Mobilise. Unite’.**

World Athletics Day 2020

- The World Athletics Day was introduced by the IAAF to increase awareness about athletics and to encourage the youth to take up sports.
- Although this day is celebrated in the month of May every year, in 2020, the IAAF marked May 7 as the World Athletics Day.

World Hand Hygiene Day 2020

- **World Hand Hygiene Day 2020:** It is also known as Hand Hygiene Day was **observed on May 5th.** A campaign theme is “SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands”.

World Thalassaemia Day 2020

- **World Thalassaemia Day is observed on May 8** in order to create and raise awareness about a blood disorder called Thalassaemia. It also honours patients suffering from the disease and their families and loved ones who have not given up in the fight against this genetic blood disorder.
- **The World Thalassaemia Day 2020 theme is “The dawning of a new era for thalassaemia: Time for a global effort to make novel therapies accessible and affordable to patients”.**

World Migratory Bird Day 2020, 9th May

- On 9th May 2020, World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is an annual global celebration campaign to raise awareness of the needs for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. This day was initiated in 2006 by the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA).
- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) marked May 9th as WMBD. The theme of this year's WMBD is "Birds Connect Our World".

National Technology Day

- National Technology Day is celebrated every year on May 11 to highlight the achievements of engineers and scientists in the field of technology and science. India is observing its 29th National Technology Day.
- The board also selects a theme for each year's event, this year the theme of the conference is 'Rebooting the Economy through Science, Technology and Research Translations titled RESTART'.

International Nurses Day observed

- On the occasion of the International Nurses Day on 12th May, which also marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare presided over the celebrations through video conference.
- This year is also significant as World Health Organization (WHO) has declared it as the 'Year of the Nurse and the Midwife'.

International Day of Families 15 May

- In 1993, the General Assembly decided in a resolution that 15 May of every year should be observed as The International Day of Families. This day provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase the knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting families.

International Day of Light

- The International Day of Light is celebrated on 16 May each year, the anniversary of the first successful operation of the laser in 1960 by physicist and engineer, Theodore Maiman. This day is a call to strengthen scientific cooperation and harness its potential to foster peace and sustainable development.

National Endangered Species Day

- National Endangered Species Day is observed on the third Friday of May. This year the day falls on May 15.
- The main idea behind observing this day is to raise awareness about endangered species and how to protect them. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, no less than 40 per cent species of animals, insects and plants are at the risk of extinction across the globe.

World celebrates International Day of Living Together in Peace

- 16th May is International Day of Living Together in Peace. In 2017, the United Nations declared this Day to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding, and solidarity across the world.

World Hypertension Day

- World Hypertension Day is a day designated and initiated by The World Hypertension League (WHL), which is itself an umbrella to organizations of 85 national hypertension societies and leagues. The WHL launched its first WHD on May 14, 2005. Since 2006, the WHL has been dedicating May 17 of every year as WHD.
- The expanded theme for World Hypertension Day is Measure Your Blood Pressure, Control It, Live Longer, with a goal of increasing high blood pressure (BP) awareness in all populations around the world.

National Dengue Day 2020

- **India observes Nation Dengue Day on May 16.** Dengue fever starts with sudden onset of fever, followed by severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pain, and rash. **Though there are no specific antiviral medicines for dengue, early clinical diagnosis by physician puts the fatality rate from this disease below 1%.**

International Museum Day 2020: May 18

- **International Museum Day (IMD) is celebrated every year on May 18 globally,** to create awareness on the importance of museums for the development of society. **Theme for the year 2020: “Museums for Equality: Diversity and Inclusion”.**

World Bee Day 20 May

- **World Bee Day is celebrated on 20 May** and it focused on bee production and good practices adopted by beekeepers to support their livelihoods and deliver good quality products.
- **To mark the Day, a virtual event - under the theme “Bee Engaged” -** will highlight the importance of traditional knowledge related to beekeeping, the use of bee-derived products and services, and their importance in achieving the SDGs.

World Metrology Day- 20 May

- **World Metrology Day 2020 is observed on 20 May. The theme for World Metrology Day 2020 is Measurements for global trade.** This theme was chosen to create awareness of the important role measurement plays in facilitating fair global trade, ensuring products meet standards and regulations, and satisfying customer quality expectations.

International Tea Day 2020, May 21

- The world joined hands to **celebrate its first Tea Day on May 21, 2020.** The day is observed **primarily with a view to increasing consumption of tea.**

World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development 21 May

- The **World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development** is a United Nations–sanctioned international holiday for the promotion of diversity issues. **It is currently held on May 21.**

International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB)

- The United Nations has proclaimed **May 22 as the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.**
- The theme **“Our solutions are in nature”** emphasizes hope, solidarity and the importance of working together at all levels to build a future of life in harmony with nature.

Goa celebrates its Statehood Day

- **Goa became a full-fledged state on May 30, 1987.** Goa, which was **liberated from the Portuguese on December 19, 1961,** which was until then a union territory.

In December 2019, India celebrates the 57th Goa Liberation Day in commemoration of the Indian armed forces freeing Goa from Portuguese rule. On December 19, 1961, India completed Operation Vijay, ending Portugal's 450-year rule over the state. The operation was carried out with minimal bloodshed and forced the Portuguese Governor General Vassalo da Silva to give up control of Goa. Within three days of the attack starting, Goa finally achieved independence and became a part of India. In 1963, the Parliament passed the 12th Amendment Act to the Constitution of India, formally integrating the captured territories into the Indian Union. It was in 1987 that Goa was separated from Daman and Diu and made a full-fledged state. Goa is region known as the Konkan. Satya Pal Malik is the current Governor of Goa and Pramod Sawant is the current Chief Minister of Goa.

World Turtle Day

- **The purpose of World Turtle Day, May 23, sponsored yearly since 2000 by American Tortoise Rescue, is to bring attention to, and increase knowledge of and respect for, turtles and tortoises, and encourage human action to help them survive and thrive.**

International Day to End Obstetric Fistula 23 May

- **May 23 is the United Nations' (UN) International Day to End Obstetric Fistula, which promotes action towards treating and preventing obstetric fistula, a condition that affects many girls and women in developing countries. The fight to end obstetric fistula, one of the most serious and tragic injuries that can occur during childbirth, could be threatened by the current pandemic of COVID-19.**
- **This year's Observance speaks up a clear message: "End gender inequality! End health inequities! End Fistula now!". Women and girls at risk of living with fistula faced structural and systemic barriers to care before the pandemic.**

World Hunger Day 2020

- **World Hunger Day 2020: As we observe the World Hunger Day on May 28 amidst the pandemic's onslaught, it is time to revisit the structural challenges behind this human crisis. Nearly 135 million people currently face chronic hunger.**
- **Nearly 135 million people also face chronic hunger owing to calamities caused by armed conflict and climate change. The World Food Programme predicts the current statistic of 135 million could go up by another 130 million by the time 2020 ends, due to the coronavirus pandemic. To address this issue May 28 is celebrated as World Hunger Day yearly. World Hunger Day is an initiative by The Hunger Project.**



QUESTIONS

1. Recently, Chak-Hao, the black rice of _____ and the _____ terracotta have bagged the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
(a) Manipur and Gorakhpur (b) Mizoram and Varanasi
(c) Tripura and Bhopal (d) Meghalaya and Raipur
2. Which of the following countries is the Chair of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) for 2020?
(a) Brazil (b) South Africa (c) Russia (d) India
3. Which of the following states has topped the list of states in providing employment to over 18 lakh unskilled labourers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Maharashtra
4. Which of the following states recently launched Jagananna Vidya Deevena scheme which will provide 100 percent fee reimbursement which will benefit close to 12 lakh students across the state?
(a) Telangana (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Kerala
5. How many Indians have been elected for the prestigious membership of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences this year?
(a) 2 (b) 3 (c) 5 (d) 8
6. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has downgraded India to the lowest ranking, “countries of particular concern” (CPC) in its 2020 report. India was categorised as a _____ in last year’s listing.
(a) “Tier 2 country” (b) “Tier 3 country” (c) “Tier 4 country” (d) “Tier 5 country”
7. According to the latest Open Budget Survey, what is the rank of India in terms of budget transparency and accountability?
(a) 22nd (b) 36th (c) 48th (d) 53rd
8. Which is the NASA’s first Mars helicopter?
(a) Ingenuity (b) Starkest (c) Divinity (d) Miracle
9. Name the doctor of Manipur who has been conferred the ‘Order of Rising Sun’ by the Japan government for promoting a better understanding of Japan in India and deepening ties between the two countries.
(a) Sengrest Miythai (b) Mangiram Kiloli
(c) Thangjam Dhabali Singh (d) Okram Kilol Singh
10. Recently, Veteran actor Rishi Kapoor died in Mumbai. He won the National Film Award for Best Child Artist for the movie:
(a) Bobby (b) Mera Naam Joker (c) Teesri Kasam (d) Sangam
11. Which is the first state in country to provide free and cashless insurance premium to people of the state?
(a) Odisha (b) Maharashtra (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Madhya Pradesh
12. Which is the first state to bring its migrant labourers back home through the first train run post Lockdown orders?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Bihar (c) Jharkhand (d) Odisha
13. Name the only saffron in the world grown at an altitude of 1,600 m to 1,800 m AMSL (above mean sea level), which has been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry.
(a) Sikkim Saffron (b) Mizoram Saffron (c) Kashmir Saffron (d) Meghalaya Saffron

14. Which of the following countries will host the world's largest maritime exercises RIMPAC 2020?
(a) Canada (b) United States of America
(c) Australia (d) Russia
15. For the first time, which of the following states has been added to the list of e-NAM states?
(a) Kerala (b) Goa (c) Sikkim (d) Karnataka
16. Which of the following extended regulatory benefits to all banks including those deploying their own resources to extend liquidity support to the mutual funds under the Special Liquidity Facility for Mutual Funds SLF-MF scheme?
(a) Ministry of Finance (b) Ministry of Corporate Affairs
(c) Reserve Bank of India (d) NABARD
17. Who is the first Indian to be nominated for the Fed Cup Heart Award from the Asia/Oceania zone?
(a) Sania Mirza (b) Leander Paes (c) Mahesh Bhupati (d) Ankita Raina
18. Which of the following IIT's has completed a project in designing bamboo furniture to meet the requirements of the primary health centres in rural Assam during the COVID-19 pandemic?
(a) IIT Delhi (b) IIT Guwahati (c) IIT Bombay (d) IIT Kharagpur
19. Who has been chosen for the Nikkei Asia Prizes 2020 in 'Science and Technology' category for his work in nanotechnology-based water purification?
(a) M Bhaskara Rao (b) Meet Singh Dhillon
(c) Rajendra Singh Rajawat (d) T. Pradeep
20. The International Labour Day or May Day is celebrated worldwide on:
(a) 19th May (b) 29th May (c) 1st May (d) 4th May
21. Recently, Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan has approved the integration of five more States and Union Territories with the National Cluster under the One Nation, One Ration Card plan. Which of the following states has not yet joined the plan?
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Bihar (c) Assam (d) Punjab
22. Who launched 'MSME Bank of Ideas, Innovation and Research' portal via Video conferencing?
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Amit Shah
(c) Shri Nitin Gadkari (d) Shri Piyush Goyal
23. Recently, Fair trade regulator CCI has given nod to a proposed combination between BP Global Investments Ltd and Reliance BP Mobility Ltd (RBPML). Full form of CCI is:
(a) Competition Commission of India (b) Corporate Commission of India
(c) Competition Corporation of India (d) Competition Culture of India
24. Recently, Scientists and students from Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG) studied rivers in _____ bringing out 35 thousand-year history of river erosion and identified hotspots of erosion and wide valleys that act a buffer zones.
(a) Ladakh Himalaya (b) Greater Himalayan ranges
(c) Shivalik Range (d) Karakoram Ranges
25. Recently, The first ever evidence of a dinosaur which swam, lived and hunted underwater has been discovered in:
(a) Gobi Desert (b) Sahara Desert (c) Siberian Desert (d) The Great Australian Desert

26. National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC), Department of Science & Technology (DST) has launched a programme on health and risk communication _____ with focus on COVID-19.
(a) ANSH (b) YASH (c) SUYASH (d) ANAND
27. The Astronomy Day 2020 is celebrated on:
(a) 29th April (b) 30th April (c) 2nd May (d) 4th May
28. The All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), under Ministry of AYUSH and Delhi Police organised _____ programme for Delhi Police personnel at New Delhi.
(a) AYURAKSHA (b) AYUSEWA (c) AYUSANSKAR (d) AYURWEDA SURAKSHA
29. Name the Legendary former India footballer who captained the 1962 Asian Games gold-winning team and died after suffering a cardiac arrest recently.
(a) Anand Sehgal (b) Deepak Kulshrestha (c) Mahendra Kapoor (d) Chuni Goswami
30. Who has been appointed as the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations?
(a) Mukesh Anveshwan (b) Amit Malviya (c) T.S. Tirumurti (d) Deepak Dewan
31. The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has announced to launch a national e-commerce marketplace _____ soon for all retail traders in collaboration with several technology partners.
(a) 'bharatmarket' (b) 'indiamarket' (c) 'deshmarket' (d) 'sansthanmarket'
32. Recently, A team of Indian and Irish biologists from Delhi University, University College Dublin and the Natural History Museum (UK) have discovered three new species of horned frogs from the jungles of:
(a) Western Ghats (b) Eastern Ghats (c) Himachal Pradesh (d) North-East India
33. The seventh Commonwealth Youth Games were scheduled to take place from August 1 to 7 2021 in:
(a) Fiji (b) Suriname
(c) Trinidad and Tobago (d) New Zealand
34. The Central Road Research Institute (CRRI), a CSIR lab, has come up with an app called _____ to resolve the problems related to the agricultural supply chain.
(a) Kisan Sabha (b) Farmer Unity (c) Krishak Samiti (d) Farmer's Sabha
35. Recently, The UN children's agency urged _____ Middle East countries to greenlight special polio and measles vaccination campaigns put on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic.
(a) Three (b) Four (c) Six (d) Eight
36. Name the film which was adjudged the best documentary at the 10th Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival Awards 2020.
(a) Chi Lupo (b) Bhui Ryan (c) The Small Wonder (d) The Little Syrup
37. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of _____ based the CKP Cooperative Bank Ltd., with effect from the close of business.
(a) Mumbai (b) Chennai (c) Kolkata (d) Hyderabad
38. Who among the following assumed the charge of the economic affairs secretary?
(a) Atanu Mukherjee (b) Mrinal Jain (c) Franklin D'Souza (d) Tarun Bajaj

39. The first process for Enhancing Coastal and Ocean Resource Efficiency (ENCORE) would include _____ coastal states and three coastal Union Territories, with USD 180 million in financing.
(a) eight (b) nine (c) ten (d) eleven
40. The World Press Freedom Day is being celebrated across the globe on:
(a) 1st May (b) 2nd May (c) 3rd May (d) 5th May
41. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the Non Aligned Movement can help promote global solidarity and it must remain inclusive. The NAM was established in:
(a) 1955 (b) 1959 (c) 1961 (d) 1971
42. Kovilpatti kadalai mittai was granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag. It is from which of the following states of India?
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Kerala (c) Telangana (d) Tamil Nadu
43. Which of the following countries will launch first Arktika-M satellite for monitoring Arctic climate this year at the end of the year?
(a) India (b) China (c) Russia (d) USA
44. Which of the following countries has banned all Iran-backed Hezbollah activity on its soil and designated it a terrorist organization?
(a) India (b) Saudi Arabia (c) Germany (d) USA
45. US President Donald Trump has nominated Indian-American _____ as a representative to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
(a) Ashok Michael Pinto (b) Ravinder Yogi
(c) Punkaj Jain (d) Siddarth Malhotra
46. The US placed _____ on the 'Priority Watch List' for lack of sufficient measurable improvements to its intellectual property framework on the "long-standing" and "new challenges" that have negatively affected American right holders over the past year.
(a) India (b) Pakistan (c) China (d) Nepal
47. Which of the following has developed an Ultra Violet Disinfection Tower for rapid and chemical free disinfection of high infection prone areas?
(a) ISRO (b) DRDO (c) HAL (d) BEL
48. According to the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Ozone depletion over the Arctic hit a "record level" in March, the biggest since 2011, but the hole has now closed. The organization is headquartered in:
(a) Geneva (b) Tokyo (c) New York (d) Paris
49. CSIR-Central Scientific Instruments Organisation (CSIR-CSIO) has designed and developed an innovative technology for effective disinfection and sanitization to fight with corona pandemic. The CSIO is based in:
(a) Hyderabad (b) Bhopal (c) Chandigarh (d) New Delhi
50. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) released a new list containing 169 names of future tropical cyclones that would emerge in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. IMD is headquartered in:
(a) Kolkata (b) Chennai (c) Delhi (d) Pune

51. Which of the following states unveiled three schemes Birsa Harit Gram Yojana (BHGY), Neelambar Pitambar JAL Sammriddhi Yojana (NPJSY) and Veer Sahid Poto Ho Khel Vikas Scheme (VSPHKVS) to create wage employment for workers in rural areas?
(a) Bihar (b) Jharkhand (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Madhya Pradesh
52. Recently, United States President Donald Trump has nominated senior Indian-American diplomat _____ as his envoy to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
(a) Deepika Munjal (b) Saras Mehndiratta (c) Maya Narain (d) Manisha Singh
53. Who has launched the Saras collection on Government e Marketplace (GeM) portal in New Delhi?
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Narendra Singh Tomar
(c) Shri Amit Shah (d) Shri Rajnath Singh
54. Recently, Russian President Vladimir Putin has awarded _____ a commemorative war medal marking the 75th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany.
(a) Narendra Modi (b) Kim Jong Un (c) Imran Khan (d) Justin Trudeau
55. Which of the following has recently set up a panel to frame standard professional indemnity policy for insurance intermediaries that can be issued by all the insurers?
(a) ICRA (b) SIDBI (c) IRDAI (d) NABARD
56. Which of the following ministries has constituted a seven-member committee to examine the comments received on the consultation paper floated by it for enhancing audit independence and accountability in the country?
(a) Ministry of Finance (b) Ministry of Corporate Affairs
(c) Ministry of Home Affairs (d) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
57. Which of the following countries has launched 'The Long March 5B' rocket?
(a) India (b) China (c) North Korea (d) South Korea
58. India's first test bus for the Coronavirus (Covid 19) was flagged off in:
(a) Gujarat (b) Maharashtra (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Punjab
59. World Asthma Day is observed on:
(a) May 2nd (b) May 4th (c) April 29th (d) May 5th
60. Recently, Three photojournalists from _____ have been awarded the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for their "striking images of life" in the valley.
(a) Jammu and Kashmir (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Maharashtra
61. Who has been reappointed as chairperson of the Parliament's public accounts committee (PAC) recently?
(a) Shri Shashi Tharoor
(b) Shri Manish Tewari
(c) Shri Rahul Gandhi
(d) Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury
62. What is the name of the operation launched by sending two ships to the Maldives to bring back 1,000 Indians stranded on the island nation after COVID19 pandemic?
(a) Operation Maitrayi
(b) Operation Sagar Setu
(c) Operation Samudra Setu
(d) Operation Samudra Mitra

63. Which of the following state governments is planning to launch a new programme Nigah, in order to sensitize and educate the family members of the people coming to the state from other parts of the country?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Andhra Pradesh
(c) Himachal Pradesh (d) Arunachal Pradesh
64. Which of the following institutions in association with Piramal Foundation launched a campaign 'Surakshit Dada-Dadi & Nana-Nani Abhiyan' focussed on ensuring well-being of senior citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic?
(a) NITI Aayog (b) AIIMS Delhi (c) IIT Delhi (d) Reserve Bank of India
65. Name the Pakistani Hindu youth who has become the first person from the minority community to join the Pakistan Air Force recently.
(a) Manish Anand (b) Dhruv Chandra (c) Anuj Kumar (d) Rahul Dev
66. Who has been appointed as a director on the central board of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) by the government?
(a) Deepak Khajuria (b) Mahesh Baranwal (c) Tarun Bajaj (d) Amit Ranjan Jha
67. The prestigious Navaratnalu - Pedalandariki Illu (houses for all the poor) scheme will be launched on July 8 in:
(a) Telangana (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Karnataka (d) Tamil Nadu
68. What is the name of the portal for fast-track approval to COVID-19-related drone operations launched by DGCA?
(a) Jatayu (b) Garud (c) Vihag (d) Vidyut
69. Which of the following states launched the Ayush Kavach app that will provide health-related tips and information about ayurvedic medicines to people during the coronavirus crisis?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand (c) Punjab (d) Jharkhand
70. The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) celebrates the:
(a) 1st May (b) 3rd May (c) 5th May (d) 6th May
71. Which is the first state in the country to provide mid-day meal ration?
(a) Chhattisgarh (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Jharkhand (d) Uttar Pradesh
72. Which of the following countries national currency will be changed from the rial to the Toman?
(a) Iraq (b) Syria (c) Jordan (d) Iran
73. Name the former spy chief who was recently sworn in as prime minister of Iraq.
(a) Mustafa al-Kadhimi (b) Adnan al-Zurfi
(c) Barham Salih (d) Adil Abdul Mahdi
74. According to the 'Digital in India' report by the Internet & Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), as of last November, the active internet users in rural areas is _____ more than in urban areas.
(a) 5% (b) 10% (c) 15% (d) 20%
75. How many Central Universities have been selected for the prestigious Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF) scheme this year?
(a) 3 (b) 5 (c) 6 (d) 8
76. Which of the following states has launched an online portal scholarships.gov.in under 'Mukhyamantri Yuba Yogayog Yojana'?
(a) Nagaland (b) Tripura (c) West Bengal (d) Manipur

77. Who among the following has launched the 'AYUSH Sanjivani' App and two AYUSH based studies related to COVID-19 situation?
(a) Shri Siddhant Guleria (b) Shri Narendra Modi
(c) Shri Amit Shah (d) Dr. Harsh Vardhan
78. Recently, A team of astronomers has discovered that the closest known brown dwarf _____ which shows signs of cloud bands similar to those seen on Jupiter and Saturn.
(a) Luhman 16A (b) Lukman 20B (c) Marit 9F (d) Hister 18G
79. In 2020, the IAAF marked _____ as the World Athletics Day.
(a) 3rd May (b) 5th May (c) 6th May (d) 7th May
80. Recently, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) extended environmentalist and actor-producer _____ term as its National Goodwill Ambassador for another two years till the end of 2022.
(a) Priyanka Chopra (b) Aishwarya Rai Bachchan
(c) Dia Mirza (d) Lara Dutta
81. Who was held meeting via video conferencing with the members of SIAM Institute on impact of COVID-19 on auto sector?
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Rajnath Singh
(c) Shri Nitin Gadkari (d) Shri Peeyush Goyal
82. Which of the following states launched the 'Pravasi Rahat Mitra' App that is aimed at aiding migrant citizens from other states so that they can take advantage of government schemes?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) West Bengal
83. In a first of its kind initiative, a unique vehicle 'Sanjeevani' has been developed at the local level in which of the following Indian state?
(a) Jharkhand (b) Chhattisgarh (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Maharashtra
84. Name the evacuation exercises which was launched by the government to bring home nearly 14,800 Indian nationals stranded abroad due to the coronavirus lockdown.
(a) Vande Nagrik Mission (b) Come Back to India
(c) Vande Bharat Mission (d) Welcome Everyone
85. Recently, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu formally received the support of a majority of lawmakers to lead a new government in:
(a) Egypt (b) Israel (c) Canada (d) Poland
86. Amidst Covid-19 cases surging in seven populous States in India global rating agency Moody's slashed India's GDP growth rate at _____ for the current fiscal 2020-21.
(a) Minus One (b) Zero (c) Plus One (d) Plus Two
87. Which among the following has disbursed Rs 12,767 crore to State Co-operative Banks (StCBs) and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) across the country to augment their resources for extending credit to farmers during the ongoing lockdown?
(a) Reserve Bank of India (b) NABARD
(c) RRB (d) Ministry of Finance
88. Recently, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's (AIIB) approved a _____ million loan to support India's Covid-19 operations.
(a) \$200 (b) \$500 (c) \$650 (d) \$900

89. Which of the following countries launched new prototype spacecraft “successfully landed” marking an important step in its ambitions to run a permanent space station and send astronauts to the moon?
(a) Japan (b) China (c) India (d) South Korea
90. World Hand Hygiene Day 2020 was observed on:
(a) 29th April (b) 1st May (c) 3rd May (d) 5th May
91. Name the gas which was leaked by LG Polymers India Limited in Vizag (Andhra Pradesh).
(a) Methyl Isocyanide (b) Mustard Gas (c) Styrene (d) Propylene
92. Which of the following states has become the first state in the country to provide the facility of beds with ventilators in hospitals of each and every district of state?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Odisha (c) Rajasthan (d) Uttar Pradesh
93. World Thalassaemia Day is observed on:
(a) 2nd May (b) 5th May (c) 6th May (d) 8th May
94. The latest estimation of tiger numbers in the Indian Sunderbans indicate an increase in the population of big cats by:
(a) 3 (b) 5 (c) 8 (d) 11
95. Which of the following IIT’s startup named ‘Nanosafe Solutions’ has launched an antimicrobial and washable face mask that can be reused up to 50 launderings?
(a) IIT Bombay (b) IIT Delhi (c) IIT Kharagpur (d) IIT Kanpur
96. Recently, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman launched Rupee-Dollar (INR-USD) futures and options contracts on the _____ international exchanges.
(a) Two (b) Three (c) Five (d) Six
97. Recently, Supreme Court held that cooperative banks established under a State law or multi-State level societies come within the ambit of:
(a) SARFAESI Act 1992 (b) SARFAESI Act 1998
(c) SARFAESI Act 2002 (d) SARFAESI Act 2006
98. Recently, World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN’s postal agency have released a commemorative postage stamp on the 40th anniversary of the eradication of:
(a) Measles (b) Chicken Pox (c) Smallpox (d) Plague
99. Recently, Uttar Pradesh has suspended major labour laws for _____ years to attract investors.
(a) Two (b) Three (c) Four (d) Five
100. Which of the following countries won the inaugural \$180,000 FIDE Chess.com Online Nations Cup?
(a) Russia (b) India (c) USA (d) China
101. Recently, India rejected Kathmandu’s protest against the construction of a road to Lipulekh on the border with China. Lipulekh Pass is located in:
(a) Uttarakhand (b) Himachal Pradesh (c) Arunachal Pradesh (d) Sikkim
102. Recently, The Indian Navy’s INS Kesari, a 5,600-tonne landing ship, was deployed following requests for assistance from the Indian Ocean countries. Which of the following is not among the Indian Ocean countries?
(a) Madagascar (b) Indonesia (c) Comoros (d) Mauritius

103. According to data released by the Registrar General of India, which of the following states has the worst Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in the country at 48?
(a) Rajasthan (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Bihar (d) Uttar Pradesh
104. Which of the following countries has introduced 'Operation Warp Speed', which pulls together pharmaceutical companies, government agencies and the military?
(a) Russia (b) USA (c) India (d) China
105. Name India's largest power generator which achieved 100 percent Plant Load Factor (PLF) at three of its thermal power stations.
(a) BPCL (b) IOCL (c) BHEL (d) NTPC
106. Which of the following is India's first indigenous Covid-19 testing kit?
(a) FLISA (b) ELISA (c) MERIT (d) CHLORIT
107. Which of the following has developed automated Ultraviolet systems to sanitise electronic gadgets, papers and currency notes?
(a) ISRO (b) RBI (c) DRDO (d) IIT
108. World Migratory Bird Day(WMBD) is an annual global celebration campaign to raise awareness of the needs for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats and is celebrated on:
(a) 1st May (b) 3rd May (c) 5th May (d) 9th May
109. The Defence Ministry signed a contract with _____ for modernisation of infrastructure at 37 airfields of the Indian Air Force, Coast Guard and the Navy.
(a) Tata Power SED (b) Reliance Power (c) Adani Power (d) Essar Power
110. Which of the following states health department has released an anti-coronavirus mobile game 'Covid Run' - the first of its kind - in collaboration with a startup?
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Kerala (c) Assam (d) Maharashtra
111. Which of the following states launched India's first ever 'FIR Aapke Dwar Yojana'?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Bihar (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Rajasthan
112. Recently, Supreme Court sets up panel to look into Jammu and Kashmir Internet curbs. Who is the head of this panel?
(a) Justice N.V.Ramana (b) Justice Arun Mishra
(c) Justice Fali S Narington (d) Justice D.Y.Chandrachud
113. Name the initiative, which is aimed at helping patients to monitor the progress of ILI to severe acute respiratory illness (SARI).
(a) Pranseva (b) Pranavayu (c) Jeevan Swas (d) Jeev Amrit
114. According to a new report released by the International Energy Agency, the report projects that energy demands will fall _____ in 2020.
(a) 3% (b) 6% (c) 9% (d) 12%
115. Recently, The government's flagship social security scheme, Atal Pension Yojana (APY), has achieved the milestone of 2.23 subscribers as it completes five years of its implementation. It was launched on:
(a) 4th May, 2017 (b) 6th May, 2016 (c) 9th May, 2015 (d) 12th May, 2014

116. In India, Three new species of fishes are found in:
(a) Sundarbans (b) Eastern Ghats (c) Western Ghats (d) Sutluj River
117. Recently, an existing mobile application used for personal nutrition studies, a multinational collaboration the Coronavirus Pandemic Epidemiology (COPE) has developed a COVID-19 Symptom Tracker mobile app. The mobile app, which allows for epidemiologic data collection and analysis, was launched in:
(a) USA (b) United Kingdom (c) Australia (d) New Zealand
118. Recently, Hari Sankar Vasudevan, who had tested positive for coronavirus, died at a private hospital in Kolkata. He was a famous:
(a) Scientist (b) Mathematician (c) Historian (d) Astrologer
119. National Technology Day is celebrated every year on:
(a) 4th May (b) 6th May (c) 8th May (d) 11th May
120. Name the Indian who is being presented the Deutsche Welle's Freedom of Speech Award this year.
(a) Siddharth Varadarajan (b) Ravish Kumar
(c) Sweta Singh (d) Anjana Om Kashyap
121. Sohrai Khovar painting has been granted Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry. These paintings are famous in:
(a) Jharkhand (b) Telangana (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Madhya Pradesh
122. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a special economic package worth _____ crore rupees for an 'Atma-Nirbhar Bharat' or self-reliant India.
(a) 10 lakh (b) 15 lakh (c) 20 lakh (d) 25 lakh
123. Which of the following states has constituted a 24-member committee headed by former RBI Governor C Rangarajan to assess the "immediate and medium-term" impact of the coronavirus pandemic on different sectors that contribute to the state's economy?
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Maharashtra (d) Bihar
124. Which of the following ministries has launched 'CHAMPIONS' portal www.Champions.gov.in, a technology driven control room-cum-management information system?
(a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
(b) Ministry of Home Affairs
(c) Ministry of Human Resource Development
(d) Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
125. Which of the following states launched the first indigenous seam sealing machine, which helps in manufacturing PPE kits?
(a) Gujarat (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Maharashtra (d) Bihar
126. Which of the following countries has launched two satellites to test the space-based Internet of Things (IoT) communications technology in May 2020?
(a) India (b) USA (c) North Korea (d) China
127. CSIR - National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), a constituent of lab of CSIR has developed a Non Invasive BiPAP Ventilator in a record time of 36 days to treat COVID-19 patients. The National Aerospace Laboratories is headquartered in:
(a) Chennai (b) Kolkata (c) Hyderabad (d) Bangalore

128. The first ever 'State of the World's Nursing Report' is released by
(a) Red Cross (b) World Health Organization
(c) ICMR (d) International health
129. Who is the first Indian to win Fed Cup Heart Award recently?
(a) P.V.Sindhu (b) Sania Mirza
(c) Mahesh Bhupathi (d) Leander Paes
130. The International Nurses Day on 12th May, 2020 also marked the 200th birth anniversary of:
(a) Florence Nightingale (b) Wann Anna Rosy
(c) Mariyam Rehana (d) Mary Ann Rose
131. Which of the following states launched a portal 'HOPE' aimed at creating employment avenues for the trained youth as well as offering them skill development opportunities to increase their employability?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand
(c) Haryana (d) Punjab
132. Which of the following states has re-launched the ambitious Sambal Yojana aimed to strengthen the lives of the poor and the SC and ST communities by providing them social security cover, right from birth to death?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand (c) Haryana (d) Punjab
133. The Forbes Global 2000 saw a new entry at the top of the list of oil and gas firms with the debut of:
(a) Reliance Oil & Gas (b) Aramco (c) Shell (d) Lumisonov
134. Which of the following countries wants to construct seven more dams as it strives to live up to its billing as the "Battery of Asia"?
(a) Vietnam (b) Cambodia (c) Myanmar (d) Laos
135. The New Development Bank of the BRICS countries has fully disbursed USD _____ emergency assistance loan to India to help it contain the spread of COVID-19 and reduce human, social and economic losses.
(a) 250 million (b) 500 million (c) 1 billion (d) 5 billion
136. Which of the following Indian airports has won this year's SKYTRAX Award for Best Regional Airport in India and Central Asia?
(a) Indira Gandhi international airport
(b) Rajiv Gandhi international airport
(c) Chaudhary Charan Singh International airport
(d) Kempegowda International Airport
137. What is the India rank in the World Economic Forum (WEF) global 'Energy Transition Index'?
(a) 32nd (b) 45th (c) 56th (d) 74th
138. Which of the following motorcycle companies and IIT Madras (IIT-M) have jointly developed a low-cost, automated respiratory assistance device called 'Sundaram Ventago' to provide breathing support to patience through Ambu bag?
(a) Hero Motocorps (b) Bajaj (c) Yamaha (d) TVS group
139. Name the cricketer who is set to serve his second term as the president of Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC).
(a) Vivian Richard (b) Chris Cairns (c) Kumar Sangakkara (d) Ian Botham

140. The International Day of Families is observed on:
(a) 5th May (b) 12th May (c) 13th May (d) 15th May
141. Recently, In Gujarat, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced Aatmanirbhar Gujarat Sahay Yojana. This yojana is for the benefit of:
(a) Students (b) Old Age People (c) Village Heads (d) Small Shopkeepers
142. Recently, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announces _____ concessional credit boost through the Kisan Credit Card Special drive benefiting over 2.5 crore farmers in the country.
(a) One lakh crore (b) Two lakh crore (c) Three lakh crore (d) Five lakh crore
143. Recently, Kashmir plans to provide tap water connections to all rural households by December 2022 under the:
(a) Jal Jyoti Mission (b) Jal Jeevan Mission
(c) Jal Amrit Yojana (d) Jal Dhara Amrit Yojana
144. Which of the following state government s launched the 'Matir Smristi' scheme, which will benefit around 2.5 lakh people in rural part of the state?
(a) Odisha (b) Assam (c) West Bengal (d) Meghalaya
145. According to the latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a _____ fall in international tourist arrivals during the first quarter of 2020.
(a) 12% (b) 15% (c) 22% (d) 30%
146. Recently, MoneyGram Payment Systems has tied up with _____ to offer a cost-effective direct-to-bank account credit option for customers in India.
(a) RBL Bank (b) Federal Bank (c) Axis Bank (d) Bandhan Bank
147. The International Day of Light is celebrated on:
(a) 4th May (b) 7th May (c) 11th May (d) 16th May
148. According to the Global Nutrition Report 2020 released, India is among _____ countries that are likely to miss global nutrition targets by 2025.
(a) 32 (b) 46 (c) 76 (d) 88
149. Recently, According to FRA 2020 released by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the rate of forest loss in 2015-2020 declined to an estimated _____ million hectares (mha), down from 12 million hectares (mha) in 2010-2015.
(a) 10 (b) 8 (c) 6 (d) 5
150. Recently, Roberto Azevedo has decided to resign, a year before his term expires. He was the head of:
(a) World Bank (b) IMF (c) WTO (d) UNICEF
151. Which of the following States/ Union territories Police launched 'Thermal Corona Combat Headgear' through which police personnel will be able to detect temperature of a large number of people from a distance of 10-15 metres?
(a) Puducherry (b) Delhi (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Jharkhand
152. Who among the following e-launched seven titles on "Psycho-Social Impact of Pandemic & Lockdown and How to Cope With"?
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Amit Shah
(c) Shri Rajnath Singh (d) Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank

153. The central government will launch a _____ crore rupees Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana for the development of marine and inland fisheries.
(a) 10,000 (b) 15,000 (c) 20,000 (d) 30,000
154. The GOAL programme is designed to provide mentorship to _____ through digital mode.
(a) Unemployed Youth (b) Sports person (c) Minority Youth (d) Tribal Youth
155. Which of the following countries has recently named a street after celebrated Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore as a tribute on his 159th birthday?
(a) Israel (b) Bulgaria (c) Saudi Arabia (d) Egypt
156. Which of the following countries has become the first European country to proclaim an end to the coronavirus epidemic at home?
(a) Slovenia (b) Netherlands (c) Poland (d) Germany
157. Recently, A team of zoologists from Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have found a frog species, with origins in the Tibet region of China, in:
(a) Arunachal Pradesh (b) Meghalaya (c) Sikkim (d) Tripura
158. Which of the following ministries has developed an e-governance platform 'SAMARTH Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)' under the National Mission of Education in Information and Communication Technology Scheme (NMEICT)?
(a) Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
(b) Ministry of Human Resource Development
(c) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
(d) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
159. Recently, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced _____ Agri Infrastructure Fund that will finance projects at farm-gate and aggregation point for efficient post-harvest management of crops.
(a) One lakh crore rupees (b) Two lakh crore rupees
(c) Four lakh crore rupees (d) Five lakh crore rupees
160. National Endangered Species Day is observed on:
(a) Third Saturday of May (b) Third Wednesday of May
(c) Third Friday of May (d) Third Tuesday of May
161. Recently, One dedicated TV channel per class from class 1 to class 12 has started for students to study online. This has been launched under a comprehensive initiative called:
(a) Pradhan Mantri e-SHIKSHA (b) Pradhan Mantri e-SAKSHAR
(c) Pradhan Mantri e-EDUCATION (d) Pradhan Mantri e-VIDYA
162. Recently, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in defence manufacturing under automatic route was raised from 49 per cent to:
(a) 60% (b) 74% (c) 80% (d) 100%
163. Under the MNREGA scheme, an additional Rs _____ thousand crore will be allocated for employment generation in the rural parts of the country.
(a) 10 (b) 20 (c) 30 (d) 40
164. The Centre has given approval to a modified detailed project report (DPR) of the Ujh Multipurpose Project (MPP) in Jammu and Kashmir. Ujh is one of the main tributaries of river:
(a) Beas (b) Ravi (c) Sutluj (d) Chenab

165. The pan-India electronic agriculture trading portal, e-NAM has reached milestone of one thousand Mandis across 18 States and three Union Territories. E-NAM was launched in:
(a) 2011 (b) 2014 (c) 2016 (d) 2017
166. Which of the following countries hosted bizarre ghost election with zero turnouts?
(a) Greece (b) Poland (c) Slovenia (d) Portugal
167. Who topped – ‘The Sunday Times Rich List 2020’ with 16.2 billion pounds?
(a) Reuben brothers (b) Hinduja brothers (c) James Dyson (d) Laxmi Niwas Mittal
168. Recently, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned Rs 1,500 crore for _____ to ensure continuous credit flow to farmers, through state cooperative banks, amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
(a) Punjab (b) Haryana (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Bihar
169. Recently, Scientists at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), an autonomous research institute under the Department of Science and Technology, have recently developed an injectable Silk fibroin-based hydrogel for sustained insulin delivery in:
(a) Cancer patients (b) Jaundice patients (c) Diabetic patients (d) Tuberculosis patients
170. International Day of Living Together in Peace was celebrated on:
(a) 11th May (b) 13th May (c) 15th May (d) 16th May
171. Recently, Government of India, the Government of _____ and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) signed a loan agreement for a US\$145 million project to improve irrigation services and flood management in the Damodar Valley Command Area.
(a) Odisha (b) West Bengal (c) Sikkim (d) Jharkhand
172. In a first of its kind of initiative, which of the following Indian states has started Charan Paduka campaign for the migrant labourers passing through the state?
(a) Maharashtra (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Bihar
173. Which of the following countries will publish a new political map asserting its claim over the Kalapani region that has been at the centre of a simmering territorial dispute with India?
(a) Bhutan (b) Nepal (c) Bangladesh (d) Pakistan
174. Recently, Israel’s Parliament swore in its new unity government led by Prime Minister Netanyahu and his former rival _____ ending the longest political crisis in the nation’s history.
(a) Issac Tremo (b) Benny Gantz (c) Timoth Resty (d) Jerac Riuvim
175. The Centre is taking another \$1 billion loan from the _____ to support its COVID-19 relief measures and financial assistance for the poorest and most vulnerable communities.
(a) IMF (b) AIIB (c) World Bank (d) New Development Bank
176. According to the recent study by Comparisun, a company which helps organisations compare different business products. Who could potentially become the world’s first trillionaire as early as 2026?
(a) Warren Buffet (b) Carlos Slim Helu (c) Jeff Bezos (d) Mukesh Ambani
177. The United Nations forecast that the COVID-19 pandemic will shrink the world economy by _____ per cent this year, the sharpest contraction since the Great Depression in the 1930s.
(a) 1.4 (b) 1.9 (c) 2.4 (d) 3.2

178. Name the cyclone which has made landfall in between Sagar Islands (West Bengal) and Hatiya Islands (Bangladesh) on May 20.
(a) Cyclone Ambuja (b) Cyclone Amphan (c) Cyclone Bertry (d) Cyclone Anjanad
179. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) got a new Director General with the appointment of:
(a) Lakshmi Reddy (b) Srijeeta Misra
(c) Ananya Dharmadhikari (d) V. Vidyavathi
180. In 2020, World Hypertension Day was observed on:
(a) 13th May (b) 14th May (c) 15th May (d) 17th May
181. Recently, Union Government has implemented _____ Committee's recommendations related to creating border infrastructure.
(a) Lt. General R S Kushwaha (b) Lt. General Mahendra Vikram Singh
(c) Lt. General D B Shekatkar (d) Lt. General M D Goyal
182. Recently, Scientists have discovered a new species of parasitic fungus on:
(a) Facebook (b) Google (c) Instagram (d) Twitter
183. Recently, Reliance Industries announced that US-based private equity firm _____ will invest Rs 6,598.38 crore for a 1.34 per cent stake in Jio Platforms.
(a) General Atlantic (b) US Willson (c) Shell (d) Miranda
184. Which of the following states has launched first accelerator for cyber security start-ups?
(a) Kerala (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Karnataka (d) Tamil Nadu
185. The first Indian bank to offer video based "zero-contact" onboarding service is
(a) ICICI Bank (b) Kotak Mahindra (c) State Bank of India (d) HDFC Bank
186. Sovereign Gold Bonds are issued by the _____ on behalf of the government and is a bond denominated in gold.
(a) Finance Ministry (b) NITI Aayog
(c) Reserve Bank of India (d) NABARD
187. Which of the following IIT's has come up with a data science driven identification and mitigation framework for implementing state-by-state lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19?
(a) IIT Bombay (b) IIT Madras (c) IIT Delhi (d) IIT Kanpur
188. The Cotton Development and Research Association (CDRA) of Southern India Mills' Association has signed an agreement with Cotton Development Organisation and National Agricultural Research Organisation of _____ to develop a cotton seed variety that will help increase the income of farmers in both the countries.
(a) Burundi (b) Nigeria (c) Sudan (d) Uganda
189. Who has been presented the 2019 Alexander Dalrymple Award in recognition of his "outstanding contribution" to Indian hydrography and across the wider Indian Ocean region?
(a) Vice Admiral Vinay Badhwar (b) Captain Deepak Saluja
(c) Major Aravind Singh (d) Admiral Ajay Ranavat
190. International Museum Day (IMD) is celebrated every year on:
(a) 11th May (b) 13th May (c) 15th May (d) 18th May

191. Which of the following states / Union Territories launched Online Career Guidance Portal “Manzelein” for students in association with UNICEF which is a structured and well programmed portal developed to help students in choosing a right career after completing their secondary or higher secondary education?
(a) Jammu and Kashmir (b) Lakshadweep (c) Haryana (d) Rajasthan
192. Recently, Indian Railways became the _____ country in the world to join the elite club of producing high horsepower locomotive indigenously.
(a) Second (b) Third (c) Sixth (d) Ninth
193. Name the first Indian state capital which was declared free of Novel coronavirus recently.
(a) Shimla (b) Bengaluru (c) Dehradun (d) Bhubaneswar
194. Recently, the centre has declared five-star garbage free cities. Which of the following is not one among the five cities?
(a) Ambikapur (b) Jaipur (c) Rajkot (d) Navi Mumbai
195. In a first of its kind proposal the Army plans to take civilians on a _____ year ‘Tour of Duty’ (ToD) on a trial basis to serve in the force as both officers and other ranks initially for a limited number of vacancies and then expanded later.
(a) One (b) Two (c) Three (d) Five
196. Who will be India’s nominee to be the next WHO Executive Board chairman?
(a) Peeyush Goyal (b) Nirmala Sitharaman (c) Dr. Harsh Vardhan (d) Narendra Modi
197. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) has disbursed Rs _____ to cooperative banks and regional rural banks (RRBs) for on-lending to farmers.
(a) Rs 12,000 crore (b) Rs 16,750 crore (c) Rs 20,500 crore (d) Rs 25,000 crore
198. Which of the following railway zones has developed a robotic device, “RAIL-BOT” (R-BOT) to assist in hospital management functions towards patient care in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak?
(a) South Railway zone (b) South Central Railway zone
(c) North Railway zone (d) North Central Railway zone
199. World Bee Day is celebrated on:
(a) 12th May (b) 15th May (c) 17th May (d) 20th May
200. Who is the first Indian Television actress to collaborate with Google?
(a) Krystle D Souza (b) Rashami Desai (c) Hina Khan (d) Divyanka Tripathi Dahiya
201. Which of the following state governments launched a scheme Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojna on the late former Prime Minister’s 19th death anniversary for direct cash transfers to around 2 million farmers in four installments?
(a) Maharashtra (b) Punjab (c) Rajasthan (d) Chhattisgarh
202. The Indian Army’s only mounted cavalry regiment is set to say goodbye to its horses, with the government approving a proposal to equip the _____ Cavalry with tanks.
(a) 52nd (b) 57th (c) 61st (d) 64th
203. Which of the following Union territories / States has started an initiative ‘SUKOON’ - COVID-19 Beat the Stress’?
(a) Lakshadweep (b) Jammu & Kashmir (c) West Bengal (d) Haryana

204. Which of the following states has announced 'Mee Annapurna', an initiative that integrates three critical aspects of livelihood and comprehensive engagement?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Maharashtra (c) Gujarat (d) Rajasthan
205. Recently, Union Cabinet has approved Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana which aims to bring about _____ through sustainable and responsible development of fisheries sector in the country.
(a) Blue Revolution (b) Silver Revolution (c) Yellow Revolution (d) Grey Revolution
206. Recently, Baltic countries started what is being referred to as a 'travel bubble' to help put their economies back on track post-Covid lockdowns. Which of the following is not among Baltic countries?
(a) Latvia (b) Slovenia (c) Lithuania (d) Estonia
207. Recently, Moeketsi Majoro has been sworn in as new prime minister of:
(a) The Gambia (b) Lesotho (c) Tuvalu (d) San Marino
208. Indian Government has recently appointed Govinda Rajulu Chintala as chairman of:
(a) SIDBI (b) FCI (c) NABARD (d) LIC
209. Recently, Union Cabinet gave its approval to a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme named Scheme for Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises for the Unorganized Sector with an outlay of Rs. 10 thousand crore. The expenditure will be shared by Centre and the States in ratio of:
(a) 45:55 (b) 50:50 (c) 60:40 (d) 25:75
210. World Metrology Day 2020 was celebrated on:
(a) 12th May (b) 14th May (c) 17th May (d) 20th May
211. Recently, the financial crisis expert Carmen Reinhart has been named as the chief economist of:
(a) International Monetary Fund (b) World Bank
(c) AIIB (d) New Development Bank
212. According to the Government, India has become the world's _____ largest manufacturer of personal protective equipment (PPE) body coverall.
(a) Second (b) Third (c) Fourth (d) Fifth
213. Recently, Which of the following states has launched the 'Startup Fund' to encourage the youth of the state for entrepreneurship?
(a) Bihar (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Gujarat (d) Rajasthan
214. Recently, India and _____ signed an agreement to operationalise five new ports of call and two new protocol routes to boost the bilateral trade.
(a) Bangladesh (b) Sri Lanka (c) Mauritius (d) Maldives
215. In which of the following national parks the only population of feral horses is found in India?
(a) Dibru-Saikhowa National Park (b) Nagarhole National Park
(c) Balphakram National Park (d) Valley of Flowers National Park
216. Recently, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has launched a scheme for 100% solarisation of Konark Sun Temple and Konark town in:
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Odisha

217. Which of the following companies launched a new safety feature called 'Lock Your Profile' that allows users to restrict access to their photos, timelines and posts from non-friends in a single click?
(a) Tiktok (b) Instagram (c) Facebook (d) WhattsApp
218. Which of the following IIT's has developed 'Parabolic Trough Collector', a lightweight and low-cost system with high energy efficiency and can operate under the country's varied climatic conditions?
(a) IIT Bombay (b) IIT Madras (c) IIT Delhi (d) IIT Kanpur
219. The world joined hands to celebrate its first Tea Day on:
(a) 12th May (b) 16th May (c) 18th May (d) 21st May
220. Recently, Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati has worked on out-of-the-box ideas that can help prevent or reduce short-term memory losses associated with _____ disease.
(a) Alzheimer (b) Brain Tumor (c) Dementia (d) Agnosia
221. Which of the following states got its first ever international waterway as five new protocol routes were announced between India and its eastern neighbour Bangladesh?
(a) Manipur (b) Mizoram (c) Tripura (d) Meghalaya
222. Recently, which of the following states inaugurated 'Everybody will get employment' scheme?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Rajasthan
223. Which of following countries will withdraw from the Treaty on Open Skies, a nearly 30-year-old pact designed to reduce the chances of an accidental war by allowing mutual reconnaissance flights for members of the 34-country agreement?
(a) USA (b) France (c) Russia (d) Germany
224. Which of the following telecom companies has teamed up with UNICEF to provide children with access to remote learning and cash assistance for their families via mobile cash transfers?
(a) Reliance Jio (b) Vodafone Idea (c) Bharti Airtel (d) MTNL
225. The National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) announced the commencement of trading in the country's first agri futures index _____.
(a) NCDEX AGRIDEX (b) NCDEX AGRIRIN
(c) NCDEX AGRIDINE (d) NCDEX AGRI
226. Which of the following companies has acquired GIPHY for \$400 million to integrate its GIF library?
(a) Google (b) Facebook (c) Yahoo (d) Tiktok
227. Recently, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has approved Union Bank of India's proposal to continue with its _____ holding in India First Life Insurance with the caveat that the lender will exercise no control in the management of the insurer.
(a) 10% (b) 20% (c) 30% (d) 40%
228. Which of the following private sector banks has launched 'Golden Years FD', the scheme for senior citizens?
(a) HDFC Bank (b) RBL Bank (c) ICICI Bank (d) Axis Bank
229. The United Nations has proclaimed _____ as the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.
(a) 16th May (b) 18th May (c) 20th May (d) 22nd May

230. Who is the author of new book Hop On: My Adventures on Boats, Trains and Planes?
(a) Arundhati Roy (b) Aravind Adiga (c) Ruskin Bond (d) Dibaker Bannerjee
231. Which of the following states has announced a mega boost for MSMEs with a Rs 1,110 crore restart package?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Odisha (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Uttar Pradesh
232. Recently, Centre has identified 4 model cities for Covid handling. Which of the following is not one among them?
(a) Indore (b) Bhopal (c) Jaipur (d) Bengaluru
233. After a gap of about 5 months due to the Corona pandemic, “Hunar Haat” will restart from September 2020 with the theme of:
(a) Vocal for Local (b) Quality Deliverance
(c) Best Possible Outcome (d) Local to Global
234. Who has been appointed as the National President of FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO), the women wing of the leading industry chamber of the country?
(a) Veera Rawat (b) Jahnabi Phookan
(c) Vaishnavi Merchant (d) Naigombi Rani Singh
235. In an industry first _____ has launched a motor OD (own damage) floater policy that allows the insured to pay as he/she uses the vehicle.
(a) Edelweiss General Insurance (b) Tata AIA Life Insurance
(c) PNB MetLife Life Insurance (d) Pramerica Life Insurance.
236. In a first, which of the following states has released biggest report on plant species in India?
(a) Arunachal Pradesh (b) Sikkim (c) Himachal Pradesh (d) Uttarakhand
237. Recently, A high-level committee of experts has been formed by the government to recommend reforms in India's drug regulatory system so that approval processes can be fast-tracked. The committee is chaired by:
(a) Aniket Mishra (b) Deepak Bhujaria (c) Amit Anand (d) Rajesh Bhushan
238. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is set to replace hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) with anti-HIV drugs to improve immunity and possibly reduce viral replication, in the revised protocol. Which of the following tea could also be effective in boosting immunity?
(a) Assam Tea (b) Darjeeling Tea (c) Kangra Tea (d) Mysore Tea
239. Who has been appointed as first Indian for Coalition for Global Hearing Health (CGHH) who works with WHO?
(a) Meenakshi Talreja (b) Vidhi Magoo (c) Anamika Rao (d) Devangi Dalal
240. The World Turtle Day is celebrated on:
(a) 16th May (b) 18th May (c) 20th May (d) 23rd May
241. Recently, United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth has listed _____ Khudol (gift) among the top 10 global initiatives for an inclusive fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.
(a) Manipur's (b) Meghalaya's (c) Sikkim's (d) Mizoram's
242. The Indian Air Force is set to operationalize its squadron called the _____ with a fleet of the Light Combat Aircraft, LCA Tejas at its Sulur base near Coimbatore.
(a) Number-10 - Flying Bullets (b) Number-12 - Flying Bullets
(c) Number-14 - Flying Bullets (d) Number-18 - Flying Bullets

243. Which of the following countries warship has successfully tested a new high-energy laser weapon that can destroy aircraft mid-flight?
(a) Russia (b) USA (c) France (d) Germany
244. Which of the following automobile companies launched new solution 'Buy-Now-Pay-Later Offer' is aimed to provide customers with easy financing options?
(a) Hyundai (b) Volkswagen (c) Kia (d) Maruti Suzuki
245. Recently, Government of India has notified _____ emission norms for quadricycles, paving the way for higher production of the new category of vehicle that was introduced less than two years ago.
(a) BS-III (b) BS-IV (c) BS-VI (d) BS-VIII
246. Which is the first country in the world to sell generic version of remdesivir to treat Covid?
(a) India (b) Bangladesh (c) Mauritius (d) USA
247. A team of scientists of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) have reported the discovery of three new plant species from the evergreen forest patches of the southern end of the:
(a) Sunderbans (b) Western Ghats
(c) Eastern Ghats (d) Andaman & Nicobar Islands
248. Which of the following states has recently granted industry status to sports, a move aimed at generating employment?
(a) Manipur (b) Mizoram (c) Meghalaya (d) Sikkim
249. The International Day to End Obstetric Fistula was celebrated on:
(a) 21st May (b) 22nd may (c) 23rd May (d) 25th May
250. Recently, SoftBank Group said that Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma will resign from its board. SoftBank Group Corp is headquartered at:
(a) China (b) Japan (c) Singapore (d) Malaysia
251. Among the first of their kind in the country, which state introduced new standard operating procedures (SOP) for salon owners?
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Uttar Pradesh
252. Which of the following state governments will form a migration commission to identify the skills of returning migrant workers and provide employment to them?
(a) Uttarakhand (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Himachal Pradesh
253. Name the former Supreme Court judge who inaugurated the Indian Dispute Resolution Centre (IDRC), which provides a paperless dispute resolution environment.
(a) Justice A K Sikri (b) Justice Gyan Sudha Mishra
(c) Justice Kurien Joseph (d) Justice Anand Swaroop

254. Which of the following countries has developed world's first 3D AI news anchor which mimics human voice?
(a) USA (b) China (c) South Korea (d) Italy
255. Name the Indian economist who has been appointed by the World Bank to a key position on climate change and disaster management in South Asia.
(a) Amit Mohan Prasad (b) Deepak Munjal
(c) Mahendra Vikram Singh (d) Abhas Jha
256. A working group of insurance regulator IRDAI that revisited guidelines on Trade Credit Insurance (TCI) has recommended an increase in the indemnity provided to the policyholders from existing 85% of the trade receivables from each buyer to _____.
(a) 87% (b) 90% (c) 93% (d) 100%
257. Which of the following countries has successfully transplanted liver cells derived from embryonic stem cells into a newborn baby, in a world-first that could provide new treatment options for infants?
(a) Malaysia (b) Indonesia (c) China (d) Japan
258. The Indian Navy's indigenously-made PPE kit _____ made for enhancing comforts of the health workers under Indian conditions is helping fight the war against Covid-19 in a better and effective manner.
(a) "NavRakshak" (b) "NavPrakash" (c) "NavRest" (d) "NavRaksha"
259. Recently, Balbir Singh Senior the three-time Olympic gold medal-winning _____ legend died in a private hospital at Mohali, Punjab.
(a) Football (b) Hockey (c) Cricket (d) Wrestling
260. For the first time, the UN Military Gender Advocate award has been awarded to two UN peacekeepers: Commander Carla Monteiro de Castro Araujo, a Brazilian Naval officer, and _____ of the Indian Army.
(a) Major Suneeta Maithani (b) Major Suman Gawani
(c) Major Radha Khetani (d) Major Heera Naithani
261. Which of the following private NBFC's has launched the voicebot "TIA" on WhatsApp?
(a) Ujjivan Financial Services Limited (b) Tata Capital
(c) HDB Financial Services Limited (d) L&T Infrastructure Finance Company Limited
262. Recently, Union Minister for Road Transport Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the 440 metre-long tunnel, constructed below the busy town of _____ as part of the Chardham Connectivity Project.
(a) Chamba (b) Manali (c) Mandi (d) Kinnur
263. Recently, State-owned shadow banking firm REC has tied up with _____ to provide food to frontline health workers fighting the COVID-19 battle.
(a) TajSATS (b) STATHAS (c) SARTHAK (d) StaREST

264. Which of the following state governments has started preliminary works for implementing the unique Solar Fence Farmland Protection Programme, under the Central Agriculture Improvement Scheme?
(a) Kerala (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Maharashtra
265. Recently, India's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) has joined hands with _____ to offer retail financing schemes to its customers.
(a) HDFC Bank (b) ICICI Bank (c) RBL Bank (d) Axis Bank
266. Which of the following insurance companies announced the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (Modified- 2020) Scheme?
(a) Shriram Life Insurance. (b) Life Insurance Corporation of India
(c) PNB MetLife Life Insurance (d) IndiaFirst Life Insurance
267. Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, the University of North Texas and the US Army Research Laboratory have developed an engineered _____ alloy which can replace steel and aluminium alloys in the automobile industry making vehicles more fuel efficient.
(a) Magnesium (b) Lead (c) Copper (d) Aluminium
268. More than 200 singers, including Asha Bhosle and Sonu Nigam, have come together to create a song titled "Jayatu Jayatu Bharatam, Vasudev Kutumbakkam". The historic anthem in _____ languages is dedicated as a salutation to each and every Indian who has stood together as a family in these difficult times.
(a) 5 (b) 7 (c) 9 (d) 14
269. Name the Indian, who awarded by IBM Academy of Technology for winning The New York Intellectual Property Law Association (NYIPLA) 2020 Inventor of the Year Award.
(a) Nripendra Mishra (b) Dr. Rajiv Joshi (c) Chinta Mani Chauhan (d) Veeresh Pourush
270. Name the book by JK Rowling which will be free to read online to help entertain children and families stuck at home during the coronavirus pandemic.
(a) The Ickabog (b) The Vesrcase (c) The Berter (d) The Youth
271. India's first observatory for the mammals has been setting up in:
(a) Bahraich (b) Katihar (c) Bhagalpur (d) Kolkata
272. Name the political party which has become the first political outfit in India to hold a two-day digital conclave and leaders are participated through Zoom digital platform.
(a) Samajwadi Party (b) Indian National Lokdal
(c) Telugu Desam Party (d) Biju Janta Dal
273. India along with _____ is held their first "virtual summit" on June 4, 2020.
(a) Russia (b) Germany (c) Japan (d) Australia

274. Which of the following countries announced the postponement of BRICS and SCO Summits in wake of Covid-19?
(a) Brazil (b) South Africa (c) India (d) Russia
275. The European Union (EU)'s executive unveiled a _____ billion plan to prop up economies hammered by the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.
(a) €250 (b) €450 (c) €750 (d) €950
276. ITC has entered into a share purchase agreement (SPA) to acquire _____ percent of the equity share capital of Sunrise Foods Private Limited (SFPL).
(a) 50 (b) 70 (c) 80 (d) 100
277. Who is the new President of National Development Bank (NDB)?
(a) KV Kamath (b) Marcos Prado Troyjo (c) Sujeet Sharma (d) Anil Kishora
278. A Chinese survey team reached Mount Everest through Tibet to remeasure the exact height of the world's tallest mountain. According to China's measurement the height of Mount Everest is _____ meters which is four meters less than Nepal's calculations, the state media reported.
(a) 7844.22 (b) 8199.56 (c) 8244.27 (d) 8844.43
279. According to a preliminary assessment of the West Bengal forest department, around _____ of the world's mangrove delta – the Sunderban – has been damaged by Cyclone Amphan.
(a) One-Fourth (b) One-Third (c) One-Half (d) One-Fifth
280. Which is the world's first contactless Visitor Management Software with temperature scanner and mask detection?
(a) LAMS AttGuard (b) VAMS SafeGuard (c) PAMS SafeFriend (d) VAMS SafeLife
281. Name Popular Indian YouTuber who has gained 20 million subscribers on his channel, making him the first individual Indian YouTuber to have achieved this milestone?
(a) Deepak Kalra (b) Mrigank Jain (c) Amit Bhadana (d) Anubhav Sinha
282. The first Indian state that will soon launch a 'State Health Register' that will maintain the health records of all the citizens is
(a) Kerala (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Karnataka (d) Madhya Pradesh
283. In a historical and rare event, Joseph Thermadom from _____ became the first Indian from the hearing and speech impaired community to take religious vows.
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Karnataka (c) Kerala (d) Maharashtra
284. In May 2020, Asian Development Bank -ADB signed a 177 million US dollars loan to upgrade 450 km of state highways and major district roads in:
(a) Gujarat (b) Rajasthan (c) Maharashtra (d) Madhya Pradesh

285. Recently, Researchers at Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST) _____ have found a unique route to fabricate precisely controlled nanostructures of desired geometry and location on 2D materials, through a rapid one-step low power laser writing process.
(a) Mohali (b) Lucknow (c) Bengaluru (d) Mumbai
286. Recently, Central Institute of Plastics Engineering & Technology (CIPET) has been renamed as Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology (CIPET). Its Headquarter is located at:
(a) Chennai (b) Bengaluru (c) Kanpur (d) Udaipur
287. Who has been recently appointed as a member of the Olympic Channel Commission?
(a) Nita Ambani (b) Gurinder Singh Chhaddha
(c) Narinder Batra (d) Siddharth Anand
288. Which of the following state governments will develop 800 km roads as Herbal roads in the state?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Rajasthan (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Chhattisgarh
289. Who among the following launched the facility for instant allotment of PAN on near to real time basis?
(a) Ramnath Kovind (b) Narendra Modi (c) Shaktikanta Das (d) Nirmala Sitharaman
290. Recently, World Hunger Day 2020 was observed on:
(a) 21st May (b) 23rd May (c) 26th May (d) 28th May
291. Which of the following countries was the top source of foreign direct investment into India for the second consecutive financial year, accounting for about 30 per cent of FDI inflows in 2019-20?
(a) Mauritius (b) Maldives (c) Singapore (d) USA
292. Who topped the Hurun India Art List 2020 for the second year in a row?
(a) Anish Kapoor (b) Rameshwar Broota (c) Mahendra Singh (d) Krishen Khanna
293. Recently, Thirty countries led by _____ and the World Health Organization launched an initiative aimed at sharing vaccines, medicines and diagnostic tools to tackle the global coronavirus pandemic.
(a) Suriname (b) Morocco (c) Costa Rica (d) Fiji
294. Which of the following has recently launched an artificial intelligence (AI) based chatbot 'PAI' to create awareness around its products like FASTag, RuPay, UPI, AePS on a real time basis?
(a) SIDBI (b) NABARD (c) NPCI (d) RBI
295. Which of the following cities has thrown up a new species of silver-hued fish which has been christened Puntius sanctus 'sanctus' is Latin for holy after the popular pilgrim town?
(a) Varanasi (b) Mysore (c) Velankanni (d) Udupi
296. Who among the following nominated 15 MPs to assist the Delimitation Commission in redrawing the Lok Sabha and the Assembly constituencies of the northeastern States and the Union Territory?
(a) Shri Rajnath Singh (b) Shri Amit Shah (c) Shri Om Birla (d) Shri Venkai Naidu

297. A Kochi-based startup has launched a multipurpose decontamination device called _____ that can sanitise items ranging from N95 masks to vegetables, thereby keeping a check on the spread of Covid-19.
(a) 'Lumos' (b) 'Rumos' (c) 'Efmos' (d) 'Annmos'
298. Recently, Ajit Jogi passed away; he was the first Chief Minister of:
(a) Jharkhand (b) Uttarakhand (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Telangana
299. Recently, NASA has renamed its Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope (WFIRST), a next-generation space telescope set to launch in 2025, in honor of _____ the US space agency's first chief astronomer, who paved the way for space telescopes focused on the broader universe.
(a) Elinor Olstorn (b) Nancy Grace Roman (c) Patricia Greman (d) Alexandra Kuttip
300. Name the first state to launch the 'Rozgar Setu' scheme, which would help to secure employment for skilled workers who have returned to the state.
(a) Bihar (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Uttarakhand
301. Which of the following states is to appoint 'Banking Correspondent Sakhi', or female banking agents, in all 5,8000 gram panchayats in the state?
(a) Bihar (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Odisha
302. Which of the following states will spent for creation of 1.05 lakh farm ponds under "Mo Pokhari" initiative?
(a) West Bengal (b) Assam (c) Odisha (d) Jharkhand
303. Which of the following countries first domestically built aircraft carrier "Shandong" has begun sea trials to test weapons and equipment capabilities and sharpen training for its crew?
(a) Japan (b) China (c) South Korea (d) North Korea
304. Which of the following countries has recently announced to terminate its relationship with World Health Organization over its handling of the Corona virus?
(a) Belgium (b) Norway (c) Finland (d) USA
305. National Highways Authority of India, NHAI, has planned to develop _____ stretches of National Highway in every State to educate the Highway Engineers, including State PWD Engineers.
(a) 23 (b) 35 (c) 45 (d) 57
306. Recently, the meeting of the Heads of Tax Authorities of the BRICS countries, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa was held. Who among the following represented India at the meeting?
(a) Nirmala Sitharaman (b) Anurag Thakur (c) Hasamukh Adhia (d) Ajay Bhushan Pandey
307. Asia's largest brackish water body is:
(a) Wular Lake (b) Sambhar Lake (c) Chilika Lake (d) Andaman Sea

308. Recently, the foundation Stone for a Missile Park “AGNEEPRASTHA” was laid at _____ by in the presence of Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain.
(a) INS Kalinga (b) INS Vikramaditya (c) INS Konkan (d) INS Kalvari
309. Goa became a full-fledged state on:
(a) 21st May 1980 (b) 24th May 1982 (c) 27th May 1984 (d) 30th May 1987
310. Name the only Indian who is in the Forbes’ list of world’s highest-paid athletes with total earnings of USD 26 million.
(a) Deepika Padukone (b) Virat Kohli (c) Anushka Sharma (d) Sachin Tendulkar



Career
Launcher

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. a Chak-Hao, the black rice of Manipur and the Gorakhpur terracotta have bagged the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
2. c Russia is the Chair of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) for 2020.
3. c Chhattisgarh has topped the list of states in providing employment to over 18 lakh unskilled labourers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).
4. b Andhra Pradesh State Government has announced a fee reimbursement scheme for the students of the state.
5. b Three Indians have been elected for the prestigious membership of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences this year.
6. a India was categorised as a “Tier 2 country” in last year’s listing.
7. d India has been placed at 53rd position among 117 nations in terms of budget transparency and accountability, according to the Open Budget Survey.
8. a Destined to become the first aircraft to attempt powered flight on another planet, NASA’s Mars Helicopter officially named: Ingenuity, as suggested by Rupani.
9. c Thangjam Dhabali Singh, an allopathic doctor by profession and founder of the Manipur Tourism Forum (MTF), was conferred the ‘Order of Rising Sun - Gold and Silver Rays’ by the Japan government.
10. b He made his debut, as an adolescent, in his father Raj Kapoor’s film Mera Naam Joker (1970), for which he won the National Film Award for Best Child Artist.
11. b Amid the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the Maharashtra Government announced that cent per cent inclusion of population from the state will be provided free health treatment under the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Aarogya Yojana.
12. c Jharkhand becomes the first state to bring its migrant labourers back home through the first train run between Lingampally railway station in Telangana to Hatia railway station in Ranchi post Lockdown orders.
13. c Kashmir saffron, which is cultivated and harvested in the Karewa (highlands) of Jammu and Kashmir, has been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry.
14. b The United States Navy has said that it will host the world’s largest maritime exercises in Hawaii again this year, but the drills will only be held at sea because of the Corona virus.
15. d It is for the first time that Karnataka has been added to the list of e-NAM states.
16. c The Reserve Bank of India extended regulatory benefits to all banks including those deploying their own resources to extend liquidity support to the mutual funds under the Special Liquidity Facility for Mutual Funds SLF-MF scheme.
17. a Indian tennis star Sania Mirza became the first Indian to be nominated for the Fed Cup Heart Award from the Asia/Oceania zone along with Indonesia’s Priska Medelyn Nugrorho.
18. b The Department of Design in the Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati (IIT-G) has completed a project in designing bamboo furniture to meet the requirements of the primary health centres in rural Assam during the COVID-19 pandemic.
19. d Indian Institute of Technology Madras faculty Prof. T. Pradeep has been chosen for the Nikkei Asia Prizes 2020 in ‘Science and Technology’ category for his work in nanotechnology-based water purification.

20. c May 1 is observed as International Labour Day or May Day worldwide.
21. c These States and UTs are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. 12 states have already under One Nation, One Ration Card plan namely - Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala, Karnataka Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana and Tripura.
22. c Union Minister Nitin Gadkari launched a portal for uploading ideas and innovations regarding the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector.
23. a The Competition Commission of India was established to prevent the activities that have an adverse effect on competition in India.
24. a Scientists and students from Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of India studied rivers in Ladakh Himalaya, bringing out 35 thousand-year history of river erosion and identified hotspots of erosion and wide valleys that act a buffer zones.
25. b The first ever evidence of a dinosaur which swam, lived and hunted underwater has been discovered in the now-barren wilderness of the Saharan desert.
26. b National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC), Department of Science & Technology (DST) has launched a programme on health and risk communication 'Year of Awareness on Science & Health (YASH)' with focus on COVID-19.
27. c The Astronomy Day 2020 is celebrated on May 2.
28. a The All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), under Ministry of AYUSH and Delhi Police organised AYURAKSHA programme for Delhi Police personal at New Delhi.
29. d Legendary former India footballer Chuni Goswami, who captained the 1962 Asian Games gold-winning team, died after suffering a cardiac arrest.
30. c The government has appointed T.S. Tirumurti as the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations.
31. a Traders' body Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has announced to launch a national e-commerce marketplace 'bharatmarket' soon for all retail traders in collaboration with several technology partners.
32. d A team of Indian and Irish biologists from Delhi University, University College Dublin and the Natural History Museum (UK) have discovered three new species of horned frogs from the jungles of North-East India.
33. c The seventh Commonwealth Youth Games were scheduled to take place from August 1 to 7 2021 in Trinidad and Tobago.
34. a The Central Road Research Institute (CRRI), a CSIR lab, has come up with an app called Kisan Sabha to resolve the problems related to the agricultural supply chain.
35. c The UN children's agency urged six Middle East countries to greenlight special polio and measles vaccination campaigns put on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic.
36. a Kezang D. Thongdok's 26-minute film Chi Lupo was adjudged the best documentary at the 10th Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival Awards 2020.
37. a The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of Mumbai-based The CKP Cooperative Bank Ltd., with effect from the close of business on April 30, 2020, as the lender's financial position had deteriorated and it was not in a position to repay depositors.
38. d Tarun Bajaj, a 1988-batch, Haryana cadre officer of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), assumed the charge of the economic affairs secretary after retirement of Atanu Chakraborty from the position.

39. a The first process for Enhancing Coastal and Ocean Resource Efficiency (ENCORE) would include eight coastal states and three coastal Union Territories, with USD 180 million in financing.
40. c World Press Freedom Day is being celebrated across the globe on 3rd May.
41. c Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the Non Aligned Movement can help promote global solidarity and it must remain inclusive. He said the humanity is facing a major crisis in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic and NAM can contribute in dealing with it. Speaking at virtual Non-Aligned Movement Summit through Video Conferencing this evening, Mr Modi said, the world needs a new template of globalisation post COVID-19 based on fairness, equality and humanity. Drawing on the principles agreed at the Bandung Conference in 1955, the NAM was established in 1961 in Belgrade, SR Serbia, and Yugoslavia through an initiative of the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and the Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito.
42. d After a five-year wait, Kovilpatti kadalai mittai -- peanut candy from the southern part of Tamil Nadu -- was granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag. Deputy Registrar of the Registry, Chennai, Chinnaraja G Naidu, said the coveted status was granted to Kovilpatti Regional Kadalaimittai Manufacturers and Retailers Association in Kovilpatti in Thoothukudi district.
43. c Russia will launch first Arktika-M satellite for monitoring Arctic climate this year at the end of the year, General Director of Lavochkin aerospace company Vladimir Kolmykov told sputnik news agency.
44. c Germany has banned all Iran-backed Hezbollah activity on its soil and designated it a terrorist organisation, the Interior Ministry said.
45. a US President Donald Trump has nominated Indian-American Ashok Michael Pinto as a representative to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Pinto was nominated yesterday as US Alternate Executive Director of IBRD for a term of two years.
46. a The US placed India on the 'Priority Watch List' for lack of sufficient measurable improvements to its intellectual property framework on the "long-standing" and "new challenges" that have negatively affected American right holders over the past year.
47. b Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO has developed an Ultra Violet Disinfection Tower for rapid and chemical free disinfection of high infection prone areas.
48. a Ozone depletion over the Arctic hit a "record level" in March, the biggest since 2011, but the hole has now closed, the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said. The organization is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
49. c CSIR-Central Scientific Instruments Organisation (CSIR-CSIO), Chandigarh, has designed and developed an innovative technology for effective disinfection and sanitization to fight with corona pandemic.
50. c The India Meteorological Department (IMD) released a new list containing 169 names of future tropical cyclones that would emerge in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. IMD is headquartered in Delhi and operates hundreds of observation stations across India and Antarctica.
51. b In Ranchi, Chief Minister Hemant Soren unveiled three schemes — Birsa Harit Gram Yojana (BHGY), Neelambar Pitambar JAL Sammridhi Yojana (NPJSY) and Veer Sahid Poto Ho Khel Vikas Scheme (VSPHKVS) — to create wage employment for workers in rural areas.
52. d United States President Donald Trump has nominated senior Indian-American diplomat Manisha Singh as his envoy to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
53. b Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar has launched the Saras collection on Government e Marketplace (GeM) portal in New Delhi.

54. b Russian President Vladimir Putin has awarded Kim Jong Un a commemorative war medal marking the 75th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany.
55. c The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has set up a panel to frame standard professional indemnity policy for insurance intermediaries that can be issued by all the insurers.
56. b
57. b China successfully launched a new rocket and prototype spacecraft in a major test of the country's ambitions to operate a permanent space station and send astronauts to the Moon.
58. b With the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic throwing up challenges every day, India's first test bus for the disease was flagged off on Maharashtra Day.
59. d This year, World Asthma Day is observed on May 5, 2020.
60. a Three photojournalists from Jammu and Kashmir have been awarded the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for their "striking images of life" in the valley.
61. d Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has been reappointed as chairperson of the Parliament's public accounts committee (PAC).
62. c The massive evacuation plan was kicked off with the Indian Navy launching Operation Samudra Setu (Sea Bridge) by sending two ships to the Maldives to bring back 1,000 Indians stranded on the island nation after COVID19 pandemic.
63. c In Himachal Pradesh, the state government is planning to launch a new programme Nigah, in order to sensitize and educate the family members of the people coming to the state from other parts of the country.
64. a Government think tank Niti Aayog in association with Piramal Foundation -- the philanthropic arm of the Piramal Group launched a campaign 'Surakshit Dada-Dadi & Nana-Nani Abhiyan' focussed on ensuring well-being of senior citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic.
65. d In a first, a Pakistani Hindu youth has become the first person from the minority community to join the Pakistan Air Force. Rahul Dev has been recruited as a General Duty Pilot Officer.
66. c The government has appointed Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj as a director on the central board of Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
67. b The prestigious Navaratnalu - Pedalandariki Illu (houses for all the poor) will be launched on July 8 in Andhra Pradesh.
68. b (DGCA) launched GARUD portal for fast-track approval to COVID-19-related drone operations.
69. a Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the Ayush Kavach app that will provide health-related tips and information about ayurvedic medicines to people during the coronavirus crisis.
70. c The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) celebrates the International Day of Midwives on May 5.
71. b Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to provide mid-day meal ration.
72. d Iran's national currency will be changed from the rial to the Toman, which is equal to 10,000 rials, under the bill.
73. a The majority of 255 legislators attending the session approved the government plan and the majority of cabinet ministers proposed by Mustafa al-Kadhimi, officially inaugurating him as Iraq's sixth premier since 2003 and ending five months of a leadership void.

74. b As of last November, there were 227 million active internet users in rural areas which is 10% more than around 205 million in urban areas. In total, India had 504 million active internet users.
75. c National Institute of Technology, Trichy and six Central Universities have been selected for the prestigious Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF) scheme this year.
76. b In Tripura, Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb has launched an online portal scholarships.gov.in under 'Mukhyamantri Yuba Yogayog Yojana'.
77. d Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Health & Family Welfare Minister launched the 'AYUSH Sanjivani' App and two AYUSH based studies related to COVID-19 situation, in the presence of Shri Shripad Yesso Naik, MoS (I/c), AYUSH who participated through Video Conferencing from Goa.
78. a A team of astronomers has discovered that the closest known brown dwarf, Luhman 16A, shows signs of cloud bands similar to those seen on Jupiter and Saturn.
79. d The World Athletics Day was introduced by the IAAF to increase awareness about athletics and to encourage the youth to take up sports. Although this day is celebrated in the month of May every year, in 2020, the IAAF marked May 7 as the World Athletics Day.
80. c The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) extended environmentalist and actor-producer Dia Mirza's term as its National Goodwill Ambassador for another two years till the end of 2022.
81. c Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and MSMEs Shri Nitin Gadkari held meeting via video conferencing with the members of SIAM Institute on impact of COVID-19 on auto sector.
82. b Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, launched the 'Pravasi Rahat Mitra' App that is aimed at aiding migrant citizens coming to Uttar Pradesh from other states so that they can take advantage of government schemes.
83. c In Madhya Pradesh, in a first of its kind initiative, a unique vehicle has been developed at the local level.
84. c In one of the largest evacuation exercises named the Vande Bharat Mission, the government is operating 64 flights till 13th May to bring home nearly 14,800 Indian nationals stranded abroad due to the coronavirus lockdown.
85. b Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu formally received the support of a majority of lawmakers to lead a new government paving the way for a controversial power-sharing deal with rival-turned-partner Benny Gantz.
86. b Amidst Covid-19 cases surging in seven populous States in India, including commercial capital Mumbai and national capital Delhi, global rating agency Moody's slashed India's GDP growth rate at Zero for the current fiscal – 2020-21.
87. b The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has disbursed Rs 12,767 crore to State Co-operative Banks (StCBs) and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) across the country to augment their resources for extending credit to farmers during the ongoing lockdown.
88. b The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's (AIIB) approved a \$500 million loan to support India's Covid-19 operations.
89. b China's new prototype spacecraft "successfully landed" marking an important step in its ambitions to run a permanent space station and send astronauts to the moon.
90. d World Hand Hygiene Day 2020: It is also known as Hand Hygiene Day was observed on May 5th.
91. c The Andhra Pradesh government announced a door-to-door survey in all villages close to LG Polymers India Limited to identify residents exposed to the leak of Styrene gas near this coastal city as hundreds of villagers staged a sit-in protest with bodies of the victims at the plant, demanding its immediate closure.

92. * Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in the country to provide the facility of beds with ventilators in hospitals of each and every district of state.
93. d World Thalassaemia Day is observed on May 8 in order to create and raise awareness about a blood disorder called Thalassaemia.
94. c According to the West Bengal Forest Department, the tiger count for the year 2019-20 rose to 96, from 88 in 2018-19.
95. b An IIT-Delhi startup named 'Nanosafe Solutions' has launched an antimicrobial and washable face mask that can be reused up to 50 launderings.
96. a Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman launched Rupee-Dollar (INR-USD) futures and options contracts on the two international exchanges BSE's India INX and NSE's NSE-IFSC at GIFT International Financial Services Centre in Gandhinagar through video conference.
97. c The Supreme Court held that cooperative banks established under a State law or multi-State level societies come within the ambit of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act of 2002.
98. c World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN's postal agency have released a commemorative postage stamp on the 40th anniversary of the eradication of smallpox.
99. b The CM had recently indicated an amendment in the labour laws to draw new investment to the state especially from China in the post-lockdown phase to support the depleting economy.
100. d China won the inaugural \$180,000 FIDE Chess.com Online Nations Cup following a 2-2 draw against USA.
101. a Lipulekh is a Himalayan pass on the border between India's Uttarakhand state and the Tibet region of China, near their trijunction with Nepal.
102. b India has dispatched a warship with two medical teams and medical supplies to help authorities in the Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles combat Covid-19, symbolising the importance attached by New Delhi to its maritime neighbourhood.
103. b In fact, MP's IMR has worsened slightly from 2017 when it stood at 47. The urban rural differential in MP is huge with the rural IMR at 51, while the urban IMR at 32.
104. b President Donald Trump is putting everything he's got into a research effort dubbed Operation Warp Speed, which pulls together pharmaceutical companies, government agencies and the military.
105. d NTPC Limited, a central PSU under Ministry of Power and India's largest power generator, achieved 100 percent Plant Load Factor, PLF at three of its thermal power stations.
106. b Elisa, developed by Pune-based Institute of Virology, detects antibodies for Covid-19.
107. c Hyderabad based Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO lab has developed automated Ultraviolet systems to sanitise electronic gadgets, papers and currency notes
108. d On 9th May 2020, World Migratory Bird Day(WMBD) is an annual global celebration campaign to raise awareness of the needs for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.
109. a The Defence Ministry signed a contract with Tata Power SED for modernisation of infrastructure at 37 airfields of the Indian Air Force, Coast Guard and the Navy at a cost of around Rs 1,200 crore.
110. b Kerala health department launches 'world's first' coronavirus-themed mobile game.

111. c Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Dr Narottam Mishra launched country's first ever 'FIR Aapke Dwar Yojana' in Bhopal.
112. a Union Territory has been plagued with militancy, which is required to be taken into consideration," a three-judge Bench led by Justice N.V. Ramana observed in the 19-page order.
113. b The initiative, christened 'Pranavayu', is aimed at helping patients monitor the progress of ILI to severe acute respiratory illness (SARI).
114. b The report projects that energy demand will fall 6% in 2020 – seven times the decline after the 2008 global financial crisis.
115. c Launched on May 9, 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with an objective of delivering old age income security, particularly to the workers in the unorganised sector, the scheme still remains relevant for addressing the challenges of the rapidly increasing aging population of India.
116. c Scientists from the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) and the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune, have unravelled the diversity in the filament barbs of the Western Ghats.
117. b By repurposing an existing mobile application used for personal nutrition studies, a multinational collaboration — the Coronavirus Pandemic Epidemiology (COPE) — has developed a COVID-19 Symptom Tracker mobile app. The mobile app, which allows for epidemiologic data collection and analysis, was launched in the U.K.
118. c Historian Hari Sankar Vasudevan, who had tested positive for coronavirus, died at a private hospital in Kolkata.
119. d National Technology Day is celebrated every year on May 11 to highlight the achievements of engineers and scientists in the field of technology and science.
120. a The Wire's founding editor Siddharth Varadarajan is among the 17 journalists from 14 countries who are being presented the Deutsche Welle's Freedom of Speech Award this year.
121. b Jharkhand's Sohrai Khovar painting and Telangana's Telia Ruma were given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry headquartered in Chennai.
122. c Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a special economic package worth 20 lakh crore rupees for an 'Atma-Nirbhar Bharat' or self-reliant India, saying that self-reliance is the only way to ensure that 21st Century belongs to India.
123. a Tamil Nadu constituted a 24-member committee headed by former RBI Governor C Rangarajan to assess the "immediate and medium-term" impact of the coronavirus pandemic on different sectors that contribute to the state's economy.
124. d Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, MSME Ministry has launched CHAMPIONS portal www.Champions.gov.in, a technology driven control room-cum-management information system. The initiative is aimed at assisting Indian MSMEs to march into big league as national and global champions.
125. a Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani launched the first indigenous seam sealing machine, which helps in manufacturing PPE kits.
126. d China successfully launched two satellites to test the space-based Internet of Things (IoT) communications technology. The satellites, Xingyun-2 01 and 02, were launched by a Kuaizhou-1A (KZ-1A) carrier rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China.
127. d CSIR - National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) Bangalore, a constituent of lab of CSIR has developed a Non Invasive BiPAP Ventilator in a record time of 36 days to treat COVID-19 patients. BiPAP Non-Invasive ventilator is a microcontroller-based precise closed-loop adaptive control system with a built-in biocompatible "3D printed manifold & coupler" with HEPA filter (Highly Efficient Particulate Air Filter).

128. b The World Health Organization warns a severe global shortage of nurses is putting the lives of millions of people at risk and is particularly worrisome at a time when the world is doing battle with the COVID-19 pandemic. To mark World Health Day, the first ever State of the World's Nursing Report, produced jointly by WHO and the International Council of Nurses, is being launched.
129. b Tennis ace Sania Mirza became the first Indian to win the Fed Cup Heart Award for her successful return to the court post motherhood.
130. a On the occasion of the International Nurses Day on 12th May, which also marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare presided over the celebrations through video conference.
131. b Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat launched a portal aimed at creating employment avenues for the trained youth as well as offering them skill development opportunities to increase their employability. The portal, 'HOPE' - Helping Out People Everywhere, has already begun collecting data on the youths staying in the state as well as migrant youths who have returned recently from outside.
132. a The Madhya Pradesh government has re-launched the ambitious Sambal Yojana aimed to strengthen the lives of the poor and the SC and ST communities by providing them social security cover, right from birth to death.
133. b This year the Forbes Global 2000 saw a new entry at the top of the list of oil and gas firms with the debut of Saudi Aramco.
134. d Two dams the Xayaburi and Don Sahong have been built in Laos, which wants to construct seven more as it strives to live up to its billing as the "Battery of Asia".
135. c The New Development Bank of the BRICS countries has fully disbursed USD one billion emergency assistance loan to India to help it contain the spread of COVID-19 and reduce human, social and economic losses caused by the coronavirus pandemic.
136. d The Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru has won this year's SKYTRAX Award for Best Regional Airport in India and Central Asia, said Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL).
137. d India has moved up two positions to rank 74th on a global 'Energy Transition Index' with improvements on all key parameters of economic growth, energy security and environmental sustainability, the World Economic Forum (WEF) said.
138. d The TVS group and IIT Madras (IIT-M) have jointly developed a low-cost, automated respiratory assistance device called 'Sundaram Ventago' to provide breathing support to patients through controlled and automated squeezing of a self-inflating or Ambu bag.
139. c Former Sri Lanka skipper Kumar Sangakkara is set to serve his second term as the president of Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) as the current activities have been postponed at the club.
140. d In 1993, the General Assembly decided in a resolution that 15 May of every year should be observed as The International Day of Families.
141. d In Gujarat, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced Aatmanirbhar Gujarat Sahay Yojana. The scheme for small shop keepers and self-employed hit by the lockdown. Under the scheme, one lakh rupees collateral free loan will be given at two per cent for the beneficiaries for three years.
142. b Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announces two lakh crore concessional credit boost through the Kisan Credit Card Special drive benefiting over 2.5 crore farmers in the country.
143. b Kashmir plans to provide tap water connections to all rural households by December 2022 under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).
144. c Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said her government had been working on the 'Matir Smriti' scheme, which will benefit around 2.5 lakh people in rural Bengal.

145. c The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a 22% fall in international tourist arrivals during the first quarter of 2020, the latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) shows.
146. b MoneyGram Payment Systems has tied up with Federal Bank to offer a cost-effective direct-to-bank account credit option for customers in India.
147. d The International Day of Light is celebrated on 16 May each year, the anniversary of the first successful operation of the laser in 1960 by physicist and engineer, Theodore Maiman.
148. d India is among 88 countries that are likely to miss global nutrition targets by 2025, according to the Global Nutrition Report 2020 released.
149. a The rate of forest loss in 2015-2020 declined to an estimated 10 million hectares (mha), down from 12 million hectares (mha) in 2010-2015, according to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 (FRA 2020).
150. c In an unprecedented move, the Head of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Roberto Azevedo has decided to resign, a year before his term expires.
151. b In a bid to provide safety to frontline warriors, Delhi Police launched 'Thermal Corona Combat Headgear' through which police personnel will be able to detect temperature of a large number of people from a distance of 10-15 metres.
152. d Human Resources Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank e-Launched print as well as e-editions of the set of seven titles on "Psycho-Social impact of pandemic and lockdown and how to Cope With" under the corona studies series published by National Book Trust, NBT India.
153. c The government will also launch a 20,000 crore rupees Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana for the development of marine and inland fisheries.
154. d The GOAL programme is designed to provide mentorship to tribal youth through digital mode.
155. a Israel has named a street in Tel Aviv after celebrated Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore as a tribute on his 159th birthday.
156. a Slovenia has become the first European country to proclaim an end to the coronavirus epidemic at home.
157. a A team of zoologists from Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have found a frog species, with origins in the Tibet region of China, in Tawang area of Arunachal Pradesh.
158. b The Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) has developed an e-governance platform 'SAMARTH Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)' under the National Mission of Education in Information and Communication Technology Scheme (NMEICT).
159. a Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a one lakh crore rupees Agri Infrastructure Fund that will finance projects at farm-gate and aggregation point for efficient post-harvest management of crops.
160. c National Endangered Species Day is observed on the third Friday of May. This year the day falls on May 15.
161. d This has been launched under a comprehensive initiative called Pradhan Mantri e-VIDYA.
162. b In a major announcement, Ms Sitharaman informed that, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in defence manufacturing under automatic route will be raised from 49 per cent to 74 per cent.
163. d Nirmala Sitharaman said, under the MNREGA scheme, an additional Rs 40 thousand crore will be allocated for employment generation in the rural parts of the country. She said, this will help to generate nearly 300 crore person days to provide relief to the migrant workers.

164. b The modified Ujh MPP is located on river Ujh, one of the main tributaries of river Ravi, in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir.
165. c E-NAM was launched in 2016, with the aim of networking the existing Mandis on a common online market platform as One Nation, One Market for agricultural commodities in the country.
166. b Poland's election day was one for the history books, as polling stations remain closed and turnout will clock in at zero due to a political crisis set off by the coronavirus pandemic.
167. c Two sets of Indian-origin siblings dominate the annual tally of Britain's wealthiest as the Hinduja and Reuben brothers share the second spot with a fortune of 16 billion pounds each, while British inventor-entrepreneur James Dyson tops 'The Sunday Times Rich List 2020' with 16.2 billion pounds.
168. a The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned Rs 1,500 crore for Punjab to ensure continuous credit flow to farmers, through state cooperative banks, amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
169. c Scientists at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), an autonomous research institute under the Department of Science and Technology, have recently developed an injectable Silk fibroin-based hydrogel for sustained insulin delivery in diabetic patients.
170. d 16th May is International Day of Living Together in Peace. In 2017, the United Nations declared this Day to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding, and solidarity across the world.
171. b The Government of India, the Government of West Bengal and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) signed a loan agreement for a US\$145 million project to improve irrigation services and flood management in the Damodar Valley Command Area (DVCA) in West Bengal.
172. c In Madhya Pradesh, in a first of its kind of initiative, Charan Paduka campaign has been started for the migrant labourers passing through the state.
173. b In a tit for tat move, Nepal will publish a new political map asserting its claim over the Kalapani region that has been at the centre of a simmering territorial dispute with India.
174. b Israel's Parliament swore in its new unity government led by Prime Minister Netanyahu and his former rival Benny Gantz, ending the longest political crisis in the nation's history.
175. c The Centre is taking another \$1 billion loan from the World Bank to support its COVID-19 relief measures and financial assistance for the poorest and most vulnerable communities.
176. c Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos could potentially become the world's first trillionaire as early as 2026, at which point he will be aged 62, says a study.
177. d The United Nations forecast that the COVID-19 pandemic will shrink the world economy by 3.2 per cent this year, the sharpest contraction since the Great Depression in the 1930s.
178. b Teams of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been deployed ahead of Cyclone Amphan, which has made landfall in between Sagar Islands (West Bengal) and Hatiya Islands (Bangladesh) on May 20.
179. d The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) got a new Director General with the appointment of IAS officer V. Vidyavathi.
180. d The WHL launched its first WHD on May 14, 2005. Since 2006, the WHL has been dedicating May 17 of every year as WHD.
181. c Union Government has implemented Lt. General D B Shekatkar Committee's recommendations related to creating border infrastructure. These were related to speeding up road construction leading to socio-economic development in the border areas.
182. d Scientists have discovered a new species of parasitic fungus on the micro-blogging platform Twitter.

183. a Reliance Industries announced that US-based private equity firm General Atlantic will invest Rs 6,598.38 crore for a 1.34 per cent stake in Jio Platforms.
184. c Karnataka's centre of excellence in cyber security (CySecK) has launched an accelerator programme for cyber security start-ups.
185. b Kotak Mahindra Bank has introduced video-KYC facility for customers opening savings account on Kotak 811 - the bank's digital banking platform. The private lender is the first Indian bank to offer video based "zero-contact" onboarding service.
186. c The bonds are issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on behalf of the government and is a bond denominated in gold.
187. c COVID-19: IIT Delhi team develops 'risk index' for implementing state-wise lockdown.
188. d The Cotton Development and Research Association (CDRA) of Southern India Mills' Association has signed an agreement with Cotton Development Organisation and National Agricultural Research Organisation of Uganda to develop a cotton seed variety that will help increase the income of farmers in both the countries.
189. a Vice Admiral Vinay Badhwar has been presented the 2019 Alexander Dalrymple Award in recognition of his "outstanding contribution" to Indian hydrography and across the wider Indian Ocean region.
190. d International Museum Day (IMD) is celebrated every year on May 18 globally, to create awareness on the importance of museums for the development of society. The event highlights a specific theme which changes every year to reflect the basis of the international museum community's preoccupations.
191. a In Jammu and Kashmir, the Union Territory Administration has initiated a slew of measures under Samagra Shiksha programme to facilitate students with complete access to education through technological interventions and other viable means in wake of COVID-19 lockdown.
192. c The Indian Railways became the sixth country in the world to join the elite club of producing high horsepower locomotive indigenously. It was the first time, a high horsepower locomotive was operationalised on a broad gauge track in the world.
193. d Odisha's capital city Bhubaneswar was declared free of Novel coronavirus, a highly contagious infectious disease that made an entry in the city two months ago.
194. b Centre has declared Ambikapur, Rajkot, Surat, Mysore, Indore and Navi Mumbai as five-star garbage free cities.
195. c In a first of its kind proposal the Army plans to take civilians on a three- year 'Tour of Duty' (ToD) or 'three-year short service' on a trial basis to serve in the force as both officers and other ranks initially for a limited number of vacancies and then expanded later.
196. c Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, who is leading the country's battle against Covid-19 in the country, will be India's nominee to be the next WHO Executive Board chairman, people familiar with the development.
197. c National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) has disbursed Rs 20,500 crore to cooperative banks and regional rural banks (RRBs) for on-lending to farmers.
198. b South Central Railway zone has developed a robotic device, "RAIL-BOT" (R-BOT) to assist in hospital management functions towards patient care in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak.
199. d This year, World Bee Day is observed on 20th May will therefore focus on bee production and good practices adopted by beekeepers to support their livelihoods and deliver good quality products.
200. b Television actress Rashami Desai, last remembered for her stint in 'Bigg Boss 13', has now become the first Indian Television actress to collaborate with Google.

201. d The Chhattisgarh government will launch a scheme named after Rajiv Gandhi on the late former Prime Minister's 19th death anniversary for direct cash transfers to around 2 million farmers in four instalments.
202. c The Indian Army's only mounted cavalry regiment is set to say goodbye to its horses, with the government approving a proposal to equip the 61st Cavalry with tanks.
203. b In order to spread awareness about psychological impact of lockdown and measures to be adopted to overcome them, Department of Information and Public Relations, J&K has started an initiative 'SUKOON' - COVID-19 Beat the Stress".
204. b The Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Maharashtra announced a three year empanelment of insurance companies and intermediaries for implementation of crop insurance scheme across the state.
205. a Union Cabinet has approved Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana. The scheme aims to bring about Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development of fisheries sector in the country.
206. b The Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania started what is being referred to as a 'travel bubble' to help put their economies back on track post-Covid lockdowns.
207. b Moeketsi Majoro has been sworn in as Lesotho's prime minister following the resignation of his embattled predecessor, Thomas Thabane.
208. c The government has appointed Govinda Rajulu Chintala as chairman of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, an official communication said. Chintala is currently chief general manager at Nabard.
209. c Union Cabinet gave its approval to a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme named Scheme for Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises for the Unorganized Sector on All India basis with an outlay of Rs. 10 thousand crore. The expenditure will be shared by Centre and the States in ratio of 60:40.
210. d May 20 is World Metrology Day, commemorating the anniversary of the signing of the Metre Convention in 1875. This treaty provides the basis for a worldwide coherent measurement system that underpins scientific discovery and innovation, industrial manufacturing and international trade, as well as the improvement of the quality of life and the protection of the global environment.
211. b The World Bank named former Bear Stearns executive Carmen Reinhart as its new vice president and chief economist, tapping an expert on financial crises who also serves on the advisory board of the New York Federal Reserve.
212. a India has become the world's second largest manufacturer of personal protective equipment (PPE) body coveralls within a short time span of two months, the government said.
213. b Uttar Pradesh government has launched the 'Uttar Pradesh Startup Fund' to encourage the youth of the state for entrepreneurship. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath handed over the first installment of 15 crore rupees to Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) at a function in Lucknow.
214. a India and Bangladesh signed an agreement to operationalise five new ports of call and two new protocol routes to boost the bilateral trade.
215. a Exploration major Oil India Limited (OIL) has negated fears that a drilling project under Assam's Dibru-Saikhowa National Park would spell doom for its flora and fauna, including the only population of feral horses in India.
216. d The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has launched a scheme for solarisation of Konark Sun Temple and Konark town in Odisha.
217. c Facebook is launching a new safety feature called 'Lock Your Profile' that allows users to restrict access to their photos, timelines and posts from non-friends in a single click.

218. b A new trough collector equipped with enhanced energy to serve industries has been developed by Indian Institute of Madras (IIT-M).
219. d The world will join hands to celebrate its first Tea Day on May 21, 2020.
220. a Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati have worked on out-of-the-box ideas that can help prevent or reduce short-term memory losses associated with Alzheimer's disease.
221. c Tripura got its first ever international waterway as five new protocol routes were announced between India and its eastern neighbour Bangladesh, with Chief Minister Biplab Deb expressing hope that the state will emerge as 'gateway of Northeast' in future by tapping into bilateral connectivity and trade potential.
222. b In Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will inaugurate the 'Everybody will get employment' scheme through video conferencing.
223. a United States will withdraw from the Treaty on Open Skies, a nearly 30-year-old pact designed to reduce the chances of an accidental war by allowing mutual reconnaissance flights for members of the 34-country agreement.
224. c Bharti Airtel's Africa arm has teamed up with UNICEF to provide children with access to remote learning and cash assistance for their families via mobile cash transfers.
225. a The National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) announced the commencement of trading in the country's first agri futures index, NCDEX AGRIDEX.
226. b Facebook has acquired GIPHY for \$400 million to integrate its GIF library into Instagram and other Facebook apps.
227. c Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has approved Union Bank of India's proposal to continue with its 30% holding in India First Life Insurance with the caveat that the lender will exercise no control in the management of the insurer.
228. c Private sector ICICI Bank will offer 6.55% on fixed deposits of 5-year to 10-year tenure for senior citizens, which is 80 basis points (bps) higher than the ordinary deposits. Typically, banks offer 50 bps more to senior citizens for fixed deposits. "Named 'ICICI Bank Golden Years FD', the scheme offers senior citizens an interest rate of 6.55% per annum for deposits up to Rs. 2 crore with a tenure of more than five to 10 years".
229. d The United Nations has proclaimed May 22 the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.
230. c Talking Cub (the children's imprint of Speaking Tiger) is proud to announce the publication of Hop On: My Adventures on Boats, Trains and Planes by Ruskin Bond.
231. c As a lockdown exit plan, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy announced a mega boost for MSMEs with a Rs 1,110 crore restart package.
232. b Four cities -- Jaipur, Indore, Chennai and Bengaluru -- could serve as possible role models for other urban centres in handling the Covid-19 pandemic that India is striving to control while moving to restart the economy.
233. d After a gap of about 5 months due to the Corona pandemic, "Hunar Haat", which has become "Empowerment Exchange" of artisans and craftsmen from across the country, will restart from September 2020 with the theme of "Local to Global" and comparatively larger participation of artisans.
234. b Assam-based entrepreneur Jahnabi Phookan has been appointed as the National President of FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO), the women wing of the leading industry chamber of the country.
235. a In an industry first, Edelweiss General Insurance has launched a motor OD (own damage) floater policy that allows the insured to pay as he/she uses the vehicle.

236. d In one of a kind and biggest conservation programmes in the country, Uttarakhand state has identified total 1145 plant species ranging from state flower Brahmkamal to mythological 'Sanjivni Booti'.
237. d The committee chaired by Rajesh Bhushan, the OSD to the Union health minister, comprises top drug and vaccine entrepreneurs of India along with officers nominated from the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Department of Biotechnology, Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission, Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance, ICMR along with public health expert from AIIMS.
238. c The chemicals in Kangra tea could also be effective in boosting immunity as they can block coronavirus activity better than anti-HIV drugs, said Dr Sanjay Kumar, Director, Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), based in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh. Dr Kumar has revealed this fact during a webinar organized at IHBT on the occasion of the International Tea Day.
239. d Devangi Dalal an audiologist and Speech Therapist is a Co-Founder of JOSH Foundation with experience over 28 years.
240. d The purpose of World Turtle Day, May 23, sponsored yearly since 2000 by American Tortoise Rescue, is to bring attention to, and increase knowledge of and respect for, turtles and tortoises, and encourage human action to help them survive and thrive.
241. a The United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth has listed Manipur's Khudol (gift) among the top 10 global initiatives for an inclusive fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.
242. d The Indian Air Force is set to operationalize its squadron called the Number-18 – Flying Bullets with a fleet of the Light Combat Aircraft, LCA Tejas at its Sulur base near Coimbatore.
243. b A US Navy warship has successfully tested a new high-energy laser weapon that can destroy aircraft mid-flight, the Navy's Pacific Fleet has announced.
244. d India's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India announced partnership with Cholamandalam Investment & Finance Company Ltd to provide customised auto retail financing solutions to retail buyers.
245. c The government has notified BS-VI emission norms for quadricycles, paving the way for higher production of the new category of vehicle that was introduced less than two years ago.
246. b Bangladesh becomes first in the world to sell generic version of remdesivir to treat Covid.
247. b A team of scientists of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) have reported the discovery of three new plant species from the evergreen forest patches of the southern end of the Western Ghats in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
248. b The Mizoram Cabinet has granted industry status to sports, a move aimed at generating employment.
249. c The fight to end obstetric fistula, one of the most serious and tragic injuries that can occur during childbirth, could be threatened by the current pandemic of COVID-19.
250. b SoftBank Group Corp. is a Japanese multinational conglomerate holding company headquartered in Tokyo.
251. a Introducing new standard operating procedures (SOP) for salon owners, Himachal Pradesh has prohibited direct communication between barbers and customers.
252. b The Uttar Pradesh government will form a migration commission to identify the skills of returning migrant workers and provide employment to them.

253. a Former Supreme Court judge Justice A K Sikri has inaugurated the Indian Dispute Resolution Centre (IDRC), which provides a paperless dispute resolution environment.
254. b Xinhua a Chinese news agency added an AI 3D news anchor to its lineup of virtual presenters reported the daily mail.
255. d Abhas Jha, an Indian economist, has been appointed by the World Bank to a key position on climate change and disaster management in South Asia.
256. b A working group of insurance regulator IRDAI that revisited guidelines on Trade Credit Insurance (TCI) has recommended an increase in the indemnity provided to the policyholders from existing 85% of the trade receivables from each buyer to 90%.
257. d Doctors in Japan have successfully transplanted liver cells derived from embryonic stem cells into a newborn baby, in a world-first that could provide new treatment options for infants.
258. a The Indian Navy's indigenously-made PPE kit, "NavRakshak", made for enhancing comforts of the health workers under Indian conditions, is helping fight the war against Covid-19 in a better and effective manner.
259. b Balbir Singh Senior, the three-time Olympic gold medal-winning hockey legend died in a private hospital at Mohali, Punjab.
260. b For the first time, the UN Military Gender Advocate award has been awarded to two UN peacekeepers: Commander Carla Monteiro de Castro Araujo, a Brazilian Naval officer, and Major Suman Gawani, of the Indian Army.
261. b Private NBFC, Tata Capital has launched the voicebot "TIA" on WhatsApp.
262. a Union Minister for Road Transport Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the 440 metre-long tunnel, constructed below the busy town of Chamba as part of the Chardham Connectivity Project.
263. a State-owned shadow banking firm REC has tied up with TajSATS to provide food to frontline health workers fighting the COVID-19 battle.
264. c The Tamil Nadu government has started preliminary works for implementing the unique Solar Fence Farmland Protection Programme, under the Central Agriculture Improvement Scheme.
265. b India's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) has joined hands with ICICI Bank to offer retail financing schemes to its customers.
266. b Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) announced the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (Modified-2020) Scheme.
267. a Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, the University of North Texas and the US Army Research Laboratory have developed an engineered magnesium alloy which can replace steel and aluminium alloys in the automobile industry making vehicles more fuel efficient.
268. d 'Jayatu Jayatu Bharatam' – the historic anthem in 14 languages is dedicated as a salutation to each and every Indian who has stood together as a family in these difficult times.

269. b The IBM Academy of Technology is pleased to congratulate Dr. Rajiv Joshi, IBM Academy of Technology member, for winning The New York Intellectual Property Law Association (NYIPLA) 2020 Inventor of the Year Award.
270. a JK Rowling is publishing a new story called 'The Ickabog', which will be free to read online to help entertain children and families stuck at home during the coronavirus pandemic.
271. c The Bihar government is setting up India's first observatory for the mammals in Bhagalpur district. Construction at the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS) in the state's Bhagalpur district is scheduled to be completed by early next year.
272. c Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has become the first political outfit in India to hold a two-day digital conclave in which over 25,000 party activists and leaders are participating through Zoom digital platform.
273. d India and Australia are expected to make bilateral diplomatic history by signing an agreement for reciprocal access to military logistics facilities and other pacts aimed at developing alternative supply chains when the two sides hold their first "virtual summit" on June 4.
274. d Russia announced that summit meetings of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) grouping and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which it was to host in July, has been postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic.
275. c The European Union (EU)'s executive unveiled a €750 billion plan to prop up economies hammered by the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, hoping to end months of squabbling over how to fund a recovery that has exposed fault-lines across the 27-nation bloc.
276. d ITC has entered into a share purchase agreement (SPA) to acquire 100 percent of the equity share capital of Sunrise Foods Private Limited (SFPL), a company primarily engaged in the business of spices under the trademark 'Sunrise', subject to fulfilment of various terms and conditions as specified in the SPA.
277. b Marcos Prado Troyjo, former deputy economy minister of Brazil will replace KV Kamath as the president of the New Development Bank's (NDB), a multilateral financial institution set up to mobilise resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies.
278. d A Chinese survey team reached Mount Everest through Tibet to remeasure the exact height of the world's tallest mountain. According to China's measurement the height of Mount Everest is 8844.43 meters which is four meters less than Nepal's calculations, the state media reported.
279. b Around one-third of the world's mangrove delta – the Sunderban – has been damaged by Cyclone Amphan, according to a preliminary assessment of the West Bengal forest department.
280. b VAMS SafeGuard as is it called scans body temperature, read faces with a mask on while monitoring social distancing on the premise.
281. c Popular Indian YouTuber, Amit Bhadana, also known as the Desi YouTuber, has gained 20 million subscribers on his channel, making him the first individual Indian YouTuber to have achieved this milestone.
282. c Karnataka will soon launch a 'State Health Register' that will maintain the health records of all the citizens.

283. c In a historical and rare event, Joseph Thermadom, from the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese, has made his First Religious Profession at Holy Cross Novitiate, Yercaud (TN), becoming the first Indian from the hearing and speech impaired community to take religious vows.
284. c The Asian Development Bank -ADB signed a 177 million US dollars loan to upgrade 450 km of state highways and major district roads in Maharashtra.
285. a Researchers at Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST) Mohali, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology (DST) have found a straightforward and unique route to fabricate precisely controlled nanostructures of desired geometry and location on 2D materials, through a rapid one-step low power laser writing process.
286. a Central Institute of Plastics Engineering & Technology (CIPET) has been renamed as Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology (CIPET). Its Headquarter is located at Chennai.
287. c Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president Narinder Batra has been appointed as a member of the Olympic Channel Commission.
288. c Uttar Pradesh government will develop 800 km roads as Herbal roads in the state.
289. d Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman formally launched the facility for instant allotment of PAN on near to real time basis.
290. d World Hunger Day 2020: As we observe the World Hunger Day on May 28 amidst the pandemic's onslaught, it is time to revisit the structural challenges behind this human crisis.
291. c Singapore was the top source of foreign direct investment into India for the second consecutive financial year, accounting for about 30 per cent of FDI inflows in 2019-20.
292. a With the last auctions valuing his works at Rs 44.39 crore in 2019, London-based Anish Kapoor topped the Hurun India Art List 2020 for the second year in a row.
293. c Thirty countries led by Costa Rica and the World Health Organization launched an initiative aimed at sharing vaccines, medicines and diagnostic tools to tackle the global coronavirus pandemic.
294. c National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) has launched an artificial intelligence (AI) based chatbot, PAi, to create awareness around its products like FASTag, RuPay, UPI, AePS on a real time basis.
295. c Velankanni in Tamil Nadu has thrown up a new species of small freshwater fish of the family Cyprinidae.
296. c Speaker Om Birla has nominated 15 MPs from Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh to assist the Delimitation Commission in redrawing the Lok Sabha and the Assembly constituencies of the northeastern States and the Union Territory.
297. a A Kochi-based startup has launched a multipurpose decontamination device called 'Lumos' that can sanitise items ranging from N95 masks to vegetables, thereby keeping a check on the spread of Covid-19.
298. c Chhattisgarh first Chief Minister Ajit Jogi passed away at the age of 74 years. He breathed his last at a private hospital in state capital Raipur.

299. b NASA has renamed its Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope (WFIRST), a next-generation space telescope set to launch in 2025, in honor of Nancy Grace Roman, the US space agency's first chief astronomer, who paved the way for space telescopes focused on the broader universe.
300. b Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced the launch of the 'Rozgar Setu' scheme, saying it would help secure employment for skilled workers who have returned. The State is the first to devise such a work plan.
301. b The UP government's latest initiative is the move to appoint 'Banking Correspondent Sakhi', or female banking agents, in all 5,8000 gram panchayats in the state.
302. c For the migrant workers who have returned to Odisha, Rs 1,000 crore would be spent for creation of 1.05 lakh farm ponds under "Mo Pokhari" initiative.
303. b China's first domestically built aircraft carrier has begun sea trials to test weapons and equipment capabilities and sharpen training for its crew.
304. d United States President Donald Trump has announced that America is terminating its relationship with World Health Organization over its handling of the Corona virus.
305. d National Highways Authority of India, NHAI, has planned to develop 57 stretches of National Highway in every State to educate the Highway Engineers, including State PWD Engineers.
306. d Finance Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey represented India at the meeting.
307. c A research project by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has helped Odisha's Chilika lake, Asia's largest brackish water body, in tripling the population of the Irrawaddy dolphins.
308. a Foundation Stone for a Missile Park "AGNEEPRASTHA" was laid at INS Kalinga by Cmde Rajesh Debnath, Commanding Officer, in the presence of Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain.
309. d Goa became a full-fledged state on May 30, 1987. Goa, which was liberated from the Portuguese on December 19, 1961, which was until then a union territory.
310. b Cricket superstar Virat Kohli remains the only Indian in the Forbes' list of world's highest-paid athletes with total earnings of USD 26 million, jumping to the 66th spot from 100 in the 2020 standings.