

CURRENT AFFAIRS

July 2020



Summary and Multiple Choice Questions



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Current Affairs — July 2020

This is a guide to provide you a precise summary and a huge collection of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) covering national and international current affairs for the month of **July 2020**.

This guide will help you in preparing for Indian competitive examinations like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade and Officer Grade, etc.

Audience

Aspirants who are preparing for different competitive exams like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade, Officer Grade, etc.

Even though you are not preparing for any exams but are willing to have news encapsulated in a roll, which you can walk through within 30 minutes, then we have put all the major points for the whole month in a precise and interesting way.

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Appointments

1. Indra Mani Pandey appointed as India's Permanent Representative to UN

Senior diplomat Indra Mani Pandey has been appointed as the next Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva. He is presently additional secretary in the External Affairs ministry.

Mr Pandey, a 1990 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, succeeds Rajiv K Chander in Geneva. He has served in Indian missions in Damascus, Cairo, Islamabad, Kabul, Muscat and Geneva. He also served as joint secretary in the Disarmament and International Security Affairs division of the MEA.



2. Shrikant Madhav Vaidya took over as Chairman of IOC

Shrikant Madhav Vaidya took charge as the new Chairman of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC). He succeeds Sanjiv Singh. Prior to the appointment as Chairman, he was the Director (Refineries) on the IOC Board.

Vaidya will also be Chairman of Chennai Petroleum Corporation, a stand-alone refining subsidiary of IOC and Indian Oiltanking Ltd. He will also be Director on the Board of Petronet LNG. He steered the rollout of BS-VI grade auto fuels ahead of time.



3. Ravinder Bhakar assumed charge as CEO, CBFC

Ravinder Bhakar has taken over as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Central Board of Films Certification (CBFC). Prior to his appointment as CEO, CBFC, Mr. Bhakar was posted as the Secretary & Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railways.

Mr. Bhakar is a 1999 batch officer of Indian Railway Stores Service (IRSS). He is also recipient of many prestigious awards, including the National award from Minister of Railways for outstanding service & General Manager Award both in Western Railways (WR) & Central Railways (CR) for exemplary service.



4. Injeti Srinivas appointed as Chairman of IFSCA

Senior bureaucrat Injeti Srinivas was appointed as the first Chairman of the International Financial Services Centre Authority. IFSCA includes a member from RBI, IRDAI, SEBI and PFRDA each. There are two other members from the Central Government and full-time or part-time members in the Authority.



International Financial Services Centres Authority was established by the central government to regulate financial products such as securities, deposits or contracts of insurance, financial services, and financial institutions.

5. Rudrendra Tandon appointed India's next Ambassador to Afghanistan

Indian Foreign Service officer Rudrendra Tandon was appointed as next Ambassador of India to Afghanistan. He replaced Vinay Kumar. Prior to this appointment, he was serving as Indian envoy to ASEAN at Jakarta. He served at Pakistan-Afghanistan-Iran desk in the external affairs ministry.



Vikram Doraiswami was appointed as a high commissioner to Dhaka, replacing Riva Ganguly Das. Vikram has been handling as Additional Secretary incharge of International Organisations and Summits at the foreign ministry.

6. ADB appointed Ashok Lavasa as new Vice President

The Asian Development Bank appointed Ashok Lavasa as Vice-President for Private Sector Operations and Public-Private Partnerships. He succeeded Diwakar Gupta. He made significant contributions to the inclusion of the private sector in many development programs in India.



Ashok Lavasa is currently one of the Election Commissioners of India and previously served in a range of senior posts such as Union Finance Secretary of India; Union Secretary for the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change; and Union Secretary for the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

7. Roshni Nadar Malhotra becomes new Chairperson of HCL

Roshni Nadar Malhotra became the new Chairperson of HCL Technologies after she took over from her father Shiv Nadar. She became the first woman chairperson to head a listed Indian IT firm. She is also the richest woman in India.

Roshni joined the board of HCL Technologies in 2013 and was Vice Chairperson. She will continue as CEO of HCL Corporation, the holding company for all the group entities. The HCL Group includes HCL Technologies, HCL Infosystem, and HCL Healthcare.



8. Rajesh Bhushan appointed as new Health Secretary

Rajesh Bhushan was appointed as the new Health Secretary in the Union Health Ministry. Prior to this, he was holding the post of OSD in the Health Ministry and will succeed Preeti Sudan.

Other appointments include Ajay Tirkey as Secretary, Department of Land Resources in the Ministry of Rural Development, Ram Mohan Mishra as Secretary in the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Sushil Kumar as Secretary, National Commission for Scheduled Castes in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Anil Kumar as Secretary, Mines.



9. Ashwini Kumar Tewari named new MD & CEO of SBI Cards

Ashwini Kumar Tewari has been appointed as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the SBI cards and Payment Services. He has been nominated by parent State Bank of India for a period of two years.

Mr Tewari replaced Hardayal Prasad. Mr prasad quit from the directorship of the company owing to his voluntary retirement from the State Bank of India. SBI Card is headquartered in Gurgaon, Haryana/Delhi NCR and has branches in over 100 cities across India.



10. P Praveen Siddharth appointed as PS to President of India

P Praveen Siddharth, a 2001-batch Indian Revenue Service officer, has been appointed as the new personal secretary to the President of India, Ram Nath Kovind. He will replace Vikram Singh, who has now been appointed Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Shipping.



Prior to this appointment, he was serving as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the President's Secretariat. The President's Secretariat provides secretarial assistance to the President in discharging constitutional, ceremonial and other State responsibilities.

11. SAP appointed Kulmeet Bawa as President and MD of Indian subcontinent

SAP has appointed Kulmeet Bawa as President and Managing Director for SAP Indian Subcontinent. Based in Gurgaon, Kulmeet will report directly to Scott Russell, President of SAP Asia Pacific Japan (APJ). Bawa replaced Deb Deep Sengupta.



Most recently, Kulmeet was the Chief Operating Officer for Resulticks. He has served with the Indian Army in the Armored Corps, subsequently moving to the corporate side. He also led the India & South Asia market for Adobe.

12. Ramesh Babu Boddu appointed as MD & CEO of Karur Vysya Bank

Ramesh Babu Boddu has been appointed as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Karur Vysya Bank for a period of three years. He will replace P R Seshadri who has resigned citing personal reasons.



Karur Vysya Bank is a Scheduled Commercial Bank and is headquartered in Karur in Tamil Nadu. The bank had reported a 39.5% jump in net profit at ₹83.70 crore for the quarter ended March 2020.

13. DG RPF Arun Kumar nominated as the Vice-Chairman of the UIC

Arun Kumar, Director General of the Railway Protection Force (RPF), has been nominated to be the vice-chairman of the Security Platform of the Paris-based Union Internationale Des Chemins (UIC). Kumar is a 1985-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer.



Mr Arun Kumar has been appointed from July 2020 to July 2022 and will then take over as Chairman of the Security Platform from July 2022 to July 2024. UIC is a French word the meaning of which in English is International Union of Railways. It is headquartered in Paris.

14. PC Kandpal appointed as MD & CEO of SBI General Insurance

Prakash Chandra Kandpal has been appointed as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of SBI General Insurance. Prior to this appointment, he was serving as the deputy CEO of the company. He will replace Pushan Mahapatra.



Kandpal has more than 33 years of experience with SBI. He also had a stint in SBI Mutual Fund as the Chief Operating Officer. Pushan Mahapatra has been appointed as Director, Strategic Investments and Digital Initiatives.

15. Sumit Deb appointed as CMD of NMDC

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Sumit Deb as Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC). Deb is currently Director (Personnel) in the NMDC.



Deb succeeds N Baijendra Kumar on his superannuation. NMDC is a state-controlled mineral producer. It is India's largest iron ore producer and exporter, producing more than 35 million tons of iron ore. It also operates the only mechanised diamond mine in the country at Panna in Madhya Pradesh.

16. Alok Misra became new CEO & Director of MFIN

Dr. Alok Misra was appointed as new Chief Executive Officer and Director of Microfinance Institutions Network (MFIN). Prior to this appointment, he was Professor And Chairperson of public policy and governance at MDI, Gurgaon. He has 28 years of professional experience in international development, rural finance, microfinance, inclusive finance etc.



Microfinance Institutions Network is an association for the microfinance sector in India. Its member organisations constitute the leading microfinance institutions in the country.

17. Sahil Seth appointed as advisory for BRICS CCI

Sahil Seth was appointed as an honorary advisor to the steering committee for the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) till 2023. BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a registered body under Societies Registration Act - Government of India.



The committee will be responsible to connect youth from the BRICS nations - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa and connect millions of youth across the world.

18. Partha Pratim Sengupta appointed as MD and CEO of Indian Overseas Bank

Partha Pratim Sengupta has been appointed as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Indian Overseas Bank (IOB). Prior to this appointment, he was working with State Bank of India (SBI) as its Deputy Managing Director.



Mr Sengupta will replace Karnam Sekar who superannuated. He joined SBI as a probationary officer in 1987. Before his promotion as DMD in SBI, he was the chief general manager of SBI's Kolkata Circle.

19. Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi assumed Charge as Commandant Indian Naval Academy

Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi, AVSM, NM has taken over as the Commandant, Indian Naval Academy (INA). He replaced Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, AVSM, NM. He has the rare distinction of commanding the Indian Naval Academy twice.

Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakvasala. Prior to this appointment, he was the Director General Naval Operations. He is a recipient of the Nao Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty) and the Ati Vishist Seva Medal.



20. Paytm Money appointed Varun Sridhar as new CEO

Paytm Money has appointed Varun Sridhar as its new CEO after former MD and CEO Pravin Jadhav resigned from the startup. Sridhar has most recently served as CEO of FinShell India. Paytm Money has also appointed Amit Kapoor as the new CFO and VP.

Paytm Money is a subsidiary of One97 Communications Ltd, which operates Paytm. Paytm Money had received approval from Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to begin stock broking services on its platform.



Awards

1. UN honours Kerala Health Minister KK Shailaja

United Nations has honoured Health Minister of Kerala, KK Shailaja, for her efforts to fight coronavirus in her state. She was also invited by the UN to participate in a panel discussion on World Public Service Day 2020.

The United Nations observes the world public service day every year on June 23 to pay respect to public servants across the world. The UN gives the UN Public Service Awards (UNPSA) for the excellent work done by public servants.



2. Beyonce felicitated with Humanitarian Award at "BET Awards 2020"

Popstar Beyonce was honoured with the Humanitarian Award at the 20th edition of the "BET Awards" for her longstanding philanthropic work, including her recent COVID-19 relief efforts. The BET Awards also paid tribute to basketball legend Kobe Bryant and music icon Little Richard.



Additionally, Nicolas Johnson, Timbaland, Swizz Beatz, and D-Nice were recognised as 2020 Shine A Light honourees. French anti-racist activist Assa Traore has been named BET International's Global Good Recipient. The award aims to celebrate African Americans and other minorities in music, acting, sports and other fields of entertainment.

3. The first 'Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis National Award in Official Statistics' conferred on Dr. C. Rangarajan

The first Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis National Award in Official Statistics for lifetime achievement was conferred on Dr. C. Rangarajan, former Chairman, National Statistical Commission and former RBI Governor. He was recognised for his outstanding contribution in laying the foundation for holistic reforms in national statistical system.



Known as father of Indian Statistics, Mahalanobis is the founder of Indian Statistical Institute (ISI). Mahalanobis also shaped the Planning Commission and pioneered methodologies for large-scale surveys.

4. India's AI enabled MyGov Corona Helpdesk won two global awards

India's Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled MyGov Corona Helpdesk has bagged two awards at the Global Leadership Summit and Festival of AI and Emerging Technology, CogX 2020. It won the two awards under categories of Best Innovation for Covid-19 - Society and People's Choice Covid-19 Overall Winner.



MyGov is the world's largest citizen engagement platform, which facilitates two-ways communication between the Government and Citizen and facilitates participatory governance in India. CogX 2020 is a prestigious Global Leadership Summit and Festival of AI and Emerging Technology held annually in London.

5. India's Freya Thakral bagged "The Diana Award 2020"

A 13-year-old student of the British School New Delhi, Freya Thakral was honored with the 2020 Diana Award for her "Recycler App". The App has helped the ragpickers of Delhi, by building a connection between users and waste-handlers.



Freya Thakral's Recycler App provides users a door-to-door pick up service for recyclable waste. It has simple options that guide one to recycling its waste. The Diana Award is a registered charity that honors some of the most inspirational young people from around the world.

6. IOC received EU Green Building Leadership Award 2020

The International Olympic Committee's new headquarters in Lausanne has been awarded the European 2020 US Green Building Council (USGBC) Leadership Award. Olympic House, which also holds the rigorous LEED Platinum certification, is one of the most sustainable buildings in the world.



Olympic House is powered by renewable energy, part of which is produced on site. Ninety-five per cent of Olympic House construction waste was recycled, and more than 95 per cent of the former IOC building was recycled or reused. Carbon emissions from the building's construction and operations have been compensated through the IOC-Dow carbon partnership.

7. NTPC Limited won prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Award 2019

National Thermal Power Corporation, NTPC Limited, a Central PSU under Ministry of Power, has won the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Award 2019, under Outstanding Accomplishment in Corporate Excellence Category. The company has also received Commendation for Significant Achievement in the category of CSR.



CII-ITC Sustainability Awards recognise and reward excellence in sustainability practices. It is considered to be the most credible platform for sustainability recognition in the country.

8. Kezang D Thongdok won 2020 Dada Saheb Phalke Award

Kezang D Thongdok of Arunachal Pradesh has won the Dada Saheb Phalke Award 2020 for a short documentary "Chi Lupo". The documentary is based on honey hunting. It portrays the customs and practices of honey hunting practiced in the Shertukpen community.



The Chi in the title of the documentary refers to honey and Lupo refers to hunter. The documentary is aimed to create awareness about the negative effects of modernisation on the practice of honey hunting and to educate the future generation about honey hunting.

9. Gurbux Singh, Palash Nandi to be honoured with Mohun Bagan Ratna

Hockey stalwart Gurbux Singh and former Bengal cricketer and coach Palash Nandi will be honoured with city football club Mohun Bagan on the occasion of its foundation day. Other awardees include Lifetime Achievement: Ashok Kumar (Hockey), Pranab Ganguly (Football), Monoranjan Porel (Athletics); Best Footballer: Joseba Beitia (Senior); Best Youth Player: Sajal Bag (U18 team).



Mohun Bagan Day is celebrated every year on July 29 to celebrate their IFA Shield victory in 1911, when they had won the tournament defeating East Yorkshire Regiment 2-1, thus becoming the first Indian club to end the British stranglehold.

10. ISRO Chief K Sivan named for Von Karman Award 2020

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chief, Dr. Kailasavadivoo Sivan was nominated for Von Karman Award 2020 by the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA). The award receiving ceremony will be organized in March 2021 at Paris France. Dr. Kailasavadivoo Sivan has been honored with Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Award in 2019.



Von Karman Award recognises outstanding lifetime achievements in any branch of science. The award honors the memory of the Academy's founder and first President. Prof. Udupi Ramachandra Rao was the first Indian to receive the von Karman award.

11. Chhattisgarh awarded “Elites Excellence Awards 2020”

Chhattisgarh state received “Elites Excellence Awards -2020” at National Award Elite India Transformation Summit for its outstanding Darpan website and mobile app. The app was prepared for monitoring Chhattisgarh Government's ambitious Suraji Gaon Scheme and other flagship schemes. Both the website and the mobile application have been developed by Chhattisgarh Infotech Promotion Society (CHiPS).



Elites Excellence Awards is given by prestigious IT institution Elites Technomedia under the 'Digital India initiative'.

12. Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister K Palaniswami honored with Paul Harris Fellow Recognition

Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister, Edappadi K Palaniswami received Paul Harris Fellow recognition by Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, Chicago. He received honor for his efficient services in providing drinking water, sanitation, prevention of diseases, environment, world peace etc. to the people of Tamil Nadu state.



Edappadi K Palaniswami has been serving to the government of Tamil Nadu since 2011. Paul Harris Fellow recognition is in the honor of Rotary founder, Paul Harris who contributed to The Rotary Foundation.

13. Environmental activist Greta Thunberg won first Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity

Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg was awarded the first Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity. She is the founder of School Strike for Climate and was described as "one of the most remarkable figures of our days" by the judges.

Ms Thunberg will donate the entire amount of prize money to project and organisations "fighting for a sustainable world". She has earlier been awarded Time Magazine's Person of the Year in 2019 and has been nominated twice for the Nobel Peace Prize.



14. Ved Parkash Dudeja won the 'Infra Business Leader of the Year' award

Ved Parkash Dudeja has won the coveted 'Infra Business Leader of the Year' award for 2020 by the Rail Infra and Mobility Business Digital Awards (RIMBDA). He is the Vice chairman, Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA).

RLDA is a statutory authority under the Ministry of Railways, responsible for development of vacant railway land for commercial use to generate revenue. Dudeja has been conferred "Vishishtha Seva Praman Patra" by Minister of Railways in 2015-16 for his extraordinary contribution to railways.



15. Tata's N Chandrasekaran and Lockheed Martin's Jim Taiclet to receive USIBC Global Leadership Award 2020

Tata group Chairman N Chandrasekaran and Lockheed Martin CEO Jim Taiclet will receive the US-India Business Council (USIBC) Global Leadership Award 2020. The award is conferred upon executives in recognition of outstanding leadership and for promoting Indo-US trade and business.

The USIBC Global Leadership Award has been presented annually since 2007. The earlier receivers of this award include Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Google CEO Adena Friedman, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, and Sun Pharmaceuticals Founder and Managing Director Dilip Shanghvi.



16. CPJ announced 2020 International Press Freedom awardees

The Committee to Protect Journalists announced the winners of 2020 International Press Freedom awards. CPJ's 2020 awardees are:

- Shahidul Alam (Bangladesh)
- Mohammad Mosaed (Iran)
- Dapo Olorunyomi (Nigeria)
- Svetlana Prokopyeva (Russia)



Human rights lawyer Amal Clooney will also be honoured by the New York-based watchdog with the Gwen Ifill Press Freedom Award. The Gwen Ifill Press Freedom Award is given annually by CPJ's board of directors to recognise extraordinary and sustained commitment to press freedom.

17. Marianna Vardinoyannis & Morissana Kouyaté win 2020 Nelson Mandela Prize

The 2020 Nelson Mandela Prize will go this year to Marianna Vardinoyannis, of Greece and Doctor Morissana Kouyaté, of Guinea. The award is given every five years and recognises those, who dedicate their lives to the service of humanity.



Vardinoyannis is a Greek philanthropist known for fighting childhood cancer and for a world without borders in health for about 30 years. Kouyaté is another Human rights activist known for her contribution towards violence against women and girls in Africa.

18. Arnab Chaudhuri to receive Toonz Media Award posthumously

The 'Legend of Animation' award as part of the Animation Masters Summit (AMS) 2020 - Digital Edition will be posthumously conferred to the legendary animation director Arnab Chaudhuri, for his invaluable contribution to the animation and entertainment industry of India. Arnab's animation movie 'Arjun: The Warrior Prince' is the only animation from India to date to be long listed for Oscar awards.



The 'Legend of Animation' award is given away every year to honour a genius from the field of animation in India. The award is instituted by the Toonz Media Group (TMG).

19. Kala Narayanasamy honored with President's Award in Singapore

An Indian-origin nurse in Singapore, Kala Narayanasamy was honored with the President's Award for Nurses for serving on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic. She was awarded a trophy, a certificate with the signature of President Halimah Yacob and SGD 10,000 (USD 7,228). She was one among 5 awardees.



The Deputy Director of Nursing at Woodlands Health Campus, Kala Narayanasamy was pioneer in utilising the infection control practices that she had learned during the 2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak, in the current pandemic.

20. India's first solar-powered ferry Aditya won Gustave Trouve Award

India's first solar-powered ferry, Aditya, has won the prestigious Gustave Trouve Award for Excellence in Electric Boats and Boating. The ferry was adjudged the world's best electric boat in the category of ferries designed for paid passenger service.



The ferry belongs to the Kerala State Water Transport Department (KSWTD) and runs on the Vaikkom-Thavanakkadavu route in Alappuzha district, since January 2017. The award was instituted this year in honour of Frenchman Gustave Trouve for his groundbreaking work on electric transport.

21. Sunil ydv SS honoured with "Karamveer Chakra Award"

Sunil ydv SS, Founder of SS Motivation, has been honoured with "Karamveer Chakra Award" by Global Fellowship Award instituted by United Nations and International Confederation of NGO (iCONGO) at the ReX ConCLIVE hosted in IIT Delhi. He received the award for his relentless contribution to society through his Telegram channel "SS Motivation."



Sunil addresses social issues and motivates people every day through his channel. He is a world record holder, digital social activist, and entrepreneur.

22. MoES National Awards for excellence in Earth System Science announced

The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) announced the National Awards for excellence in Earth System Science.

Life Time Excellence Award	Professor Ashok Sahni	For contribution in the field of Geology, Vertebrate Paleontology and Biostratigraphy.
National Award for Ocean Science & Technology	Dr. V. V. S. S. Sarma	For contributions in understanding biogeochemistry of the Indian Ocean.
	Dr. M. Ravichandran	For formulation and execution of Indian Argo Project and Implementation of Ocean Data assimilation and Modelling for operational ocean services.
National Award for Atmospheric Science & Technology	Dr. S. Suresh Babu	For contributions towards understanding the radiative impacts of black carbon aerosols on atmospheric stability and climate.
National award for Geoscience & Technology	N. V. Chalapathi Rao	For research on deeper mantle petrology and geochemistry.
National Award for Ocean Technolog	Dr. M. A. Atmanand	For work in the area of deep sea technologies.
Anna Mani award for woman scientist	Dr. Lidita D. S. Khandeparker	For contributions in the field of aquatic microbial ecology.
Young Researcher Award	Dr. Indra Sekhar Sen	For their outstanding work in Earth System Science.

Bills and Acts

1. Amendments in the Indian Stamp Act, 1899 implemented

The Amendments in the Indian Stamp Act, 1899 brought through Finance Act 2019 and Rules made there under came into effect from 1st July, 2020. In order to bring in uniformity of the stamp duty on securities across States and thereby build a pan-India securities market, the Central Government, through requisite amendments, has created the legal and institutional mechanism.



The amendment will enable states to collect stamp duty on securities market instruments at one place by one agency through one instrument. The collecting agents will be the Stock Exchanges or authorised Clearing Corporations and the Depositories.

2. Consumer Protection Act, 2019 comes into force

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 came into force from 20th July, 2020. The new Act will empower consumers and help them in protecting their rights through its various notified Rules and provisions. The Act includes establishment of the Central Consumer Protection Authority, CCPA to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers.



The new Act also provides for Alternate Dispute Resolution mechanism of Mediation. This will simplify the adjudication process. There are provisions for filing complaints electronically, credit of amount due to unidentifiable consumers to Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF).

3. Government notified new rules & regulations for e-commerce companies

The government has notified the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020' under the Consumer Protection Act 2019. Under the new rules and regulations for e-commerce companies, it is mandatory to display the 'country of origin' on their products.

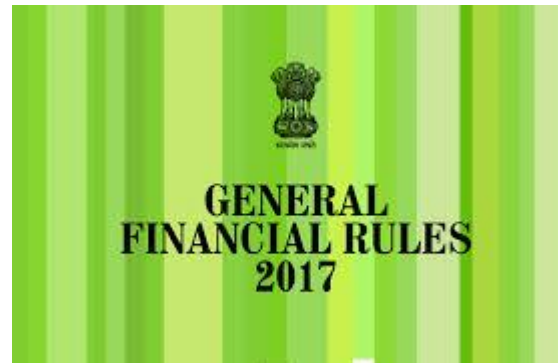


The government also notified the new Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), with sweeping powers to book those found violating consumer rights. It aims to protect the rights of consumer by establishing authorities for timely and effective administration and settlement of consumers' disputes.

4. Government amended General Financial Rules, 2017

The Government of India has amended General Financial Rules, 2017 on national security grounds. The rules were amended to impose restrictions on public procurement from the neighbourhood countries of India that share land border.

After the new amendments, a bidder from neighbouring country of India shall place bids to procure goods only if it is registered with the Registration Committee set up by the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).



Books & Authors

1. Vice President released "The Future of Higher Education" book

Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu, virtually released a book on "Future of Higher Education – Nine Mega Trends". The book has been authored by CA V Pattabhi Ram. It is based on a survey of around 5,000 educators across India, who were part of ICT Academy's "SkyCampus" Digital Knowledge Series.



The book covers the new norms in the key areas of higher education such as Student-Teacher relationship, Learning methods, Laboratories, Examinations, etc; all taking a paradigm shift during this COVID pandemic. The book was brought out by ICT Academy.

2. Former RBI governor Urjit Patel penned book 'Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver'

Former RBI governor, Urjit Patel penned a book titled 'Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver'. The book to be published by Harper Collins India, highlights the impact of non-performing assets (NPAs) issue on Indian banking industry in recent years.



The book describes various subjects like the RBI's autonomy, interest rates or its stance on demonetisation. Urjit Patel has 30 years of macroeconomic experience in building strategies to protect banks from "unscrupulous racketeers and secure depositors' savings.

3. "Getting Competitive: A Practitioner's Guide for India" authored by R C Bhargava

R C Bhargava (Chairman of Maruti Suzuki) penned a book titled 'Getting Competitive: A Practitioner's Guide for India'. Author has detailed his experience as a policymaker and a leading industrialist in the book. The book published by HarperCollins India.



R.C. Bhargava draws upon his unique experience of more than sixty years as a policymaker and industry leader to give practical suggestions. These include replacing socialistic industry-related policies with those that would promote competitive manufacturing and substituting Western management culture with that of the East to create trust with citizens and partnership relations with industrialists.

4. Biographical book on Dalai Lama to be released in 2020

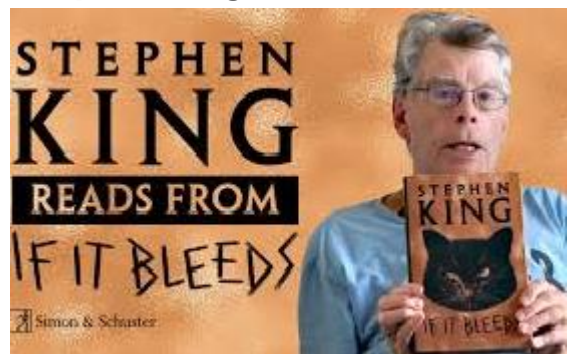
A new biography on the life of Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness Dalai Lama will be released in 2020. The book is titled 'His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama: An Illustrated Biography' and written by Tenzin Geyche Tethong. It will be published by Roli Books.

The book gives a glance of an important part of the history before he was forced to flee to India in March 1959. The biography contains some 400 rare pictures and documents about H H Dalai Lama. Tenzin Geyche Tethong has been associated with the Dalai Lama as his close aide and advisor.



5. Book titled “If It Bleeds” authored by Stephen King released

Stephen King's penned new book titled as 'If It Bleeds' was released. It is collection of four stories namely Mr. Harrigan's Phone, The Life of Chuck, Rat, and the title story, If It Bleeds. 'If It Bleeds' contains four new, compelling novels that reaffirm horror master King at his finest, using the weird riff on mortality, the price of creativity, and the unpredictable consequences of material attachments.



Stephen King has written more than sixty books such as The Institute, Elevation, The Outsider, Sleeping Beauties, End of Watch, Finders Keepers, and Mr. Mercedes.

6. Arunachal CM Pema Khandu launched book on Tangams

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu released a book titled "Tangams: An Ethnolinguistic Study Of The Critically Endangered Group of Arunachal Pradesh". The Tangam community has reportedly 253 speakers concentrated in Kugging village in Upper Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

The book is published by the Centre for Endangered Languages (CFEL), Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU) and Himalayan Publishers, New Delhi. Its co-authors are Kaling Dabi, Kombong Darang, Rejhoney Borang, Chera Devi and Rumi Deuri.



7. Book titled “The Endgame” authored by Hussain Zaidi

Crime writer S Hussain Zaidi has come out with a new novel titled "The Endgame". The book, published by Harper Collins India, is about politics, betrayal, and unimaginable terror.

S.Hussain Zaidi is India's most prolific crime writer. His documentation of the Mumbai mafia in books like Dongri to Dubai, Mafia Queens of Mumbai, My Name is Abu Salem and Byculla to Bangkok is considered one of the finest pieces of investigative journalism.



8. Book titled “Suraj Kade Marda Nahi” published

A book titled 'Suraj Kade Marda Nahi' written by Baldev Singh Sadaknama was published by Unistarbooks. The book portrays some facts pertaining to Colonel Reginald Dyer, also known as the butcher of Jallianwala bagh. It also covers how Udham Singh killed Michael O' Dwyer.

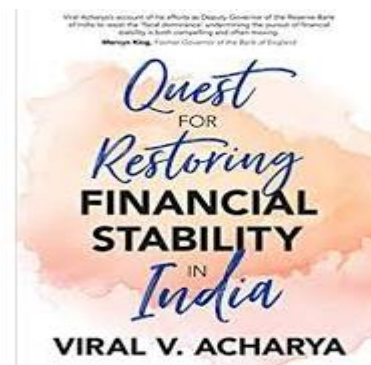
Baldev Singh Sadaknama received the Sahitya Akademi Award 2011 for his novel Dhaahwan Dilli De Kingre. He also won the Dhahan Prize for his novel 'Suraj Di Aakh' based on the life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.



9. “Quest for Restoring Financial Stability in India” authored by Viral V.Acharya

The book titled “Quest for Restoring Financial Stability in India” authored by former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) deputy governor Viral V. Acharya was released. The book describes about author’s quest for restoring financial stability in India, raises unanswered questions related to the re-emergence of fiscal dominance in India and offers a concrete plan for sustained improvement.

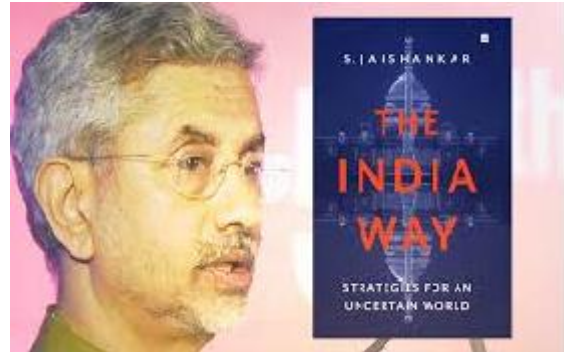
Viral V. Acharya is an Indian economist who served as member of the advisory council of the RBI Academy and was a member of the Academic Council of the National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM), Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) since 2014.



10. “The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World” authored by Dr. S Jaishankar

“The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World” book written by Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar was released. The book published by HarperCollins India publications, analyses the challenges and spells out possible policy responses.

Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar is an Indian diplomat who served in different capacities in India and abroad including as a High Commissioner to Singapore (2007–09) and as Ambassador to the Czech Republic (2001–04), China (2009–2013) and the USA (2014–2015).



Committees

1. Sijo George appointed to Centre's committee on STIP 2020

Sijo Kuruvilla George was appointed to the Central Government's committee on Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020 (STIP 2020). He is a founding CEO of Startup Village and founder of Re-think Foundation.

STIP 2020 Town Hall Meet, the Track-I public & expert consultation process for the formulation of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP) 2020 was launched by the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India Professor K VijayRaghavan and Secretary, DST Professor Ashutosh Sharma.



2. Delhi government formed expert committee to explore economic reform measures

Delhi government formed a 12-member expert committee to explore economic reform measures to help businesses recover from the impact of COVID-19. The committee will be headed by Vice-Chairperson of Dialogue and Development Commission of Delhi, Jasmine Shah.

The committee will explore reform measures that improve ease of doing business in Delhi and shorten the process of economic recovery from the impact of COVID-19. The order was passed by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority regarding the formation of this committee.



3. Study Committee formed for creation of new districts in Andhra Pradesh state

The State Cabinet of Andhra Pradesh state approved formation of a study committee for the creation of new districts in the state. This includes reorganising the existing 13 districts into 25 districts.

The committee will be headed by the State Chief Secretary. The reorganisation of the districts would be based upon the Parliamentary Constituencies in the state. There are 25 Parliamentary Constituencies in the state. The proposal for the creation of a 26th District is also under process.



4. HRD Ministry sets up D P Singh Committee

The Ministry of Human Resources and Development has set up a committee under Prof DP Singh, Chairman of UGC. The committee will prepare guidelines and measures to ensure that more students stay in India to study and come out with a mechanism to increase intake in well-performing universities.

The Ministry has asked the committee to submit a report on this subject within a fortnight. The committee will also explore mechanism for starting Multi-disciplinary and innovative programs, twinning and joint degree programs, Cross Country designing of centers etc.



Deaths

1. Veteran Kannada writer Geetha Nagabhushan passed away

Veteran Kannada novelist Geetha Nagabhushan passed away at the age of 78 years. She was the first woman writer in Kannada literature to bag the Kendra Sahitya Akademi and Nadoja awards.

Geetha Nagabhushan has authored 27 novels, 50 short stories, 12 plays and two collections of poetry. She was the President of 76th Akhila Bharata Kannada Sahitya Sammelana at Gadag in 2020. Some of her works include Baduku (novel), Hasimamsa Mattu Haddugalu (novel), Avva Mattu Itara Kathegalu (collection of short stories), Jwalantha (collection of short stories) and Jogini (play).



2. West Indies legend Everton Weekes passed away

West Indies legend Everton Weekes passed away at the age of 95 years. He was last surviving member of the famous three 'Ws' formed by him, Frank Worrell and Clyde Walcott. Weekes was regarded as one of the greatest batsmen in the 40s and 50s.

Weekes played 48 test matches and made 4,455 runs at an average of 58.61 per innings. That included a world-record five consecutive centuries in 1948. Weekes test average of 58.6 is placed in the top 10 Test averages of all time.



3. Ace Bollywood choreographer Saroj Khan passed away

Renowned choreographer Saroj Khan passed away at the age of 71 years. The three-time National Award winner was known as Masterji and choreographed more than 2,000 songs. Khan's best work was with actors Sridevi and Madhuri Dixit.

Khan got her first break as an independent choreographer with Geeta Mera Naam in 1974. She received three National Awards for films Devdas, Jab We Met and Sringaram (Tamil). She won Filmfare Awards for movies like Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam, Guru, Khalnayak and Chaalbaaz.



4. Veteran Italian film composer Ennio Morricone passed away

Ennio Morricone, Oscar-winning Italian film composer of Film Scores passed away. The Italian composer wrote atmospheric scores for spaghetti westerns. He had experience of working in more than 500 films. Ennio was honored with Oscars for his work on Quentin Tarantino's *The Hateful Eight* in 2015.



Some of his popular works includes *Once Upon a Time in America*, Malick's *Days of Heaven* (1978), Roland Joffe's *The Mission* (1986), *The Untouchables* and *Cinema Paradiso*.

5. British film and TV actor Earl Cameron passed away

Earl Cameron, a veteran film, television and theater actor passed away. The actor first appeared on screen in early 1950s and became one of Britain's first Black movie stars. He worked in the 1951 film *Pool of London*. Some of his popular films include 2005 film *The Interpreter*, 1965 Bond movie *Thunderball*, *Safari*, *Inception* and *Doctor Who*.



Earl Cameron was honored with Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2009 New Year honors. The University of Warwick awarded Cameron an honorary doctorate in January 2013.

6. Ivory Coast PM Amadou Gon Coulibaly passed away

Amadou Gon Coulibaly, Ivory Coast's Prime Minister, passed away. He was selected as the ruling party Rally of Houphouetists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP)'s candidate for October's presidential elections 2020. He was selected as Prime Minister of Ivory Coast in January 2017.



Prior to this, Coulibaly served as Minister of Agriculture under Laurent Gbagbo and as secretary general of the presidency for six years. He has handled various posts such as Technical Advisor, Senior Civil Servant, Deputy and Mayor of Korhogo, Agriculture Minister and Cabinet Minister.

7. Legendary musician Charlie Daniels passed away

Legendary musician Charlie Daniels passed away. He was popularly known for fiddle playing and outspoken brand of conservative patriotism. He was honored with Grammy Award for his American classic hit tune "The Devil went down to Georgia" in 1979. He was inducted into the Cheyenne Frontier Days Hall of fame in 2002, the Grand Ole Opry in 2008 and Country Music Hall of Fame in 2016.



Some of his best songs include "Uneasy Rider", "All Night Long" and "Carolina Dreams. Daniels released a book titled Let's All Make the Day Count: The Everyday Wisdom of Charlie Daniels through Harper Collins'.

8. Veteran Gujarati journalist and columnist Nagindas Sanghvi passed away

Veteran Gujarati journalist, columnist, writer and political analyst Nagindas Sanghvi passed away at the age of 100 years. Mr. Sangvi was conferred Padma Shri award in the year 2019. He was teacher at Bhavan's College Andheri from 1951 to 1980.



Sangvi had written in Gujarati, English and Hindi languages. Some of his best books are Gandhi: The Agony of Arrival - The South Africa Years, Gujarat at Cross-Roads, Sardar Patel – Ek Samarpit Jivan, A Brief History of Yoga, Narendra Modi etc.

9. Former England World Cup winner Jack Charlton passed away

Jack Charlton, a World Cup winner with England, passed away at the age of 85 years. He was in the team that won the World Cup at Wembley in 1966, alongside his brother Bobby. Charlton was Footballer of the Year in England in 1967.



Charlton went to become the first foreign coach of Ireland in 1986. He led the Republic of Ireland to their first major finals at Euro '88 and the World Cup quarter-finals at Italia 90.

10. Creator of 1980 Olympic Mascot Viktor Chizhikov passed away

The creator of the brown bear mascot "Misha" for the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics, Viktor Chizhikov passed away. His mascot design proved so popular that many Russians still fondly remembered him when the 2014 Winter Olympics were held in Sochi. Some of his best artistic drawings appeared in famous magazines such as "Young Naturalist", "Twinkle", "Funny Pictures" and "Murzilka".

Viktor Chizhikov's mascot was selected among a group of artists produced 60 versions of the mascot.



11. Dutch Football legend Wim Suurbier passed away

Netherlands football legend Wim Suurbier passed away. He appeared in more than 60 matches for the Netherlands national football team from 1966 to 1978. He played for various clubs such as European Cup, Intercontinental Cup, European Super Cup, KNVB Cup etc.

Suurbier was known for his pace and stamina. He worked as assistant coach with the Golden Bay Earthquakes and as head coach of the Los Angeles Heat of the Western Soccer League and Rene Meulenstein.



12. Maharashtra's first woman Election Commissioner, Neela Satyanarayan, passed away

Neela Satyanarayan, the first woman Chief Election Commissioner of Maharashtra, passed away at the age 72 years due to COVID-19. Neela was also a celebrated author, poet and newspaper columnist. She was an IAS Officer of the 1972-batch.

Mrs Satyanarayan retired as the additional chief secretary (Revenue) in 2009. She had authored several collections of poetry and 17 novels. Her most well-known book was One Half One Full. She has also penned books such as Vanava and Ek Purna Ek Apurna.



13. Acharya Shree Purushottam Priyadasji Swamishree passed away

Shree Purushottam Priyadasji Swamishree Maharaj passed away at the age of 78 years due to COVID-19. He was the head priest of Maninagar Shree Swaminarayan Gadi Sansthan, Ahmedabad. He was the fifth heir in the lineage of ascetic acharyas, which descends directly from Lord Shree Swaminarayan.

Sadguru Shastri Shree Jitendriyapriyadasji Swami was appointed as the successor to Acharya Shree Purushottampriyadasji Swamishree Maharaj.



14. Professor C. S. Seshadri passed away

One of the world's most eminent mathematicians, Conjeevaram Srirangachari Seshadri, passed away at the age of 88 years. He was a Padma Bhushan awardee. He helped shape Mumbai's Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) School of Mathematics into a premier institute.

Mr Seshadri also founded the Chennai Mathematical Institute, where he remained Director-Emeritus. He was elected Fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences in 1971. CS Seshadri has received both the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award and Srinivasa Ramanujan Medal from the Indian Academy of Sciences.



15. Madhya Pradesh Governor Lalji Tandon passed away

Madhya Pradesh Governor Lalji Tandon passed away at the age of 85 years. Tandon served in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council for two terms from 1978 to 1984, and 1990-1996.

Tandon also served as an MLA in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly for three terms between 1996 to 2009; as MP in the 15th Lok Sabha; and Governor of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel has been given charge of Madhya Pradesh until the appointment of regular incumbent.



16. Veteran Odia actor Bijay Mohanty passed away

Veteran Odia actor Bijay Mohanty passed away at the age of 70 years. Mohanty had started his career in the Odia cinema in 1977 with Chilika Tire which had won the national award for that year.

Mohanty is credited with introducing layered negative characters in the Odia film industry. He had joined the drama department of the Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya and had retired as a professor from the institute.



17. Spanish novelist Juan Marsé passed away

Award-winning Spanish novelist Juan Marsé passed away at the age of 87 years. Marsé was awarded the 2008 Cervantes Prize. His most popular novel was Últimas tardes con Teresa (Last Afternoons with Teresa) published in 1965.

Marsé's first novel, Encerrados con un solo juguete (Locked up with a Single Toy), published in 1958 was a finalist of the Biblioteca Breve Seix Barral Prize. His novel titled La muchacha de las bragas de oro (Girl with Golden Panties) won the Planeta Prize.



18. Veteran actor Kumkum passed away

Legendary actor Kumkum passed away. She featured in over 100 Hindi films and popular songs such as 'Kabhi aar, Kabhi paar' and 'Mere Mehboob Qayamat Hogi'. She was known for her appearances which include "Mr. X in Bombay", "Mother India", "Kohinoor", "Ujala" and "Naya Daur".

Some of her popular songs that were featured on her were "Madhuban Mein Radhika Nache Re" from "Kohinoor" (1960); "Kabhi Aar Kabhi Paar" from "Aar Paar" (1954) and "Yeh Hai Bombay Meri Jaan" from 1956's "CID".



19. Padma Shri awardee Ren Sonam Tshering Lepcha passed away

Folk musician and Padma Shri awardee Ren Sonam Tshering Lepcha passed away at the age of 92 years. He compiled a wide range of Indian folk and traditional Lepcha songs and played folk music on All India Radio in 1960.

Lepcha was awarded the Padma Shri for his contribution in the field of folk music. Lepcha was born in Kalimpong in 1928 and started his career as a soldier.



Defence

1. Government cleared Defence acquisition worth Rs 38,900 Cr

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) accorded approval for Capital acquisition proposal for an approximate cost of 38,900 Crore rupees of various platforms and equipment required by the Indian Armed Forces. These approvals include acquisitions from Indian Industry amounting to 31,130 Crore rupees.

The equipments are to be manufactured in India involving Indian Defence Industry with participation of several MSMEs as prime tier vendors. The Indigenous content in some of these projects is up to 80% of the project cost.



2. Defence ministry approved purchase of 33 fighter aircraft for IAF

The Ministry of Defence has approved the purchase of a total of 33 new fighter aircraft that includes 21 MiG-29s from Russia and 12 Sukhoi-30 MKIs from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) along with upgradation of 59 MiG-29s at a cost of Rs 18,148 crore.

The Ministry also cleared purchase of 248 indigenous long-range air to air Astra missiles at an estimated cost of Rs. 2,700 crore. The Ministry cleared a total of Rs. 38,900 crore towards defence purchase and upgradation.



3. Indian Coast Guard signed MoU with Indonesia Coast Guard

Indian Coast Guard and Indonesia Coast Guard signed MoU to enhance collaborative and co-operative engagements in the domains of maritime law enforcement, maritime search and rescue and marine pollution response.

MoU will entail exchange of information towards combating transnational maritime crimes, facilitation of co-ordinated search, rescue operations at sea and conduct of capacity and capability building activities. It is a step taken towards bolstering the comprehensive strategic partnership between India and Indonesia.



4. INS Kesari covered 14,000 Km in 49 Days under ‘Mission Sagar’

INS Kesari covered 14,000 Km in 49 Days under 'Mission Sagar' to extend India's helping hand across the Indian Ocean. INS Kesari travelled over 7,500 nautical miles for 55 days and provided help with Covid-19 related assistance such as essential food items, medicines including Ayurvedic medicines to countries like Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles.



'Mission Sagar' was launched in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region 'SAGAR' and is being coordinated by the Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Defence.

5. Bharat Dynamics Limited signed licence agreement & ToT with DRDO

Bharat Dynamics Limited signed a licence agreement and transfer of technology of Akash Missile Weapon System with Defence Research and Development Organisation. Akash Missile Weapon System (AKASH) is a short protect vulnerable areas and vulnerable points from air attacks.



AKASH Weapon System can simultaneously engage multiple targets in group mode or autonomous mode. It has built counter-countermeasures (ECCM) features. The entire weapon system has been configured on mobile platforms. AKASH Weapon Systems has been inducted and is operational with the Indian Air Force (IAF) as well as the Indian Army.

6. Boeing completed delivery of 37 military helicopters to India

US aerospace major Boeing delivered the final five of the 22 Apache attack helicopters to the Indian Air Force. Boeing completed delivery of 15 Chinook military helicopters to the IAF. India finalised a multi-billion dollar contract with Boeing to procure 22 Apache helicopters and 15 Chinooks for the IAF in September 2015.



The AH-64E Apache is one of the world's most advanced multi-role combat helicopters, and is flown by the US Army. The Chinook is a multi-role, vertical-lift platform, primarily used for transporting troops, artillery, equipment and fuel.

7. Indian Army plans to buy Raven UAV and Spike Firefly

The Indian army is planning to acquire hand-launched, remote-controlled unmanned vehicle RQ-11 Raven from the United States and the state-of-the-art Israeli Spike Firefly 'loitering' ammunition. The procurement would include 200 units of RQ-11 UAV.



RQ-11 Raven is designed with the capability to fly 10km at an altitude of 500ft and can cruise at a speed of up to 95km/h. Spike Firefly is designed for precision strikes on enemy troops located at a distance of 1km.

8. New Israeli Assault Rifles ARAD & CARMEL to be manufactured in India

Two latest Israeli assault rifles — the Arad and the Carmel — are set to be manufactured in India under the Make in India initiative. The rifles will be manufactured in Madhya Pradesh by Israel Weapons System (IWI) in a joint venture called PLR Systems.



ARAD is a lightweight modular assault rifle. It has short-stroke gas piston firing mechanism with two regulators providing smooth operation under different environmental conditions. CARMEL, the ambidextrous AR, is made of special steel, aviation-grade aluminums and high impact polymer suited for extended combat duration.

9. DAC delegated powers for progressing urgent capital acquisition cases to Armed Forces

Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) delegated the powers for progressing urgent Capital Acquisition Cases up to Rs 300 crore to the Armed Forces to meet their emergent operational requirements. This will shrink the procurement timelines and ensure placement of orders within six months and commencement of deliveries within one year.



Ministry of Defence,
Government of India

The decision was taken under the chairmanship of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to consider the security environment based on the prevailing situation along the Northern Borders and the need to strengthen the Armed Forces for the defence of the country's borders.

10. DAC delegates urgent Capital Acquisition powers upto Rs. 300 crore to Armed Forces

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has delegated the powers for progressing urgent Capital Acquisition Cases upto Rs. 300 crore to the Armed Forces to meet their emergent operational requirements. This will shrink the procurement timelines and ensure placement of orders within six months and commencement of deliveries within one year.

The special financial power was granted to the defence forces to procure weapons and military hardware at short notice and boost their operational preparedness for any future conflict or contingency.



11. DRDO developed fully indigenous P7 Heavy Drop System

Defense Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed P7 Heavy Drop System in line to the 'Make in India' programme. P-7 Heavy Drop System is used for Para drop of military stores (vehicle/ammunition/ equipment) of 7 Ton weight class from IL 76 aircraft directly in a war zone.

The Heavy Drop System was being manufactured by L&T, while the parachutes were being designed by Indian Ordnance Factory. P-7 HDS has been inducted in the Army.



12. Largest Solar Power Plant of Navy Commissioned

The Indian Navy's largest solar power plant has been commissioned at Indian Naval Academy, Ezhimala, in Kannur district of Kerala. The 3 MW Solar Power Plant is in line with the Government of India initiative of 'National Solar Mission' to achieve 100GW of solar power by 2022.

The solar plant is the largest in the Indian Navy and has an estimated life of 25 years. All components have been indigenously sourced, including 9180 highly efficient monocrystalline solar panels employing the latest technology. The project has been



executed by Kerala State Electronics Development Corporation Ltd. (KELTRON).

13. MoD signed contract with BEML for procurement of 1,512 Mine Plough for T-90 tanks

The Acquisition Wing of Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed a contract with Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) for procurement of 1,512 Mine Plough (MP) for Tank T-90 S/SK at an approximate cost of Rs. 557 crore. The contract has Buy and Make (Indian) categorisation with a minimum of 50% indigenous content in make portion of the contract.



The mine ploughs will facilitate individual mobility to Tanks while negotiating mine field. Mobility of Tank Fleet will enhance manifold, which in turn would extend the reach of Armoured Formation deep into enemy territory without becoming mine causality.

14. Indian Navy conducted PASSEX with the US Navy

The Indian and the US navies conducted a joint Passage Exercise (PASSEX) in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The passage exercise involved a total of eight Indian and US warships including the United States' Carrier Strike Group (CSG) led by aircraft carrier Nimitz.



The 'Passage Exercise' includes a shorter form of interaction, where the two sides have established interoperability. Navies of the two countries have already institutionalised the Malabar series of maritime exercises being held since 1992.

15. Indian Army got DRDO-developed 'Bharat' Drones

DRDO has provided its indigenously-developed "Bharat" drone to the Indian Army for carrying out accurate surveillance in high altitude areas and mountainous terrain along the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh. Bharat drones are touted as one of the world's most agile and lightest surveillance systems.



The drone is equipped with artificial intelligence to detect friends and foes and can take action accordingly. The drone provides real-time video transmission during the complete missions and with very advanced night vision capabilities, it can detect humans hidden in deep forests.

16. DRDO installed COVID-19 Testing Facility at Leh

DRDO has established a COVID-19 testing facility at the Leh based laboratory Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR) to enhance the rate of testing to identify the Corona cases in the Union Territory of Ladakh. The facility meets the safety standards and guidelines of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

The testing facility at DIHAR is capable of screening 50 samples per day. DIHAR is one of the life sciences laboratories of DRDO working on cold arid agro-animal technologies. The laboratory is screening and identifying the medicinal and aromatic plants.



17. India successfully test fired “Dhruvastra” anti-guided missiles

India's anti-tank guided missile 'Dhruvastra' was successfully test fired from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in Odisha. Dhruvastra is the latest variant of India's indigenously built anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) systems in the range of DRDO's anti-tank destroyers that can be fired from a helicopter to target using digital imaging.

Dhruvastra is the helicopter version of 'Nag Helina' to help in strengthening the defence capabilities of the country.



18. India to receive four sub-killer P-8I craft in 2021

India is set to receive four more P-8I multi-mission aircraft from the US in 2021. The Indian Navy variant of the P-8A Poseidon - P-8I where I stands for India - is essentially designed for maritime patrol.

The P-8I is integrated with the Harpoon Block II air launched missiles and lightweight torpedoes. It can carry 129 sonobuoys to locate submarines and turns into a deadly submarine killer that can also launch anti-ship missiles.



19. Fleet of 5 Rafale combat jets arrived in India

A fleet of five French-manufactured Rafale multi-role combat jets arrived in India. The aircraft landed at the Ambala Air Force base. They had originated from the Merignac airbase in French port city of Bordeaux.

The fleet has been inducted into the IAF as part of its Ambala-based No 17 Squadron, also known as the 'Golden Arrows'. The delivery of all 36 aircraft is expected to be completed on schedule by the end of 2021.



1. Direct investment in India rose by 19 billion US dollar

According to the data on the International Investment Position, IIP, released by the Reserve Bank of India, direct investment into the country rose by 19 billion US dollar during 2019-20. International financial assets of Indian residents increased by 73.9 billion dollar, due to the rise in reserve assets and overseas direct investment by 64.9 billion dollar and 13.0 billion dollar, respectively.



Overall, net claims of non-residents on India declined by 57.6 billion dollar during the year. Despite a fall of 13.7 billion dollar in portfolio investment during the year, international financial liabilities increased by 16.3 billion dollar as direct investment and other investments rose by 19.0 billion dollar and 11.0 billion dollar, respectively.

2. Output of eight core-infrastructure industries shrinks by 23.4% in May

According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry data, the output of eight core infrastructure industries shrank by 23.4% in May, due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown. Barring fertiliser, all seven sectors - coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, steel, cement, and electricity - had recorded negative growth in May.



During April-May 2020-21, the sectors output dipped by 30% as compared to 4.5% in the same period previous year. The eight core sectors had expanded by 3.8% in May 2019. These eight industries accounts for 40.27% in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

3. Bombardier Transport India bagged contract for Kanpur, Agra Metro projects

Bombardier Transport India has bagged the contract for supply of 201 metro coaches of Agra Metro and Kanpur Metro projects. The Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation has awarded the contract for Supply, Testing and Commissioning of 201 cars for 67 trains of three cars each along with Train Control and Signaling System.



The state-of-the-art modern stain-less steel trains will be manufactured by Bombardier company in Indian Plant at Savli in Gujarat. Four international firms participated in the tender submitted with UPMRC.

4. Fitch slashed India's growth projection to 8% for FY22

Fitch Ratings has slashed India's growth forecast from 9.5% to 8% for FY22. It retained its projection of the contraction in the Indian economy by 5% in the current fiscal. Fitch projected Indian economy to grow 5.5% in 2022-23.

S&P has forecast a 5% contraction in the current fiscal and the growth to recover to 8.5% in next fiscal. Similarly, Moody's expects India's real GDP to contract by 4% in the current fiscal followed by 8.7% growth in fiscal 2021.



5. Care Ratings predict Indian economy to contract by 6.4% in FY21

Care Ratings revised India's GDP growth forecast for the current financial year to -6.4% on account of COVID-19 induced lockdown. It had earlier in May projected a decline in GDP growth of 1.5-1.6% in FY21.

The rating agency has predicted a GVA (de)growth to be around (-) 6.1%. In FY20, India's economy grew at an estimated 4.2%, almost a decade low. The agency has put across its assumption that two-third of the economic sectors would broadly be operating at 50-70% capacity by the end of third quarter.



6. KKR to buy 54% controlling stake in JB Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals

Global investment firm KKR will buy a 54% equity stake in JB Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals, a Mumbai based pharmaceutical major for Rs. 3,109 crore. KKR will also make an open offer for an additional 26% stake in the company.

JB Chemicals has an international presence with exports to over 40 countries. The pharma major earns half of its revenue from international markets. This is the third deal sealed by KKR in 2020, after the buyout of five solar assets of Shapoorji Pallonji Infra and its minority stake buy in Reliance Jio.



7. Reliance Jio received ₹1,894 crore investment from Intel Capital

Intel Capital has invested ₹ 1,894.50 crore in Jio Platforms at an equity value of ₹ 4.91 lakh crore and an enterprise value of ₹ 5.16 lakh crore. Intel Capital will hold 0.39% equity stake in Jio Platforms on a fully diluted basis.



This was 12th such investment taking the total investment amount to ₹ 1,17,588.45 crore. Jio has sold 25.09% stake including this deal with Intel Capital. Intel Capital is an arm of Intel, the world's largest semiconductor manufacturer.

8. India's trade deficit with China reduced to USD 48.66 bn in FY20

India's trade deficit with China reduced to USD 48.66 billion in FY20 due to decline in imports from China. According to the data by the government, while exports to China stood at USD 16.6 billion, imports were made worth USD 65.26 billion.



The trade deficit between the countries was at USD 53.56 billion in 2018-19 and USD 63 billion in 2017-18. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from China too has dipped to USD 163.78 million in 2019-20 from USD 229 million in the previous fiscal.

9. Unemployment rate fell to 10.99% in June 2020

According to data released by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the unemployment rate of India fell to 10.99% in June 2020 from 23.48% in May 2020. The decline was mainly on account of resumption in activities as India unlocked its economy from 1 June.



Job loss rate in rural India was 10.52% in June, down from 22.48% in May, while urban unemployment was 12.02% in the month as against 25.79% a month ago. The overall job loss rate was 8.75% in March and 7.76% in February.

10. GST collection rises sharply in June

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection increased by 46% in June at Rs. 90,917 crore as compared to May 2020. However, it was less by 9% against Rs 99,939 crore collected in June 2019. The growth in June 2020 as compared May 2020 was mainly on account of resumption of business activities post 68-day nationwide Covid-19 lockdown.

The GST collection for April was Rs. 32,294 crore, while it was Rs. 62,009 crore in May 2020. In March 2020, the revenue collection dipped by 8% at Rs. 97,597 crore.



11. Government released Rs. 6,195.08 crore to 14 states as Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant

Government released Rs. 6,195.08 crore to 14 states as fourth equated monthly installment of the Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant. Post devolution revenue deficit grants is about a third of the total revenue collected by the Centre, which is directly transferred to states as their share in the divisible pool.

After accounting for the projected tax devolution to the states of ₹8.55 trillion, 14 states garner post-tax devolution revenue surplus of ₹3.08 trillion, while the remaining 14 face a combined post-tax devolution revenue deficit of ₹74,340 crore. These states have been compensated by the 15th Finance Commission.



12. Google to invest Rs. 75,000 crores in India over next 5 to 7 years

Google CEO Sundar Pichai announced an investment of Rs. 75,000 crore (\$10 billion dollars) in India over the next 5 to 7 years through Google for India Digitisation Fund. The investments will focus on four key areas of India's digitisation.

- Enabling affordable access and information to every Indian in their own language.
- Building new products and services that are deeply relevant to India's needs.
- Empowering business as they continue to embark on their digital transformation.
- Leveraging technology and AI for social good in areas like health, education, and agriculture.

Google for
INDIA
Digitization Fund

13. Retail inflation rises by 6.09% in June

According to the latest data released by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI), the retail inflation, which is measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) grew 6.09% in the month of June. Food price inflation in June stood at 7.87%.

The government, in April, had revised the CPI data for the month of March to 5.84% from 5.91%. The retail inflation has grown beyond the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) upper margin of 6%.



14. India's foreign exchange reserves touched all time high of 513.25 billion dollars

India's foreign exchange reserves have surged by a massive 6.47 billion dollars to reach a fresh all-time high of 513.25 billion dollars in the week ended 3rd July 2020. Foreign currency assets, a major part of the overall reserves, rose by 5.66 billion dollars to 473.26 billion dollars. Gold reserves went up by 495 million dollars to end at 34.02 billion dollars.

India's special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund rose by 4 million dollars to reach 1.45 billion dollars, while the country's reserve position increased by 259 million dollars to 4.526 billion dollars.



15. US remains India's top trading partner

The United States continued to remain India's top trading partner for a second year in a row. The bilateral trade between the US and India stood at \$88.75 billion in 2019-20. It was valued at \$87.96 billion in 2018-19. India has a trade surplus of \$17.42 billion in 2019-20 with USA.

The bilateral trade between India and China has dipped to \$81.87 billion in 2019-20 with a trade deficit of \$48.66 billion.



16. Qualcomm to invest Rs 730 crore in Jio Platforms

Qualcomm Ventures will invest Rs. 730 crore in Jio Platforms to buy 0.15% stake in it. Qualcomm Ventures is investment arm of US-based Qualcomm Incorporated. Jio Platforms is the digital services arm of Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries.

The deal gives Jio Platforms an equity value of Rs. 4.91 lakh crore and an enterprise value of Rs. 5.16 lakh crore. Qualcomm is the 12th investor to pick up a stake in Jio.



17. India-Bhutan opened new trade route

India and Bhutan opened a new trade route between Jaigaon in West Bengal and Pasakha in Bhutan to facilitate ease of trade between our two countries in these COVID 19 times and decongestion of vehicular traffic along the Jaigaon-Phuentsholing route.

An additional land customs station has been opened at Ahllay, Pasakha by the Government of India. Bhutan's exports to India stood at Rs/Nu. 3217 cr and constituted 78 % of its total exports. The bilateral trade between the two countries allows 16 entry and exit points.



18. Google to buy 7.73% stake in Jio Platforms

Google will buy a 7.73% stake in Reliance Industries (RIL)'s telecom and digital unit Jio Platforms for Rs. 33,737 crore on a fully-diluted basis. Google is investing in Jio Platforms at an equity valuation of Rs. 4.36 lakh crore.

With this, the total investment from financial and strategic investors into Jio Platforms stands at Rs. 1,52,056 crore for a combined 32.97% stake in Jio Platforms to about 13 investors in total. RIL has become first Indian company to cross annual EBITDA (Earnings before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortisation) of Rs. 1 lakh crore.



19. CCI approved acquisition by Aceso in HCG

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved acquisition by Aceso Company Pte. Ltd. (Aceso) in HealthCare Global Enterprises Limited (HCG). The Proposed Combination relates to an acquisition of upto 58.92% stake in HCG by Aceso.

Aceso is an entity forming part of the CVC Network. HCG and its group are engaged in the business of providing services through cancer treatment clinics, multi-specialty hospitals, fertility treatment centres.



20. India's foreign exchange reserves reached all-time high of 516.362 billion dollars

India's foreign exchange reserves increased by 3.108 billion dollars and reached an all-time high of 516.362 billion dollars in the week ended 10th July 2020. Foreign currency assets rose by 2.372 billion dollars to 475.635 billion dollars.

Gold reserves surged by 712 million dollars to end at 34.729 billion dollars. India's special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund rose by 5 million dollars to reach 1.453 billion dollars, while the country's reserve position also increased by 19 million dollars to 4.545 billion dollars.



21. CCI approved Krishnapatnam port acquisition by Adani Ports, SEZL

The Competition Commission of India has approved the acquisition of Krishnapatnam Port Company Limited (KPCL) by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited. The proposed combination envisages acquisition of equity shareholding along with management control of Krishnapatnam Port Company Limited by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited.

Adani Ports is a customer-facing integrated port infrastructure services provider currently present across ten domestic ports in six maritime states of Gujarat, Goa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Odisha. KPCL is engaged as a developer and operator of the deep water port at Krishnapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.



22. Ola rolled out 'Ola Corporate' to international markets

Ola has rolled out its enterprise offering 'Ola Corporate' to Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Ola Corporate has over 10,000 corporate users in India. It has reportedly reduced travel expenses by up to 25%, due to the platform's centralised billing system and paperless reimbursement.



Ola Corporate clients will operate the service through a new, personalised dashboard where they can add and manage employees. The Bengaluru-based company operates in more than 250 cities across India, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK.

23. Indian Spices Exports increased by 23%

Spice exports from India rose by 23% in dollar terms and 34% in rupee terms in June, due to coronavirus pandemic. Exports increased to \$359 million (Rs. 2,721 crore) in June 2020.

India had exported a total of 1,100,250 tonnes of spices and spice products worth Rs 19,505.81 crore (\$2,805.50 million) in 2018-19. Major spices produced in India include pepper, cardamom, chilli, ginger, turmeric, coriander, cumin, celery, fennel, fenugreek, ajwain, dill seed, garlic, tamarind etc.



24. Centre released GST Compensation of over Rs. 1.65 lakh crores

The Central Government has released GST Compensation of Rs. 13,806 crore to States for March, 2020. The total amount of compensation released for the year 2019-20 is Rs. 1,65,302 crore. The amount of cess collected during the same time was Rs. 95,444 crore.



Centre had transferred Rs. 33,412 crore from Consolidated Fund of India to the Compensation Fund as a part of an exercise to apportion balance of IGST pertaining to 2017-18. Maharashtra received the maximum Rs. 19,233 crore GST Compensation cess followed by Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Punjab.

25. India to setup its own Cotton Warehouse in Vietnam to boost Exports

In order to enhance exports of Cotton, Cotton Corporation of India has decided to set up its own warehouse in Vietnam. MoU signed with Bangladesh to export 1.5-2 million bales (of 170 kilograms each) of cotton, is among other initiative by Government to increase exports.



The Cotton Corporation of India Limited is a public sector agency, engaged in diverse activities related to trade, procurement, and export of cotton. The corporation had procured nearly a third of India's 2019-20 cotton output.

26. CCI approved proposed 49% acquisition of OPGC by APL

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved proposed acquisition of 49% of the total equity share capital of Odisha Power Generation Corporation Limited (OPGC) by Adani Power Limited (APL). APL is a part of the Adani Group, which is engaged in the business operations of generation, transmission and distribution of power in India. APL is primarily engaged in the business of power generation.



OPGC, incorporated in Odisha, is a joint venture between Government of Odisha, AES India Private Limited and AES OPGC Holding and operates as a state government company. OPGC is engaged in the business of power generation.

1. Scientists discovered new species of venomous amphibians

A team of scientists from Brazil and the United States has discovered a new species of amphibians called *Siphonops annulatus*. The ringed caecilian has venomous glands. They are limbless amphibians found in tropical climates of Africa, Asian and the Americas.

Siphonops annulatus live in water bodies or self-made burrows. They are nearly blind and hence, depend on facial tentacles and slime to navigate. They can produce two types of secretions: a poisonous one in their tail and mucus in their head.



2. India's 2018 Tiger Census sets Guinness Book of World Records

India's 2018 Tiger Census has made it to the Guinness Book of World Records for being the world's largest on-camera wildlife survey. The fourth cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation 2018, results estimated 2,967 tigers or 75% of the global tiger population.

The fourth iteration of the survey conducted in 2018-19 - was the most comprehensive to date, in terms of both resource and data amassed. Camera traps captured 34,858,623 photographs of wildlife (76,651 of which were tigers). Camera traps were placed in 26,838 locations across 141 different sites and surveyed an effective area of 121,337 sq km.



3. Uttarakhand forest department developed India's first lichen park

Uttarakhand forest department has claimed to have developed country's first lichen park in Kumaon's Munsiyari area. The park is spread over 1.5 acres with over 80 species of lichens collected from across the Himalayan state.

Lichens are considered to be the best bio-indicators of pollution levels in the Himalayas. Uttarakhand has more than 600 species of lichens followed by Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir with 503 and 386 species respectively.



4. Unique urban forest inaugurated at the office of the CAG in New Delhi

Union Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurated a “dense” urban forest at the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) in New Delhi. The forest covers an area of one acre including 12,000 saplings of 59 indigenous species.



The forest has been created, according to the Miyawaki method of forest creation. It would help in reducing the temperature by as much as 14 degree & increase the moisture by more than 40%. The government had recently announced implementation of the Nagar van scheme to develop 200 Urban Forests across the country in next five years.

5. ‘Golden Birdwing’ became the largest Butterfly in India

A Himalayan butterfly named as Golden Birdwing dethroned 'Southern Birdwing' to become the largest Butterfly in India. 'Southern Birdwing' was known as largest butterfly since 88 years. Golden Birdwing is a large and striking butterfly endemic to south India.



Female Golden Birdwing has wingspan of 194 mm, whereas male Golden Birdwing is smaller with 106 mm wingspan. Golden Birdwing was recorded from Didihat in Uttarakhand, while the male birdwing butterfly was discovered from Wankhar Butterfly Museum in Shillong, Meghalaya. Scientific name of Golden Birdwing butterfly is *Troides aeacus*.

6. Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary to be upgraded into a National Park

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal announced to upgrade the Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary into a national park. The Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve which surrounds the Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary, is located across the coal and oil-rich districts of Upper Assam. Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary is spread across 111.42 sq km.



Wildlife sanctuaries are protected areas, which permit some activities such as grazing, while National parks call for a complete protection status under The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

7. Poba Reserve Forest in Assam's Dhemaji to be upgraded to wildlife sanctuary

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has announced to upgrade Poba Reserve Forest as a wildlife sanctuary. It is situated in Jonai Subdivision of Dhemaji District of Assam. The Reserved Forest (RF) was created in the year 1924 and covers an area of 10,221 hectares.

Poba is one of the richest rain forests of North-East India in terms of the flora and fauna found in it. Poba RF is an important elephant corridor linking the foot hills of Arunachal Pradesh and Dibru Saikhowa National Park via the proposed Kobu Chapori Reserve Forest.



8. Rare yellow turtle discovered in India

A farmer in eastern India called as Basudev Mahapatra, spotted a yellow colored turtle in the village of Sujanpur, in Odisha's Balasore district. Researchers predict it to be the product of albinism. Albinism is a type of genetic disorder, where there is little or no production of pigment in the skin, eyes and hair.

The turtle is named as "Indian flap shell turtle". The turtle, commonly found in places such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar, feeds on frogs, snails and even some aquatic vegetation.



9. Scientists find Giant Sea Cockroaches in the Eastern Indian Ocean

Singapore researchers found a 14-legged giant 'sea cockroach' at the bottom of the Indian Ocean. It was found during a marine survey conducted by Peter Ng of the National University of Singapore.

Researchers have classified gigantic cockroach to a new species named as "Bathynomus raksasa".

The giant Bathynomus of size of 20 inches is the second-largest isopod species known to science. It lives on scavenging for the remains of dead marine animals.



1. Government launched Special Liquidity Scheme of Rs. 30,000 crore

The Union Government has launched the Special Liquidity Scheme of Rs. 30,000 crore to improve the liquidity position for Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) and Housing Finance Companies (HFCs). The scheme was launched through a Special Purpose Vehicle in the form of SLS Trust set up by SBI Capital Markets Limited (SBICAP).



Reserve Bank of India will provide funds for the Scheme by subscribing to government guaranteed special securities issued by the Trust. The period of lending by the Trust will be for a period of up to 90 days.

2. PhonePe partnered with ICICI Bank to launch UPI handle

Digital payments major PhonePe has partnered with ICICI Bank and launched UPI handle, '@ibl'. It had started with Yes Bank and was offering the '@ybl' handle. Collaboration with two banks will help PhonePe strengthen the overall service reliability and uptime of its Unified Payments Interface (UPI) offering.



PhonePe suffered a major outage in March, when the Reserve Bank of India imposed a moratorium on Yes Bank, because of the private lender's poor financial health. UPI, developed by NPCI, is a real-time payment system that allows users to transfer money across multiple bank accounts, without sharing bank details.

3. Swiggy launched its own digital wallet in partnership with ICICI Bank

Swiggy has launched its own digital wallet 'Swiggy Money' in partnership with ICICI Bank. It will enable a 'single-click checkout experience' for the customers on its platform. The full-fledged digital wallet will allow Swiggy customers to store money and be used for all food orders on Swiggy.



Swiggy Money is powered by ICICI Bank's 'insta wallet service', which is built on a cloud platform with API integration. The new service is also claimed to enable instant refunds to customers.

4. ADB becomes “Observer” for Network for Greening the Financial System

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) joined the Central Banks and Supervisors Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) as an observer. NGFS is a group of central banks and supervisors willing to share best practices and contribute to the development of environment and climate risk management in the financial sector, while mobilising mainstream finance to support the transition towards a sustainable economy.



Asian Development Bank

ADB's inclusion to the NGFS is aligned with the goals in its corporate strategy, the Strategy 2030, particularly in tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability.

5. Cabinet approved capital infusion for the three Public Sector General Insurance Companies

The Union Cabinet approved the capital infusion for an overall value of Rs.12,450 crore in the three Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs) namely Oriental Insurance Company Limited (OICL), National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) and United India Insurance Company Limited (UIICL).



Out of 12,450 crores, Rs.3,475 crore will be released immediately, while the balance Rs. 6,475 crore will be infused later. Cabinet also approved increase in authorised share capital of NICL to Rs.7,500 crore and that of UIICL and OICL to Rs. 5,000 crore respectively to give effect to the capital infusion.

6. AIIB released \$50 million loan to L&T Infrastructure Finance

L&T Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd received the first tranche of \$ 50 million of the total \$ 100 million ECB loan from Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), a multilateral development bank, that invests in sustainable infrastructure. This development marks AIIB's first loan to a non-banking financial company (NBFC) in India.



The loan proceeds will be used to on-lend to large and mid-scale wind and solar power infrastructure projects in India. The proposed financing supports AIIB's Sustainable Energy for Asia Strategy and Strategy on Mobilising Private Capital for Infrastructure.

7. IRDAI sets up panel to create 'Indian Pandemic Risk Pool'

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) plans to set up a "pandemic risk pool" in order to address various risks, which have been triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic and offer protection, in case of a similar crisis in the future. The nine-member committee will be headed by IRDAI Executive Director Suresh Mathur.

The committee will recommend the structure and operating model for the pool and submit its report within eight weeks. A risk pool is a form of risk management practiced by insurance companies.



8. IRDAI permits corona Kavach Health Insurance Policies

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has allowed 29 general and health insurers to launch short-term 'Corona Kavach' health insurance policies. The policy will cover medical expenses occurred due to coronavirus disease.

The sum insured amount of the policy ranges between fifty thousand rupees to five lakh rupees. The policy will also provide for any co-morbid condition triggered due to Covid-19 during the period of hospitalisation.



9. CBDT launched new tool for banks to ascertain TDS applicability rates on cash withdrawals

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has launched a new Utility Tool to facilitate the Banks and Post Offices. It will help to calculate the TDS applicability rates on cash withdrawal of above ₹20 lakh in case of a non-filer of the income-tax return and that of above ₹1 Crore in case of a filer of the income-tax return.

Finance (No.2) Act, 2019 has inserted section 194N in the Income Tax Act to provide for levy of TDS at 2% on cash withdrawal exceeding ₹1 crore from a bank/post office account(s) subject to certain exceptions.



10. NABARD launched development projects worth Rs. 44 lakhs in Andaman & Nicobar Islands

NABARD has launched development projects worth Rs. 44 lakhs in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, in order to strengthen the concept of Atmanirbhar Bharat through rural entrepreneurship. It includes the formation and development of Self-Help Groups, SHGs.

Skill development of SHGs members will be taken up to promote rural entrepreneurship at micro level. NABARD has also partnered with the Centre of Agriculture Research Institute (CARI) to conduct agricultural programmes with an amount of Rs. 20 lakh.



11. NABARD organised its first 'Digital Choupal'

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development organised its first 'Digital Choupal' to mark its 39th foundation day. Digital Choupal discussed seven projects based on rural livelihoods, empowering tribal communities, soil health is real health, direct marketing to urban consumers, climate resilience, climate proofing of koutuguda, and collectivisation of weavers.

NABARD assigned Rs. 5,000 crore of refinance scheme for banks and financial institutions and another Rs. 5,000 crore to transform Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) into multi service centres.



12. Visa united with Federal Bank to launch "Visa Secure"

Visa Secure united with Federal Bank to launch "Visa Secure" to the bank's customers and provides smoother and more consistent user experiences across multiple payment channels, including mobile, web, in-app, and connected devices. Visa Secure is based on latest standards of the EMV 3DS (3D Secure) protocol.

Federal bank will benefit on customer-centric digital solutions that make online shopping experiences seamless, while reducing customer friction at the point of purchase.



13. Income Tax Department rolled out new Form 26AS

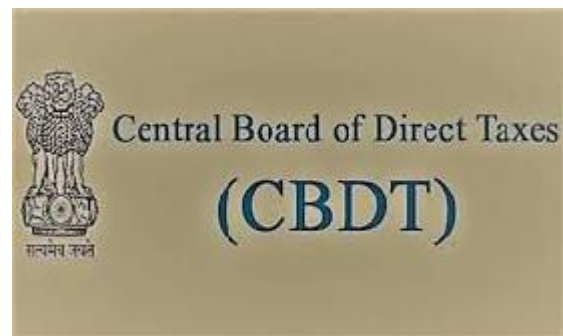
Income Tax Department has rolled out new Form 26AS with an aim to assist Tax payers in filing quick and correct Income Tax Return (ITR). The new form will carry some additional details on taxpayers financial transactions as specified in the Statement of Financial Transactions (SFTs) in various categories.

The additional details will facilitate voluntary compliance, tax accountability and ease of e-filing of returns. SFTs will handhold the taxpayers while filing their ITR. The new form will also calculate the correct tax liability based on these entries.

14. CBDT inked MOU with MoMSME for sharing of data

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. The MoU will facilitate seamless sharing of certain Income-tax Return (ITR) related information by the Income Tax Department to MoMSME.

The MoMSME will use the data to check and classify enterprises in Micro, Small and Medium categories. Both the organisations will appoint Nodal Officer and Alternate Nodal Officers to facilitate the process of data exchange.



15. NOCI launched 'Autopay' feature on UPI for recurring payments

National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) has launched the functionality of UPI AutoPay for recurring payments. With this new facility introduced under UPI 2.0, customers can now enable recurring e-mandate using any UPI application for recurring payments upto Rs. 2000. If the amount exceeds Rs. 2000, customers have to execute every mandate with UPI PIN.

UPI users can create e-mandate through UPI ID, QR scan or Intent. The UPI 2.0 offers features such as overdraft facility, one-time mandate, invoice in the inbox and signed intent & QR and foreign inward remittance among others to the customers.



16. FamPay launched India's first numberless card

Fintech startup FamPay has launched India's first numberless card – FamCard. FamCard is just like a debit card that teenagers can use to make payments independently, relieving parents of the trouble of giving them physical cash or their debit/credit card.



The card has been launched in partnership with IDFC Bank and is accepted across the RuPay payment network of merchants. FamPay aims to drive the smart generation of teens (Gen-Z) from cash to digital through a family-friendly app.

17. Bank of Baroda launched 'Insta Click Savings Account'

Bank of Baroda launched 'Insta Click Savings Account', a digital self-assisted online savings account, for all its customers, thereby offering digital banking comforts.



Features of the account are mentioned below:

- It can be activated in real-time, which means the customer can start transacting, using the Baroda M Connect Plus application with the MPIN.
- It offers a wide range of digital channels.
- It uses a new form of digital KYC (know-your-customer) and Aadhaar-based OTP verification.
- It has no minimum balance commitment.

18. Airtel Payments Bank and NSDC united to train rural youth

Airtel Payments Bank and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) united to skill youth in rural India and enable them to find employment opportunities within the financial services industry. The partnership aims to combine NSDC's rich experience, deep training infrastructure, and wide network with Airtel Payment Bank's industry insights to design and conduct targeted skill development programs for rural youth.



Airtel Payments Bank will also conduct an awareness drive at NSDC's training centres. The partnership will also encourage skill trainees to become entrepreneurs.

19. RBI estimates Gross NPA of banks to rise to 12.5% by March 2021

The Reserve Bank of India released the Financial Stability Report (FSR). According to the report, the gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio of the country's scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) may increase from 8.5% in March 2020 to 12.5% in March 2021. It also expected the ratio to go upto 14.7% under severe economic stress.



The report projected that public sector banks (PSBs) may see their GNPA ratio of 11.3% in March 2020 increase to 15.2% by March 2021 under the baseline scenario. The report suggested that the gross NPA ratio fell from 9.3% in September 2019 to 8.5% by March 2020.

20. Special Insolvency Resolution Framework for MSMEs on advanced stage

In order to have ease of doing business, MSMEs announced to have a special insolvency resolution framework, currently at an advanced stage of preparation, under section 240A of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).



The efforts are being made to speed up the processing of cases under IBC by having a provision for the pre-pack plan. The Code would consolidate good behaviour through its features that seek promoters and external resolution applicants to compete for a firm's insolvency resolution.

Important Days

1. International Day of Parliamentarism 2020

The International Day of Parliamentarism was observed across the globe on 30th June, the date in 1889, on which the IPU, the global organisation of parliaments was founded. The Day was established in 2018 through a United Nations General Assembly Resolution.



The day is an opportunity to celebrate parliaments, as the cornerstone of democracy, and as institutions designed to improve the lives of the people they represent. Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has permanent observer status at the United Nations General Assembly and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

2. National Doctor's Day observed on July 1

The National Doctor's Day is observed every year on July 1 to thank the doctors and physicians for their relentless service to humanity. The theme of this year's Doctors Day is 'Lessen the mortality of COVID 19'.



National Doctor's Day is celebrated on July 1 each year to honour the birth and death anniversary of Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy. He was a great physician and also the second Chief Minister of West Bengal.

3. International Day of Co-operatives 2020

The International Day of Co-operatives was observed this year on 4th July. The theme for this year is "Co-operatives For Climate Action". It was chosen to address the threat of greenhouse gas emissions and global warming and to support Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on Climate Action.



Co-operatives have been acknowledged as associations and enterprises through which citizens can effectively improve their lives while contributing to the economic, social, cultural and political advancement of their community and nation.

4. National Fish Farmers Day observed on 10th July

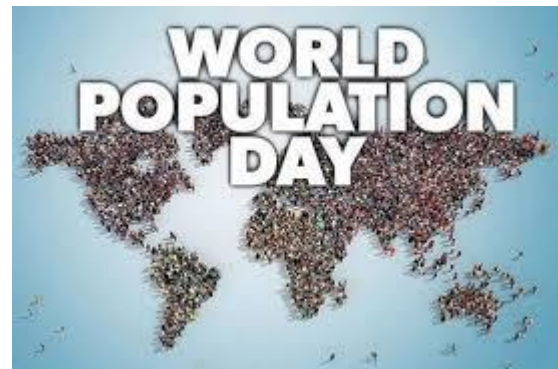
National Fish Farmers Day is celebrated on 10th July every year in remembrance of scientists Dr. K. H. Alikunhi and Dr. H.L. Chaudhury, who did epoch-making innovation in the field of induced breeding of Indian major carps. Dr. K. H. Alikunhi and Dr. H.L. Chaudhury invented induced breeding technology on 10th July 1957. The day marks importance of fish farmers and motivate them to adopt fish farming as a main or ancillary.



The ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture observed the 18th National Fish Farmers' Day. A scientist-farmer interaction session was also organised on the theme 'doubling farmer's income'.

5. World Population Day 2020

The 2020 World Population Day was observed across the globe on 11th July. The theme for this year was 'Putting the brakes on COVID-19: how to safeguard the health and rights of women and girls now'. The theme aims to raise awareness about the sexual and reproductive health needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls during the pandemic.



World Population Day seeks to draw attention on the urgency and importance of population issues such as education, population control, sustainable growth, etc.

6. World Youth Skills Day

UNESCO-UNEVOC joined the global celebrations to mark World Youth Skills Day (WYSD) on 15th July every year. The celebration aimed to recognise the strategic importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship, and to highlight the crucial role of skilled youth in addressing current and future global challenges.

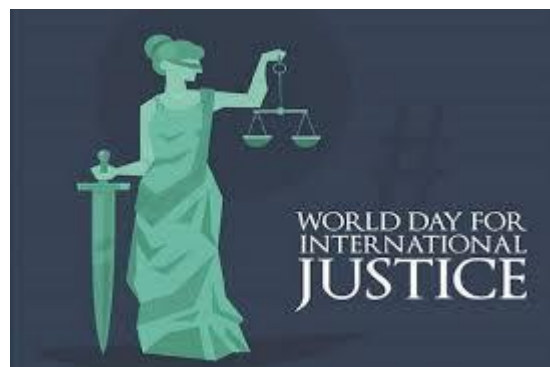


World Youth Skills Day 2020 took stock of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on skills development and explored strategies in response to the unfolding economic crisis.

7. World Day for International Justice 2020

The World Day for International Justice also known as International Criminal Justice Day or International Justice Day is observed annually on 17 July to recognise the strengthening system of international justice.

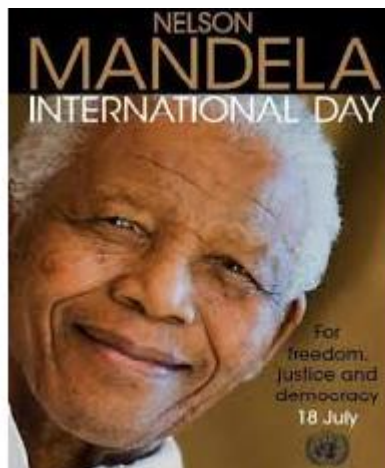
The day marks the anniversary of adoption of Rome Statute in 1998, the treaty that helped establish International Criminal Court (ICC). The aim of this day is to unite everyone who wants to support justice as well as promote victims' rights.



8. Nelson Mandela International Day

The Nelson Mandela International Day, also known as Mandela Day, is observed on July 18 annually. This day remembers Mandela's achievements in working towards conflict resolution, democracy, human rights, peace, and reconciliation. On this day, UN joins a call by the Nelson Mandela Foundation to devote 67 minutes of time to helping others, as a way to mark Nelson Mandela International Day.

Mandela Day also celebrates a campaign known as "46664", in reference to Nelson Mandela's Robben Island prison number. The campaign was originally launched to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS. However, its focus expanded to broader humanitarian work.



9. National Broadcasting Day observed on 23rd July

National Broadcasting Day was observed on 23rd July. On this day in 1927, the first ever radio broadcast in the country went on air from the Bombay Station under a private company, the Indian Broadcasting Company. In 1936, the Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS) became All India Radio (AIR).

The day highlights the importance of radio that has been effective and credible medium of knowledge, information and entertainment and also played crucial role in protecting Indian culture and traditions.



10. 21st Kargil Vijay Diwas

The 21st Kargil Vijay Diwas was observed across India. The day is named after the success of Operation Vijay and is observed annually on 26th July in honour of the Kargil War's Heroes.

The Kargil war was fought for more than 60 days. India regained possessions of Kargil. 'Operation Vijay' was launched to clear the Kargil Sector of infiltration by Pakistani soldiers and Kashmiri militants on the Indian side of the Line of Control.



11. World Hepatitis Day 2020

World Hepatitis Day (WHD) takes place every year on 28 July and brings the world together under a single theme to raise awareness of the global burden of viral hepatitis and to influence real change. The Theme for World Hepatitis Day 2020 is "Hepatitis-free future".

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver that causes a range of health problems, including liver cancer. There are five main strains of the hepatitis virus – A, B, C, D and E.



12. July 29 observed as Global Tiger Day

July 29 is observed across the world as Global Tiger Day every year, to raise awareness about the declining population of the tigers, protect the natural habitats of tigers and support for tiger conservation issues. The day was created in 2010 at the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit by 13 tiger range countries in 2010 in Russia.

The governments of these tiger range countries had aimed to encourage the conservation and double the number of tigers by 2022. India has 70% of the world's tiger population.



International

1. Sri Lanka appointed 5-member committee to examine concerns regarding development of ECT, JCT of Colombo Port

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has appointed a five-member committee to examine and report on the concerns regarding the development of East Container Terminal (ECT) and Jaya Container Terminal (JCT) of the Colombo Port. It will also look into agreements entered by Sri Lanka with other governments for Colombo Port.



Sri Lanka had signed a tripartite agreement with India and Japan for development of ECT. However, port trade unions are protesting against the agreement.

2. FCC designates Huawei Technologies and ZTE Corporation as National Security Threats

The US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has designated two Chinese companies - Huawei Technologies and ZTE Corporation as national security threats. The FCC has increasingly scrutinised Chinese companies as tensions grow between Beijing and Washington over trade, the coronavirus and security issues.



Huawei and ZTE have close ties with Chinese Communist Party and China's military apparatus. The US contends that Huawei's equipment could be used by China for spying.

3. IMF approved an emergency financial assistance of 356.5 million dollars for Myanmar

The IMF Executive board has approved an emergency financial assistance worth 356.5 million dollars for Myanmar to address challenges posed by the COVID 19 pandemic. It has been approved under the Rapid Credit Facility and Rapid Financing Instrument to meet the urgent balance of payment and fiscal needs of the country.



The emergency fund will also support the government's plans to boost spending especially on health and social safety nets. The Myanmar economy is being impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19, through a sharp decline in tourism and remittances and supply chain disruptions.

4. World Bank predicts Myanmar growth rate to slide to 0.5%

According to the latest World Bank report, the economy of Myanmar is projected to grow by just about 0.5% in the fiscal year 2019-20. The report has further forecasted a contract of 2.5%, if the pandemic is protracted.

The GDP growth rate for Myanmar was 6.8 percent in 2018-19. Tax revenue is projected to decline by 6.0% during the current year. However, the report has projected the economy to grow at 7.2% in 2020-21, if Myanmar is able to control the economic impact of Coronavirus.



5. Micheal Martin elected as new PM of Ireland

Micheal Martin has been elected as the new Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland following the formation of a historic coalition government. The Fianna Fáil leader will be leading a three-party league consisting of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party.

Micheal Martin will replace outgoing Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, who was highly popular in the country. Leo had rejoined the medical register to help health services during the peak of corona pandemic.



6. Lazarus Chakwera elected as President of Malawi

Lazarus Chakwera was elected as the new President of Malawi, after he secured 58.57% of votes in the elections. He defeated incumbent Peter Mutharika. In February, Malawi's constitutional court annulled Mr Mutharika's victory in the May 2019 election, citing vote tampering.

Mr Chakwera leads a nine-party coalition, the Tonse Alliance. He is the head of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). Malawi is the second African nation to annul a presidential election over irregularities, after Kenya in 2017.



7. Gudni Johannesson re-elected as President of Iceland

Gudni Johannesson, was re-elected President of Iceland with an overwhelming majority of the vote. He received 92.2% of the votes and defeated Gudmundur Franklin Jonsson. Johannesson was first elected as president of Iceland in 2016, becoming the country's youngest president, since its independence in 1944.



In Iceland's political system, president has no term limits. The position is largely symbolic and with limited power, but president has the power to veto legislation or submit it to a referendum. The Prime Minister of Iceland is Katrín Jakobsdóttir.

8. Russian President Vladimir Putin won the presidential polls

President Vladimir Putin has won a resounding victory in a nationwide referendum on Constitutional Amendments. The vote paves the way for Putin to remain President, until 2036. According to Russia's Central Election Commission, more than 77% of voters supported the changes to the Russian constitution.



Mr Putin has been in power since 2000, either as president or prime minister. If he wins the March election, he will be eligible to serve until 2024.

9. World Bank has upgraded Nepal to Lower-Middle Income Economy

World Bank has upgraded Nepal to Lower-Middle Income Economy while it has downgraded Sri Lanka to the Lower-Middle Income Economy. As per the 2020 Classification, India continues to remain a Lower-Middle Income country.



The World Bank assigns the world's economies to four income groups—low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and high-income countries. The classifications are updated each year on July 1 and are based on GNI per capita in current USD (using the Atlas method exchange rates) of the previous year (i.e. 2019 in this case).

10. The USMCA or “NAFTA 2.0” came into force

The US-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA), which is a new version of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into force on 1 July 2020. While the USA calls the agreement USMCA, Canada has named it CUSMA and Mexico has referred to as T-MEC.



Among the differences between the USMCA and NAFTA are the revised Investor State dispute settlement provisions at Chapter 14 of the USMCA. Under the sunset clause, NAFTA will remain in effect for three years from this date for legacy investments and pending claims.

11. China passed Hong Kong security law

China has adopted the controversial Hong Kong security law that gives it new powers over Hong Kong. The new law effectively curtails protests and freedom of speech. It is also set to criminalise secession, subversion and collusion with foreign forces.



The law takes direct aim at the anti-government protesters' strategy of disruption. It allows Beijing to seize broad control in security cases, especially during crises. The law focuses heavily on the perceived role of foreigners in Hong Kong's unrest.

12. Israel successfully launched “Ofek 16” spy satellite into space

Israel successfully launched latest satellite in a series of military-operated spy satellites, named as 'Ofek 16'. It was launched into low Earth orbit by using a locally-developed Shavit rocket from Palmachim airbase in central Israel.



Ofek 16 is an electro-optical reconnaissance satellite with advanced capabilities to capture high-resolution images of the Earth for the Ministry of Defence. This was the first launch of an Israeli spy satellite into space, since the Ofek-11 which entered orbit in September 2016.

13. 15th meeting of India-EU Summit held in virtual

The 15th Summit between India and the European Union (EU) was held in virtual format on 15th July 2020. India was represented by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The EU was represented by Mr. Charles Michel, President of the European Council, and Ms. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission.



The leaders adopted the "EU-India Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025" to guide cooperation between the EU and India over the next five years. They welcomed the signing of the Euratom-India Agreement on research and development co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

14. India Global Week 2020 conference held in United Kingdom

The India Global Week 2020 virtual conference was inaugurated by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, held at United Kingdom. It was organised based on theme "Be the Revival: India and a Better New World".



Highlights of the conference are as follows:

- Atma Nirbhar Bharat was the key feature of the event, where the keynote speakers talked about opportunities.
- It witnessed participation from several industry captains and global thought leaders.
- The forum discussed aspects relating to opportunities in India as well as the global economic revival post-COVID.
- The forum witnessed tribute to sitar maestro Ravi Shankar by three of his most eminent students.

15. Google Plus rebranded by Google as "Google Currents"

Internet search giant Google has rebranded its social networking platform Google+ as Google Currents. Google Currents is a platform, which enables its users to track what is happening in other departments across the organisation and connect with their colleagues to exchange documents.



The Google Currents is available for G Suite enterprise customers only. It is introduced with trending tags and more such other things. The new app is targeted more towards businesses and enterprise users.

16. Maldives and Sri Lanka eliminated measles & rubella, ahead of 2023 target

Maldives and Sri Lanka eliminated measles and rubella, ahead of 2023 target. Maldives and Sri Lanka became first two countries in WHO South-East Asia Region to achieve measles and rubella elimination ahead of the 2023 target.

A country is verified as having eliminated a disease, when there is no evidence of endemic transmission of that disease for over three years in the presence of a well performing surveillance system. Maldives reported last endemic case of measles in 2009 and of rubella in 2015, while Sri Lanka reported last endemic case of measles in 2016 and of rubella in 2017.



17. First launch of China's 'Kuaizhou-11 (KZ-11)' rocket failed

China confirmed its Kuaizhou-11 rocket failed after it was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China. Kuaizhou-11 rocket failed due to malfunction occurred during the flight. The Kuaizhou-11 is a larger version of the Kuaizhou-1A solid rocket, operated by Expace, a commercial spin-off from the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp.

Kuaizhou, meaning "fast ship" in Chinese, is capable of delivering 1,000 kilograms to a 700-kilometer Sun-synchronous orbit.



18. China launched Commercial Communication Satellite 'APSTAR-6D'

China launched high-throughput communications satellite 'APSTAR-6D'. It marked the 18th rocket launched by China in 2020. The Apstar 6D satellite deployed from the Long March 3B rocket has total capacity of 50 gigabits per second. It is designed to provide Internet access to airliner passengers, cruise ships, fishing vessels, and other mobile users.

A Long March 3B rocket carried Apstar 6D spacecraft, which will "meet all types of mobile satellite communication, as well as satellite broadband connection needs in the Asia-Pacific region.



19. WHO initiated Independent Panel to evaluate global response to Covid-19

WHO has initiated the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR) to evaluate the world's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Panel will be co-chaired by former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark and former President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

The Panel will present an interim report in November. Prime Minister Clark leads the United Nations Development Programme and President Sirleaf is a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.



20. India becomes second-largest source of FDI for UK

India has become the second-largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the United Kingdom after the US in 2019. According to the data released by the Department for International Trade (DIT) inward investment statistics for 2019-2020, India invested in 120 projects and created 5,429 new jobs in the UK.

USA invested in 462 projects and created 20,131 jobs. Germany, France and China were the other three countries in the top five nations list.



21. Lee Hsien Loong re-elected as Prime Minister

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was re-elected as the prime Minister of Singapore after his party, People's Action Party, won the general elections with 83 seats out of total 93 seats. The opposition Workers' Party won a record 10 seats.

Lee was first appointed as Prime Minister in 2004 and has been the PM of Singapore, since then. The PAP is also one of the world's longest serving parties — after those in China and North Korea.



22. Andrzej Duda re-elected as President of Poland

Poland's incumbent President Andrzej Duda was re-elected as President of the country after he defeated Rafal Trzaskowski in the presidential elections. Mr Duda had won 51.2% of the votes. The total voter turnout was 68.18%.

Duda was earlier elected as President in 2016. Andrzej Duda is a social conservative allied with the government headed by the nationalist Law and Justice Party. On the other hand, Rafal Trzaskowski is a social liberal mayor of Warsaw.



23. Indian-origin Chan Santokhi elected as new President of Suriname

The National Assembly of Suriname has elected Chan Santokhi as the new President of the South American nation. Mr Santokhi is an Indian-origin former police chief. He will replace outgoing president Dési Bouterse, who was found guilty of murder in 2019.

Chandrikapersad "Chan" Santokhi leads the Progressive Reform Party. Ronnie Brunswijk has been elected as vice-president. Mr Brunswijk leads the General Liberation and Development Party that forms part of the coalition government.



24. Pakistan and China signed agreement for Azad Pattan Hydel Power Project

Pakistan and China signed an agreement for the construction of Azad Pattan Hydel Power Project under CPEC. The 700.7 MW project is a run-of-the-river scheme with a reservoir located near Muslimabad village located at River Jhelum and is expected to be completed in 2026.

The project is being developed under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), at an estimated cost of \$1.5 billion. The project will be commissioned by 2024. The project will comprise a 90-metre-high dam, with a 3.8 sq km reservoir.



25. Ossouka Raponda appointed as first woman Prime Minister of Gabon

The President of Gabon, Ali Bongo Ondimba, has appointed Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda as the first female Prime Minister of the nation. She took over from Julien Nkoghe Bekale. She was holding the portfolio of Defence Ministry prior to her appointment as PM.

Raponda is the sixth prime minister to serve under Ondimba after she succeeded her father in 2009. Gabon is situated along the Atlantic coast of Central Africa.



26. UK stationed the HMS Queen Elizabeth carrier in the Pacific

The United Kingdom has stationed the HMS Queen Elizabeth carrier in the Pacific to counter China's growing assertiveness since the Corona pandemic. The move is as a part of an Inter-Parliamentary Alliance against China. The alliance was launched in June 2020 by United States, UK, Japan, Germany, Canada, Australia, Norway and Sweden.

Britain also has already implemented "Project Defend" to reduce Britain's industrial reliance on China. Japan, India, Australia and the US also have joined hands to form "QUAD" to counter growing Chinese influence in the Indian and Pacific Ocean.



27. Turkmenistan got observer status in World Trade Organization

Turkmenistan has been granted Observer status by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) General Council. Turkmenistan has become the last former Soviet republic to establish formal ties with the WTO. The Central Asian country filed a request for Observer status in May and expressed willingness to trigger the talks on accession to the WTO within five years.

Neighbouring Central Asian countries -- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Afghanistan -- have acceded to the WTO, while Uzbekistan has been in on-and-off negotiations on WTO accession since 1994.



28. India, Maldives signed agreement for establishment of ‘Emergency Medical Services’ in Male

India and Maldives have signed an agreement for establishment of ‘Emergency Medical Services’ in capital Male. It is one of the several small and medium projects that are being financed by India under a grant assistance of around 20 million US dollars for the neighbouring country.

The emergency medical service unit will enhance timely access to quality emergency care. It will increase collaboration between healthcare facilities and disaster response agencies, especially during critical times of need.



29. UAE launched its first space mission to Mars from Japan

UAE launched its first space mission to Mars from Tanegashima Space Center in Japan. The space craft, Hope Probe, was onboard H2A rocket. It is the Arab world's first interplanetary landmark mission, putting UAE firmly ahead of all the countries in the Middle East in the area of space and technology.

Hope Probe Spacecraft is expected to reach the Red Planet by February 2021, to coincide with UAE's 50th anniversary of its formation.

The orbiter Hope is expected to take images and send back data of the distant Red Planet.



30. SpaceX launched South Korea's 1st military satellite

SpaceX launched a South Korean military communications satellite, ANASIS-II onboard the Falcon 9 Block 5 rocket. The launch took place from SLC-40 at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida.

Army/Navy/Air Force Satellite Information System 2 (ANASIS-II), previously named KMilSatCom-1, is a secure communications satellite for the South Korean Agency for Defense Development. The spacecraft is the first dedicated South Korean military communications satellite. The ANASIS-II spacecraft is based on Airbus's Eurostar E3000 satellite bus.



31. China launched its first independent unmanned mission to Mars

China successfully launched its first independent unmanned probe to Mars. The probe was launched onboard China's largest carrier rocket, the Long March 5 Y-4, from Wenchang Space Launch Centre on the southern island of Hainan.

The probe is named Tianwen-1 - which in Mandarin means "Questions to Heaven". It is expected to reach Mars in February, where it will try to land in Utopia Planitia, a plain in the northern hemisphere.



32. Nicaragua became the 87th Country to sign ISA agreement

Nicaragua became the most recent country to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Framework Agreement. The agreement was signed by the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations Jaime Hermida Castillo at the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in New York.

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an alliance of 121 countries initiated by India, most of them being sunshine countries, which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. The initiative was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the India Africa Summit in 2015.



33. India handed over 10 Broad Gauge diesel locomotives to Bangladesh

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Railways Minister Piyush Goyal flagged off virtually ten Broad Gauge locomotives to Bangladesh. Bangladesh's Railway Minister Md. Nurul Islam Sujan and Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Abul Kalam Abdul Momen received the locomotives on behalf of their government. Both sides saw the highest ever exchange of freight trains in the month of June.



These locomotives will help handle the increasing volume of passenger and freight train operations in Bangladesh. This is expected to significantly enhance the scope of bilateral trade.

34. 300-year-old Kali temple reconstructed with Indian support in Bangladesh

300 year old Sree Sree JoyKali Matar temple in Bangladesh has been reconstructed with Indian support. The MoU for the reconstruction of the temple at Lalbazar, Natore was signed in 2016. Government of India provided a grant assistance of Taka 97 lakh for the reconstruction of the historic temple.



The temple was built approximately 300 years back in the early 18th century. The Government of India provided developmental assistance to Bangladesh for the direct benefit of local communities under its High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) scheme.

35. India granted medical assistance worth about USD 1Mn to North Korea

India has extended medical assistance worth about USD 1 million to North Korea in response to a request received from the World Health Organisation (WHO). India is sensitive to the shortage of medical supply situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and decided to grant a humanitarian assistance of USD 1 million in the form of anti-tuberculosis medicines.



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

36. China ordered closure of US Consulate of Chengdu

China seized the U.S. consulate in Chengdu following U.S. shuttering a Chinese consulate in Houston. U.S.A. had closed Chinese consulate based on suspicion that the consulate was a refuge for Chinese spies who tried to steal data from multiple facilities in Texas, including the Texas A&M medical system and University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.



The Chengdu consular district is made up of the Provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou, as well as the Tibet Autonomous Region and Chongqing City Municipality.

37. Hichem Mechichi became new Prime Minister of Tunisia

Hichem Mechichi was appointed as the new Prime Minister of Tunisia. He succeeded Elyes Fakhfakh who resigned over the pressure by his coalition party and allegations of a conflict of interest.

Hichem served as Director General of the National Agency for the Sanitary and Environmental Control of Products, as Minister of the Interior in the government of Elyes Fakhfakh and as advisor in charge of Legal Affairs.



38. IMF approved US\$4.3 Billion in Emergency Support to South Africa

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved South Africa's request for emergency financial assistance of SDR 3,051.2 million (US\$ 4,286.5 million or 100% of quota) under the Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI) to meet the urgent balance of payment (BOP) needs stemming from the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The RFI will help fill the urgent BOP needs originating from the fiscal pressures posed by the pandemic. It is the largest amount given to any country to fight the coronavirus pandemic.



Miscellaneous

1. Sanskrit News Magazine 'Vaartavali' completed five years of broadcast on DD News.
2. Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel has been given the additional charge of Madhya Pradesh as its Governor.
3. The G20 Extraordinary Virtual Education Ministers' Meeting was held under the presidency of Saudi Arabia. Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' represented India in the meeting.
4. Union Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal chaired the 49th Governing Council Meeting of National Productivity Council (NPC). He is also the President of NPC Governing Council.
5. According to the Union Ministry of Agriculture, India is the first country to control locusts by using drones.
6. Karnataka government has launched a portal called "Skill Connect Forum" to connect job seekers with employers on a common platform.
7. In order to maintain the academic regularity of students during the Corona crisis, the Madhya Pradesh State Education Center has prepared a 'Hamara Ghar-Hamara Vidyalaya' means My Home-My school scheme, in which children will be taught at home in a school-like environment.
8. The 36th edition of the biannual ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Summit 2020 was held via video conferencing in Hanoi, Vietnam with theme "Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN".
9. The National Postal Worker Day is observed every year on 1st of July to recognise postal workers across the globe.
10. The Kerala government launched 'Dream Kerala Project' to tap the potential and experience of those returning from abroad and other states after losing their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
11. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Professor Sanjay Dwivedi as the Director General of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC).
12. HDFC Bank has launched the 'e-Kisaan Dhan' app for farmers all over India.
13. Former Mizoram Assembly speaker, Upa Rokamlova passed away.
14. The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet has approved the extension of Sukhbir Singh Sandhu's tenure as the Chairman of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).
15. Himachal Pradesh is planning to provide 100% coverage of Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to all rural households in the state by August 2022, ahead of national goal by 2024.
16. NLC India and Coal India executed a Joint Venture Agreement for formation of a Joint Venture Company (50:50) to develop Solar and Thermal Power assets to the tune of 5000 MW.
17. The Mars Colour Camera (MCC) onboard Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) Mars Orbiter Mission has captured the image of Phobos, the closest and biggest moon of Mars.
18. Dr. Bishnu Prasad Nanda has taken over as Director General Railway Health Services (DG RHS) Railway Board.
19. A draft of ordinance to provide 75 per cent reservation in jobs in private sector for the residents of Haryana was passed by the state Cabinet.
20. "Maha" Jobs Portal has been launched by the Maharashtra government. The job portal has been rolled out to offer employment opportunities to local residents.

21. The UK India Business Council (UKIBC) has appointed Jayant Krishna as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the group.
22. UltraTech Cement's subsidiary Krishna Holdings to sell its entire 92.5% Stake from China's Shandong Binani Rongan Cement.
23. Mobility platform Ola has entered into a partnership with digital payments platform PhonePe to expand payment options for riders.
24. HDFC Bank offers instant car loans to existing customers through an initiative called "ZipDrive" in 1,000 cities.
25. "Unisaviour", a disinfection box has been developed by the researchers at IIT Roorkee. The disinfection box "Unisaviour" can be used to sterilise personal belongings, apparels, PPE, medical equipment among others from the COVID-19.
26. Delhi government will launch a mega tree plantation drive under the 'Paudhelagao, ParyavaranBachao' campaign. The campaign aims to plant 31 lakh of tree saplings in 17 days.
27. At the Cricket South Africa annual awards 2020, Quinton de Kock was named as the men's cricketer of the year, while Laura Wolvaardt was named as the women's cricketer of the year.
28. YES Bank has launched a digital solution, "Loan in Seconds" for instant disbursement of retail loans.
29. World Chocolate Day or International Chocolate Day is observed on 7th July every year.
30. The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), Jharkhand new administrative and the academic building was named after Bharatiya Jan Sangh founder Late Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee on his 119th birth anniversary.
31. West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee has launched a new mobile application called "SelfScan", which has been developed by the state's information technology department, to scan documents.
32. 'Bhavishya' savings account has been launched by the Fino Payments Bank Limited for minors aged between 10-18 years. 'Bhavishya', a subscription-based savings account, can be opened by paying a nominal amount.
33. The KarurVysya Bank (KVB) has entered into a partnership with Star Health and Allied Insurance Co. to provide a wide range of health insurance options to its customers.
34. Private lender, SBM Bank (India) Ltd. has partnered with Mastercard to revolutionise domestic and cross-border payments and remittances services.
35. United States submits notice to U.N Secretary-General to withdraw from WHO by 6th July 2021.
36. The term of Rajkiran Rai as managing director and CEO of Union Bank of India has received an extension for a period of two-year from the government of India.
37. Goa's former health minister Dr. Suresh Amonkar passed away.
38. The tenure of Justice Bansi Lal Bhat as the chairperson of National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has been extended by the Government of India.
39. Karur Vysya Bank has signed an agreement with Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance to offer life insurance solutions to its customers.
40. The fourth edition of the virtual Ministerial on Climate Action was co-chaired by European Union, China and Canada.
41. Veteran Actor-comedian Jagdeep, best known for his role as Soorma Bhopali in 'Sholay', passed away.
42. India will not run the World's Emptiest Airport - Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport in Sri Lanka.
43. Nepal Government banned the broadcast of Indian NEWS channels in its country.

44. The Madhya Pradesh government has started a Roko - Toko (रोको टोकु) campaign for those who do not wear masks.
45. Flipkart signed an MoU with Karnataka MSME and Mines department to promote the states arts, crafts and handloom sectors by bringing them on to e-commerce and providing market access.
46. The Asia Cup cricket tournament has been postponed until June 2021 owing to Covid-19 pandemic.
47. Russia has become the first nation to complete clinical trials of Covid-19 vaccine on humans.
48. Maharashtra started 'Healthcare Service At Your Doorstep' initiative in Nashik to fight against Covid-19.
49. India has handed over outdoor fitness equipment for 61 islands across the Maldives under a cash grant of 8 million US dollars.
50. Hemang Amin has been given the interim charge of CEO of BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India).
51. India's best-known ceramic artists Jyotsna Bhatt passed away.
52. Hawkins Cookers Chairman, Brahm Vasudeva passed away.
53. Madhya Pradesh topped among the other states in the implementation of PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbharNidhi (PM SVANidhi).
54. Union Home Minister, Amit Shah has rolled out the Central Armed Police Force's (CAPFs) nationwide tree plantation drive by planting a sapling of the peepal tree at the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) campus in Gurugram.
55. The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad observed Swachhata Pakhwada till 15 July.
56. A two-day Digital Indo-Italian Business Mission on Food Processing was held virtually in New Delhi.
57. The Women Safety Wing, Telangana State Police has launched the "CybHer" campaign in association with the Legal Aid Centre, Symbiosis Law School, Hyderabad to tackle cybercrime against children and women in the state.
58. Senegal and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) have mutually agreed to postpone the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) Dakar 2022 to 2026.
59. Indian Turtle Conservation Action Network (ITCAN) in collaboration with the Turtle Survival Alliance-India and Wildlife Conservation Society-India launched a mobile-based application called KURMA aimed at turtle conservation.
60. Former state Minister Om Prakash Dhankar has been appointed as the new president of BJP's Haryana unit.
61. Arunachal Pradesh Government has decided to provide 100% tap water connections to all the households in the State by 2023 under Jal Jeevan Mission.
62. The government of Uttarakhand has decided to convert waste generated in the state to electricity under an initiative titled 'Waste to Energy'.
63. International para athlete and Arjuna award winner, Ramesh Tikaram, passed away at the age of 51 years, due to COVID-19.
64. Eminent dancer and choreographer Amala Shankar passed away.
65. The three day long Air Force Commanders' Conference was held in New Delhi. The theme of the conference was "Indian Air Force in the Next Decade".
66. The Indian Premier League (IPL) is likely to be held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from September 19 onwards.
67. The first batch of five Indian Air Force (IAF) Rafale is likely to arrive in India by end July 2020. The aircraft will be inducted at Air Force Station Ambala.
68. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) has partnered with UNICEF to strengthen the Government of India's resolution to mobilise 1 crore youth volunteers to attain the goals of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

69. The ICC Men's T20 World Cup has formally been postponed to 2022 due to COVID-19. ICC has also postponed the 2023 ODI World Cup in India to October-November 2023.
70. Former Australian test wicketkeeper and ex-International Cricket Council match referee, Barry Jarman passed away.
71. The 3rd G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting was held under the Saudi Arabian Presidency.
72. The International Chess Day is celebrated annually on July 20.
73. Punjab National Bank has launched a nation-wide campaign to distribute face masks and sanitizers to prevent the spread of COVID-19 under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
74. Eminent dancer and choreographer Amala Shankar passed away.
75. All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Nagpur has designed and developed a 'smart wristband' for effective tracking and monitoring of Covid-19 positive and suspect patients.
76. Digital payments major, Amazon Pay has launched vehicle insurance in partnership with Bengaluru-based startup Acko General Insurance.
77. Home Minister launched "Vriksharopan Abhiyan" in New Delhi.
78. Sonu Sood launched 'Pravasi Rojgar' app to help migrants to find job opportunities across India.
79. The fifth phase of the Vande Bharat Mission will run from 1st of August, 2020 till 31st August, 2020.
80. Maldives celebrated its 55th Independence day on 26th July.
81. Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah distributed 100 electric potter wheels to 100 trained artisans under the Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
82. The Rajasthan government is planning to start the state's first plasma bank in Jaipur at Sawai Man Singh Hospital.
83. Ministry of Earth Sciences launched the mobile App "Mausam" for India Meteorological Department on its Foundation Day celebrations.
84. Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu has announced the launch of a 'Macadamisation Program' for the improvement of roads across Jammu and Kashmir.
85. Under the Digital India initiative of Government of India, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) aims to develop a World-Class Knowledge Resource Centre Network (KRCNet).
86. The silver medal of the Indian 4×400 mixed relay team's 2018 Asian Games, Jakarta has been upgraded to gold. The medal was upgraded to gold following the disqualification of Bahrain squad that finished first in the 4×400 mixed relay final.
87. The Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode based incubated startup Qual5 India Pvt.Ltd has developed a wearable hand band known as the "Veli Band". The band will help in maintaining social distancing by sending out an alarm in case of proximity with another person.
88. Delhi government has launched the portal named as "Rozgar Bazar", a sort of marketplace for job seekers and the people recruiters.
89. On the occasion of "World Hepatitis Day", 2nd Empathy e-Conclave was organised in collaboration with Airport Authority of India (AAI) for creating awareness among the parliamentarians.
90. World Nature Conservation Day is observed on 28th July every year. World Conservation Day is celebrated internationally to increase awareness about the best practices to protect our natural resources.

91. SBI Cards has launched a co-branded contactless credit card with Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC) on RuPay platform.
92. Bangladeshi pacer, Kazi Anik Islam has been handed a two-year ban by the national cricket board for failing a dope test in 2018.
93. Bharti AXA General Insurance has launched a crop insurance campaign titled 'Bohot Zaroori Hai' for farmers in Maharashtra and Karnataka to encourage them about their yield protection and financial security.

1. Meity-NITI launched Aatmanirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in partnership with Atal Innovation Mission – Niti Aayog launched a Digital India AatmaNirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge for Indian tech entrepreneurs and startups. This will run in two tracks - Promotion of Existing Apps and Development of New Apps.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially launched the challenge to identify the best Indian Apps that are already being used by citizens and have the potential to scale and become world class Apps in their respective categories.

2. India-Bangladesh form 50:50 Joint Venture Company for LPG business in Bangladesh

India and Bangladesh signed an agreement for the formation of a 50:50 Joint Venture Company (JVC) for LPG business in Bangladesh. The agreement was signed between the IOC Middle East FZE, Dubai, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and RR Holdings Ltd., Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, the holding company of Beximco LPG of Bangladesh.



The Joint Venture Company will help reduce the cost of import of LPG and make it more affordable for the consumers in Bangladesh. The company is to diversify into LPG export to northeastern states of India from Bangladesh.

3. India, Bhutan sign pact for first joint venture hydropower project

India and Bhutan signed an agreement for the construction of the 600 MW Kholongchhu joint venture hydroelectric project in Bhutan. The project is expected to be completed in the second half of 2025. The Project envisages an underground powerhouse of four 150 MW turbines with water impounded by a concrete gravity dam of 95 meters height.



The Project will be implemented by Kholongchhu Hydro Energy Limited, a Joint Venture company formed between Druk Green Power Corporation of Bhutan and Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited of India.

4. Union Government sanctioned Rs. 4,000 crore to Karnataka for setting up food parks

The Union Government has sanctioned Rs. 4000 crore under Atmanirbhar programme to improve infrastructure for the Food Parks in Karnataka. Agri start-ups will be encouraged in the state to set up units in the Food Parks.

Food Karnataka Limited is a special purpose vehicle appointed to manage these parks. Karnataka is known for the India Food Park at Tumkur. The other six parks at Hiriyur, Maddur, Jewargi, Belagavi, Malur and Bagalkote are not functioning well.



5. Union Minister NS Tomar launched web portal of Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan

Union Minister for Rural Development Narendra Singh Tomar launched the web portal of the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan. The GKRA is the massive employment generation-cum-rural infrastructure creation programme of Government of India.

The portal will help to monitor the progress of completion of the works being undertaken with a fund outlay of 50 thousand crore rupees in 116 districts of 6 states, where there are more than 25,000 returnee migrant workers per district.



6. IOC launched Battery Swapping Facility Quick Interchange Service (QIS) at Chandigarh

Indian Oil has launched Battery Swapping Facility Quick Interchange Service (QIS) at Chandigarh. It has signed a non-binding Strategic cooperation document with M/s Sun Mobility to explore setting up of Energy infrastructure for Electric vehicle through Battery Swapping model across Indian Oil Retail outlets in select cities.

Battery swapping technology offers the best alternative to slow charging and helps the drivers to make optimum use of the operational hours. The Pilot ROs – QIS have 14 Batteries, a touch screen for swapping preloaded cards and an electricity sub meter.



7. New process of MSME Registration started

The new process of MSME Registration took off in the name of Udyam Registration. It is fully online, paperless and based on self-declaration. Adhaar Number will be required for registration. The new portal for Udyam Registration is www.udyamregistration.gov.in.

The government had recently issued new criteria for MSME classification:

	Plant & Machinery	Turnover
Micro	Rs 1 Crore	Rs 5 Crore
Small	Rs 10 Crore	Rs 50 Crore
Medium	Rs 50 Crore	Rs 250 Crore



MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

8. Asia's first Continuous Galvanised Rebar Production Facility in Punjab

Union Minister of Steel Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated Continuous Galvanised Rebar (CGR) Production Facility at Mandi Gobindgarh in Punjab. The CGR was launched by Madhav KRD Group in association with International Zinc Association (IZA) with the support of Hindustan Zinc Limited.



The facility will manufacture ZNCOAT TEMPCORE TMT bars under the brand "JYOTI". It is the first of its kind in Asia to apply CGR technology with enhanced life and low maintenance cost.

9. India and World Bank signed loan agreement for First Tamil Nadu Housing Sector strengthening Programme

The Government of India, the Government of Tamil Nadu and the World Bank signed legal agreements to help low-income groups in the state of Tamil Nadu get access to affordable housing. The legal agreements were signed for two projects – \$200 million First Tamil Nadu Housing Sector Strengthening Programme and \$50 million Tamil Nadu Housing and Habitat Development Project – to strengthen the state's housing sector policies, institutions, and regulations.



THE WORLD BANK

The loans of \$200 million and \$50 million from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) have a maturity of 20 years including a grace period of 3.5 years.

10. Indian Oil, NTPC Ltd and SDMC signed MoU for Waste to Energy plant in Delhi

Indian Oil, NTPC Ltd. and South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) signed a MoU on Waste to Energy plant at Okhla, Delhi. The trio will come together to develop a demonstration Waste-to-energy Plant at Okhla landfill site in Delhi, using Gasification technology.

This Plant shall process 17500 tons per annum of Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) produced from combustible components of Municipal Waste to generate syngas which shall in turn be used to generate electricity.



11. Union Cabinet extended Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Anna Yojana till November

The Union Cabinet has given approval for extending Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana till November 2020. Under the scheme, 5kg of Wheat or Rice will be given to every member of the beneficiary family and 1kg of Chana will be given to each family. The scheme will benefit more than 80 crore people.

The Government also extended the time limit for availing three free gas cylinders by beneficiaries of PMUY till September 2020. It further approved extension of the Employee Provident Fund contribution of 24% from June to August 2020. It entails an expenditure of Rs. 4,860 crore.



12. India banned 59 Chinese apps

The government banned 59 Chinese mobile applications, including top social media platforms such as TikTok, Helo and WeChat, to counter the threat posed by these applications to the country's "sovereignty and security".

The ban has been imposed under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act read with relevant provisions of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking of Access of Information by Public) Rules 2009. The government has sent a list of 79 questions to the companies, asking them to answer them by July 22.



13. World Bank approved \$500m towards 'STARS' project

The World Bank has approved a new project named STARS (Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program) worth \$500 million. STARS will be implemented through the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, the flagship central scheme, in partnership with Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan.



STARS will help improve learning assessment systems, strengthen classroom instruction, and remediation, facilitate school-to-work transition, and strengthen governance and decentralised management.

14. First edition of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Newsletter “Matsya Sampada” launched

Union Minister Giriraj Singh launched the first edition of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Newsletter “MATSYA SAMPADA” published by the Department of Fisheries and the Operational Guidelines of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). The Newsletter is informative and educative about the latest developments in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.



The Newsletter would be published on a quarterly basis starting from the first quarter of the year 2020-21. The Government of India launched PMMSY for sustainable and responsible development of fisheries sector at an investment of Rs. 20,050 crore.

15. World Bank and GoI signed \$750 million Agreement for Emergency Response Program for MSME

The World Bank and the Government of India (GOI) signed the \$750 million agreement for the MSME Emergency Response Program to support increased flow of finance into the hands of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.



The MSME sector contributes 30% of India's GDP and 40% of exports. It employs about 150-180 million people. The World Bank has to date committed \$2.75 billion to support India's emergency COVID-19 response that also includes \$1 billion each of support announced in April and May.

16. IIT Kanpur developed classroom-to-home teaching setup 'Mobile Masterjee'

IIT Kanpur has developed a classroom-to-home teaching setup named 'Mobile Masterjee'. It can record the lectures or instructions by the teachers while using their available smart phones.

The product is lightweight and has adjustments to fit sheets and book on it for delivering instructions to the kids. A set graduated scale aligns the sheet at the desired angle, followed by the rotational quick adjustment of the mobile holder.



17. SAP launched MSMEs initiative “Global Bharat” to make them globally competitive

SAP India launched Global Bharat, a program designed to enable Indian MSMEs become globally competitive by equipping them with digital technologies. It includes three initiatives which are as follows:

- MSMEs will have open access to B2B marketplace SAP Ariba Discovery, where buyers can post their sourcing needs and the suppliers on Ariba Network can respond with their ability to deliver the goods and services.
- Business owners will have access to SAP India’s Code Unnati, a coveted Golden Peacock Award winning digital skilling initiative.
- SAP India will also offer MSMEs access to their enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, through the Business One Starter Pack on the cloud.



18. AIR begins broadcast of its first ever news magazine programme in Sanskrit

All India Radio started the broadcast of its first ever news magazine programme in Sanskrit. The programme titled, 'Sanskrit Saptahiki' will be of 20 minutes duration and can be heard at 7.10 A.M on every Saturday on All India Radio FM News Channel.

The weekly programme will have elements from the prominent developments of the week, news from the world of Sanskrit, explaining the humane values enshrined in Sanskrit literature, philosophy, history, art, culture and tradition.



19. Atal Innovation Mission launched 'AIM-iCREST'

NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), has launched AIM iCREST – an Incubator Capabilities enhancement program for a Robust Ecosystem focused on creating high performing Startups. This is a first of its kind initiative for advancing innovation at scale in India.



AIM has joined hands with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Wadhvani Foundation - organisations that can lend credible support and expertise in the entrepreneurship and innovation space.

20. First Indian social media app - Elyments launched

India's first social media app, "Elyments", was launched by Vice President, Venkaiah Naidu. More than 1,000 IT professionals jointly created the indigenous first social media super-app. The app is available in more than eight Indian languages.



The app offers tools such as video and voice calls, instant messaging as well as social networking. The data in this app will only be accessible within the Indian shores with the hardware-based encryption technology.

21. World Bank sanctioned USD 400 mn as enhanced support for rejuvenating the Ganga

The World Bank enhanced its support for the Government of India's program to rejuvenate the Ganga River with a \$400 million operation. It will help stem pollution in the river and strengthen the management of the river basin.



The fund was approved under the Second National Ganga River Basin Project (SNGRBP). It will support the government's Namami Gange program. The World Bank has been supporting the government's efforts since 2011, through the ongoing National Ganga River Basin Project, which helped set up the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

22. Indian Railways targets to achieve net zero carbon emission by 2030

Indian Railways has set the target to achieve net zero carbon emission by the year 2030. It has completed electrification of more than 40,000 route kilometres, which is 63% of the total broad gauge routes. All routes on the broad gauge network have been planned to be electrified by the end of year 2023.

Railways has also installed 100MW capacity solar plants as well as 103 MW wind-based power plants. 400 MW solar plants are under different stages of execution. Railways has also planned to set up 200 MW wind energy plants in the next two years.



23. Cabinet gave nod to Central Sector Scheme- Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

The Union Cabinet approved a new pan India Central Sector Scheme - Agriculture Infrastructure Fund. The scheme will provide a medium and long term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and financial support.

Under the scheme, one lakh crore rupees will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans to Primary Agricultural Credit Societies, Marketing Co-operative Societies, Farmer Producers Organisations, Self Help Group, Farmers, Startups and Centre and State agency among others.



24. CBDT and SEBI signed MoU for data exchange

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) signed MoU for data exchange between the two organisations. This will facilitate the sharing of data and information between SEBI and CBDT on an automatic and regular basis for the purpose of carrying out their functions under various laws.

A Data Exchange Steering Group has also been constituted for the initiative, which will meet periodically to review the data exchange status and take steps to further improve the effectiveness of the data sharing mechanism.



25. Operation Samudra Setu culminated

Operation Samudra Setu, which was launched in May 2020, to repatriate Indian citizens from overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic, was culminated after successfully bringing 3992 Indian citizens back to their homeland by sea route.

Indian Naval Ships Jalashwa, Airavat, Shardul and Magar participated in this operation, which lasted over 55 days and involved traversing more than 23 thousand kilometers by sea. Rigorous measures were planned and medical and safety protocols unique to the operating environment of ships were implemented.



26. Cabinet approved affordable rental housing complexes development for urban migrants

The Union Cabinet approved developing of Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs) for urban poor migrants under Pradhan Mantri AwasYojana – Urban (PMAY – U). An expenditure of Rs. 600 Crore is estimated in the form of Technology Innovation Grant, which will be released for projects using identified innovative technologies for construction.

Under this scheme, existing vacant government funded housing complexes will be converted in ARHCs through Concession Agreements for 25 years. Various special incentives like use permission, 50% additional FAR/FSI, concessional loan at priority sector lending rate, tax reliefs etc. will be offered to private/ public entities to develop ARHCs.



27. CBSE tie-up with Facebook to introduce curriculum on digital safety

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Facebook united to launch certified curriculum on digital safety and online well-being. The curriculum is comprehensive training program launched for teachers and students of its affiliated schools in the first phase. It will help in augmented reality (AR) for students and educators in India.

Under second phase, CBSE will introduce the training program on digital safety and augmented reality for 30,000 students in each category. Facebook will use Instagram's guide, created by The Jed Foundation and Young Leaders for Active Citizenship, for building healthy digital habits.



28. India's first NPNT compliant Drone flight successfully completed

India's First No-Permission No-Takeoff (NPNT) compliant drone flight on the A200 Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) was completed successfully by Quidich Innovation Labs and Asteria Aerospace. This NPNT drone flight is under the Ministry of Civil Aviation MoCA& DGCA comprehensive policy on the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV).



NPNT or 'No Permission – No Take-off' is a software program that enables every RPA (except Nano) to obtain valid permissions through digital sky platform before operating in India. If an NPNT compliant drone tries to breach geo-fencing, the in-built software will compel the drone to return-to-home (RTH).

29. Railways and BHEL united for solar power generation

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) successfully commissioned a 1.7 MW Solar PV Plant at Bina in Madhya Pradesh for the Indian Railways. The plant will directly feed power to traction systems of Indian Railways. The project is a landmark achievement in the history of solar power, as this is the first time that solar power is being directly used for traction applications.



This development marks a major step of merging the advantages of renewable energy in the railway sector in an unprecedented way. BHEL has achieved direct injection of single-phase 25 kV power to traction substation of Indian Railways.

30. Microsoft partnered with NSDC to provide digital skills

National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) partnered with Microsoft for providing digital skills to over 1 lakh youth in the country over the next 12 months. It will help 25 million people worldwide acquire new digital skills needed for the COVID-19 economy.



Microsoft will collaborate with NSDC's eSkill India portal to provide free access to learning resources and conduct digital skilling awareness drives, equipping the next generation of learners with the skills they need to thrive in a digital economy. The sessions will be designed to drive digital literacy into technologies like AI, machine learning and cloud computing among others.

31. India and Afghanistan signed 5 MoUs for developing educational infrastructure

India and Afghanistan inked five MoUs for the development of educational infrastructure in four provinces of Afghanistan namely Nouristan, Farah, Badakhshan and Kapisa. The five MoUs were signed under the high impact community development projects (HICDP) programme being implemented by India in Afghanistan to further strengthen the bilateral development partnership.



These projects are part of India's commitment to assist Afghanistan emerge as a peaceful, united, prosperous and pluralistic nation.

32. Center launched ASEEM portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities

Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launched Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employee-Employer Mapping (ASEEM) portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities. ASEEM will be used as a match-making engine to map skilled workers with the jobs available.



ASEEM portal will provide employers a platform to assess the availability of skilled workforce and formulate their hiring plans. It refers to all the data, trends and analytics, which describe the workforce market and map demand of skilled workforce to supply.

33. Prime Minister dedicated 750 MW Rewa Solar Project to the nation

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi dedicated 750 MW Solar Project to the nation, set up at Rewa, Madhya Pradesh. The Rewa Solar Project is the first solar project in the country to break the grid parity barrier. Central Financial Assistance of Rs. 138 crore has been provided to RUMSL for development of the park.



The Rewa Project has been acknowledged in India and abroad for its robust project structuring and innovations. Its payment security mechanism for reducing risks to power developers has been recommended as a model to other States by MNRE.

34. EESL signed agreement with NOIDA authority

Energy Efficiency Services Limited signed an agreement with the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (NOIDA) to promote electric vehicles and install public EV charging stations & related infrastructure. The partnership will facilitate the creation of an infrastructural ecosystem to accelerate e-mobility uptake as the nation emerges from the lockdown post COVID-19 pandemic.



EESL will make an upfront investment on services pertaining to the agreement along with the operation and maintenance of public charging infrastructure by qualified manpower. NOIDA authority will be responsible for the provision of space for the charging infrastructure.

35. USAID partnered with MNRE for clean energy development

USAID-supported South Asia Group for Energy (SAGE) partnered with MNRE's National Technical Institutions. SAGE is a U.S. Government consortium, that will provide advanced technical knowledge on clean energy development embedded in the U.S. Department of Energy's National Laboratories to MNRE's National Technical Institutions and other public institutes under this new partnership.



SAGE has identified several key topics such as building world-class capabilities in cook stove testing in order to reduce the environmental and health impacts of traditional cook stove use; understanding the feasibility of biomass and renewable energy hybrid systems; economic and environmental assessment of agriculture and bioenergy development.

36. NITI Aayog presented India's second Voluntary National Review (VNR)

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



The VNR 2020 report has been titled as "Decade of Action: Taking SDGs from Global to Local" and it accounts for the adoption and implementation of the 2030 Agenda in India.

37. Atal Innovation Mission of NITI Aayog developed ATL App

Atal Innovation Mission of the NITI Aayog has launched the ATL App Development Module for school children across the country. The ATL App is an online course, which is completely free. Through six project-based learning modules and online mentoring sessions, young innovators can learn to build mobile apps in various Indian languages and showcase their talent.



The ATL App Development modules have been launched in collaboration with Indian homegrown startup Plezmo. The app was launched under AIM's flagship Atal Tinkering Labs initiative.

38. Government approved Rs. 107 cr for firefighting facilities at Haldia Dock

Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandaviya approved 107 Crore rupees for augmentation of firefighting facilities on five jetties of Haldia Dock Complex at Kolkata Port.



The modern firefighting facility will enable the Haldia Dock Complex in safe handling of the movement of petro-chemical products. The state-of-the-art firefighting infrastructure will help to manage the petro-chemical goods in a safe and secure manner at Kolkata Port. The existing fire fighting facility does not support the handling of the LPG and other petroleum products.

39. Government aimed to increase public health expenditure to 2.5% of GDP by 2025

The Union Health Ministry aims at gradually increasing the public health expenditure to 2.5% of the nation's GDP by the year 2025. The outlay for primary health expenditure will also be made nearly two third of the total public health expenditure in the country.



The Health Ministry revised its requirement of around 4.9 lakh crores to 6.04 lakh crores in view of the COVID pandemic. It has asked for additional resources for the States which would be utilised for achievement of the National Health Policy targets.

40. UNICEF INDIA united with FICCI for #Reimagine Campaign

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



The partnership will help avoid potential long-term damage to business operations and employment pipelines, and their most important resource, their personnel, their children and their families. FICCI and UNICEF will work on an action plan based on the document, that is being developed jointly by the International Chambers of Commerce and UNICEF.

41. Government launched PM SVANidhi app for street vendors

The government launched the PM SVANidhi mobile App. It is a mobile application of PM Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi to bring micro-credit facility for street vendors at their door steps. It aims to provide user-friendly digital interface for lending institutions and their field functionaries for sourcing and processing loan applications of street vendors under the scheme.



PM SVANidhi scheme was launched by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman under the ambit of the Atma Nirbhar Bharat package. The scheme facilitated street vendors to take a loan of Rs. 10,000 to reestablish their businesses hit by the coronavirus-led nationwide lockdown.

42. HRD Ministry announced PRAGYATA Guidelines on digital education

The Human Resource and Development Ministry has announced the PRAGYATA guidelines for online classes operationalised by schools amid the COVID pandemic. It includes eight steps of online/ digital learning that is, Plan – Review – Arrange – Guide – Yak(talk) – Assign – Track – Appreciate.



As per the guidelines, online classes for pre-primary students should not be for more than 30 minutes. It further mentions that two online sessions of up to 30-45 minutes each should be conducted for classes 1 to 8 and four sessions for classes 9 to 12.

43. Cochin Shipyard signed contract for construction of electric vessels for ASKO maritime AS, Norway

Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) signed contracts for construction and supply of Two nos Autonomous Electric Ferry for ASKO Maritime AS, Norway with an option to build 2 more identical vessels. The 67m-long vessels will initially be delivered as a full-electric transport ferry, powered by 1846kWh capacity battery.

CSL is the largest commercial shipbuilder in India. ASKO Maritime AS is the subsidiary group of Norges Gruppen ASA, one of the largest players in the Norwegian retail segment.



44. Indian Railways created POST COVID COACH to ensure safer journey

Indian Railways' production unit, Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala, has developed a Post Covid Coach to fight Covid 19. This Post Covid Coach has design improvements in the coach like handsfree amenities, copper-coated handrails & latches, plasma air purification and titanium di-oxide coating for Covid free passenger journey.



Post Covid Coach is having handsfree amenities like foot operated water tap & soap dispenser. The plasma air equipment will sterilise the air and surfaces inside the AC coach using ionised air to make the coach Covid-19 and particulate matter resistant. Nano structured Titanium Dioxide coating functions as photoactive material.

45. 1st cable-stayed rail bridge of Indian Railways, Anji Khad Bridge

The "first cable-stayed" bridge of the Indian Railways, Anji Khad Bridge Project, will soon connect Katra and Reasi in Jammu and Kashmir. It is being developed by Konkan Railway Corporation Limited and is a part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project.



The total length of the Anji Khad Bridge is 473.25 metres. It has support of 96 cables. The expected budget of the project is Rs. 458 crore. The bridge will connect tunnel T2 on Katra side and tunnel T3 on Reasi side.

46. AAI signed MoU with BEL for co-operation in civil aviation

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) to collaborate in tapping emerging global opportunities in the airport business, including those in the Asia-Pacific region. AAI will assist BEL in its domain of expertise to enable execution of the prestigious MEA projects outside India by BEL.



The MoU will provide for the synergy of capabilities of both the organisations in their particular field. Both the organisations will work in close co-operation in the field of civil aviation, in all projects handled by BEL.

47. First on-line NISHTHA programme launched in Andhra Pradesh

Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank launched virtually the first online National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) programme for 1,200 key resources persons of Andhra Pradesh. Initially, the NISHTHA programme was launched in 2019 through face-to-face mode to improve learning outcomes at the elementary level in the country.



NISHTHA is a capacity building programme for improving the quality of school education through integrated teacher training. It aims to build competencies among all the teachers and school principals at the elementary stage.

48. UNICEF India and SAP India partner to improve employability of young people

UNICEF India has partnered with SAP India to provide career counselling to young people of India to improve their employability skills. UNICEF is collaborating with YuWaah (Generation Unlimited) under this initiative to provide digital education and occupational skill-set to the underserved young people of the Country.



Under the collaboration UNICEF – YuWaah – SAP will strengthen the following:

- Improve digital skills and life skills for young people.
- Provide young people with career options.
- Re-imagine the model in other states with the Government of India.
- Impacting one million young people by the end of 2022.

49. CIPET gets accreditation by NABL to test PPE kits

Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering and Technology, CIPET an apex level premium institute under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, has been accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories NABL for Testing and Certification of PPE Kit.

The PPE kit includes Gloves, Coverall, Face Shield, Goggles and Triple Layer Medical masks in line with International Standards. CIPET has been taking up the R&D initiatives in the areas of Health Care as per WHO/ ISO guidelines.



50. Union government successfully implemented 'One Nation One Ration Card' facility in 20 States, UTs

The Union Government has successfully implemented the One Nation One Ration Card facility in 20 States and Union Territories. The facility has been enabled for all the National Food Security Act (NFSA) card holder beneficiaries.

The states include Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Gujarat among others. Under this facility, migratory NFSA beneficiaries will now be enabled with an option to take their entitled quota of foodgrains from any Fair Price Shop situated across the country.



51. India Ideas Summit 2020

The India Ideas Summit 2020 was hosted by the US-India Business Council (USIBC) on 22nd July with the theme 'Building a Better Future'. PM Narendra Modi addressed the keynote address.

The Summit convened business and government leaders for discussions on the future of the U.S.-India Partnership and the trends shaping globalisation, trade and investment, and the future of work in the COVID-era and beyond. 2020 Summit Speakers included U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar among others.



52. CBSE tied up with IBM to integrate AI curriculum

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has tied up with IBM to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) in the high school curriculum (class XI & XII) for the current academic year 2020 – 2021. The curriculum is part of CBSE's social empowerment through work education and action (SEWA) programme.



The curriculum will be introduced in approximately 200 schools across 13 states in India. It was co-developed with Australia's Macquarie University and Indian implementation partners – Learning Links Foundation and 1M1B.

53. CSIR-CMERI unveils the COPS for workplace

CSIR-CMERI, Durgapur, unveiled the COVID Protection System (COPS) for Workplace as a game-changer in the current Pandemic Scenario. The COPS is a conglomeration of following three units:



- **Solar Based Intelligent Mask Automated Dispensing Unit cum Thermal Scanner (IntelliMAST):** It is an Intelligent surveillance kiosk, which identifies the body temperature and whether an individual is wearing Face Mask or not.
- **Touchless Faucet (TouF):** It dispenses Liquid Soap and Water from the same Faucet with a time-gap of 30 seconds.
- **360 degree Car Flusher:** It is a Sodium Hypochlorite Water Screen with a specialised Nozzle Design.

54. Government approved Zonal Master Plan of Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone

The Union Environment Ministry has approved the Zonal Master Plan for the Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone notification. It stretches from Gaumukh to Uttarakashi covering an area of 4179.59 sq. kilometer.



The approval of ZMP will give a boost to conservation and ecology of the area and also to undertake developmental activities as permitted under ZMP. The approval will also pave way for faster execution of the Chardhaam Project.

55. India and Israel sign agreement to expand co-operation in cyber security

India and Israel have signed an agreement to further expand collaboration in dealing with cyber threats amid rapid digitisation. The agreement was signed between Israel's National Cyber Directorate (INCD) and the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT).



The agreement lays down co-operation in capacity building and mutual exchange of best practices in the field. Cyber Security was identified as one of the important areas of cooperation by the leaders of India and Israel when PM Modi visited Israel in 2017.

56. Rs. 8,767 crore approved for 81 projects for 60,000 homes across India

A fund of 8,767 crore rupees was approved for 81 projects which would enable the completion of 60,000 homes across India. These projects would also provide employment opportunities to various skilled and semi-skilled workers.



These projects are spread across the National Capital Region, Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune, Lucknow, Surat, Dehradun, Nagpur, Jaipur, Nashik and other cities. Investments in 18 projects have been given final clearance and disbursement is at various stages across seven residential projects.

57. HRD Ministry conducted first ever Ind-SAT Test 2020

Human Resources and Development Ministry conducted the first ever Indian Scholastic Assessment (Ind-SAT) Test 2020 under its Study in India programme. Ind-SAT is an exam for grant of scholarships and admissions to foreign students for studying in select Indian universities. The exam is designed to gauge the scholastic capability of students applying to study in India.



The Ind-SAT scores will serve as a criterion to shortlist the meritorious students for the allocation of scholarships for under graduate as well as post graduate programmes under Study in India programme.

58. HRD Minister launched Manodarpan initiative

Human Resource and Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishak virtually launched the Manodarpan initiative under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. This initiative will provide psycho-social support to students, teachers and parents and address their issues related to mental health and emotional well being.



The government has launched a helpline number 8448440632 to provide the consultation which can be accessed from morning 8 AM to 8 PM. The initiative will provide strength, suggestions and support to the students, teachers and families in the difficult situation.

59. India's first NABL-accredited honey testing lab inaugurated

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated India's first honey testing lab set up by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) at Anand with support of National Bee Board (NBB). It will help for quality production of honey and its export to other countries.



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

60. ICAT launched an e-portal "ASPIRE"

The International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) has launched its e-Portal, named "ASPIRE" (Automobile Solutions Portal for Industry, Research & Education). The key objective of this initiative is "to enhance the technological capability of Indian automotive sector through exchange of knowledge & expertise, in order to make them self reliant and to facilitate the growth of automobile sector and overall socio-economic progress of the country".



This technology platform will facilitate the Indian auto industry, R&D institutions and academia to come together for R&D, technology development etc. on issues involving technology advancements. The e-portal will act as one stop solution.

61. Kakrapar Atomic Power Plant, Unit-3 attained Criticality

The third unit of the Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP-3) in Gujarat achieved its 'first criticality'. A nuclear reactor is said to attain criticality, when every nuclear fission event releases a sufficient number of neutrons in order to sustain an ongoing series of reactions or a self-sustaining chain reaction.

KAPP-3 is India's first 700 MWe (Megawatt Electric) Unit and the biggest indigenously developed variant of the Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR).



62. Centre allocated additional Rs. 40,000 cr under MGNREGA

The Union Government has made an additional allocation of Rs. 40,000 crore for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, during this financial year in view of the situation arising out of COVID-19 pandemic. The government has made a provision of about Rs. 1,20,000 crore in the Budget Estimates for the financial year 2020-21.

The Union Budget 2020-21 had allocated around Rs. 61,500 for the MGNREGS. Of this, according to government estimates, around Rs. 23,119 crore, almost 38%, has been released by the Centre to the states in the first 45 days of 2020-21.



63. First Container train for Bangladesh flagged off from Kolkata

The first container train to Bangladesh was flagged off from the Container Corporation of India Ltd's (CONCOR) terminal at Majerhat, Kolkata. The train with 50 containers carried FMCG goods like soaps, shampoos and textile fabric. It arrived at Benapole in Bangladesh.

The process for facilitating movement of Container trains from India to Bangladesh started in 2017, when a MoU was signed by Container Corporation of India and the Bangladesh Container Company Ltd. It was followed up by a trial run of the first container train from Kolkata to Bangabandhu West station (BBW) in April 2018.



64. India announced 400-million-dollar currency swap for Sri Lanka

India and Sri Lanka agreed for US \$400 million currency swap agreement under the SAARC framework. Reserve Bank of India signed the agreement with the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The arrangement will remain available till November 2022.

A currency swap is a transaction in which two parties exchange principal and interest in different currencies. This eliminates risks due to fluctuations in exchange rates. RBI's currency swap arrangement for SAARC states has a corpus of \$2 billion.



65. India and EU renew Agreement on Scientific and Technological Co-operation till 2025

India and European Union have renewed its Agreement on Scientific and Technological Co-operation for the next five years till 2025. This will expand the co-operation in scientific and technological research and strengthen the conduct of co-operative activities in areas of common interest and application of the results of such co-operation to their economic and social benefit.

The Agreement was initially signed on 23rd November in 2001 and renewed two times in 2007 and 2015. The co-operation has been focused on water, green transport, e-mobility, clean energy, bio-economy, health, and ICT.



66. TRIFED partnered with IIT Delhi for Unnat Bharat Abhiyan

Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India, TRIFED, under Tribal Affairs Ministry, has entered into a partnership with IIT Delhi for the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA). A tri-partite Memorandum of Understanding was signed between TRIFED, IIT Delhi and Vijnana Bharati. It will help boost livelihood opportunities and income generation for tribal communities.



The Unnat Bharat Abhiyan is a flagship national programme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The UBA connects higher education institutions with villages for the economic and social betterment of rural communities.

67. DST launched INR 15 Crore fund to support India-Russia collaboration joint R&D and cross-country technology adaptation

The Department of Science and Technology has launched the India-Russia Joint Technology Assessment and Accelerated Commercialization Programme in partnership with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Foundation for Assistance to Small Innovative Enterprises (FASIE) of the Russian Federation. The programme will connect Indian, and Russian Science & Technology (S&T) led SMEs and Start-ups for joint R&D for technology development and for cross-country technology adaptation.



DST will fund up to Rs. 15 Crores to Indian SMEs/Start-ups and FASIE will provide similar funding to the Russian projects. The programme will run through two annual cycles and top five selected Indian and Russian partners will be provided partial funding support.

68. PM Modi launched three high throughput COVID-19 testing facilities

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched three high throughput COVID-19 testing facilities. These facilities are located at the National Institutes of Indian Council of Medical Research at Kolkata, Mumbai and Noida. It can also test Hepatitis B and C, HIV, Dengue and several other diseases.



These hi-tech testing facilities are capable of 10,000 daily tests in each of the three cities. India now has more than 11 thousand COVID facilities and more than 11 lakh isolation beds. The annual production capacity of ventilators in the country has become 3 lakh.

69. Center launched four schemes for setting up of Bulk Drugs & Medical Devices Parks

Government of India has approved four schemes, two each for Bulk Drugs and Medical Devices parks.

The salient features of the schemes are:

- Scheme for promotion of Bulk Drug Parks:** The scheme envisages creation of 3 bulk drug parks in the country with a total financial outlay of the scheme is Rs. 3,000 crore. The grant-in-aid will be 90% of the project cost in case of North-East and hilly States and 70% in case of other States. Maximum grant-in-aid for one bulk drug park is limited to Rs.1,000 crore.



- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for promoting domestic manufacturing of Medical Devices:** The scheme (with a financial outlay Rs.3,420 crore) intends to boost domestic manufacturing of medical devices in four target segments by giving financial incentives on sales to a maximum number of 28 selected applicants for a period of 5 years. Financial incentive will be given at a rate of 5% of the sales of domestically manufactured medical devices.

70. Center notified changes in FDI norms on civil aviation

The government notified changes in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) norms on civil aviation. These rules are named as the 'Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) (Third Amendment) Rules, 2020'.



Amendments are as follows:

- Permits non-resident Indian nationals to own 100% stake of Air India.
- Permits 100% FDI under automatic route in helicopter services/seaplane services requiring Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) approval.

71. Commerce Ministry amended its export policy for PPE & masks

Commerce Ministry amended its export policy for Personal Protection Equipment, PPE and masks. Under the new policy, 2 and 3 ply surgical masks and medical goggles can now be exported with certain limitations.



For 2 and 3 ply surgical masks a monthly export quota of 4 crore has been fixed by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT). Medical Goggles can be exported with a monthly cap of 20 lakh units. Government has also removed prohibition on export of Face Shields from the country.

72. Bureau of Indian Standard's Mobile App BIS-Care launched

Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan launched the Bureau of Indian Standard's Mobile App BIS-Care. He also launched three portals on Standardisation, Conformity Assessment and Training of e-BIS.



The consumers can check the authenticity of the ISI-marked and hallmarked products through this Application. Customers can also lodge complaints using this medium. The certification and surveillance are important aspects of BIS functioning. BIS is strengthening its capacity of enforcement by implementation of e-BIS.

73. DRDO launched 'Dare to Dream 2.0' contest

DRDO Innovation Contest 'Dare to Dream 2.0' was launched on the fifth Death Anniversary of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, who had a vision of self-reliance. The scheme is being launched for emerging technologies to promote the individuals & start-ups for innovation in defence and aerospace technologies in the country.

Dare to Dream 2.0 is an open challenge to promote the country's innovators and start-ups. The winners will be decided after due evaluation by the expert committee. A cash award of up to 10 lakh for Start-ups and 5 lakh for individuals will be given to winners.



74. Cabinet approved MoU with Zimbabwe on Traditional Systems of Medicine

The Union Cabinet gave ex-post facto approval to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between India and Zimbabwe on Co-operation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy. The MoU was signed on 3rd November, 2018. It will provide a frame work for the co-operation between the two countries for the promotion of traditional systems of medicine and homeopathy.



The main objective of the MoU is to strengthen, promote and develop co-operation in the field of traditional systems of medicine between the two countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

75. Asian Development Bank approved US \$3 million grant to India

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved US \$3 million grant to India from its Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund (APDRF). This grant will further support the government's emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This support will enhance disease surveillance and help in early detection, contact tracing, and treatment.



On 28th of April, ADB approved a 1.5 billion US dollar COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) Programme to support India in its immediate pandemic response efforts.

Persons in News

1. Two Indian-Americans named as "2020 Great Immigrants"

Two renowned Indian-Americans, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and oncologist Siddhartha Mukherjee and Professor of Economics at Harvard University Raj Chetty have been named by the Carnegie Corporation of New York as "2020 Great Immigrants" honorees. The duo have contributed towards the efforts in mitigating the COVID-19 health crisis.



Mr Mukherjee used his "gifts as a science communicator" to educate the public about the virus through media interviews, public forums, essays and through his social media accounts. Chetty helped to launch a resource to monitor the real-time economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic on businesses, people, and communities across the US.

2. Pakistan Army appointed Nigar Johar as first female Lieutenant General

Pakistan Army has appointed Major General Nigar Johar as the first woman officer as Lieutenant General. She has also been appointed as the first female surgeon general of the Pakistan Army.



Johar graduated from the Army Medical College, Rawalpindi, in 1985 and joined the army's Medical Corps. In 2017, she became the third woman officer in the Pakistan Army to attain the rank of major general. The other two women major generals were Shahida Badsha and Shahida Malik.

3. Lt Col Bharat Pannu secured podium position at vRAAM 2020

Lt. Col. Bharat Pannu, a serving Indian Army Officer created history by successfully securing a podium place at the first edition of the Virtual Race Across America (VRAAM) 2020 and became the first Indian ever to win a podium place at an international ultracycling race.



The Race Across America (RAAM) is a 5,000 km transcontinental race from the West coast to East coast of the United States of America with a cut-off time of 12 days. Lt. Col. Pannu finished third on the leaderboard with a total distance of 4,086 km in 12 days and total cumulative elevation gain of 71,000 meters.

4. Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson became Instagram's highest-paid celebrity

Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson has become the highest paid celebrity of Instagram by replacing Kylie Jenner. Johnson topped the Instagram charts with 189 million followers followed by Jenner has 183 million followers. Dwayne Douglas Johnson, also known by his ring name The Rock, is an American-Canadian actor, producer, businessman, retired professional wrestler, and former American football player.



Other artists who were among highest paid lists were pro soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo, who charged about \$889,000 per post and actress Kim Kardashian, who could charge \$858,000.

5. Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar inaugurated Plasma Therapy Unit for treating COVID-19 patients

Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar inaugurated a Plasma Therapy Unit for treating COVID-19 patients in Mumbai. The unit is an initiative of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). It will offer convalescent plasma therapy to COVID-19 patients using donated blood plasma from those who have recovered.



The plasma therapy has emerged as an option to treat critically ill patients. Researchers around the globe are working to find an effective vaccine and treatment. Plasma of a donor, who has recovered, contains high levels of antibodies against the pathogen that is the cause of the disease.

6. UN designated Pakistan Taliban leader Noor Mehsud as global terrorist

The United Nations has designated Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terror group's leader Noor Wali Mehsud, as a global terrorist for participating in the financing, planning and perpetrating acts on behalf of and in support of entities associated with al-Qaida.



The Pakistani national was added to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List by the UN Security Council's Sanctions Committee, subjecting him to an assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo. Mehsud was named the leader of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan in June 2018, following the death of former TTP leader Maulana Fazlullah.

7. Australian cricket legend Brett Lee was appointed as brand ambassador of SportsAdda

Australian cricket legend Brett Lee has been appointed as the brand ambassador of SportsAdda. As part of the partnership, Lee, will also be conducting a host of fun activities including contests, quizzes, Q&As, bowling masterclasses and giveaways that will feature exclusively on the SportsAdda app, website and social handles.



Lee has taken over 700 wickets in his international career across all three formats in cricket. SportsAdda is an Indian news and information platform that provides all updates, insights and statistics for cricket, football, and kabaddi.

8. Marcus Rashford becomes youngest ever recipient of University of Manchester honorary degree

Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford at 22 years of age, will become the youngest person to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Manchester for his campaign against child poverty. He campaigned for the government to allow about 1.3 million children to claim free school meal vouchers in England's summer holidays.



The award is the highest honour the University can bestow. United legends Sir Alex Ferguson and Sir Bobby Charlton have previously received the award from the university.

9. Archana Soreng named by UN chief to new climate change advisory group

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has named Archana Soreng of India to his new advisory group to tackle the worsening climate crisis. Archana is a climate activist and has studied regulatory governance from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) Mumbai.



Archana Soreng joins six other young climate leaders from around the world who have been named to the new Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change. The group will advise the UN chief regularly on accelerating global action and ambition to tackle the worsening climate crisis.

Places in News

1. First Plasma Bank of India opened in Delhi

India's first plasma bank was inaugurated in Delhi by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS). The bank has been set up to pool in plasma from people who recovered from Covid-19 so that moderately ill patients can have better access to therapy using it.



The chief minister launched the helpline 1031, where people can call to get registered for plasma donation. Plasma bank would streamline the entire process of getting plasma for hospitals and families of patients.

2. PM visited Nimu in Ladakh to interact with Indian troops

Prime Minister Narendra Modi travelled to Nimu in Ladakh to interact with Indian troops. Nimu is located at 11,000 feet and surrounded by the Zaskar range and is on the banks of river Indus. Earlier, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was supposed to visit Ladakh, which was rescheduled.



PM Modi's visit came weeks after the violent clash between Indian Army personnel and Chinese troops in Galwan Valley on June 15 that left 20 Indian soldiers dead and over 70 others injured.

3. World's second largest Tier IV designed data centre 'NM1' inaugurated at Navi Mumbai

India's largest Tier IV Data Center and world's second largest Tier IV designed data centre Yotta NMI was inaugurated at India's Navi Mumbai. It is certified by Uptime Institute in Asia. The data center is a global pioneer not just in terms of capability and price but more so in terms of its focus on efficiency and sustainability.



Yotta is a complete package from control over input resources, presence of huge land banks that also have green energy generation and distribution capacities.

4. Nadaun Police Station of HP ranked as one of best Police Stations of India

Nadaun Police Station of Hamirpur district in Himachal Pradesh has been ranked as one of the best Police Stations of the country. Union Home Minister Amit Shah provided Certificate of Excellence to the Police Station.

The ranking of police stations is carried out by Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. The criteria for ranking include standard of service delivery, identifying techniques of improvement in policing, addressing of cases and infrastructure.



5. Fifth edition of the conference on Aerospace and Defence Manufacturing Technologies held in New Delhi

The fifth edition of the conference on Aerospace and Defence Manufacturing Technologies was held in New Delhi. Theme of the conference was Empowering India with 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Mission'.

The Aerospace and Defence industry in India is estimated to reach around 70 billion Dollar by 2030. The Indian civil Aviation MRO market, at present, stands at around \$900 million and is anticipated to grow to \$4.33 billion by 2025 increasing at a CAGR of about 14-15%.



6. India's first public EV charging plaza inaugurated in New Delhi

Minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh inaugurated India's first public EV (Electric Vehicle) charging plaza at Chelmsford Club in New Delhi. The plaza has been established by EESL (Energy Efficiency Services Ltd) in collaboration with NDMC (New Delhi Municipal Council).

The new public EV charging plaza will host five chargers of different specifications. The EV charging plaza is a new avenue for making e-mobility ubiquitous and convenient in India.



7. Guwahati becomes city in NE to use robot for manhole cleaning

Guwahati became the first city in Northeast to use manhole cleaning robot to end manual scavenging. The roobot is named 'BANDICOOT'. It was developed by a Start-up India company called Genrobotics and procured by Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC).

The BANDICOOT robot was developed under the Make in India initiative. The project was funded by the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. The other two city to use technology to clean manhole are Gurugram and Coimbatore.



Regional

1. Maharashtra launched Project Platina

The Maharashtra government has launched "Project Platina". It is considered to be the world's largest plasma therapy trial for treatment of coronavirus patients with severe symptoms. The project aims to boost the chances of survival of serious COVID-19 patients by providing free plasma therapy at 21 government-run centres in Maharashtra.



Convalescent plasma therapy involves injecting a COVID-19 patient with the convalescent sera of recovered patients. Antibodies in the blood of recovered patients can help fight the virus.

2. MP Government launched Kill Corona campaign

The Madhya Pradesh state government has launched Kill Corona campaign from July 1, to control the spread of coronavirus in the state. Under the campaign, a door-to-door survey will be conducted and tests would also be done on citizens for other diseases.



During the 15-day 'Kill Corona' campaign in MP, 2.5 lakh tests were carried out and 15,000 to 20,000 samples collected daily. The government used SARTHAK app developed by the state to document the survey.

3. Government declared entire Nagaland 'disturbed area' for six more months

The Union Government has declared the whole of Nagaland as a "disturbed" area under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, for a further period of six months till December-end. Nagaland has been under the coverage of the AFSPA for almost six decades.



The AFSPA gives the military sweeping powers to search and arrest, and to open fire if they deem it necessary for "the maintenance of public order", and to do so with a degree of immunity from prosecution.

4. Government of Maharashtra signed MoU with UKIBC

The Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) and the UK India Business Council signed a MoU to proactively better its business environment and strengthen its collaboration with British business. The MoU establishes a broad-based understanding between the MIDC and UKIBC on the areas of collaboration and mutual interest.



Maharashtra is regarded as the top destination for improved business environment in India and, relatedly, the most common state that UK companies are looking to expand in. 30% of UK companies running operations in India are based in Maharashtra.

5. Odisha state government launched 'Balaram Yojana'

Odisha state government launched 'Balaram Yojana' to provide crop loans to landless farmers.



Features are explained below:

- Landless cultivators will get credit facility on 'social collateral' model through joint liability groups (JLGs).
- Government has set a target to provide farm loans of Rs 1,040 crore to 7 lakh landless farmers in the next two years.
- It is sub scheme of Odisha's Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme.
- The scheme designed in collaboration with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, is implemented by Agricultural Technology Management Agency.

6. Karnataka government launched "Nekara Samman Yojane"

Karnataka government launched a relief scheme "Nekara Samman Yojane" for weavers of silk, cotton, wool and other handloom weavers. Funds of Rs. 10.96 crore has been allocated under this scheme to benefit 19,744 handloom weavers through Direct Benefit Transfer. Beneficiaries will receive financial aid of Rs 2,000 each.



Under Nekara Samman Yojane, workers employed in the powerloom sector would also get a one-time payment of Rs. 2,000 each. Karnataka has a significant presence of powerlooms with 1,20,000 looms engaged in weaving of silk and cotton. Power looms are mainly concentrated in Belagavi, Bagalkote, Tumkur, Bangalore Urban and Rural Districts.

7. Madhya Pradesh tourism board launched “Intzaar Aap Ka” campaign

Madhya Pradesh Tourism board launched a tourist campaign "Intzaar Aap Ka" on social media platforms to attract tourists. It means 'waiting for you campaign'. Madhya Pradesh Tourism board is inviting tourists for safe outing during the monsoon season at various religious, natural and archaeological tourist places of the state.



Different tour packages have been prepared which include safe travel, stay and excursions, keeping in mind all the safety standards in the prevention of Corona infection.

8. State Finance Commission of Odisha recommended Rs. 23,848 crore for PRIs and ULBs

State Finance Commission of Odisha recommended Rs. 23,848 crore for state's civic bodies. As per the recommendation of the fifth State Finance Commission, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in Odisha will receive funds for over a period of six years.



The funds may also be spent on maintenance of health sub-centres, Anganwadi centres, livestock centres, roads, culverts, creation of water bodies in urban areas etc. Under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy, the decision was taken into account.

9. Tamil Nadu topped market borrowings among States

According to data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Tamil Nadu raised ₹30,500 crores in the fiscal 2020-21 and topped market borrowings among States in the country. Tamil Nadu raised ₹1,250 crores at the low-interest rate of 6.63% for the 35-year bonds and ₹1,250 crores at the rate of 4.54% for the three-year bonds in the auction conducted by RBI.



Other states include Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, in the top four list. Tamil Nadu accounted for 17% of the borrowings through the issue of bonds (known as state development loans). Maharashtra accounted for 14% (₹25,500 crores).

10. IIT Alumni Council & CSIR-IGIB partnered for joint research

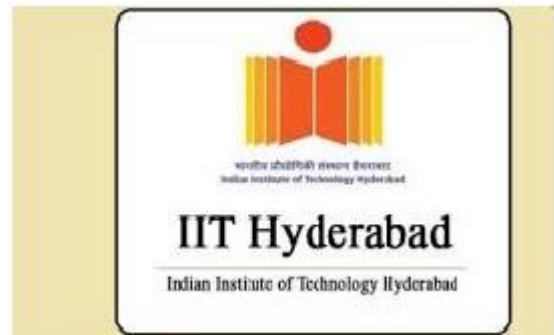
The IIT Alumni Council signed an agreement with the CSIR Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB) to jointly conduct research on COVID-19 and patient data analysis. The council is setting up the world's largest molecular diagnostic lab 'Mega Lab Mumbai'.



In order to expand research, the council handed over imaging data of over 8,500 patients, who were admitted at the COVID Care Facility at Worli's National Sports Club of India. The IIT Alumni Council is the largest body of alumni, students and faculty from all the 23 Indian Institutes of Technology.

11. IIT-H & NVIDIA ties-up to establish joint AI research centre

Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH) united with a multinational technology company, NVIDIA to establish India's 1st 'NVIDIA AI Technology Centre' (NVAITC). NVAITC with the help of 220 faculty at IITH, aims to focus on improving AI research in the aspects of agriculture, smart cities and language understanding, support safe transportation systems, traffic management etc.



Nvidia Corporation, is an American multinational technology company that designs graphics processing units for the gaming and professional markets.

12. Cabinet of state approved Uttar Pradesh 'Startup Policy 2020'

The state cabinet approved Uttar Pradesh Startup Policy 2020 to nurture fresh business ideas. Policy will be applicable for 5 years.



Highlights of Uttar Pradesh Startup Policy 2020 are as follows:

- To establish at least one incubator in each district and 100 incubators across the state.
- To create an ecosystem for establishment of 10,000 staround artups etc.
- Policy will generate 1,50,000 employment and self-employment opportunities, including 50,000 direct jobs.
- It will help in the corporatisation of more than 10,000 startups.
- For setting up of state-of-art centres of excellence, apart from instituting the country's largest incubation hub in Lucknow.

13. Chhattisgarh organised India's first e-Lok Adalat

Chhattisgarh organised the first e-Lok Adalat of the country amid restricted judicial functioning owing to Covid-19 outbreak. The virtual hearings were conducted through video conferencing. About 195 benches were constituted at different places of the state.



The High Court and Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority decided to organise e-Lok Adalat for resolving the pending cases. The session was inaugurated by the Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court, Justice P R Ramachandra Menon.

14. Andhra Pradesh started online registration of crops

Officials of the Revenue and Agriculture Departments in Andhra Pradesh started to register crops online (e-Crop) in the State. The village revenue officers (VROs) and the village agriculture assistants (VAAs) will enumerate the crops at village level.



The data will be utilised by the government for preparing action plans, supplying seeds, fertilizers and pesticides and in procuring the yield. Welfare schemes of the government like interest-free loans, Rythu Bharosa, crop insurance and Minimum Support Price (MSP) will also be based on e-crop data.

15. Hyderabad airport gets India's first complete contactless parking using FASTags

GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL) became the first and only airport in India to provide completely contactless car parking amid COVID-19. The NETC (National Electronic Toll Collection) FASTag Car Parking facility was introduced by GHIAL in collaboration with NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India).



The facility was implemented by traffic and transport technology solutions provider Comvion. Comvion is one of the few NPCI-certified companies for issuer as well as acquirer services of FASTag in India.

16. Andhra Pradesh unveiled Renewable Energy Export Policy

The government of Andhra Pradesh has notified the Andhra Pradesh Renewable Energy Export Policy, 2020. The policy will be applicable to solar, wind and wind-solar hybrid projects up to 120 Giga Watts (GW) and will be in force for the five years.



The New and Renewable Energy Development Corporation of Andhra Pradesh Ltd, (NREDCAP) shall be the nodal agency for implementing the policy. The projects will be exempted from obtaining any NOC/Consent for establishment from AP Pollution Control Board.

17. Zoram Mega Food Park inaugurated in Mizoram

Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badaal inaugurated the Zoram Mega Food Park Ltd. at Kolasib in Mizoram through virtual conference. The Food Park built at a cost of Rs. 75 crore and spread over 55 Acres of land will directly benefit over 25,000 farmers and will provide employment opportunities to over 5,000 people in the region.



The Ministry of Food Processing Industries has initiated 88 projects for the entire North-Eastern Region including 7 in Mizoram with an outlay of Rs. 1,000 crore. It will directly benefit 3 lakh farmers and will provide job opportunities to 50,000 youth from the region.

18. Delhi Cabinet approved “Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana”

The Delhi State Government has approved the "Mukhyamantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana" aimed for doorstep delivery of ration that will be synced with the Centre's 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme.



Under the scheme, beneficiaries would be delivered ration in packets and would get aata instead of wheat. It is expected to bring relief to the poor, who are struggling to meet their daily needs due to covid-19 pandemic.

19. UP Government launched “Navin Rojgar Chhatri Yojana” for Scheduled Castes

The Uttar Pradesh Government launched “Navin Rojgar Chhatri Yojana” for the Scheduled Castes (SC). It is an all-round development scheme to provide financial assistance to support people to become self-dependent.



The scheme targets to benefit around 7.5 lakh families in 2020-2021. The government has transferred financial assistance to around 1,77,491 beneficiaries. The government also transferred Rs. 17.42 crore, as subsidy to around 3,484 people under the "Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Swarojgar Yojana".

20. Punjab signed MoUs with IIT Ropar for skill development

The Punjab state government has signed MoUs with IIT Ropar in the area of skill development. The MoUs provide for IIT's Technical Education Department to become academic mentor for the state's engineering colleges at Gurdaspur and Ferozepur, as well as for Sri Guru Gobind Singh Skill Institute at Shri Chamkaur Sahib, five government polytechnics and 10 government ITIs.



The institute will also help the state in developing a model ITI and a model polytechnic. Indian Institute of Management, Amritsar also extended support to the state government in promoting skill development.

21. Tamil Nadu Government inked 8 MoUs of Rs 10,399 crores

Tamil Nadu government signed eight new MoUs worth Rs. 10,399 crore, to bring in an investment worth over Rs. 10 crore into the state. A Special Investment Promotion Task Force will be set up under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, to speed up various clearances.



These projects will be implemented in Kancheepuram, Chengalpattu, Ranipettai, Coimbatore, Viluppuram and Erode Districts for manufacture of solar cells and modules, establish an industrial park project, cashew nut processing project, manufacturing air compressors etc.

Reports

1. Sustainable Development Index 2020 released

Sustainable Development Index (SDG) for the year 2020 was unveiled. Sweden topped the index with an overall score of 84.7. Among 166 countries, Bangladesh scored 109th position as it was good in achieving goals relating to poverty alleviation, quality education, decent work and economic growth and climate action.



The SDG index frames the implementation of 17 SDG goals among UN member states in terms of six broad transformations - education and skills, health and wellbeing, clean energy and industry, sustainable land use, sustainable cities, and digital technologies.

2. India ranked 34th in JLL and LaSalle's biennial GRETI

Jones Lang LaSalle's (JLL) released LaSalle's biennial Global Real Estate Transparency Index (GRET). India was placed at 34th position in GRETI 2020 due to higher levels of transparency observed in India. Indian government launched various regulatory reforms, promising developments, enhanced market data and sustainability initiatives. India has also edged itself into the top 20 for Sustainability Transparency.



JLL and LaSalle have been tracking real estate transparency and championing higher standards, since 1999. This 11th edition of GRETI covers 99 countries and territories and 163 city regions.

3. UN's State of Food Security and Nutrition Report, 2020 released

State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020 (SOFI 2020) report was released based on transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets. The report unveiled the estimates of the extent of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition around the world.



Highlights of the report are as follows:

- Nearly 690 million people of the world population are hungry.
- An estimated 2 billion people in the world did not have regular access to sufficient food in 2019.
- COVID-19 pandemic may add between 83 and 132 million people to the total number of undernourished in the world in 2020.
- Diet-related social cost of greenhouse gas emissions to be more than USD 1.7 trillion per year by 2030.

4. India records world's largest reduction in poverty from 2005-16

According to a report published by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, India has recorded the largest reduction in poverty from 2005 to 2016. More than 270 million people in India were lifted out of poverty during this period.

The study was based on a global multidimensional poverty index (MPI). India, Bangladesh and Nepal — were among the 16 fastest countries to reduce their MPI value.



5. India ranks third in global manufacturing locations

According to the Global Manufacturing Risk Index (MRI) report by property consultant Cushman & Wakefield, India ranks third in the list of most-suitable locations for global manufacturing among 48 countries in terms of cost competitiveness. China retains the top spot, followed by the US at second.

However, India ranks 30th in risk scenario. Countries that present lower levels of political and economic risks are ranked higher. Each of the countries has been assessed in four key areas: Bounce back ability, Conditions, Costs and Risks.



6. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Global Rights Index released

International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Global Rights Index was unveiled that ranked 144 countries on the degree of respect for workers' rights.

Highlights are as follows:

- 85% of countries have violated the right to strike.
- The ten worst countries for workers in 2020 were India, Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Honduras, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, Turkey and Zimbabwe.
- The Middle East and North Africa continued to be the world's worst region for workers' rights.
- Workers had no or restricted access to justice in 72% of countries.



7. India among top 10 countries gaining forest area in the world

According to the latest Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) published by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, India has ranked third among the top 10 countries that have gained in forest areas in the last decade. The top ten countries in the report are China, Australia, India, Chile, Vietnam, Turkey, the United States, France, Italy and Romania.



India reported 0.38% annual gain in forest, or 266,000 hectare of forest increase every year at an average. The FRA 2020 has credited the government's Joint Forest Management programme for the significant increase in community-managed forest areas.

8. Hyderabad is 16th most surveilled city in world

According to an annual report published by the UK-based Comparitech, Hyderabad with over three lakh surveillance cameras has been ranked 16th among the top 20 most surveilled cities in the world. London and Hyderabad were the only cities outside of China to make the top 20.



London took the third place. The city of Taiyuan in China was ranked first with 4,65,255 CCTV cameras. Hyderabad had 3 lakh CCTV cameras.

9. United Nations World Wildlife Crime Report released

United Nations World Wildlife Crime Report 2020 was unveiled.

Highlights of the report are as follows:

- India and Thailand are topmost suppliers of the illegal tiger products in the world.
- Millions of species that are not listed by CITES may be illegally harvested and traded internationally.
- Nearly 6,000 species have been seized between 1999-2018, including not only mammals but reptiles, corals, birds, and fish.
- Out of the 155 cases, where the nationality of the trafficker could be identified, 18 percent belonged to India, followed by 14 percent Vietnamese and 8 percent Indonesian traffickers.



Resignations & Retirements

1. Former Germany and Bayern Munich striker Mario Gomez retired

Former Germany striker Mario Gomez announced his retirement from football after scoring in his last game for Stuttgart. Gomez is considered to be one of the best German forwards of his time. He scored 31 goals in 78 appearances for the national team.

Gomez started his club career at Stuttgart, winning the Bundesliga in 2006-07. He moved to Bayern Munich, where he won the Bundesliga twice more and the Champions League once.



2. Shashank Manohar stepped down as ICC Chairman

Shashank Manohar stepped down as Chairman of ICC. Deputy Chairman Imran Khwaja will assume the responsibilities of the Chairperson until a successor is elected.

Shashank Manohar has served two consecutive terms as the ICC chairman starting 2016. He was again elected for a second term in 2018. Manohar had taken over as President of the Board of Control for Cricket (BCCI) in India in October 2015, after the death of veteran administrator Jagmohan Dalmiya.



3. French Prime Minister Édouard Philippe resigned

French Prime Minister Édouard Philippe resigned as President Emmanuel Macron embarked on a high-stakes reshuffle of his cabinet. Philippe was appointed in 2017 after Macron's presidential election victory.

Jean Castex has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of France. Castex is a career civil servant from the centre-right of French politics. He is credited for his strategy of reopening the economy of France post Covid lockdown.



4. Karnam Sekar retired as MD & CEO of Indian Overseas Bank

The Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Indian Overseas Bank (IOB), Karnam Sekar, retired on 30th June 2020. Karnam had joined the bank as an OSD (officer on special duty) and whole-time director on April 1, 2019. He was elevated as MD and CEO on July 1, 2019, after the retirement of Subramaniam Kumar.



Prior to joining IOB as OSD, he was MD and CEO of Dena Bank. He was Deputy Managing Director and Chief Credit Officer in State Bank of India. Sekar had joined SBI as Probationary officer.

5. Two-time Olympic champion Lin Dan announced retirement

China's two-time Olympic badminton champion Lin Dan has announced his retirement. He won the Olympics singles titles in Beijing in 2008 and the 2012 London Games. The 36-year-old has won all the sport's major titles, including five world championships' gold medals and six All England titles.



In 2011, he became the first badminton player to seal the sport's 'Super Grand Slam' by winning all nine of its major titles. Lin was voted Most Valuable Player (MVP) during the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, China.

6. Egyptian squash player Raneem El Welily announced retirement

World's top-ranked squash player Raneem El Welily announced retirement. She topped the women's squash rankings, since December 2018. During her career, she won 24 titles in championships such as Tournament of Champions, Netsuite Open, PSA World Tour Finals, World Open, China Open etc.



Raneem El Welily won her first senior Tour title in 2009, when she triumphed at the Heliopolis Open in Egypt. She became the top-ranking squash player in 2015 and became the first Arab woman to secure the world's top-ranking in any sport.

7. Former Socceroos captain Mile Jedinak announced retirement

Veteran Football player Mile Jedinak announced his retirement from sports. He is popularly known as 'Socceroos', for being Socceroos captain. He retired from international football in 2018. He made 79 appearances for the Australian national team from 2008 to 2018 and headed captaincy 25 times.



Mile Jedinak has been honored with Crystal Palace Player of the Year: 2012–13, PFA Footballer of the Year: 2013–14, Asian International Footballer of the Year: 2014, AFC Asian Cup: 2015 and various others.

8. Tunisian Prime Minister Elyes Fakhfakh resigned

Tunisia's Prime Minister Elyes Fakhfakh resigned from his position, due to suspicions of conflict of interest, because of his stake in a waste processing company that had won deals worth 44 million dinars (\$15m) from the state. He served as the Prime Minister of Tunisia from February 2020 to July 2020.



Elyes Fakhfakh served as the Minister of Tourism and as the Minister of Finances in 2012 under Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali. Tunisia is a country in the Maghreb region of North Africa, situated between Algeria and Libya along the Mediterranean Sea.

9. German footballer Andre Schurrle announced retirement

Andre Schürrle, a World Cup winner with Germany, has announced his retirement from football at the age of 29 after terminating his contract with Borussia Dortmund. He is known for his starring role in Germany's 2014 World Cup win.



Andre Schürrle won 57 caps for his country, scoring 22 times, and played for Bayer Leverkusen, Chelsea and Wolfsburg prior to joining Dortmund in 2016. He won the 2014-15 Premier League with Chelsea.

10. Rahul Bajaj stepped down as Chairman of Bajaj Finance

Rahul Bajaj has stepped down as Non-Executive Chairman of Bajaj Finance Ltd after 33 years at the helm. He will be succeeded by his son Sanjiv Bajaj, currently Vice Chairman. Rahul Bajaj will continue to serve the company as a non-executive non-independent director.

Sanjiv Bajaj chairs the board of Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Co. and Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co. He is also the managing director of Bajaj Holdings and Investment.



1. ICMR to launch indigenous Covid-19 vaccine for public use by Aug 15

Indian Council of Medical Research, ICMR is planning to launch indigenous Covid-19 vaccine for public use by the 15th of August after completion of all clinical trials. ICMR has partnered with Bharat Biotech International Limited to develop this path breaking, Covid-19 vaccine.

This is the first indigenous vaccine being developed in India and one of the top priority projects of the government. The vaccine is derived from a SARS-COV2 strain isolated by ICMR-National Institute of Virology, Pune.



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2. IIT Gandhinagar developed AI based tool to detect Covid-19 from chest X-ray

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN) have developed an Artificial Intelligence (AI) - based deep learning tool for detection of Covid-19 from Chest X-ray images. This online tool indicates the probability, if a person is infected with Covid-19.

The IIT researchers pooled the data of X-ray images of COVID-19 infected patients as well as healthy persons from different sources available on the internet. They trained a machine learning architecture using deep learning algorithms with these images.



3. Mylab launched India's first machine to automate Molecular Diagnostic Tests

Mylab Discovery Solutions launched 'Compact XL' - India's first machine to automate the manual processes of molecular diagnostic tests such as RT-PCR tests for Covid-19.

Compact XL is a compact bench-top machine that will automate lab processes from sample handling to preparing RT-PCR ready tubes. It is a cartridge-based machine and can test multiple samples at the same time. It can be used for a wide range of RNA/DNA-based tests. It will eliminate traditional barriers to the adoption of molecular diagnostics at labs and address any potential demand-supply gaps of highly skilled technicians for testing.



4. World's first reusable PPE Kit launched

India's Loyal Textile Mills Limited in collaboration with Reliance Industries India and HeiQ from Switzerland, launched world's first reusable PPE kit with Triple Viral Shield Technology. 'VIRAL SHIELD' comprises of Covid-19 anti-viral and reusable personal protective equipment (PPE), masks and protective fashion wear range.



An antiviral spray technology has also been developed for garments. PPEs can be washed and sterilised 10 times, whereas masks can be washed 25 times. It has 95 % particulate filtration efficiency and 99.9% bacterial filtration efficiency.

5. IIT Kanpur developed UV sanitising device 'SHUDDH'

The Imagineering Laboratory department of IIT Kanpur has developed an Ultraviolet (UV) sanitising product named "SHUDDH". SHUDDH stands for Smartphone operated Handy Ultraviolet Disinfection Helper. It has six UV lights of 15 Watts each that can be individually monitored from a distance.



The device at its full operation can disinfect a 10x10 squared feet room in about 15 minutes. SHUDDH can assist in killing the spread of corona virus at the highly prone places such as hospitals, hotels, malls, offices and schools.

6. ISRO to launch Amazonia-1 satellite of Brazil

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch Brazil's Amazonia - 1 satellite onboard the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). Amazonia-1 will be the first satellite for Earth Observation that is designed, assembled and tested in Brazil.



The Brazilian satellite will help in observing and monitoring the deforestation of the Amazon Region as well as in the agricultural and vegetation areas. India and Brazil signed a Framework Agreement for co-operation in the field of outer space in January 2004.

7. Zydus Cadila began human trials of its potential Covid-19 vaccine ZyCoV-D

Zydus Cadilla started human trials of its potential Covid-19 vaccine ZyCoV-D. The plasmid DNA vaccine ZyCoV-D, designed and developed by Zydus and partially funded by the Department of Biotechnology is the second potential vaccine candidate after Bharat Biotech's COVAXIN, which got the approval for human clinical trial by the Central Drug Standard Control Organisation.



ZyCoV-D is developed indigenously at the company's Vaccine Technology Centre in Ahmedabad after completing the preclinical phase. The vaccine was found to elicit a strong immune response in multiple animal species like mice, rats, guinea pigs and rabbits.

8. HRD Ministry launched world's most affordable COVID-19 diagnostic kit corosure

Union Human Resource Development Minister, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' e-launched the world's most affordable RT-PCR based COVID-19 diagnostic kit developed by IIT Delhi and approved by the ICMR and DCGI. Corosure diagnostic kit developed by IIT Delhi, will be now available for use by the authorised testing labs.



The base price of the RT-PCR assay is Rs. 399 excluding the RNA isolation and laboratory charges. IIT Delhi has given license to ten companies to manufacture COVID-19 diagnostic kit, using the technology developed by its researchers.

9. Indian Scientists developed low cost capacitor from industrial waste cotton

Scientists at the International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials developed a simple, low-cost, environmentally friendly, and sustainable super-capacitor electrode derived from industrial waste cotton, which can be used as an energy harvester storage device. Super-capacitor is a next-generation energy storage device.



For the first time, natural seawater is explored as an environmentally friendly aqueous electrolyte. Seawater based super-capacitor shows very good durability upon 10,000 charge-discharge cycles with 99% of capacitance retention.

10. DCGI approved India's first indigenously developed pneumonia vaccine

The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has accorded its approval to the country's first fully indigenously developed vaccine against pneumonia. The Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Conjugate Vaccine (PPSV23) has been developed and manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII).



The vaccine offers protection against 23 types of pneumonia-causing bacteria. The vaccine has been pre-qualified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in December 2019. A Special Expert Committee (SEC) of DCGI reviewed the phase I, II and III clinical trial data submitted by SII.

11. IIT Madras start-up developed portable Covid hospital

An Indian Institute of Technology Madras-incubated start-up Modulus Housing has developed a portable hospital unit called 'MediCAB' that can be installed anywhere within two hours by four people. It is a decentralised approach to detect, screen, identify, isolate and treat COVID-19 patients in their local communities through these portable microstructures.



The hospital unit is foldable and is composed of four zones - a doctor's room, an isolation room, a medical room/ward and a twin-bed ICU, maintained at negative pressure. It was launched recently in Wayanad District of Kerala.

12. THSTI Faridabad developed synthetic peptide-based vaccine candidate targeting Corona Virus

Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad has developed a synthetic peptide-based vaccine candidate targeting Corona Virus. The potential vaccine targets the spike domain of the Virus to generate an immune response that could block the viral invasion.



The multi-epitope based vaccine candidate was developed by stitching the desired peptides to produce the protein. This approach generates potential neutralising antibodies and also reduces antibody-dependent pulmonary immune pathology.

13. Oxford Covid-19 vaccine's human trial shows positive result

The human trial of COVID-19 vaccine candidate developed by the University of Oxford and backed by AstraZeneca Plc has shown a positive result. The vaccine is officially named as AZD1222. It has showed protective immune response in hundreds of people who received vaccine dose.

AZD1222 will protect against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) infection. The University of Oxford is a collegiate research university in Oxford, England.



14. India's first in-orbit space debris monitoring and tracking system

Space startup called Digantara developed India's first in-orbit Space Debris Monitoring and tracking system, which is based on LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology. The tracking system will involve tracking of both aircraft and space objects and provide global real-time earth coverage by deploying a constellation of cost-efficient nanosatellites in LEO (Low Earth Orbit).

Funds of Rs. 25 lakhs were provided to start up for developing tracking system. Digantara Research and Technologies Pvt Ltd. is a first Indian private company with a mission to secure long-term spaceflight safety by developing space debris tracking and monitoring services.



15. Genova's vaccine candidate likely to commence clinical trials by year-end

Pune based, Genova Biopharmaceuticals has developed, first of its kind, messenger-RNA based COVID-19 potential Vaccine candidate, HGCO19. Clinical trials of the vaccine candidate are likely to commence by this year-end.

HGCO19 uses self-replicating messenger-RNA platform' ensuring low injectable dosage and sustained antigen release. Genova has developed the vaccine candidate working in collaboration with HDT Biotech of the USA. Department of Biotechnology has facilitated development of the vaccine candidate under the Ind-CEPI mission.



16. NASA Mission to study the Cosmos with a Stratospheric Balloon

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is working on a mission that will take an 8.4-foot telescope high into the stratosphere. The telescope will be sent onboard a football stadium-size balloon. The telescope will observe wavelengths that are not visible from the ground.

The mission is named Astrophysics Stratospheric Telescope for High Spectral Resolution Observations at Submillimeter-wavelengths (ASTHROS). It is scheduled to blast off from Antarctica in December 2023. The mission is managed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.



17. COVISHIELD: India to take up clinical trials of OXFORD Vaccine

Serum Institute of India (SII) has sought permission for 'phase 2/3' clinical trials of Oxford vaccine in India. At least 1,600 participants will determine the safety of 'Covishield'. The clinical trials of a potential COVID-19 vaccine on humans began in April.

Oxford University announced the satisfactory progress with the vaccine, making it one of the leading ones among the dozens of vaccine candidates being developed around the world. The vaccine will cost less than Rs. 1,000 for a shot.



18. DST selected Bengaluru based startup to develop COVID risk assessment app

The Centre for Augmenting WAR with COVID-19 Health Crisis (CAWACH) has selected Bengaluru-based startup Acculi Labs to develop a COVID-19 risk assessment profile called 'Lyfas COVID score'. CAWACH is an initiative by the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

The 'Lyfas' COVID score will detect the possible infection in an asymptomatic individual. Lyfas is an Android application, which captures the capillary pulse and blood volume change, when one keeps the index finger on the rear camera of a mobile phone for five minutes.



1. India umpire Nitin Menon included in ICC Elite Panel

India's Nitin Menon was included in the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) Elite Panel of Umpires for the upcoming 2020-21 season. He replaced England's Nigel Llong and has the experience of officiating in three Tests, 24 ODIs and 16 T20Is so far.

Nitin became only the third Indian umpire to feature in the panel after former captain Srinivas Venkatraghavan and Sundaram Ravi. Menon was earlier part of the Emirates ICC International Panel of Umpires.



2. NADA launched its first mobile application

The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) launched its first mobile application, NADA India App, to provide information about prohibited substances and their inadvertent use. The app is an important step towards dope-free sports.

The app aims to create a bridge between athletes and the NADA by providing easily accessible information on various aspects of sport, and most importantly about prohibited substances and their inadvertent use, which may affect the career of athletes.



3. Wisden named Ravindra Jadeja as India's most valuable Test player in 21st century

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

Jadeja has picked up 213 wickets in 49 Tests. He emerged as the second-fastest Indian to bag 200 wickets — in 44 Tests after R Ashwin who achieved the feat in 37 matches.



4. Valtteri Bottas won F1 Austrian Grand Prix

Mercedes's, Valtteri Bottas (Finland) won the Austrian Grand Prix 2020 at Red Bull Ring in Spielberg, Austria. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc finished at second place followed by McLaren's Lando Norris at third position. This was the first race of 2020 Formula One season.



Bottas now holds a 13-point leader over reigning champion Hamilton, who crossed the line second, but finished fourth. The Austrian Grand Prix is a Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile sanctioned auto race. The Grand Prix returned to the Formula One calendar in 2014.

5. G Akash became India's 66th Chess Grandmaster

G Akash became India's 66th chess Grandmaster. His title was announced at the International Chess Federation (FIDE) for the year 2020. G Akash won the national title in 2012 and earned the International Master title subsequently. Along with him, Ameya Audi of Goa has earned International Master title.



G Akash is a former National champion & has secured 4 GM norms. Prior to this, at Aeroflot Open, he scored an upset win over GM Boris Savchenko.

6. IOA adopted new Branding & Visual Identity

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) adopted a new branding and visual identity as 100 years of participation has been completed of Indian athletes at the Olympic Games. IOA has changed its institutional and a commercial logo, to celebrate a century of participation of the country's athletes at the Summer Olympics.



The new identity signifies a century of passionate work, and contribution of the athletes and officials from across the nation in building Team India. The Indian Olympic Association is the body responsible for selecting athletes to represent India at the Olympic Games, Asian Games and other international athletic meets.

7. Gyanendro Ningombam named as the officiating President of Hockey India

Hockey India Executive Board has named Manipur's Gyanendro Ningombam as the Officiating President of Hockey India. He replaced Mohd Mushtaque Ahmad who resigned as President.



Ningombam has for several years been associated with Manipur Hockey and has been instrumental in supporting talented players and the development of the sport at the grassroots level. Ningombam has earlier served Manipur Hockey as its Chief Executive Officer from 2009 to 2014. He later was elected as Vice President of Manipur Hockey from 2014 - 2018.

8. Lewis Hamilton won Styrian Grand Prix 2020

Lewis Hamilton of the Mercedes won the Styrian Grand Prix 2020 at the Red Bull Ring in Spielberg, Austria. Valtteri Bottas of the Mercedes stood second in the race followed by Max Verstappen of Red Bull.



The 2020 Styrian Grand Prix was the second round of the 2020 Formula One World Championship. Valtteri Bottas of the Mercedes leads the championship table of 2020 followed by his teammate Lewis Hamilton at second position.

9. Qatar to host 2022 FIFA World Cup

The Federation Internationale de Football Association announced to conduct 2022 World Cup in Qatar. With this, Qatar will create history by hosting not only their first FIFA World Cup, but the first ever to be staged in the Middle East.



The Qatari peninsula shares its only land border with Saudi Arabia. 2022 FIFA World Cup is quadrennial international men's association football championship contested by the national FIFA teams of the member associations of FIFA.

10. Real Madrid win record-extending 34th La Liga title

Real Madrid won the record-extending 34th La Liga title after defeating Villarreal. Real have 86 points after 37 games. Defending champions Barcelona have 30 points are second in the table. It was the first title win for Real Madrid after 2017.

This La Liga triumph represented coach Zinedine Zidane's 11th trophy during his managerial reign at the club, just 3 shy of the club's most successful coach, Miguel Muñoz. The club has won three Champions League title under Zidane.



11. Lewis Hamilton won Hungarian Grand Prix

Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes won the Hungarian Grand Prix 2020. This was also his eighth Hungarian Grand Prix victory as he tied with Michael Schumacher's record for most number of wins at a single venue. Max Verstappen was second in the race followed by Valtteri Bottas.

The 2020 Driver Standings is topped by Lewis Hamilton with 63 points followed by Valtteri Bottas and Max Verstappen successively. The 2020 Constructor Standings is currently lead by Mercedes with 121 points followed by Red Bull Racing Honda with 55 points.



12. Haryana to host fourth Khelo India Youth Games

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

Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG), formerly Khelo India School Games (KISG), is the national level multidisciplinary grassroots games in India. It is held for two categories, namely under-17 years school students and under-21 college students. Khelo India Games has been instrumental in identifying grassroots level talent from across the country.



13. Stuart Broad becomes seventh bowler to reach 500 Test wickets

Stuart Broad of England became the seventh bowler to reach 500 Test wickets. He removed West Indies opener Kraigg Brathwaite to take his 500th scalp. Broad took 140 matches to achieve the milestone.

Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan is currently the leading wicket-taker in Test cricket with 800 scalps. He is followed by Shane Warne (708), Anil Kumble (619) and James Anderson (589), Glenn McGrath (563) and Courtney Walsh (519).



14. Jamie Vardy won Premier League's 'Golden Boot'

Leicester City striker Jamie Vardy won the Premier League's Golden Boot award for the top scorer. He top scored with 23 goals in the season. At 33 years of age, he became the oldest player to win the award and the first from Leicester City.

Arsenal's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Southampton's Danny Ings stood jointly on second with 22 goals each. Manchester City's goalkeeper Ederson won the Golden Glove award. City's Kevin De Bruyne won the Playmaker award for 20 assists in a single Premier League season.



National Education Policy 2020

The Union Cabinet cleared a new National Education Policy (NEP). The latest policy is India's third and replaces the 1986 NEP. The NEP 2020 aims at making "India a global knowledge superpower". The Ministry of Human Resource Development would be renamed as Ministry of Education.

The key highlights can be broadly classified into two groups - School Education and Higher Education.



A) School Education:

- **Universalization** of education from **preschool to secondary level** with **100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** in school education by **2030**.
- **About 2 crores out of school children will be brought back into mainstream** under NEP 2020.
- The current **10+2 system** to be **replaced** by a new **5+3+3+4** curricular structure corresponding to **ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years respectively**. This will bring the hitherto uncovered age group of 3-6 years under the school curriculum, which has been recognised globally as the crucial stage for the development of mental faculties of a child.
- It will also have 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi/ pre schooling.
- NCERT will develop a **National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE)** for children up to the age of 8.
- **Vocational Education** to start from **Class 6 with Internships**.
- Teaching up to at **least Grade 5** to be in **mother tongue/regional language**.
- A new and comprehensive **National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2021**, will be formulated by the **National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)** in consultation with **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)**.
- By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree.
- A new National Assessment Centre, **PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)**, will be set up as a standard-setting body.

B) Higher Education:

- NEP 2020 aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.
- **3.5 crore seats** to be added in higher education.
- It proposes a holistic Undergraduate education with a flexible curriculum which can be of 3 or 4 years with multiple exit options and appropriate certification within this period.
- **Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs)**, at par with IITs, IIMs, to be set up as models of best multidisciplinary education of global standards in the country.

- **The National Research Foundation** will be created as an apex body for fostering a strong research culture and building research capacity across higher education.
- **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)** will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body for entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education. HECI will have four independent verticals namely - National Higher education regulatory council (NHERC) for regulation, General Education Council (GEC) for standard-setting, Higher education Grants council for funding and National Accreditation Council for accreditation.
- It also paves the way for **foreign universities to set up campuses** in India.
- The policy aims to **achieve 100% youth and adult literacy**.
- **Academic Bank of Credits to be established to facilitate Transfer of Credits.**
- The central government and state governments will work together to increase the public investment in the education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest.