

CURRENT AFFAIRS

March 2020



Summary and Multiple Choice Questions



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Current Affairs – March 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 **March 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. Smt Amita Pandove took oath as Information Commissioner

Smt Amita Pandove took oath as Information Commissioner, Central Information Commission (CIC) by the Chief Information Commissioner, Shri Bimal Julka. With her induction, the total number of Information Commissioners in the Central Information Commission including Chief Information Commissioner has gone up to 7.



According to rules, the CIC and ICs are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister as its head, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and a Union cabinet minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister.

2. Sanjay Kumar Panda appointed as India's next Ambassador to Turkey

Shri Sanjay Kumar Panda, presently Consulate General of India, San Francisco was appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Turkey. He replaced Sanjay Bhattacharya.



Panda will be responsible for handling India-Turkey relations that are under strain, at present. Turkey criticized India after communal riots in Delhi. India cautioned Ankara against encouraging cross-border terrorism and refrained Turkey from commenting on the internal affairs of the country.

3. Ajay Bhushan Pandey appointed as new Finance Secretary

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet appointed the current Revenue Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey as the new Finance Secretary. He replaced the current Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar. He has served as GSTN Chairman and as CEO of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).



Special Secretary in the Department of Revenue Girish Chandra Murmu was appointed as new Expenditure Secretary. Delhi Chief Secretary Anshu Prakash was appointed as additional secretary in the Department of Telecommunications.

4. Nokia announced Pekka Lundmark as its new President & CEO

Nokia's Board of Directors appointed Pekka Lundmark as President and Chief Executive Officer of Nokia. He replaced Rajeev Suri who will serve as the President & CEO of Nokia till August 31, 2020. Lundmark is currently President and CEO of Fortum, a leading energy company based in Espoo, Finland.



Prior to Fortum, Lundmark served as President and CEO of Konecranes, a global material-handling technology leader, and from 1990-2000 he held multiple executive positions at Nokia, including Vice President of Strategy and Business Development at Nokia Networks.

5. Shivakumar and Anil Chaudhary appointed as chiefs of Karnataka and Delhi units for Congress

The Congress party appointed new chiefs for its Karnataka and Delhi units. While senior leader DK Shivakumar was appointed as its Karnataka unit chief, former MLA Anil Chaudhary was appointed to lead the Delhi state unit.



Shivakumar replaced Dinesh Gundu Rao and Mr Chaudhary took charge from Subhash Chopra. Congress has also appointed Abhishek Dutt, Shivani Chopra, Jaikishan, Mudit Agarwal and Ali Hassan as vice-presidents of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee.

6. Lt Gen KJS Dhillon joined CDS Staff as DG-D.I.A

Lt Gen KJS Dhillon will take over the post of Director General Defence Intelligence Agency and Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Intelligence). This department comes under the Chief of Defence Staff in the newly created Department of Military Affairs.



Lt Gen Dhillon, as DG DIA and DCIDS, will be responsible for collating technical as well as human intelligence for the three armed forces. He recently handed over the charge of XV Corps to Lt Gen BS Raju.

7. ECI appointed Hirdesh Kumar new Chief Electoral Officer of Jammu and Kashmir

The Election Commission of India has appointed Hirdesh Kumar as the new Chief Electoral Officer of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. He replaced Shailendra Kumar.

Hridesh Kumar, a 1999 batch IAS officer is presently serving as Commissioner Secretary in the School Education Department of J&K. The appointment comes at an important time when delimitation of the legislative assembly seats is around the corner and Union Government has already constituted the delimitation commission.



8. Surjit Singh Deswal gets additional charge of BSF DG

Surjit Singh Deswal took over the additional charge of Director General (DG) of Border Security Force (BSF). He is 1984-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Haryana cadre and is currently the Director-General of Indo-Tibet Border Police.

Deswal took over from Director-General Vivek Johri, who has been appointed Director-General of Madhya Pradesh Police. The Border Security Force (BSF) is a paramilitary force charged with guarding India's land border during peace time and preventing transnational crime.



9. Prashant Kumar appointed as new CEO & MD of Yes Bank

Prashant Kumar has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Yes Bank under the restructuring scheme. Kumar was the former Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Managing Director of the State Bank of India (SBI).

Sunil Mehta, former non-executive Chairman of Punjab National Bank has been appointed as the non-executive Chairman of Yes Bank. Mahesh Krishnamurthy and Atul Bheda have been appointed to the post of non-executive Directors of the bank.



10. Karan Bajwa appointed as new MD of Google Cloud India

Karan Bajwa appointed as Managing Director of Google Cloud in India. He will be responsible for handling various operations for Google Cloud's extensive solution portfolio such as Google Cloud Platform and G Suite. He has earlier served as the Managing Director of IBM for India and South Asia, worked with Microsoft for nine years and with Cisco Systems in India and Singapore.



Google Cloud Platform, offered by Google, is a suite of cloud computing services that runs on the same infrastructure that Google uses internally for its end-user products, such as Google Search, Gmail and YouTube.

11. Ravinder Singh Dhillon appointed as new CMD of PFC

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved appointment of Ravinder Singh Dhillon as Chairman and Managing Director of Power Finance Corporation (PFC). Power Finance Corporation Ltd. is a non-banking financial company engaged in providing financial assistance to the power sector. Prior to this appointment, he was serving as a Director (Projects, Public Grievance) in Power Finance Corporation (PFC) Limited.



Other appointment includes IFS officer Somnath Ghosh as officer on special duty in the Department of Defence.

12. Sameer Aggarwal appointed as new CEO of Walmart India

Sameer Aggarwal has been appointed as CEO of Walmart India. He will report to Dirk Van Den Berghe, Executive Vice-President and Regional CEO of Asia and Global Sourcing, Walmart. He succeeds Krish Iyer.



Aggarwal was working as the Chief Finance, Development and Supply Chain Officer for KFC Thailand. Prior to KFC, he worked with Sainsbury's in its UK and China operations as Head of Strategy and then Executive Assistant to the CEO.

Awards

1. National Award for Young Woman Scientists

Women scientists from Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences (DIPAS), DRDO and IIT Delhi have received National Award for Young Woman Showing Excellence through Application of Technology for Societal Benefits. Dr. Shweta Rawat from DRDO DIPAS and Dr. Shalini Gupta of IIT Delhi received the award this year.



Dr. Rawat has developed a female-specific Full Body Protector (Prabal) to safeguard the Female troops deployed in riot control actions. Dr. Shalini Gupta has successfully

led the development of a technology Septiflo™, which offers fast and affordable assay for point-of-care diagnosis and treatment of bacterial septicemia, one of the biggest in-hospital killers worldwide.

2. President of India conferred 61st Annual Lalit Kala Akademi Awards

President Ram Nath Kovind, conferred the 61st annual Lalit Kala Akademi Awards on 15 meritorious artists. Artists honoured were Anoop Kumar Manzukhi Gopi, David Malakar, Devendra Kumar Khare, Dinesh Pandya, Faruque Ahmed Halder, Hari Ram Kumbhawat, Keshari Nandan Prasad, Mohan Kumar T, Ratan Krishna Saha, Sagar Vasant Kamble, Satwinder Kaur, Sunil Thiruvayur, Tejaswi Narayan Sonawane, Yashpal Singh and Yashwant Singh.



Lalit Kala Akademi organises art exhibitions and award ceremonies every year to promote art as well as to honour talents.

3. Environmental activist Jadav Payeng awarded Commonwealth Points of Light Award

Assam's Environmental activist Jadav Payeng was awarded with 128th Commonwealth Points of Light Award. Jadav Payeng, who is popularly known as the 'Forest Man of India,' received honor by Queen Elizabeth II for his exceptional voluntary service to environmental conservation. He has contributed years to transform a treeless sandbar along the Brahmaputra river into a 1,360-acre vibrant wildlife haven. The haven acts as home for animals and birds of varied species. It is named 'Molai forest'.



The Points of Light Award recognises people across the 53 Commonwealth nations for the difference they are making in their communities and beyond.

4. President of India presented Nari Shakti Puraskar

President Ram Nath Kovind presented Nari Shakti Puraskar to Bina Devi on the occasion of International Women's Day. She is known as 'Mushroom Mahila' for popularising mushroom cultivation. Several other women were awarded in other fields.



The Nari Shakti Puraskar, instituted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, are "National Award in recognition of exceptional work for women empowerment" conferred every year on March 8 as a mark of respect and recognition for those who have demonstrated exemplary courage and stellar contribution towards empowerment of women.

5. V Praveen Rao wins MS Swaminathan Award for the period 2017-2019

V Praveen Rao, Vice-Chancellor of Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU), has won the seventh Dr. MS Swaminathan Award for the period 2017-2019. He was awarded for his contributions in the fields of agricultural research, teaching, extension and administration.



The biennial national award was constituted by Retired ICAR Employees Association (RICAREA) and Nuziveedu Seeds Limited (NSL). It carries a prize of ₹2 lakh and a citation. Praveen Rao handled 13 research and six consultancy projects on micro irrigation in India, Israel and South Africa.

6. Arfa Sherwani & Rohini Mohan conferred with Chameli Devi Jain Award

Arfa Khanum Sherwani of The Wire and Bengaluru-based freelancer Rohini Mohan were jointly conferred with Chameli Devi Jain Award for outstanding women media-persons of the year. Sherwani was chosen for her reporting from conflict situations in Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh. Rohini Mohan's reportage on the NRC exercise in Assam set a new benchmark for investigative journalism. Rohini writes on human rights and politics in South Asia.



Previous recipients of the award include Tavleen Singh, Neerja Chowdhury, Barkha Dutt, and Supriya Sharma, among others.

7. Abel Prize Laureates 2020 announced

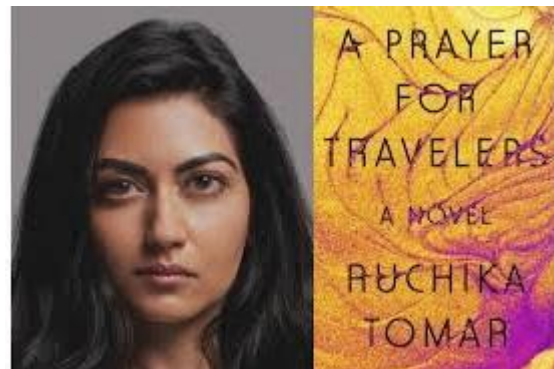
The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters announced Hillel Furstenberg from Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel and Gregory Margulis from Yale University, the USA as winners of the Abel Prize 2020 for their “pioneering use of methods from probability & dynamics in group theory, number theory and combinatorics”. Hillel Furstenberg and Gregory Margulis invented random walk techniques to investigate mathematical objects such as groups and graphs, and in so doing introduced probabilistic methods to solve many open problems in group theory.



The 2020 Abel Prize Laureates will be honoured at Abel Prize Ceremony 2021 due to Corona pandemic.

8. Novelist Ruchika Tomar wins Pen/Hemingway Award 2020

Critically-acclaimed debut novelist Ruchika Tomar won the 2020 PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Novel, for "A Prayer for Travelers". The award includes a \$25,000 prize and a month-long Residency Fellowship at the Ucross Foundation in Wyoming, a retreat for artists and writers, valued at \$10,000.



The two PEN/Hemingway Award runners-up are Stay and Fight by Madeline ffitch and The Travelers by Regina Porter (Hogarth). The prize is underwritten by the Hemingway family and the Ernest Hemingway Foundation.

9. Zoya Akhtar honoured with IIFTC Tourism Impact Award 2020

IIFTC honored Indian filmmaker Zoya Akhtar with IIFTC Tourism Impact Award 2020 for her outstanding contribution to the world tourism through her cinema. “Zoya Akhtar set the trend in the film tourism space with her 2011 classic ‘Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara’ shot in Spain, following it up with 2015 comedy-drama ‘Dil Dhadakne Do’ shot in Turkey and promote tourism of these counties through her films making her a deserving winner.



IIFTC Tourism Impact Award recognises the successful convergence of films and tourism and it celebrates Indian filmmakers, whose cinema has contributed to the growth of world tourism.

Bills and Acts

1. Cabinet approved Companies (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019

Union Cabinet approved the Companies (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019 to amend the Companies Act, 2013. The Bill would also further ease of living for law abiding corporates.



The Bill would remove criminality under the Act in case of defaults which can be determined objectively and which, otherwise, lack the element of fraud or do not involve larger public interest. This would also lead to further de-clogging of the criminal justice system in the country. Earlier, the Companies (Amendment) Act, 2015 amended certain provisions of the Act to remove difficulties faced in implementation of various provisions of the Act.

2. Lok Sabha passed IIIT Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020

Lok Sabha passed the Indian Institutes of Information Technology Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020. It will amend the principal acts of 2014 and 2017 and grant statutory status to five IIIT in Public Private Partnership mode at Surat, Bhopal, Bhagalpur, Agartala and Raichur and declare them as Institutions of National Importance along with already existing 15 IIIT under the Indian Institutes of Information Technology (Public-Private Partnership) Act, 2017.



The Act was enacted in pursuance of a scheme approved by the Government to set up twenty Indian Institutes of Information Technology in Public-private Partnership mode.

3. Parliament passed Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill 2020

The Parliament has passed the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill 2020. The amendments are aimed at streamlining the insolvency resolution process and to protect last-mile funding and boost investment in financially-distressed sectors.



The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, which came into force in 2016, has been amended thrice. The latest changes pertain to various sections of the IBC as well as introduction of a new section.

4. Parliament approved Mineral Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020

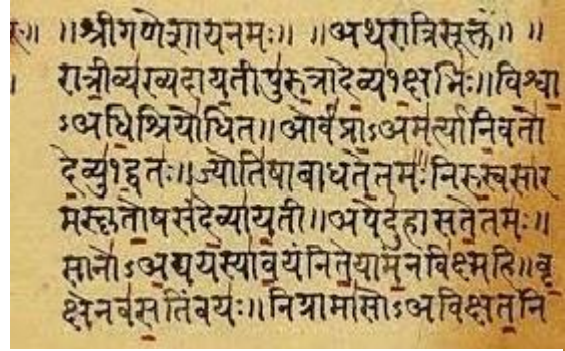
The Parliament has passed the Mineral Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020 for amendments in Mines & Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act 1957 and The Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015. The Bill provides relaxation to companies which do not possess any prior coal mining experience in India to participate in auction of coal/lignite blocks.



The Bill also permits removal of the end use restriction that would allow wider participation in auction of coal mines for a variety of purposes. The Bill also allows prospecting licence-cum-mining lease (PL-cum-ML) for coal/lignite which increases the availability of coal & lignite blocks.

5. Rajya Sabha passed Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2019

The Rajya Sabha passed the Central Sanskrit University Bill 2019. It will provide Central University status to three universities in India - Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth Tirupati, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan and Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth.



The Bill will give a boost to Post Graduate, Doctoral and Post Doctoral education and Research in the field of Sanskrit and Shastraic education. It will also help in enhancing the opportunities for imparting education in the field of Indian Philosophy, Yoga, Ayurveda and Naturopathy.

6. Lok Sabha passed Appropriation Bill

The Lok Sabha passed the Appropriation Bill 2020-21. The bill authorises the government to draw over ₹110.4-lakh crore from the Consolidated Fund of India for its working as well as implementation of its programmes and schemes.



This completed two-thirds of the exercise for approval of the Budget for 2020-21. Speaker Om Birla applied 'guillotine' on demands of grants for various ministries. Once the Speaker applies the guillotine, all the outstanding demands for grants, whether discussed or not, are put to vote at once and passed.

7. Lok Sabha passed Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill 2020

Lok Sabha passed the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill 2020.

The bill aims at establishment of an Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda in Jamnagar, Gujarat. It will be a centre for promotion of quality and excellence in education, research and training in the field of Ayurveda and allied disciplines.



Ayurveda treatment would also be now brought under the Insurance cover. The global market for Ayurvedic products is estimated to reach around 10 billion US dollar by 2022.

8. Rajya Sabha passed National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill 2019

Rajya Sabha passed both the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill 2019 and the National Commission for Homoeopathy Medicine Bill 2019. The two bills aim at providing a quality and affordable medical education system ensuring high quality medical professionals in Indian System of Medicine and Homeopathy, in all parts of the country.



Commission will also ensure adoption of latest medical research in the work of such professionals. Indian system of medicine will be promoted as the allopathic system is costlier. There will be constitution of separate boards and provision of adequate funds for further development of the alternative medicine system.

9. Lok Sabha passed Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020

Lok Sabha passed the Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020. The amendments would fulfill the requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).



Amendments will enable the three regulatory bodies in the Civil Aviation sector in India, namely Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security and Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau to become more effective, which will lead to enhancement in the level of safety and security of aircraft operations in the country.

10. Parliament passed Finance Bill, 2020

The Parliament passed the Finance Bill, 2020. The Bill will give effect to the financial proposals made by the Central Government in Union Budget 2020, for the financial year 2020-21.



Salient Features:

- Enforcement of revised personal income tax rates for those who do not avail of any tax incentives.
- The Bill removes the liability of companies to pay a tax of 15% on dividends distributed by it to its shareholders. The same will now be taxable in the hands of the recipient, under the dividend income head.
- TDS of 1% will be levied on e-commerce transactions.

11. MoS Home introduced Rashtriya Raksha University Bill, 2020

Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy introduced the Rashtriya Raksha University Bill, 2020 and The National Forensic Sciences University Bill, 2020 in the Lok Sabha. The Bill proposes to establish the Rashtriya Raksha University by upgrading the Raksha Shakti University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The new university is proposed to be a multi-disciplinary university to create new knowledge through research.



The National Forensic Sciences University will be an institution of national importance to achieve excellence in the field of forensic science in conjunction with applied behavioural science studies, law, criminology and other allied areas and technology.

Books & Authors

1. Smriti Irani released book titled “Chronicles of Change Champions”

Union Minister Smriti Zubin Irani released a book titled “Chronicles of Change Champions” in New Delhi. The book is a compilation of 25 innovative initiatives taken at the state and district levels under the Prime Minister’s flagship scheme of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao.

The book captures the convergent approach adopted at the grass-root level. It provides insight into the unique manner of community engagement by the District Administration and front-line workers.



2. National Book Trust of MHRD launched #StayHomeIndiaWithBooks initiative

In the wake of preventive measures of the Government of India to contain the spread of Covid-19 and to encourage people to #StayIn and #StayHome, the National Book Trust of HRD Ministry, in its efforts to encourage people to read books while at home, is providing its select and best-selling titles for FREE Download as part of its initiative of #StayHomeIndiaWithBooks!

The 100+ books, in PDF format, can be downloaded from the NBT's website <https://nbtindia.gov.in>. The books cover all genres of fiction, biography, popular science, teacher's handbook, and majorly books for children and young adults.



3. Book titled “The Adventures of the Daredevil Democrat” released

Odisha Chief Minister (CM) Naveen Patnaik released the comic book titled “The Adventures of the Daredevil Democrat”. The book was released on the occasion of the 104th birth Anniversary of former Odisha CM Late Biju Patnaik in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

The book deals about the life and works of legendary leader and Naveen Patnaik’s father Biju Patnaik. The book aims to inspire and encourage young minds to serve the motherland.



4. “My Encounters in Parliament” authored by Bhalchandra Mungekar released

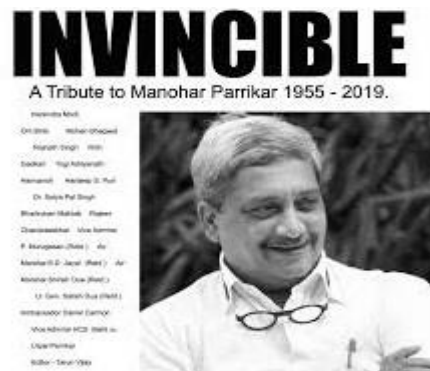
The book titled "My Encounters in Parliament" authored by Bhalchandra Mungekar was released by former Vice President Hamid Ansari. Bhalchandra Mungekar is an Indian economist, a former member of Rajya Sabha. He is an expert in agricultural economics and has handled several positions in various organizations including the Planning Commission.



The book details about the work life experiences and challenges faced by former Vice President Hamid Ansari in Parliament.

5. Nitin Gadkari presented ‘Invincible-A Tribute to Manohar Parrikar’ to President

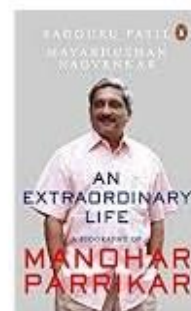
Union Minister Nitin Gadkari presented a copy of the book -- 'Invincible - A Tribute to Manohar Parrikar' to President Ram Nath Kovind. Parrikar, who was Goa's Chief Minister and also a Defence Minister passed away due to illness in 2019. The book describes on Manohar Parrikar's life's challenges and contribution towards the country.



Manohar Parrikar served as Chief Minister of Goa from 14 March 2017 until his death. He was honored with Padma Bhushan in 2020.

6. An Extraordinary Life: A biography of Manohar Parrikar book released

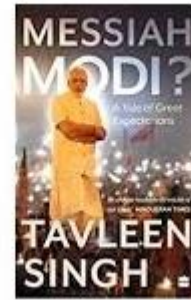
The book titled 'An Extraordinary Life: A biography of Manohar Parrikar' was released. The book details life of the former defence minister and Goa chief minister Manohar Parrikar. It is penned by veteran journalists Sadguru Patil and Mayabhushan Nagvenkar. It is published by Penguin Random House India.



Manohar Parrikar was an Indian politician and leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party who served as Chief Minister of Goa from 2000 to 2005 and from 2012 to 2014 and from 2014 to 2017.

7. Book entitled ‘Messiah Modi: A Great tale of expectations’ released

A book entitled 'Messiah Modi: A Great Tale of Expectations' penned by senior journalist & author Tavleen Singh and published by HarperCollins India was released. The book describes early support for Modi the candidate, followed by a helpless disenchantment with Modi the PM and the cabinet he headed.



The book is about the journey from lynchings to demonetization up to Article 370, the foremost controversial law CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act), implementation of National Register of Citizens (NRC) & the guarantees he made in his first term.

8. Book titled ‘Legacy of Learning’ authored by Savita Chhabra released

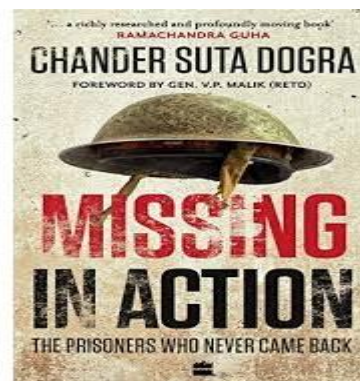
Savita Chhabra, Chairperson of Hygienic Research Institute Private Limited launched her debut book, called 'Legacy of Learning'. The book details about fictional stories and relatable interpretations of the Bhagavad Gita.



The book introduces readers to the importance of performing good karma and nudges them to be conscious about the purpose of their lives in every decision they make. Savita has successfully transformed HRIPL into the multi-crore company that it is today.

9. Book titled “Missing in Action: The Prisoners Who Never Came Back” launched

A book titled “Missing in Action: The Prisoners Who Never Came Back” was launched. The book is written by Chander Suta Dogra and published by Harpercollins. The book unearths startling revelations that shed new light on the story of India's soldiers missing in action.



The soldiers went missing in enemy territory while on daring missions during the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars. The book also attempts to find out what happened to them.

Committees

1. Task force on Sustainable Public Procurement constituted

A Task Force on Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) was constituted by Department of Expenditure with the following Terms of Reference (ToR):

- (i) Review international best practices in the area of Sustainable Public Procurement
- (ii) Inventorise the current status of SPP in India across Government organizations
- (iii) Prepare a draft Sustainable Procurement Action Plan
- (iv) Recommend an initial set of product / service categories (along with their specifications) where SPP can be implemented.



2. Government sets up a committee on Kisan Rail

The Government has set up a committee to work out modalities of Kisan Rail. It comprises of representatives of Agriculture and Railway ministries. The committee will also look into cold supply chain for perishables by starting the express and freight trains with refrigerated coaches.



To transport perishable parcel traffic, newly designed Refrigerated Parcel Vans were procured through RCF, Kapurthala. For the movement of fruits and vegetables to different parts of the country, a total of 98 Ventilated Insulated Containers have been procured, through CONCOR.

3. Finance Commission constituted committee to review fiscal consolidation roadmap

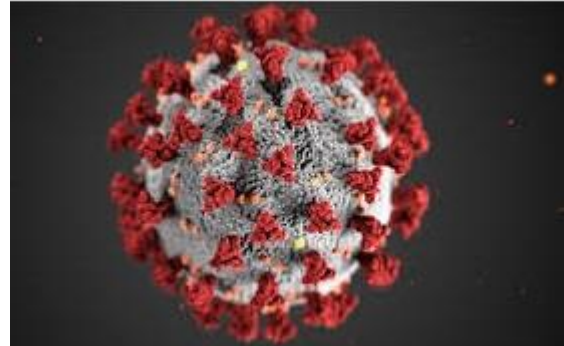
The Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission constituted a committee to review the fiscal consolidation roadmap of the general government. The Committee will be chaired by N. K. Singh. The other Members of the Committee include A. N. Jha and Dr. Anoop Singh, Members of 15th Finance Commission, one representative each from the Office of the CAG and the CGA and the Joint Secretary (Budget) of Economic Affairs.



The Terms of Reference of the Committee were to make recommendations on deficit and debt for the Central government and define contingent liabilities, provide quantifiable measures of such liabilities.

4. Government constituted high level committee of medical experts for prevention & control of COVID-19

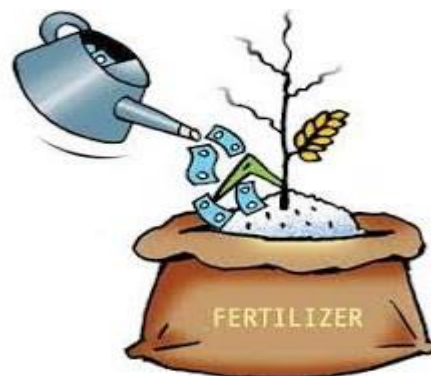
The government has constituted a high level technical committee of Public Health Experts for COVID-19 to guide the prevention and control activities in the country. The 21-member committee is headed by NITI Aayog member Dr V K Paul. Union Health Secretary, Preeti Sudan and Director General Indian Council of Medical Research, Prof. Balram Bhargava are the Co-Chair.



Director, AIIMS, Dr. Randeep Guleria, Director of National Centre for Disease Control, Delhi Dr Sujeet Singh, Director of Institute of Infectious Diseases, Pune Dr. Sanjay Pujari and Additional Chief Secretary of Kerala Dr Rajan Khobragade are among the members of the Task Force.

5. Parliamentary Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers on genuineness of Fertilizer Subsidy

A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers said that hardly any checks and balances were adopted to verify whether genuine farmers are getting subsidized fertilizers. Kanimozhi Karunanidhi of DMK heads the committee.



The committee, in its report on the Demands for Grants for the financial year 2020-21, said that a total of 1182.04 Lakh Metric Tonnes of fertilizers have been sold through Point of Sale devices under Direct Benefit Transfer scheme till December, 2019. The buyer's identity is authenticated through biometric, Aadhaar-based Unique Identification Number or Voter ID card or Kisan Credit Card.

6. Government constituted empowered groups to ramp up healthcare

The Prime Minister's Office constituted 11 different high-level committees to suggest measures to ramp up healthcare, put the economy back on track and reduce misery of people as quickly as possible post 21-day lockdown imposed to contain the Coronavirus pandemic.



The committee has senior representative from PMO and the Cabinet Secretariat to ensure seamless coordination. These groups have been set up under Disaster Management Act. The groups have been empowered to formulate plans and to take all necessary steps for their time bound implementation.

Deaths

1. Dronacharya awardee athletics coach Joginder Singh Saini passed away

Veteran athletics coach and Dronacharya awardee Joginder Singh Saini, who groomed some of India's finest track and field stars, passed away at the age of 90 years. He was the chief national athletics coach for many years from the 1970s to 90s.

Saini received the Dronacharya Award in 1997 for his contribution to Indian athletics. He was the chief coach of the Indian athletics team which won 18 medals, including eight golds, at the 1978 Asian Games.



2. Former UN Chief Javier Perez de Cuellar passed away

Former UN Chief Javier Perez de Cuellar, who served as United Nations Secretary General from 1981 to 1991, passed away. Perez de Cuellar notably led the world body during the Iran-Iraq war and the civil war in El Salvador. He served as the president of the UN Security Council from 1973 to 1974. He held various high level positions in Peru's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including Permanent Representative to the United Nations in 1971.

Perez was honored with Prince of Asturias Prize for the promotion of Ibero-American cooperation in 1987.



3. Former India hockey player Balbir Singh Kullar passed away

Former India hockey player Balbir Singh Kullar, who was a part of the 1968 Olympics bronze-winning team passed away. He served as member of the Indian team that won the Asian Games gold in 1966 at Bangkok and the Olympic Bronze in 1968 in Mexico. He played his first international game in 1963 at Lyons in France.

Balbir Singh became an Indian Police Service officer in 1987 and retired as a Deputy Inspector General (DIG) in February 2001. Balbir was honored with Padma Shri in 2009 and Arjuna Award in 1999.



4. Legendary Swedish Actor Max Von Sydow passed away

Legendary Swedish Actor Max Von Sydow passed away at the age of 90 years. He was nominated for two Oscars during his career - including best actor in 1988 for Pelle the Conqueror.

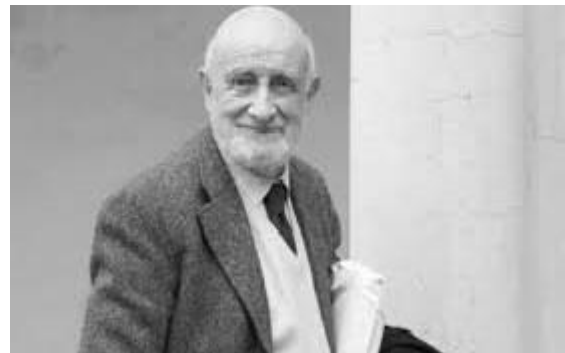
Max Von Sydow appeared in films and TV series including The Exorcist, Flash Gordon and Game of Thrones. His other film credits included Hannah and Her Sisters, The Seventh Seal and Star Wars: The Force Awakens.



5. Designer of Barcelona Olympic stadium died of Covid-19

Vittorio Gregotti, an Italian architect who designed the 1992 Barcelona Summer Olympics stadium, died of covid-19 at the age of 92 years. He died of pneumonia after being hospitalised in Milan having contracted COVID-19.

Gregotti also designed the Arcimboldi Opera Theatre in Milan, a futuristic structure built to allow the opera season to continue while the La Scala underwent renovation in 2002-2004. His studio also designed Pujiang New Town in Shanghai, China, a new town with



an Italian architectural theme.

6. Veteran Bengali actor Santu Mukhopadhyay passed away

Veteran Bengali actor Santu Mukhopadhyay passed away at the age of 69 years. He was known for his works in films such as "Sansar Simante" and "Bhalobasa Bhalobasa". Mukhopadhyay was also a familiar face on small screen. He worked in soaps like 'Isthi Kutum', 'Jol Nupur' and 'Andarmahal'.

His other popular films includes Raja, Ganadevata and Byapika Biday. His other popular films includes Raja, Ganadevata and Byapika Biday.



7. Czech Olympic javelin champion Dana Zatopkova passed away

Czech javelin champion Dana Zatopkova passed away at the age of 97 years. She had won an Olympic gold medal on the same day her husband did at the 1952 games in Helsinki with a throw beyond 50 metres. Her husband, Emil Zatopek, won the 5,000 metres race.



Zatopkova added another Olympic medal, a silver, in Rome in 1960. She also won the European championships in 1954 and 1958. In 1958, she set the world record of 55.73 metres at the age of 35.

8. Indian football Legend P K Banerjee passed away

Legendary Indian footballer P K Banerjee passed away at the age of 83 years. He won the gold medal in the 1962 Asian Games in Jakarta, Indonesia. He scored 65 international goals in 84 appearances for the national team. Banerjee led India in the 1960 Rome Olympics.



Banerjee represented India in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and played a key role in their 4-2 win over Australia in the quarterfinals. FIFA awarded him the Centennial Order of Merit in 2004. He was conferred with Arjun award and Padmshree.

9. Former world champion boxer Roger Mayweather passed away

Two-time world champion Roger Mayweather passed away. He was popularly known as the trainer of his nephew Floyd Mayweather Jr. He was a world champion boxer in two weight classes ie. category of 130 and 140 pounds.



Roger began his 18-year career in 1981. He won his first 17 career fights and captured the world title in World Boxing Association junior lightweight and earned the World Boxing Council junior welterweight title in 1987.

10. Veteran journalist Patil Puttappa passed away

Veteran journalist and former Rajya Sabha member Patil Puttappa passed away. He was a popular writer, journalist and a hardcore Kannada activist. He served as first president of the Kannada Watchdog Committee and was also the founder-president of the Border Advisory Committee.



Patil was a member of Rajyasabha for two terms between 1962 and 1974. Patil was popularly known as "PaPu", for being founder-editor of weekly "Prapancha". He also wrote columns in various dailies and edited "Navayuga".

11. Veteran poet Puthussery Ramachandran passed away

Famous poet and Malayalam scholar Puthussery Ramachandran passed away. He was a scholar of Dravidian linguistics and a professor of Malayalam for more than three decades. He worked as Organizing Secretary of the First All India Conference on Dravidian Linguistics in 1971 and as General Secretary of First World Conference on Malayalam language.



Some of his best poetries were Grameena Gayakan, Sakthipooja, Utsavabali, Agnaye Swaha etc. He was honored with 2009 Kerala Sahitya Akademi and Bhasha Samman.

12. Veteran director M.R. Viswanthan passed away

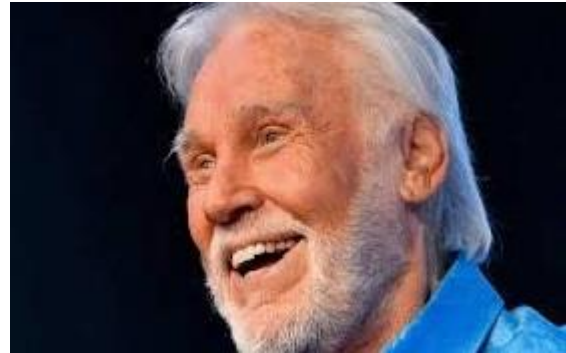
Veteran director Meenakshi Sundaram Ramasamy Viswanthan, popularly known as Visu in the Tamil film industry passed away. He was an actor, director and writer who also hosted live-debates on television. He acted in over 60 films and directed around 25 films. Some of his popular films were 'Netrikann', 'ThilluMullu', 'NallavanukkuNallavan', and 'MrBharath'. He started his career as an assistant under the legendary filmmaker K Balachander.



Visu's movie 'Samsaram Adhu Minsaram' was the first Tamil film to be honored with the National Award for best popular film.

13. American singer Kenny Rogers passed away

Kenny Rogers, whose legendary music career spanned six decades passed away. American music legend Kenny Rogers was popularly known worldwide for his global hits such as "The Gambler", "Lady", "Lucille" and "Islands in the Stream". He embraced his persona as "The Gambler" on record and on TV.



Kenny was honored with three Grammys Awards and six-time Country Music Awards. He was inducted to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2013. He had 24 No. 1 hits and through his career more than 50 million albums sold in the US alone.

14. Former footballer Abdul Latif passed away

Former India footballer Abdul Latif passed away at the age of 73 years. He played as a midfielder and represented India in the 1970 Asian Games where the team won a bronze. He was also represented India in Asia Cup Qualifier in 1968 in Myanmar and Merdeka Cup in 1969 in Kuala Lumpur.



Latif represented Mohammedan Sporting from 1963-1967 and later took over as coach. Latif was also the coach of the Assam team which won the junior and the sub-junior national titles under his guidance.

15. Former Union Minister Beni Prasad Verma passed away

Former Union Minister and Samajwadi Party leader Beni Prasad Verma passed away at the age of 79 years. He was a founding member of the Samajwadi Party. Verma was a Lok Sabha member from 1996 to 2014.



Verma served as the Union Communications Minister in Deve Gowda's cabinet from 1996–98. On July 2011, he was appointed the Steel Minister in Manmohan Singh Government. Verma briefly joined the Congress party in 2009 but returned to the fold of the Samajwadi Party in 2016.

16. Brahma Kumari's Chief Dadi Janki passed away

Rajyogini Dadi Janki, the Chief of Brahmakumaris Sansthan passed away at the age of 104 years. She had embraced the spiritual path at the age of 21. In 1970s, she moved to western countries to establish Indian philosophy, Raj Yoga and human values. She had set up 'Seva Kendras' in 140 countries around the world.

Brahmakumaris Sansthan is the world's largest spiritual organization run by women.



17. “Asterix and Obelix” co-creator Albert Uderzo passed away

Albert Uderzo, the co-creator and illustrator of the “Asterix and Obelix” comics passed away at the age of 92 years. Uderzo created Asterix in 1959 with the fellow Frenchman and writer Rene Goscinny, who brought them to life in the French-Belgian comics magazine Pilote.

In 1966, France’s first space satellite was named Asterix. The series has been translated into more than 100 languages and dialects and has sold more than 380 million copies since its debut.



18. Veteran Hindi film actress Nimmi passed away

Veteran Hindi film actress Nimmi passed away at the age of 88 years. She was the star of 1950s and '60s Hindi movies such as 'Aan', 'Barsaat' and 'Deedar'.

Born as Nawab Banoo, she made her debut in Raj Kapoor’s Barsaat. She was christened 'Nimmi' by Raj Kapoor. Nimmi worked with top actors of her era, including Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand and Ashok Kumar.



19. Veteran US civil rights leader Joseph Lowery passed away

Joseph Lowery, a veteran US civil rights leader passed away. He helped the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and fought against racial discrimination. Joseph Lowery helped establish an African-American civil rights organization set up to promote racial equality.



Joseph was honored with "Presidential Medal of Freedom", the nation's highest civilian honour, by former President Barack Obama in 2009 and with Fred L. Shuttlesworth Human Rights Award in 2009. He served as President from 1977 to 1997.

20. Veteran artist and architect Satish Gujral passes away

Satish Gujral, one of India's best known artists and architects passed away. Some of his best works include alphabet mural on the outside wall of the Delhi High Court, design of Belgian embassy in Delhi and Goa University and design of various other buildings, including the summer palace in Riyadh and the UNESCO building in Delhi.



Satish Gujral was honored with India's second-highest civilian award, Padma Vibhushan in 1999 and with NDTV Indian of the Year Award in 2014.

21. Renowned chef Floyd Cardoz passed away

Indian-born international chef Floyd Cardoz passed away due to Covid-19 in the USA. He was honored with Bravo's "Top Chef Masters" in 2011. He penned two books "One Spice, Two Spice" and "Flavorwalla." Floyd Cardoz was known for creating fusion of regional Indian cuisine with French and new American flavors.



Cardoz was a four-time James Beard Award nominee. He was co-founder in Bombay Sweet Shop, O Pedro, and The Bombay Canteen in India.

22. Veteran photographer Nemai Ghosh passed away

Veteran photographer Nemai Ghosh passed away. He was popular known for working with director Satyajit Ray as a still photographer who captured in different moods at sets besides the director, framing actors over 2 decades. He penned books like, "Dramatic Moments: Photographs and Memories of Calcutta Theatre from the Sixties to the Nineties" & "Manik Da: Memoirs of Satyajit Ray" among others.



Nemai Ghosh served as a jury member at the 2007 National Film Awards and was honored with Padma Shri by Government of India in 2010.

Defence

1. Government issued industrial licenses to 15 companies for manufacturing Bullet Proof Jackets

Government has issued industrial licenses to 15 companies for manufacturing Bullet Proof Jackets (BPJs) to meet the domestic and export requirements. These companies have production capacity of over 10 lakh BPJs per annum.

BPJs are also being exported to 18 countries. India is the fourth country after the US, UK and Germany to have its own national standard on bulletproof jacket which provides 360-degree protection.



2. IAF and Savitribai Phule Pune University signed MoU to establish 'Chair of Excellence'

IAF and Savitribai Phule Pune University entered into an academic collaboration by signing a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a 'Chair of Excellence' at Department of Defence & Strategic Studies. The "Chair of Excellence" which will be named as "Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh Chair of Excellence" has been planned to be established at Department of Defence & Strategic Studies under this unique initiative of Indian Air Force.



The Chair will enable IAF officers to pursue Doctoral Research and higher studies in Defence & Strategic Studies and allied fields and facilitate inculcating strategic outlook.

3. Joint Air Exercise conducted with Myanmar

A Table Top Exercise between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Myanmar Air Force (MAF) was conducted on the theme of HADR. The objectives of the exercise included planning of HADR operation in a given scenario, learn best practices, executing mission during HADR disasters, understand Search and Rescue Mission procedures, etc.

The exercise was conducted under the aegis of Headquarters Central Air Command, IAF. Around 20 member team of IAF participated in the exercise. The Air Forces of both countries were able to achieve the objectives of the laid down procedure.



4. Defence Minister released Draft Defence Procurement Procedure 2020

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh released Draft Defence Procurement Procedure(DPP), 2020. The policy is aligned with the vision of the government to empower the private industry through the Make in India initiative with the ultimate of turning India into a global manufacturing hub. The government has introduced leasing as another category to get defence equipment at affordable rates.



The new procedure aims to increase Indigenous Content ratio. The procedure has introduced "Buy Global" category. Under this category, only minimum necessary is to be bought from abroad.

Economic

1. UN economists forecast drop of up to 15% in FDI worldwide due to Novel Corona virus outbreak

According to a report from the United Nations Conference on Trade, Investment and Development (UNCTAD), the rapid spread of the deadly Novel Corona virus is expected to take a serious toll on foreign direct investments worldwide, with UN economists forecasting a drop of up to 15%.



The UN agency pointed to estimates that growth in the global economy will slow between 0.5 and 1.5 percent this year, depending on whether the outbreak is reined in during the first half of this year or if it rages through the end of 2020.

2. FDI inflows recorded highest ever for fiscal year 2018-19

The total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow was over 318 billion US dollars between 2014 and September 2019 representing nearly 50% of the cumulative FDI in India since April 2000. In 2018-19, the FDI inflow stood at a record 62 billion US dollars, highest ever recorded for a fiscal year.



The initiative of FDI was launched in 2014 for promoting India as an important investment destination and a global hub for manufacturing, design and innovation.

3. Moody's cuts G-20 growth outlook to 2.1%

Moody's Investors Service reported that G-20 countries are expected to grow by 2.1% in 2020. Moody's cuts 0.3% points lower than its previous forecast, due to global spread of the coronavirus and its impact in simultaneous supply and demand shocks and slow economic activity.



Moody's Investors Service revised its baseline growth projections for India from 5.4% to 5.3% in 2020 and from 5.2% to 4.8% for China due to Covid-19 outbreak. Moody's Investors Service is a leading provider of credit ratings, research, and risk analysis.

4. AdGlobal360 acquired by Japanese company HakuHodo

HakuHodo Inc, Japan's second largest advertising company has acquired AdGlobal360 for an undisclosed sum. AdGlobal360 was ranked as the fastest growing MarTech Company in 2019 by Deloitte.



AdGlobal360 is headquartered in Gurgaon with employee strength of over 460. It provides a wide array of services to Indian and international clients, from building digital marketing strategies to creative and content production, digital media planning and buying, social media management and system development, all in one stop.

5. GST rates on mobile phones increased to 18% from 12% w.e.f. 1st April

The Goods and Services Tax Council has increased the GST rates on mobile phones to 18% from 12% with effect from 1st of April. The Council also decided to slash GST on maintenance, repair and overhaul services for aircraft to 5% from 12%.



The tax rate on handmade and machine-made matchsticks has been rationalized to 12%. Interest will be levied on net tax liability from 1st of July for delayed GST payments.

6. Coronavirus drags China's FDI down 8.6% in Jan-Feb

Foreign direct investment into China fell 8.6% in the first two months of 2020 amid combined impacts of coronavirus and the extended Chinese New Year holidays.



The total FDI was 134.4 billion yuan, about USD 19.2 billion for January and February. A breakdown of the data showed FDI inflows climbed 4% year on year in January but plunged 25.6% in February. The burst of corona virus has led to a complex and grim FDI situation for the whole year along with increasing downward pressure on the world economy.

7. India's forex reserves rise 5.69 bn to 487.23 bn

India's foreign exchange rose by 5.69 billion US dollars to reach an all-time high of 487.23 billion dollars in the week ended 6th March 2020. Foreign currency assets, a major part of the overall reserves rose by 5.311 billion dollars to 451.135 billion dollars.



Gold reserves also increased by 320 million dollars to 31 billion dollars. India's special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund went up by 15 million dollars to 1.447 billion dollars, while the country's reserve position also increased by 50 million dollars to 3.656 billion dollars.

8. SpiceJet signed agreement with GMR Hyderabad Aviation SEZ

SpiceJet has signed an agreement with GMR Hyderabad Aviation SEZ Limited (GHASL) for setting up a warehousing, distribution and trading facility in the airport operator's aerospace and industrial park. The facility will be initially spread over in 33,000 sq feet area.



The facility will come up within the Free Trade Warehousing Zone of multi-product special economic zone (SEZ). GHASL is a fully-owned subsidiary of GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL).

9. Digital Solutions Exchange “GOKADDAL” launched in India

GOKADDAL, world's first Digital Solutions Exchange in the cloud has been launched in India. It is a one of its kind solutions aggregator, marketplace and cloud delivery platform with focus on four A's: Automation, Artificial Intelligence, Analytics and Augmentative Technologies.



The cloud delivery platform is expected to revolutionize the way digital solutions are sourced, delivered and managed. GOKADDAL Technologies is a Dubai based emerging technology company. GOKADDAL is led by Ravinder Pal Singh, Ex Cisco and Dell Executive.

10. Gold imports dip 8.86% during Apr-Feb 2020

Gold imports fell by 8.86% to \$27 billion (about Rs 1.90 lakh crore) during April-February 2019-2020. Gold import was \$29.62 billion in the corresponding period of 2018-19.

The dip in gold imports has helped in narrowing the country's trade deficit to \$143.12 billion during April-February period of the current fiscal, as against \$173 billion a year ago. India is the largest importer of gold. The CAD is the difference between inflow and outflow of foreign exchange.



11. 7.1% CAGR recorded in trade with India's FTA and PTA partner countries

An internal assessment of India's bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) or Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) with Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Bhutan, Nepal, Republic of Korea and Malaysia revealed that the cumulative average growth rate (CAGR) in trade with these partners over the last 5 financial years was 7.1%. While there has been growth rate in both imports and exports to these FTA partners, the utilization rate of FTAs has been moderate.



The review of the trade agreements is undertaken on the basis of mutual consent of the trading partners and demand from domestic stakeholders.

12. India's merchandise exports increased to 330.07 US\$ billion in 2018-19

India's merchandise exports have increased from 303.53 US\$ billion in 2017-18 to 330.07 US\$ billion in 2018-19, registering a positive growth of 8.75%. Exports have been growing on a secular basis since 2016-17 for almost three years and total exports reached a new peak of more than half a trillion dollars for the first time in 2018-19.



The Foreign Trade Policy (2015-20), launched on 1st April 2015, provided a framework for increasing exports of goods and services as well as generation of employment.

13. L&T Services and IIT-Kanpur collaborated for research in industrial cyber security

L&T Technology Services Limited signed a multi-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology - Kanpur to collaborate on research in industrial and infrastructure cybersecurity.



According to the MoU, L&T and IIT-Kanpur will together set-up a Center of Excellence (CoE) in the IIT-Kanpur campus and conduct research in the areas of Honeypot (network-attached system set up to entrap cyberattacks and study hacking attempts), intrusion detection systems, malware analysis, blockchain, vulnerability assessment and penetration testing and provide cybersecurity awareness and training programs.

14. India's growth forecast lowered to 5.2% by S&P for FY 2020

S&P Global Ratings reduced India's economic growth forecast from 5.7% to 5.2% for financial year 2020 due to outspread of coronavirus costing economies worldwide. S&P had earlier estimated India's GDP growth rate at 6.5%. S&P Global ratings have estimated that there will be total and permanent income loss of around USD 620 billion for Asia-Pacific from COVID-19. COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).



Some other rating agencies have also lowered growth projections such as Moody's lowered GDP projections to 5.3%, while Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development to 5.1%.

15. GST Collections for February 2020

The gross GST revenue collected in the month of February, 2020 is ₹ 1,05,366 crore of which CGST is ₹ 20,569 crore, SGST is ₹ 27,348 crore, IGST is ₹ 48,503 crore (including ₹ 20,745 crore collected on imports) and Cess is ₹ 8,947 crore (including ₹ 1,040 crore collected on imports). The total number of GSTR 3B Returns filed for the month of January up to 29th February, 2020 is 83.53 lakh.



The total revenue earned by Central Government and the State Governments after regular settlement in the month of February, 2020 is ₹ 43,155 crore for CGST and ₹ 43,901 crore for the SGST.

16. Fitch Ratings slashed India's GDP growth rate to 5.1% for FY21

Fitch Ratings revised India's real GDP growth projection for 2020-21 downwards to 5.1% from 5.6%. The estimations for reduction in GDP growth is due to impact of Covid-19 on Indian manufacturers after supply chain disruptions in China, non-availability of raw materials and intermediate inputs and reduced demand for exports.



Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.

17. US Senate passed 2.2 trillion-dollar economic rescue package

The United States Senate has passed an unparalleled 2.2- trillion-dollar economic rescue package steering aid to businesses, workers and health care systems engulfed by the Corona virus pandemic. The 880-page measure is the largest economic relief bill in US history.



The package consists of five major measures: cash payments of up to twelve hundred dollars for almost all Americans; an expansion of the unemployment-insurance system; US\$ 360 billion assistance program for small businesses; US\$ 500 bailout fund for big businesses and hundreds of billions of dollars in emergency funding for states, hospitals, and other medical providers.

18. Moody's slashed India GDP growth in 2020 to 2.5 %

Moody's Investors Service slashed its estimate of India's GDP growth during 2020 calendar year to 2.5%, from an earlier estimate of 5.3% as the Corona virus pandemic will cause unprecedented shock to the global economy.



As per the Global Macro Outlook 2020-21 of Moody's, India is likely to see a sharp fall in incomes at the estimated 2.5% growth rate, further weighing on domestic demand and the pace of recovery in 2021. Moody's also estimated the real GDP in the global economy to contract by 0.5% in 2020, followed by a pickup to 3.2% in 2021.

Environment

1. Union Government declared National Chambal Sanctuary as eco-sensitive zone

Centre declared National Chambal Sanctuary in MP as eco-sensitive zone. National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary is one of the biggest river sanctuaries in India with around 1700 gharial (fish eating crocodile). The Sanctuary is the home of Gangetic dolphins and 75% population of critically endangered species, gharial. It also harbours 180 species of migratory birds and freshwater Gangetic Dolphins.



National Chambal Sanctuary is a 5,400 km² tri-state protected area in northern India, sheltering a wide array of avian, aquatic, and other wildlife with its pristine air and water.

2. Animal Protection Index 2020

According to the Animal Protection Index 2020 created by international animal welfare charity, World Animal Protection, India has attained a C ranking in the index, along with countries like New Zealand, Mexico, France, and Spain. India is one of the better-performing countries in the index.



The index ranks countries from A (being the highest score) to G (being the weakest score) according to their policy and legislation. Austria, Denmark, Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, United Kingdom were indexed in Grade B.

3. Defence Ministry signed contract with Israeli firm IWI

The Defence Ministry signed a capital acquisition contract with Israel Weapons Industries, IWI for procurement of 16,479 light machine guns, LMGs at a cost of 880 crore rupees. IWI would be providing Negev 7.62*51 mm LMGs to the Indian armed forces under the contract.



The contracted Negev 7.62X51 mm LMG is a combat proven weapon which greatly enhances the lethality and range of a soldier vis-a-vis the presently used weapon. It is currently used by several countries around the globe.

4. DAC approved procurement of 83 indigenous Tejas fighter aircraft

Defence Acquisition Council approved procurement of 83 indigenous Tejas fighter aircraft for Indian Air Force. The Light Combat Aircraft, Tejas, is going to be the backbone of Indian Air Force in future. The Defence Acquisition Council also accorded approval for acquisition of indigenous Defence equipment for about 1,300 crore rupees.



While orders of 40 Tejas aircraft had been placed with HAL in initial configurations, DAC paved the way for the procurement of another 83 of the more advanced version of the aircraft from HAL. This procurement will be a major boost to Make in India as the aircraft is indigenously designed.

5. Indian Oil Corporation Limited became first company to begin supply of BS-VI fuel

India's biggest oil firm, Indian Oil Corporation Limited started supplying BS-VI fuel across India. With this, Indian Oil Corporation Limited became first company to begin supply of BS-VI fuel across its 28,000 petrol pumps.



Since BS (Bharat Satge)-VI grade fuel is the world's cleanest fuel containing just 10 parts per million of sulphur, Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) announced to supply BS-VI grade fuel throughout their outlets. The Government of India has set 1st April 2020 as the deadline to start the supply of BS-VI emission compliant fuels.

6. United Kingdom confirmed as first co-chair of India led CDRI

United Kingdom was confirmed as the first co-chair of the Governing Council of Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure is an India-led global climate initiative which was established by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the UN Climate Action Summit 2019 held in New York City, USA.



The UK will host COP26 in Glasgow in November 2020. U.K. will have responsibility for technical advice and expertise to help set up and build the Secretariat and advance the objectives of the Coalition.

1. NABARD infused Rs 1.46 lakh cr in rural banking system during current fiscal

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has infused 1.46 lakh crore rupees in the rural banking system during the current fiscal. 66,397 crore rupees have been given in short-term credit and 6,704 crore rupees in long-term credit to rural cooperative banks. Regional rural banks have availed 14,141 crore rupees in short-term credit and 8,417 crore rupees in long-term credit. In addition, other banks, including small finance banks, have obtained long-term refinance of 37,895 crore rupees.



2. Cabinet approved Mega Consolidation in Public Sector Banks

The Union Cabinet approved the mega consolidation of ten PSBs into four which include the-

- Amalgamation of Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India into Punjab National Bank.
- Amalgamation of Syndicate Bank into Canara Bank.
- Amalgamation of Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank into Union Bank of India.
- Amalgamation of Allahabad Bank into Indian Bank.



The amalgamation would be effective from 1.4.2020 and would result in creation of seven large PSBs. The Mega consolidation would help create banks with scale comparable to global banks and provide impetus to amalgamated entities.

3. “SEBI SCORES” mobile app launched by SEBI for investors to lodge grievances

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has launched a mobile application 'SEBI SCORES' for convenience of investors to lodge grievances in Sebi Complaints Redress System (SCORES). The mobile app will not only encourage investors to lodge their complaints on SCORES but also provide all features that are currently available in SCORES.



SCORES is a platform for investors to lodge online complaints with SEBI against listed companies, registered intermediaries and market infrastructure institutions.

4. Government imposed Rs 50,000 withdrawal limit on Yes Bank account holders

The Union Government of India imposed a withdrawal limit of 50,000 rupees for depositors of private lender Yes Bank for one month. The limit on withdrawal comes with a few exemptions, in cases like unavoidable emergency.



The board of Yes Bank has been superseded by the Reserve Bank of India for a period of 30 days owing to serious deterioration in the financial position of the private lender. Former SBI CFO Prashant Kumar has been appointed as administrator of Yes Bank. SBI Board has given in-principle approval to invest in the capital-starved Yes Bank.

5. IIT Mandi signed deal with NABARD for setting up FPOs

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mandi & Enabling Women of Kamand (EWOK) Society inked a tripartite deal with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) for setting up three Farmer Producer Organizations in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh. It will be built at the cost of Rs 35 lakhs for 3 FPOs to be established in the next 3 years.



EWOK is an initiative of IIT Mandi Women's Center to aid rural women set up small enterprises in 5 panchayats of Kataula, Katindhi, Navlaya, Batheri and Kamand in Mandi by giving them proper guidance, training & information.

6. RBI announced US dollar sell/buy swap to provide liquidity to foreign exchange market

Observing mismatch in US dollar liquidity across the world, the Reserve Bank has announced a six month US dollar sell/buy swap to provide liquidity to the foreign exchange market. The level of forex reserves, which stood at 487.24 billion dollars as of 6th March, remained comfortable to meet any exigency.



The financial markets faced intense selling pressures due to corona virus infection. The volatility in global markets spiked by a slump in international crude prices and a decline in bond yields in advanced economies.

7. State Bank of India to buy shares worth 7,250 crore rupees of Yes Bank

The State Bank of India will buy shares worth 7,250 crore rupees of the cash-strapped Yes Bank in accordance with the draft reconstruction scheme envisaged by the Reserve Bank of India. The board of SBI has permitted the purchase of the private lender's shares at a price of 10 rupees per share subject to all regulatory approvals.



According to RBI's reconstruction scheme, the strategic investor was not only supposed to pick up 49% stake but assure that the holding will not fall below 26% for a minimum period of three years from the date of capital infusion.

8. Parliament passes Vivad Se Vishwas Bill for settlement of Direct Tax disputes

Parliament has passed the Vivad Se Vishwas Bill, 2020. The bill provides a waiver on interest, penalty and prosecution for settlement of Direct Tax disputes. It grants a complete waiver on interest and penalty when the disputed amount is paid before 31st March, and provisions an additional 10% of the disputed amount in cases where the settlement is made by 30th June 2020.



The Bill only governs disputes related to Direct Tax and not litigations related to wealth tax. Cases above five crore rupees are excluded under the ambit of this bill.

9. US Federal Reserve slashed key interest rate to almost zero

The US Federal Reserve slashed the key interest rate to virtually zero in response to the growing economic impact of the new corona virus. The Fed made its second emergency rate cut in less than two weeks, cutting the benchmark borrowing rate to a range of 0-0.25%.



The central bank also announced massive asset purchases, opened its discount lending windows to banks. It also removed bank reserve requirements to allow them to use cash backstops. The action was coordinated with the European Central Bank, Bank of England, Bank of Japan, Bank of Canada and the Swiss National Bank.

10. Cabinet approved reconstruction scheme for Yes Bank

The Union Cabinet has approved a reconstruction scheme for Yes Bank as proposed by the Reserve Bank of India. State Bank of India will invest 49% equity in Yes Bank with other investors also being invited. SBI will invest Rs 7,250 crore in Yes Bank.



There will be a three-year lock-in period for all the investors. However, the lock-in period for SBI would be only for the 26% of the shareholding. The authorised capital of Yes Bank has been increased to Rs 6,200 crore from Rs 1,100 crore. The RBI removed the moratorium imposed on Yes Bank wef March 19.

11. Yes Bank reported Rs 18,564 crore loss for Q4, 2019

YES Bank has reported a staggering Rs 18,654-crore loss for the December quarter due to higher recognition of dead assets on the books and an erosion of capital buffers to the brink. The gross non-performing assets shot-up to Rs 40,709 crore or 18.87% of assets as of December 31, 2019. This forced the bank to set aside Rs 24,765 crore as provisions.



The bank has a dip of over Rs 44,000-crore in its deposits between September and December to Rs 1,65,000 crore. It also had a sharp decline in interest earned, suggesting a dip in advances.

12. RBI lowered single, group borrower limit for urban cooperative banks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) lowered the single borrower and group exposure limit for urban cooperative banks (UCBs) to 15% and 25% of tier I capital, respectively, to reduce concentration risks arising out of such large loans. Existing norms allowed 15% for single borrowers and 40% to group exposures of a bank's total capital, including tier I and tier II capital.



RBI also revised the priority sector lending (PSL) target for UCBs from 40% to 75% of the adjusted net bank credit (ANBC), or credit equivalent amount of off-balance sheet exposure (CEOBSE).

13. DBS Bank & Bharti AXA teamed up for plans covering Covid-19

In order to ensure further safety of its customers, DBS India joined hands with Bharti AXA to roll out COVID-19 insurance cover. The plan would cover all medical conditions, including Covid-19, and up to 10 days of hospitalization, with a cover of Rs 5,000 per day, for a 30-day period. The insurance scheme is designed to give customers assurance, if they seek medical treatment.



Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.

14. Manikaran Power became the first member to tie up with IGX

Manikaran Power Ltd (MPL) has become the first member of India's first gas trading platform which is called the Indian Gas Exchange (IGX). IGX is a part of Indian Energy Exchange (IEX). IGX is India's first automated national level trading platform to promote and sustain an efficient and robust Gas market and to foster gas trading in the country.



MPL provides an electronic platform for trading of power at Indian Energy Exchange and Power Exchange India Limited, documentation and assistance in bilateral trading of power, REC trading and group captive.

15. SIDBI launched “Swavalamban Express” to promote business aspirants

SIDBI launched “Swavalamban Express” to promote business aspirants. Swavalamban Express will begin from Lucknow and complete 15-day journey across India covering over 7000 kilometres. The entrepreneurship train will cover entrepreneurial cities Jammu, Delhi, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata and Varanasi as the final destination.



Swavalamban Express aims to promote budding business aspirants and entrepreneurs. Over 20 workshops and other programs will be organized during the journey. Swavalamban Express' is referred as Self-Employment Paathshala.

16. SBI opened emergency credit line to meet any liquidity mismatch for its borrowers

State Bank of India has opened an emergency credit line to meet any liquidity mismatch for its borrowers to avoid businesses getting affected due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. The additional liquidity facility Covid-19 Emergency Credit Line (CECL) will provide funds up to Rs 200 crore and will be available till June 30.



The loan will be offered at an interest rate of 7.25% with a tenure of 12 months. Borrowers can avail maximum 10% of the existing fund based working capital limits, subject to a cap of Rs 200 crore.

17. RBI injected additional Rs 30,000 cr to maintain financial stability in wake of COVID-19 outbreak

The Reserve Bank of India decided to infuse additional liquidity with a second tranche of bond purchase worth ₹30,000 crores amid the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that all markets segments function normally with adequate liquidity and turnover.



The central bank conducted purchase of government securities under open market operations (OMOs) for an aggregate amount of Rs 30,000 crore in two tranches of Rs 15,000 crore each in March. RBI infused Rs 10,000 crore through open market operations on 20th March.

18. Cabinet approved recapitalization of RRBs to improve their CRAR

The Cabinet Committee gave its approval for continuation of the process of recapitalization of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) by providing minimum regulatory capital to RRBs up to 2020-21. The approval has been given for those RRBs which are unable to maintain minimum Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of 9%, as per the regulatory norms prescribed by the Reserve Bank of India.



The CCEA also approved utilization of Rs.670 crore as central government share for the scheme of Recapitalization of RRBs (i.e. 50% of the total recapitalization support of Rs.1340 crore).

19. RBI decided to conduct variable rate Repo auctions for Rs 1,00,000 crores

The Reserve Bank of India decided to conduct the variable rate Repo auctions for Rs 1,00,000 crores in two tranches, as a preventive measure to bridge over any frictional liquidity requirements caused by COVID-19. The RBI will conduct fine-tuning variable rate Repo auctions for Rs 1,00,000 crores in two tranches of Rs 50,000 crore each.



The Reserve Bank is monitoring the evolving financial market conditions. The Reserve Bank will calibrate its operations to meet any need for additional liquidity support, if warranted, to ensure normal functioning of markets, promote staff welfare and preserve financial stability.

20. SBI cuts repo rate by 75 basis points

State Bank of India has announced to pass on the entire 75 basis points repo rate cut announced by the Reserve Bank of India. The new rates are effective from 1st of April and would be applicable for its borrowers availing loans based on External Benchmark-linked lending rate, EBR and Repo-Linked Lending Rate, RLLR.



The equated-monthly installments on eligible home loan accounts, linked to EBR or RLLR will get cheaper by around 52 rupees per one lakh rupees on a 30-year loan.

21. Decisions of Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the following decisions of Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to address the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Cut in Repo Rate by 75 basis points to 4.4%
- Reduced the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) of all banks by 100 basis points to 3% with effect from March 28 for 1 year providing total liquidity injection of Rs 3.74 lakh crore to the system in current scenario
- Cut Liquidity Adjustment Facility by 90 bps to 4%
- Reverse Repo Rate has been reduced by 90 basis points to 4%
- 3-month moratorium on payments of term loan installments (EMI) and interest on working capital



22. RBI offered Rs 11,722 cr to banks through repo auction

The Reserve Bank of India has offered Rs 11,772 crore to banks through a 12-day variable rate repo auction. Before the auction, the RBI enhanced the amount of auction to Rs 50,000 crore from Rs 25,000 crore.

In the auction, the central bank received Rs 11,772 crore of bids and allocated the entire amount at a cut-off rate of 5.16%. RBI will conduct another variable term repo auction of Rs 25,000 crore on March 31.



23. ITR filing deadline for FY19 extended till 30 June

The government has extended various statutory deadlines related to income tax which were ending on 31 March, till 30 June considering the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Under the income tax laws, the due date to file ITR for a financial year ends typically on 31 July of the relevant assessment year. However, a belated return can be filed till 31 March of the same AY.

The government also allowed to make investments under Sec 80C till 30th June and continue to claim deductions for FY 2019-20. Aadhaar-pan linking deadline has also been extended to June 30.



Important Days

1. World Wildlife Day

World Wildlife Day is celebrated on the 3rd of March every year to create awareness about the importance of protecting wildlife. The theme for this year was "Sustaining all life on earth" to ensure sustainable life styles. 2020 was announced as bio-diversity super year because of the large number of eco friendly initiatives being taken the world over.

The year 2020 is especially significant to India because it has taken over as the President of CoP13 for Action Against Climate Change. World Wildlife Day reminds us of the



urgent need to step up the fight against

2. International Women's Day 2020

The International Women's Day (IWD) was celebrated across the globe on 8th March. The theme for International Women's Day 2020 is, I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights.

It is also known as the United Nations (UN) Day for Women's Rights and International Peace. The day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity.



3. Jan Aushadhi Diwas

Jan Aushadhi Diwas was celebrated on 7th March. Various programme were organized at all Pradhanmantri Bhartiya Jana Aushadhi Pariyojna-PMBJP kendras across the country to increase the awareness about the scheme. These programme witnessed participation of doctors, health experts, NGO and beneficiaries in a large number. The PMBJP was launched by Prime Minister with an objective of making high-quality medicines available to all at an affordable price.



The Jan Aushadhi Divas aims to create awareness about the use of generic medicines. The day highlighted the initiative of making quality healthcare for all, like Ayushman Bharat, PMBJY, etc.

4. National Safety Day celebrated on 4th March across India

National Safety Day was observed on 4 March to commemorate the foundation of the National Safety Council and raise awareness about the safety measures to prevent mishaps and accidents due to lack of awareness. 2020 was celebrated as the 49th National Safety day based on theme "Enhance Health & Safety Performance by Use of Advanced Technology".



Various campaigns were organized to ensure integration of OSH in work culture and lifestyle and for renewing the commitment of employees and the general public to work safely throughout the year.

5. UNAIDS observed Zero Discrimination Day on March 1

World Zero Discrimination day is celebrated annually on March 1 to emphasize living life with dignity irrespective of ethnicity, age, gender, skin color, height, weight, etc. The theme was 'Zero Discrimination against women and girls'.



The day aims to promote equality and stresses that all humans are equal before the law irrespective of their ethnicity and race. The symbol of Zero Discrimination Day is butterfly. The event has been in practice since its inception in March 2014 by Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS).

6. World Hearing Day observed globally on 3rd March

World Hearing Day is observed globally on 3rd of March every year to raise awareness on how to prevent deafness and hearing loss and promote ear and hearing care across the world. The theme of 2020 World Hearing Day was "Hearing for life. Don't let hearing loss limit you".



WHO highlighted timely and effective interventions that can ensure that people with hearing loss are able to achieve their full potential.

7. World Kidney Day

The World Kidney Day is celebrated across the globe on second Thursday of March every year. This year it was observed on 12th March. This year's theme is 'Kidney health for everyone everywhere – from prevention to detection and equitable access to care'.



This day is a mutual initiative of International Society of Nephrology (ISN) and the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF). The aim of the day is to raise awareness about the role played by kidneys in maintaining overall health and to reduce the frequency and impact of kidney disease.

8. National Vaccination Day

India observes National Vaccination Day also known as National Immunization Day (NID) on 16th March every year. National Vaccination Day is observed in order to enhance the awareness of the eradication of polio from planet earth. National Immunization Day was first observed on 16th March when the first dose of Oral Polio Vaccine was given in the year 1995.



National Vaccination Day is a day celebrated to make people aware of the importance of timely vaccination for preventable diseases.

9. World Consumer Rights Day

The World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) is observed every year on 15th March for celebration and solidarity within the international consumer movement. The day aims to raise awareness about a consumer's needs and rights.



The WCRD is an opportunity to promote the basic rights of all consumers, for demanding that those rights are respected and protected, and for protesting the market abuses and social injustices which undermine them. The theme for this year is 'The Sustainable Consumer'.

10. World Sparrow Day observed on 20th March

World Sparrow Day is a day designated to raise awareness of the house sparrow and then other common birds to urban environments, and of threats to their populations, observed on 20 March.



Events and campaigns were organized across the globe to create awareness among people to create awareness about how they can contribute in saving sparrows, what efforts they can put in from their side to increase the species and how they can provide food and shelter to these little birds.

11. International Day of Happiness observed globally on 20 March

International Day of Happiness is celebrated globally on 20th March every year. Since 2013, the United Nations has celebrated the International Day of Happiness as a way to recognize the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world. The theme of 2020 was 'Happiness For All, Together'.



The day took its shape from the idea of Jayme Illien, a renowned philanthropist, activist, statesman and Special advisor to United Nations. The event is coordinated by a non-profit movement, Action for Happiness. The movement is supported by 160 nations of the world, besides from various international organizations.

The movement is supported by 160 nations of the world, besides from various international organizations.

12. Global Recycling Day observed globally on 18th March

Global Recycling Day is observed globally on 18th March every year. Global Recycling Day was created in 2018 by the Bureau of International Recycling (BIR) to help recognize, and celebrate, the importance recycling plays in preserving our precious primary resources and securing the future of our planet. The main aim of the day is to turn 'waste' into a valuable resource.



The theme of Global Recycling Day 2020 was #RecyclingHeroes. This will recognize the people, places and activities that showcase what an important role recycling plays.

13. Ordnance Factories' Day observed on 18th March

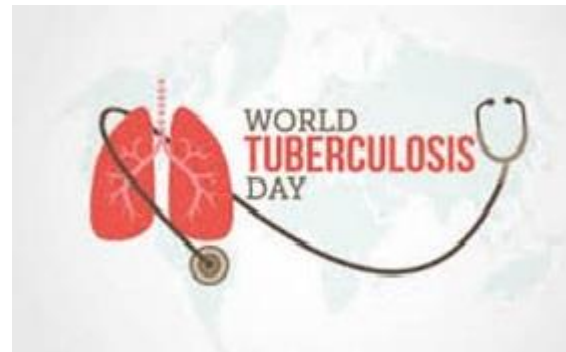
The Ordnance Factories' Day is being observed on the 18th of March every year. The Ordnance Factories are a conglomerate of 41 ordnance factories. It functions under the aegis of its corporate headquarters OFB, in Kolkata. The day marks the establishment of the first Ordnance Factory on 18 March 1801. The first factory is known as the 'Gun and Shell Factory' in Kolkata.



OFB is the 37th largest defence equipment manufacturer in the world and the largest in India. OFB is referred to as the "Fourth Arm of Defence" and the "Force Behind the Armed Forces" of India.

14. World Tuberculosis Day

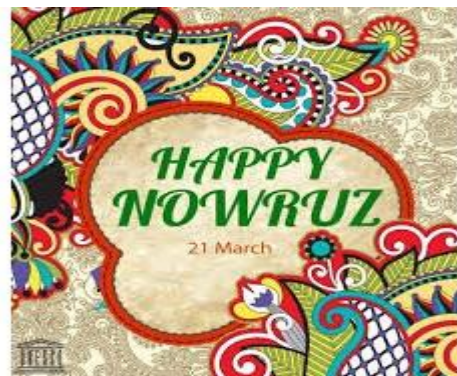
The World Tuberculosis Day is observed annually on March 24. The theme for World Tuberculosis Day 2020 is "It's Time", to add weightage on the urgency to act on the commitments made by global leaders. The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched a joint initiative "Find. Treat. All. #EndTB".



The day aims to raise public awareness of tuberculosis and the efforts made to prevent and treat this disease. It is one of eight official global public health campaigns marked by the World Health Organization (WHO).

15. International Nowruz Day

International Nowruz Day is celebrated globally on 21 March every year. Nowruz marks the first day of spring and is celebrated on the day of the astronomical vernal equinox, which usually occurs on 21 March. The word Nowruz means new day. It is celebrated as the beginning of the new year by more than 300 million people all around the world.



Celebrating Nowruz means the affirmation of life in harmony with nature, awareness of the inseparable link between constructive labour and respectful attitude towards natural sources of life.

16. World Poetry Day

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized 21st of March as World Poetry Day. The day recognizes the unique ability of poetry to capture the creative spirit of the human mind. The day is also meant to encourage a return to the oral tradition of poetry recitals and to promote the teaching of poetry.



UNESCO first adopted 21 March as World Poetry Day during its 30th General Conference in Paris in 1999, with the aim of supporting linguistic diversity through poetic expression.

17. World Down Syndrome Day

The General Assembly decided, with effect from 2012, to observe World Down Syndrome Day on 21 March each year, so as to raise public awareness of Down syndrome. Down syndrome occurs in an individual when he/she has an extra partial (or whole) copy of chromosome 21. The theme of World Down Syndrome Day 2020 was "We Decide".



The theme highlighted to empower persons with Down syndrome and show how effective and meaningful participation of persons with Down syndrome can be achieved.

18. International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

The United Nations' (UN) International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed every year on March 21. On 23 December 2013, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the International Decade for People of African Descent from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2024. The theme of observation is "People of African descent: recognition, justice, and development".



The day encourages people to remember their obligation and determination to combat racial discrimination. It was on this day in 1960, police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the apartheid pass laws.

19. International Day of Forests

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests in 2012. The Day celebrates and raises awareness of the importance of all types of forests. The theme for 2020 was "Forests and Biodiversity".

On each International Day of Forests, countries are encouraged to undertake local, national and international efforts to organize activities involving forests and trees, such as tree planting campaigns. Forests cover one third of the Earth's land mass. Forests are home to more than 80% of the terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects.



20. India celebrated "Shaheed Diwas" on 23 March

India celebrates Shaheed Diwas or Martyrs' Day on March 23 every year, to pay tribute to martyrs Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru. On 23 March 1931, the three Indian freedom fighters were hanged for assassinating John Saunders, a British police officer in 1928 in Lahore jail. The three brave freedom fighters were sentenced to death in the Lahore conspiracy case.



On this day, schools and colleges hold events to pay tribute for their contribution to India's independence from the British colonial rule.

21. World Meteorological Day observed globally on 23 March

World Meteorological Day takes place every year on 23 March and commemorates the coming into force on 23 March 1950 of the Convention establishing the World Meteorological Organization. The day underlines the efforts of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services for the safety and well-being of society.



The theme of 2020 was "Climate and Water". The themes chosen for World Meteorological Day reflect topical weather, climate or water-related issues. Since the world now faces increasing challenges posed by water stress, there is an urgent need to improve forecasting, monitoring and management of water supplies.

22. World Water Day observed globally on 22 March

World Water Day is held annually on 22 March as a means of focusing attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. This Day is an opportunity to learn more about water related issues, be inspired to tell others and take action to make a difference.



2020 Water and climate change

The theme of 2020 was "Water and Climate Change". It is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis. A new World Water Development Report is released each year to provide decision-makers with tools to formulate and implement sustainable water policies.

23. International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims

International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims is observed annually on 24th March every year. This annual observance pays tribute to the memory of Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero, who was murdered on 24 March 1980. Monsignor Romero was actively engaged in denouncing violations of the human rights of the most vulnerable individuals in El Salvador.



The purpose of the Day is to honour the memory of victims of human rights violations and pay tribute to those who have devoted their lives to protect human rights.

24. International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members

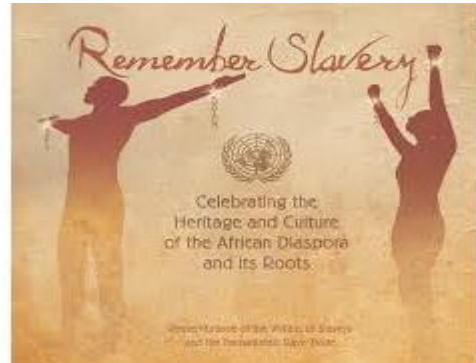
The International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members is observed annually on 25th March to encourage governments to do more in their power to protect UN personnel in their jobs.



The day commemorates the anniversary of the abduction of Alec Collett, a former journalist who was working for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) when he was kidnapped by armed gunman in 1985. His body was finally found in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon in 2009.

25. International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is observed annually on 25th March. It honors the lives of those who died as a result of slavery or experienced the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade.



The theme for 2020 is "Confronting Slavery's Legacy of Racism Together". The theme underscores the reality that lasting effects of the transatlantic slave trade, including racism, continue to divide societies across the globe and hamper our advancement towards a world that respects human rights and enables sustainable development for all.

26. World Theatre Day observed globally on 27 March

The World Theatre Day is celebrated annually on 27th March. This day is a celebration for those who can see the value and importance of the art form "theatre", and acts as a wake-up-call for governments, politicians, institutions and individuals which have not yet recognized its potential for economic growth.



World Theatre Day was initiated in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute ITI. Every year the Executive Council of ITI chooses an outstanding theatre personality to write the message for World Theatre Day, which has been celebrated internationally every March 27th since 1962.

27. Earth Hour observed on 28th March to show support for Planet Earth

Earth Hour, one of the world's largest grassroots movements for the environment was observed on 28th March to show support for Planet Earth. Earth Hour marks a moment of solidarity for the planet as global communities unite and organize events digitally due to COVID-19 health crisis.



Earth hour is observed to seek attention to the immediate need for halting nature and biodiversity loss for our health and raise their voice for securing an international commitment to stop and reverse the loss of nature.

International

1. UN Security Council unanimously approved US Taliban peace agreement

United Nations Security Council has unanimously approved a United States' resolution on the recent deal between the US and the Afghan Taliban. The US military has begun withdrawing troops as part of the pullout agreed in the February 29 pact with the Taliban.



In the resolution, the Security Council urged the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to advance the peace process. Under the terms of the deal signed in Doha, all foreign forces would quit Afghanistan within 14 months -- provided the Taliban stick to their security commitments.

2. United Nations adopted political declaration on women's rights

United Nations has adopted a stripped-down political declaration on women's rights. It seeks to preserve gains under threat but does not advocate new ways to ensure progress toward equality. The declaration was adopted during the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.



The adopted text follows the main lines of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995, which sought to promote women's emancipation and advancement around the world. A UN declaration on women is approved every five years.

3. US President Donald Trump signed USD 8.3B bill to fight coronavirus outbreak

US President Donald Trump signed an 8.3 billion US Dollars measure to help tackle the coronavirus outbreak that has killed 12 people in the US and infected more than 200. The Senate passed the legislation to help tackle the outbreak in hopes of reassuring a fearful public and accelerating the government's response to the virus.



The legislation provides federal public health agencies with money for vaccines, tests and potential treatments and helps state and local governments prepare and respond to the

threat.

4. World Bank pledged 12 billion aid package to help countries combat coronavirus outbreak

World Bank has pledged a 12 billion dollar aid package that will provide fast-track funds to help countries combat the coronavirus outbreak. The funds, some of which are targeted to the world's poorest nations, can be used for medical equipment or health services and will include expertise and policy advice.



The Bank's International Development Association, which helps the world's poorest countries, could also receive additional funds in the second quarter of 2020 if its Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF) is triggered.

5. China assumed Presidency of UN Security Council for March 2020

China has taken over as President of the UN Security Council for the month of March 2020, pledging to promote solidarity and cooperation in this capacity



The Security Council was established by the UN Charter. Its primary responsibility is to work to maintain international peace and security. The council has 15 members: the five permanent members and 10 non-permanent members elected for two-year terms. The council's presidency is a capacity that rotates every month among its 15 members.

6. BRAC retains its position as the top NGO of the world for the 5th consecutive year

Bangladesh-based international development organization BRAC has retained its position as the top NGO of the world for the 5th consecutive year. The rankings for 2020 were announced by the Geneva-based organization NGO Adviser which publishes the rankings every year based on publicly available data for the top 500 global NGOs.



BRAC was founded by Sir Fazle Hasan Abed in 1972 immediately after Bangladesh came into existence as an independent nation in 1971 to help the returning war refugees with small-scale relief and rehabilitation project. Presently, it works in Bangladesh and 11 countries in Asia and Africa.

7. Denys Shmygal selected as Ukraine's new Prime Minister

Ukraine's Parliament approved Denis Shmygal as the new Prime Minister of Ukraine. He replaced Oleksiy Honcharuk. Denis became third Prime Minister of Ukraine. Prior to this appointment, he has handled various positions such as Deputy Prime Minister in charge of regional Development, head of DTEK Burshtynskaya TPP, a coal power plant in the region and governor of the western Ivano-Frankivsk region.



Ukraine is located in Eastern Europe, the second largest on the continent after Russia. Ukraine gained independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

8. Luxembourg became first country to make public transport free

Luxembourg became the first country in the world to make all its public transport free. It abolished the fares for trains, trams and buses to have a better quality of mobility and clean environment. However, travelers can still pay for first class, at a cost of 660 euros a year.



Luxembourg has just over 600,000 inhabitants, but 214,000 more travel in for work every day from neighbouring Germany, Belgium and France, causing heavy traffic jams. Earlier in reports, it was unveiled that more than half of Luxembourg's greenhouse gas emissions come from transport.

9. ADB sanctioned USD 4 million to member countries to contain Corona Virus

Asian Development Bank (ADB) sanctioned a total of USD 4 million (about ₹29 crores) to help developing countries in Asia and Pacific to fight the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person and causes respiratory symptoms.



The funds will be available for all ADB developing member countries to contain the outbreak of the novel coronavirus and improve resilience to this such as buying emergency supplies and equipment, assessing health system and respond to animal and human disease outbreaks.

10. Muhyiddin Yassin became new Prime Minister of Malaysia

Muhyiddin Yassin was sworn in as Malaysia's new Prime Minister after the abrupt resignation of 94-year-old Mahathir Mohamad, who had been in office since the general elections of 2018. Prior to this selection, Muhyiddin Yassin was minister of home affairs under former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. As per requirement of 112 lawmakers needed to form a government in Malaysia, Muhyiddin Yassin had 113 members of parliament.



Malaysia is a Southeast Asian country occupying parts of the Malay Peninsula and the island of Borneo.

11. US Supreme Court allows Prez Trump's 'Remain in Mexico' asylum policy

The US Supreme Court has allowed the Trump administration to continue its "Remain in Mexico" policy for asylum seekers. The justices reversed a decision of a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit that had ordered the policy be suspended.



The "Remain in Mexico" policy unveiled in December 2018 by the Trump administration calls for non-Mexican asylum seekers to remain in Mexico while their cases are being decided.

12. Joy Bangla to be national slogan of Bangladesh

The High Court of Bangladesh has ordered that 'Joy Bangla' will be the national slogan of Bangladesh. The court has directed all the people holding constitutional posts and state officials use 'Joy Bangla' after their speeches on national days and other appropriate occasions.



'Joy Bangla' was the main slogan during the liberation war of Bangladesh fought against Pakistan in 1971. The first President of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman also used 'Joy Bangla' in his speeches and specially during his historic 7th March speech in 1971 declaring the goal of independence for Bangladesh.

13. WHO declared COVID-19 a 'Pandemic'

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared COVID-19 a pandemic, pointing to the over 118,000 cases of the coronavirus illness in over 110 countries and the sustained risk of further global spread. The WHO defines a pandemic as global spread of a new disease.



The declaration refers to the spread of a disease, rather than the severity of the illness it causes. COVID-19 is a disease caused by the novel coronavirus which originated in China.

14. "COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator" fund launched

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome, and Mastercard committed up to \$125 million in seed funding to speed-up the response to the COVID-19 epidemic by identifying, assessing, developing, and scaling-up treatments. The COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator will work with the World Health Organization, government and organizations.



The Accelerator will de-risk the pathway for new drugs and biologics for COVID-19 and future epidemic threats, ensuring access in lower-resource countries.

15. U.K.'s Coronavirus 'Herd Immunity'

The United Kingdom Government had adopted "Herd Immunity" strategy to contain Corona Virus for which it was criticized. The strategy was adopted in the belief that 60% of its population will develop immunity against it.



UK has neither cancelled mass gatherings nor locking down public places to contain the virus.

The UK's approach to the corona virus remains relatively mild compared to other places with similar rates of infection.

16. Nepal committed 100 million to SAARC fund to fight Coronavirus

PM Modi proposed emergency covid-19 fund for SAARC nations. In order to extend help in fighting the virus on the SAARC region, Nepal committed 100 million rupees and India pledged \$10 million toward a Covid-19 emergency fund for South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation nations. Funds will be used for immediate actions used by emergency response teams such as availability of protective equipment, hospital beds, ventilators etc.



The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is a regional intergovernmental organization that comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

17. Saudi Arabia to convene virtual G-20 Leaders' Summit

Saudi Arabia proposed to convene an extraordinary virtual G-20 Leaders' Summit to advance a coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its human and economic implications. G-20 Leaders will put forward a coordinated set of policies to protect people and safeguard the global economy. The Saudi Presidency will continue to support and coordinate international efforts to counter the impact of the pandemic, both in human and economic terms.



The Summit will build on the ongoing efforts of the G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, trade, and foreign affairs officials, to further develop the precise requirements and actions needed.

18. \$100 Billion coronavirus relief package signed by US President Donald Trump

US President Donald Trump signed a \$100-billion emergency aid package that ensures sick leave to Americans workers who fall ill from the new coronavirus. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.



The relief package will not only facilitate free coronavirus testing for those who need it but also helps unemployment insurance for millions of Americans.

19. Adnan al-Zurfi appointed as new Prime Minister of Iraq

Iraqi President Barham Salih has appointed Adnan al-Zurfi as the country's new Prime Minister. He will replace Mohammed Allawi who withdrew his candidacy for the post. Al-Zurfi has been given 30 days of time span to form his cabinet which he must then put to a vote of confidence in Iraq's fractious Parliament.



Al-Zurfi was a former official of the US-run authorities that took over Iraq after the 2003 US invasion that deposed former ruler Saddam Hussein.

20. 7th World Cities Summit to be held in Singapore

The 7th World Cities Summit is scheduled from 20 – 24 June 2021, in conjunction with the 9th Singapore International Water Week and 5th CleanEnviro Summit Singapore, at the Sands Expo & Convention Centre, Marina Bay Sands, in Singapore.



The World Cities Summit is an international conference series on public governance and the sustainable development of cities. It is organized by Singapore's Centre for Liveable Cities and the Urban Redevelopment Authority. The theme for WCS 2020 is "Livable and Sustainable Cities: Adapting to a Disrupted World".

21. Philippines became 1st country to suspend all financial markets

Philippines became first country to shut financial markets in response to the widening coronavirus pandemic. The Philippine Stock Exchange suspended stock, currency and bond trading. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.



The Philippines benchmark index fell to 8%. Philippine market fell by a record 19.5%. Global markets are in meltdown as the pandemic spreads.

22. SAARC Disaster Management Centre launched website for information related to COVID-19

The SAARC Disaster Management Centre has launched a website for information related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the region. It was proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The website shows the number of coronavirus cases in the member states while updating the numbers regularly. The website is www.covid19-sdmc.org.



The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a regional intergovernmental organisation and geopolitical union of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

23. US FDA approved first rapid 'point-of-care' test for coronavirus

The US Food and Drug Administration has approved a corona virus diagnostic test that can be conducted entirely at the point-of-care and can deliver results in 45 minutes. The test will be able to provide results within hours, rather than days like the existing tests. It is expected to be rolled out by March 30.



The kit has been developed by California-based company, Cepheid. The test would help fast identification of infected people and quickly start treating them and their quarantine.

24. Netflix announced \$100 million fund for film and TV workers

Netflix Inc (NFLX.O) has established a \$100 million (86.3 million pounds) fund to assist workers on film and television productions that have been shut down due to the global coronavirus outbreak. Out of \$100 million fund, company will contribute \$15 million to third parties and non-profit organizations that were providing emergency relief suspended crew and cast members in countries where Netflix has a large production base. Beneficiaries include electricians, carpenters, drivers and other hourly workers.



Netflix, Inc. is an American media-services provider and production company headquartered in California.

25. G20 Video Summit

The 'Extraordinary Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit' was held through video conferencing on March 26, 2020. The summit focused on coronavirus pandemic. The G20 leaders pledged to inject \$5 trillion into the global economy to reduce the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

The G20 leaders also agreed to contribute to WHO's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund on voluntary basis. The fifteenth G20 Summit was carried out under the theme of 'Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century for All'. It was chaired by Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.



26. US tested Hypersonic Nuclear capable missile

The U.S. Army and U.S. Navy tested a hypersonic weapon system from the Pacific Missile Range Facility on the island of Kauai, Hawaii. Hypersonic weapons are capable of flying at speeds five times the speed of sound, Mach 5, and even up to Mach 20. They are highly maneuverable and can operate at different altitudes.

The main point of difference is that hypersonic weapons remain in the atmosphere while they travel, whereas ballistic missile warheads spend a lot of their flight in lower Earth orbit.



27. The US announced financial assistance of 174 million US Dollars to 64 countries

The United States has announced financial assistance of 174 million US Dollars to 64 countries including 2.9 million US Dollars to India to help fight the Corona virus pandemic. This is in addition to the 100 million US Dollars aid announced by the US. The funding is for 64 of the most at-risk countries facing the threat of the global pandemic.

USA has provided 2.9 million US Dollars to help the Indian government prepare laboratory systems, activate case finding and event-based surveillance and support technical experts for response and preparedness and more.



28. IMF launched Tracker of Government Policies in response to COVID-19

The International Monetary Fund has launched a "Tracker of Policies Governments are Taking in Response to COVID-19". It will help member countries be more aware of the experiences of others in combating the pandemic, and in adapting various policies and practices to their unique circumstances and needs.



This policy tracker summarizes the key economic responses as of March 24, 2020. It covers the responses on the basis of three pillars, namely: Fiscal; Monetary And Macro-Financial and Exchange Rate And Balance Of Payments.

29. US-CDC with Microsoft creates Coronavirus chatbot called Clara

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has introduced an AI bot called 'Clara' to help people assess potential symptoms of COVID-19. The CDC has partnered up with CDC Foundation and Microsoft Azure's Healthcare Bot service to create Clara, the "coronavirus self-checker."



The bot is initially available on the CDC website. The bot helps users in self-screening to decide whether or not would they need a test, thus freeing up resources.

30. United Nations predicts loss of 25 million jobs due to Corona virus

According to a recent report published by the United Nations, the coronavirus pandemic could result in the loss of 25 million jobs across the globe. The report was published by the International Labour Organization (ILO) called 'COVID-19 and World of work: Impacts and responses'.



ILO has estimated an unemployment rate between 5.3 million in a "low" impact scenario and 24.7 million in the worst-case scenario from a base level of 188 million in 2019. The study also estimates a huge plunge in global income between \$860 billion and \$3.4 trillion by the end of 2020.

31. US launched advanced high frequency satellite for military communication

The Lockheed Martin AEHF-6 (Advanced Extremely High Frequency) satellite was launched on the Atlas V551 rocket from Florida to provide global protected communications. AEHF-6 is the final satellite in the AEHF constellation to provide coverage from geostationary Earth orbit, about 22,200 miles (35,700 kilometers) above the planet and jam-proof communications including real-time video between U.S. national leadership and deployed military forces.



AEHF-6 is the first National Security Space payload to launch under the recently established U.S. Space Force.

Miscellaneous

1. A four-day Poetry Festival was held in Kolkata.
2. Chief Secretary of Punjab, Karan Avtar Singh has launched a mobile application, COVA Punjab. COVA stands for Corona Virus Alert.
3. Global sports brand PUMA has signed bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor Khan as its new brand ambassador.
4. Punjab cadre IAS officer Chhabilendra Roul was appointed as next Fertilizers Secretary.
5. Karnataka cadre officer Yogendra Tripathy was appointed as next Tourism Secretary.
6. Director of Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration Upma Chawdhary has been appointed as Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs.
7. West Bengal IAS officer Sumanta Chaudhuri will be the new Coal Secretary.
8. Indian Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers has organised "ACREX India 2020" at India Expo Mart Limited, Greater Noida.
9. PhonePe has tied up with ICICI Bank for UPI transactions.
10. University of Ranchi has launched its own Community Radio Station named as RADIO KHANCHI 90.4 FM Aap Sabka Radio.
11. Nupur Kulshrestha becomes the first woman to be promoted as DIG of Indian Coast Guard.
12. An exhibition titled "Jallianwala Bagh" was held in New Delhi.
13. Writer-filmmaker Tahira Kashyap announced her 4th book titled "The 12 Commandments of Being A Woman".
14. Union Cabinet has approved a proposal for the construction of 780 kilometer of green highways at a cost of 7,660 crore rupees in four states, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.
15. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has to curtail the Indian Premier League (IPL) this year. The season was due to start on March 29, but has since been deferred to April 15, due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in the country and around the world.
16. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) celebrated its 35th Inception Day on 12th March 2020.
17. Indian mountaineer Bhawna Dehariya has successfully scaled Mount Kosciuszko (2,228-metres), the highest mountain peak in Australia on the occasion of Holi.
18. The State Bank of India has waived off the minimum balance charges on all savings bank accounts.
19. Department of Financial Services Secretary Debasish Panda has been nominated on the central board of Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
20. National health policy is poised to achieve a total fertility rate of 2.1% by 2025.
21. Former Supreme Court Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi took oath as a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha.
22. The Supreme court of India cleared permanent commission for women officers in the Indian Navy.
23. Four convicts in Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case namely Pawan Gupta, Vinay Sharma, Akshay Kumar and Mukesh Kumar were hanged to death at Tihar jail in Delhi.
24. Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed for "Janta Curfew" on 22nd March, within the wake of COVID 19 outbreak.
25. Bollywood actor Imtiaz Khan passed away.

26. Indian E-commerce company Flipkart has tied up with Aegon Life Insurance to sell comprehensive insurance solutions for customers.
27. The top tech giants of the world will jointly fight against the fake news and misinformation related to COVID-19 on their platforms. The top giants which have announced a fight against the fake news includes Facebook, Google, LinkedIn, Microsoft, Reddit, Twitter and YouTube.
28. Noted Marathi Actor Jairam Kulkarani passed away.
29. Rajiv Bajaj has been reappointed as MD & CEO of Bajaj Auto.
30. Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) has partnered with Visa to issue Visa debit cards.
31. Ajay Kumar, current Joint Secretary in the Ministry, was appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Uganda.
32. The French Open tennis tournament has been postponed by the French Tennis Federation, due to the coronavirus pandemic. The 2020 edition of Roland Garros (French Open tennis tournament) will now be held in the month of September-October 2020.
33. "WhatsApp Coronavirus Information Hub" has been launched globally by WhatsApp in partnership with the World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, and United Nations Development Programme.
34. Indian Railways has planned to electrify a total of 28,810 km of broad gauge route by December 2023.
35. Vrinda Rathi and Janani Narayanan have been named in the International Panel of ICC Development Umpires.
36. Punjab became first state to impose curfew amid COVID-19. The state government of Punjab has imposed a curfew across the state with no relaxations.
37. ICICI Lombard has launched a 1 year-long "COVID-19 Protection Cover", which will pay 100% of the sum insured to the COVID-19 positive individual, irrespective of hospitalisation expenses.
38. The Election Commission of India has deferred the Rajya Sabha elections amid rising risk of rapidly spreading coronavirus pandemic.
39. Karur Vysya Bank has launched India's 1st pre-paid card Enkasu (My cash in Tamil) in Karur, Tamil Nadu under its Quit cash movement.
40. The United Nations launched a \$2 billion Global Humanitarian Response Plan to fund the fight against the coronavirus pandemic in the world's poorest countries.
41. The Centre has capped the maximum retail price of three-ply face masks made of meltblown non-woven fabric at 16 rupees per piece till 30th of June.
42. U.S. Marines and Emirati forces held a major military exercise - "Native Fury".
43. YouTube has decided to reduce streaming quality for users in India until 31st March 2020, from High Definition (HD) and ultra-High Definition (HD) streaming to Standard Definition (SD) content.
44. The Odisha state government launched Mo Jeeban (My Life) programme. Through the programme, the chief minister of Odisha urged the people of the state to take a pledge to stay indoors.
45. A coronavirus risk-tracking app called 'Corona Kavach' has been launched by the Government of India. 'Corona Kavach' app uses a person's location to assess whether they are in the high-risk geographical zone.
46. Chief Minister of Nagaland, Neiphiu Rio launched the Self Declaration COVID19 Nagaland App. The app will be mandatory for any person who enters Nagaland. The app is crucial for tracking and surveillance of high-risk cases.
47. ICICI Bank has rolled out the banking services on WhatsApp which will enable the banks' retail customers to undertake a slew of banking requirements from their home amid lockdown in the country due to COVID-19 pandemic.

48. Indian shot-putter Navin Chikara was suspended by the World athletics body's (formerly known as International Association of Athletics Federations-IAAF), Athletics Integrity Unit for four years. He was suspended for failing an out-of-competition dope test in 2018.
49. Odisha government will set up two of the largest Covid-19 hospitals having a combined capacity of 1,000 beds.
50. Indore has deployed drones to sanitize city areas against the coronavirus scare and has become the 1st city in India to use drones to sanitize the city.
51. Jana Small Finance Bank has rolled out a Unified Payments Interface (UPI) QR-based loan installment payment facility along with National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) for its customers.
52. Tokyo Olympics organisers are eyeing next July as a start date for the postponed Games following the historic decision to delay the event due to the coronavirus.
53. Saudi Arabia assured India of uninterrupted LPG supply to support India's domestic requirement.
54. Australia has announced a US\$ 38 billion spending plan to mitigate the economic impact of COVID - 19. It amounts to nearly 10% of the nation's gross domestic product.
55. As a measure of relief to people due to COVID-19 outbreak, debit card holders can withdraw money from any branch of any bank without paying charges for the next three months.

National

1. India suspended all regular visas and e-visas granted to nationals of eight countries

India has suspended all regular visas and e-visas granted to the nationals of eight countries in view of outbreak of COVID19, Novel Corona virus - France, Germany, Spain, China, Italy, Iran, South Korea and Japan.

The government has also advised all passengers having travel history to China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Thailand, Singapore, Iran, Malaysia, France, Spain and Germany to undergo self-imposed quarantine for a period of 14 days from the date of their arrival.



Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India

2. GoS constituted for private passenger train operators to advise terms and conditions

Railway Ministry has constituted a Group of Secretaries (GoS) to advise the terms and conditions for private passenger train operators to operate trains with world-class technology covering the Indian Railways network and provide world-class services. The GoS was formed for a 1-year term and will be headed by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant.

“Tejas” train, run by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), is the first train operated by a private player. By 2022, the government wants to launch 150 privately-run passenger trains.



3. MSDE launched Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship programme in Bengaluru

Union Minister Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey launched the Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship programme in IIM, Bengaluru. The Fellowship is launched as part of the SANKALP programme of the ministry to provide skilled manpower for District Skill Committees to prepare the District Skill Development plan.

Under the pilot project, IIMB will train 75 graduates for two years in preparing the District skill plan considering the skill gaps, market utilities, government schemes and institutions available in the district. Graduates from 75 districts in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Karnataka and Meghalaya are chosen for the training.



4. Cabinet approved MoU between India and Côte d'Ivoire for co-operation in the field of Health

The Union Cabinet has approved a MoU between India and Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on co-operation in the field of Health.

The Memorandum of Co-operation covers the following areas of co-operation:-

- Exchange & training of medical doctors.
- Regulation of drugs and pharmaceutical products.
- Assistance in development of human resources and setting up of health care facilities.
- Medical and health research development.
- Development and improving the techniques and strategies for epidemiological surveillance.



5. Cabinet approved the Foreign Direct Investment policy on Civil Aviation

Union Cabinet approved to amend the extant FDI Policy to permit Foreign Investment (s) in M/s Air India Ltd. by NRIs, who are Indian Nationals, up to 100% under automatic route. It is done to permit foreign investment up to 100% by those NRIs, who are Indian Nationals, in case of M/s Air India Ltd.



As per the present FDI Policy, 100% FDI is permitted in scheduled Air Transport Service/Domestic Scheduled Passenger Airline (Automatic up to 49% and Government route beyond 49%). However, for NRIs 100% FDI is permitted under automatic route in Scheduled Air Transport Service/Domestic Scheduled Passenger Airline.

6. LLP settlement Scheme, 2020 launched

Central Government has introduced a scheme namely "LLP Settlement Scheme, 2020" to help non-compliant Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) firms turn compliant and enable 'ease of doing business' for such entities. The scheme came into force on March 16, 2020 and will remain in force up to June 13, 2020.



The scheme will be applicable to a "defaulting LLP" for filing documents, which were due for filing till October 31, 2019, on payment of a nominal additional fee of ₹10 per day for the period of delay.

7. Union Government Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase-II

Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched Phase II of Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen). SBM (G) Phase II will be implemented from 2020-21 to 2024-25 in a mission mode with a total outlay of Rs. 1,40,881 crores.

Phase – II of the SBM (G) will focus on sustaining the gains made under the programme in last five years in terms of toilet access and usage, ensuring that no one is left behind. It will ensure that effective solid and liquid waste management (SLWM) is instituted in every Gram Panchayat of the country.



8. Ten projects worth Rs. 301.54 crores sanctioned for food processing sector

Ten projects worth Rs. 301.54 crore with total grant-in-aid of Rs 67.29 crore were sanctioned in a meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Approval Committee (IMAC) held in New Delhi. The projects were sanctioned under the 'Agro Processing Cluster Scheme' of Kisan Sampada Yojana of MoFPI. These projects are likely to generate employment for ten thousand people and benefit nearly forty thousand farmers. These projects are likely to generate employment for around 8000 people and benefit 32000 farmers in that region.



IMAC approved 8 projects spread over eight districts of Tamil Nadu under the cluster scheme worth 230 Crore rupees.

9. DAY-NULM partnered with Amazon for e-marketing of products

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) signed MoU with Amazon for e-marketing of products made by Self Help Groups (SHGs) across the country in urban areas. It aims to provide access to wider customer base for products made by SHGs and strengthening the mission of creating sustainable livelihoods in urban areas.



Amazon's promotion of products will be helpful in documenting and preserving the unique traditional art and crafts of different

states. DAY-NULM is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to provide self-employment opportunities to urban poor households.

10. Indian Railways launched its first “Restaurant On Wheels”

Indian Railways launched its first ‘Restaurant on Wheels’ at the circulating area of Asansol Railway station for the use of Railway passengers as well as general public of Asansol. The Restaurant on Wheels at Asansol station circulating area was developed by refurbishing two over aged MEMU coaches. This unique effort will not only improve the facilities at Asansol station, but also generate non-fare revenue earnings approximately Rs.50 lakhs in the next five years.



Two new air-conditioned Retiring Rooms and Electronic Reservation Chart Display System (through MPLAD fund) and a Battery operated Car at Asansol station were also inaugurated.

11. Multilingual version of “Incredible India” website launched

The Minister of State (IC) for Tourism & Culture, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel launched multilingual Incredible India website. Ministry of Tourism has revamped the multilingual Incredible India website design, with an aim to provide more information about India’s tourist destinations. The website now comprises of a plethora of information around 165 destinations, 2700+ pages, 28 States and 9 Union Territories along with multiple attractions.



The website is launched in Chinese, Arabic and Spanish with primary objective to effectively engage the visitors.

12. India signed 40 million USD defence deal with Armenia

India bagged a deal of worth 40 million USD to supply 4 indigenously built radars (capable of locating weapons) to Armenia in Europe. The radars will provide fast, automatic and accurate location of enemy weapons like mortars, shells and rockets in a 50 km range. The deal is aimed for the ‘Make in India’ programme in the defence sector.



Under the deal, India will supply 4 SWATHI weapon locating radars. The weapon is to be developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and manufactured by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).

13. Govt plans to have at least one PMBJP Kendra in every block

The Union Government plans to open 2,500 new Jan Aushadhi stores by 2020 in order to have at least one Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya JanAushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) Kendra in each block of India. Currently, there are over 5,000 Jan Aushadhi stores across the country.

Under the PMBJP, the government provides more than 800 medicines and 154 surgicals through Jan Aushadhi centres. Jan Aushadhi stores across the country are serving 10-15 lakh people per day.



14. Google India launched skill programme designed for women

Google India on Friday introduced DigiPivot, a skilling programme designed for women, who are looking to return to their corporate careers after a break or simply planning to make mid career shifts to digital marketing. The programme is developed jointly in association with Avtar, a career portal service for women, and the Indian School of Business.

The programme aims to influence the overall gender mix in the digital marketing landscape in India and will provide an opportunity for 200 women professionals to re-skill themselves.



15. Centre invoked 'Epidemic Act' and 'Disaster Management Act' to prevent spread of coronavirus

The Centre has decided to invoke Epidemic Act 1897 to combat novel coronavirus in India. The Act provides for prevention of the spread of "dangerous epidemic diseases".

All the states and union territories of India are advised to invoke the provisions of Section 2 of the Epidemic Disease Act 1897. It provides for detention of people or any vessel that come from international shores and are seen potent to spread the epidemic in the country.



16. Government targets to achieve sales of around 70 lakh hybrid and electric vehicles in 2020

The government has set an ambitious target to achieve sales of around 70 lakh hybrid and electric vehicles by the end of 2020. The government had initiated Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles in India, FAME scheme in 2015 to promote the manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle technology under the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020.



The government has announced an outlay of Rs.10,000 crore for Phase 2 of the FAME Scheme. Rs.1,000 crore has been earmarked for setting up charging stations for electric vehicles in India.

17. Census India-2021 to be conducted in two phases

The Census India-2021 will be conducted in two phases. The first phase will begin from the 1st of April and will continue until the 30th of September, 2020. The second phase is Population Enumeration which will be conducted from 9th February to 28th February 2021 throughout the country simultaneously.



Indian census is the largest single source of a range of statistical data on different characteristics of the people of the country. It is a comprehensive collection of data relating to the people of India every 10 years.

18. Cabinet approved scheme for RoDTEP

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for introducing the Scheme for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP). A mechanism would be created for reimbursement of taxes/duties/levies, at the central, state and local level, which are currently not being refunded under any other mechanism, but which are incurred in the process of manufacture and distribution of exported products.



This scheme is going to give a boost to the domestic industry and Indian exports providing a level playing field for Indian producers in the International market, so that domestic taxes/duties are not exported.

19. POCSO rules notified by government with stringent punishments for Child abuse cases

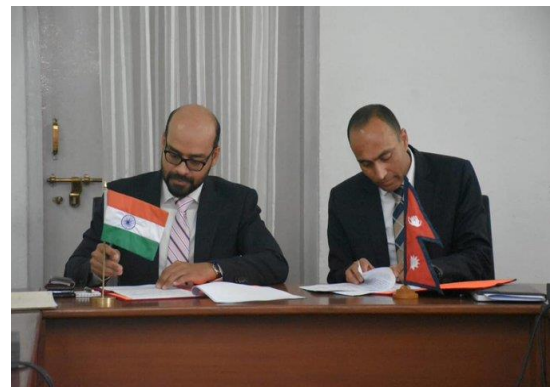
The Union Government has notified the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Rules, 2020 which enables implementation of recent amendments to the Act under which provisions of punishment for child abuse has been made more stringent.



Some of the significant additions in the new rules include provision of mandatory police verification of staff in schools and care homes, procedures to report sexual abuse material (pornography), imparting age-appropriate child rights education among others.

20. India to provide 107.01 million Nepali Rupees for three new school buildings in Nepal

The Government of India will provide 107.01 million Nepali Rupees for three new school buildings in Nepal. Two schools will be built under the India-Nepal Development Partnership program at a total estimated cost of 73.96 million Nepali Rupees in Darchula and Dhanusha districts.



The Government of India has also committed an amount of 33.05 million Nepali Rupees for the construction of new school buildings in Kapilvastu district. The India will provide funds while construction work, including a call for tender, the award of work and day to day supervision, will be by Nepal.

21. Parliamentary panel reports annual post-harvest losses of Rs. 61,000 crore in fisheries

According to a parliamentary panel, India faces annual post-harvest losses of Rs. 61,000 crore in production of marine and inland fisheries. For Marine Fisheries the losses stand at 15,000 crore rupees. The report was submitted by Chairperson to the standing committee on Agriculture, P.C. Gaddigoudar.



The panel has reported that the possible causes for Post-harvest losses are faulty handling practices, inordinate delay in packing and transportation, lack of proper cold storage facilities, and lack of technological know-how for harvesting fishes.

22. TCIL signs MoU with The Gambia for MEA's eVBAB Network Project

Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd (TCIL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with The Gambia for the eVBAB Network Project. Gambia will participate in the eVBAB Network Project for tele-education and tele-medicine in Africa.

The Gambia is the 16th country to participate in the e-Network Project. TCIL was set up in 1978 for providing Indian telecom expertise in all fields of telecom, Civil and IT to developing countries around the world.



23. “Technology Innovation Hub” to be established at IIT Mandi

Under its National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS), the Department of Science and Technology (DST) has sanctioned Rs 7.25 crore to IIT Mandi to establish a Technology Innovation Hub (TIH) at the Institute. The focus of the TIH in IIT Mandi will be research on human-computer interaction (HCI).

NM-ICPS is implemented by DST at a total outlay of Rs. 3,660 crore for a period of five years. The Mission aims at the establishment of 15 numbers of Technology Innovation Hubs (TIH), six numbers of Application Innovation Hubs (AIH) and four numbers of Technology Translation Research Parks (TTRP).



24. Facebook launched ‘Pragati’ to boost women entrepreneurship in India

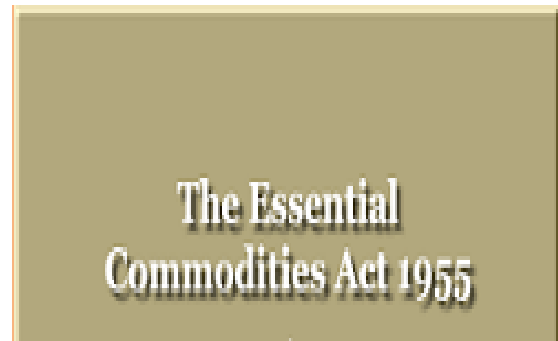
Facebook India called for applications for its CSR initiative, Facebook Pragati. It is powered by The/Nudge Centre for Social Innovation (N/Core). The initiative will incubate and accelerate early-stage women-led non-profits that are working to drive women entrepreneurship.

Facebook Pragati will award four grants of up to Rs.50 lakh for each non-profit. Each non-profit will be mentored by an N/Core Partner — which include Kamakshi Rao (Partner, Ankur Capital); KR Lakshminaraya (Chief Endowment Officer of Azim Premji Foundation) and SK Jain (Co-founder, WestBridge Capital), among others.



25. Government brings masks and hand sanitizers under the Essential Commodities Act

In view of the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19 (Corona Virus), Government of India has notified an Order under the Essential Commodities Act to declare masks and hand sanitizers as Essential Commodities up to 30th June, 2020 by amending the Schedule of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. It has also issued an advisory under the Legal Metrology Act.



Under the E.C Act, after discussions with the manufacturers, States can ask them to enhance their production capacity of these items, to make the supply chain smooth, while under the L.M. Act the States can ensure sale of both the items at MRP.

26. India's first Living Culinary Arts Museum enters Limca Book of Records

Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration (WGSHA) of Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE) entered the Limca Book of Records (LBR) for establishing "India's First Living Culinary Arts Museum" at WGSHA, Manipal, Karnataka. The museum was opened in the year April 2018. It is spread approximately over 25,000 square feet & the structure of the museum is shaped in the form of a giant pot.



Limca Book of Records (LBR) is a catalogue of achievements made by Indians, at home and abroad in diverse fields of human endeavour.

27. GoI pledged \$10 million for Covid-19 emergency fund

India pledged \$10 million toward a Covid-19 emergency fund proposed by PM Narendra Modi for South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) nations. The Sri Lankan government also committed for \$5 million for the SAARC Corona Emergency Fund.



Bangladesh has promised \$1.5 million to the fund. Nepal has announced to contribute approximately \$1 million to the COVID-19 Emergency Fund. Maldives has contributed USD 200,000 to the fund while Afghanistan has pledged \$1 million.

28. Widespread uranium contamination found in India's groundwater

There is prevalence of Uranium concentration above 30 micro-gram per litre (World Health Organization (WHO) provisional guidelines) in groundwater aquifers in 16 Indian states. The report was brought out by Duke University, USA in association with Central Ground Water Board and State Ground Water departments.



The primary source of the contamination is natural, but human factors such as groundwater-table depletion and nitrate pollution may exacerbate the problem.

29. APEDA signed MoU with SFAC

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) signed MoU with Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium.



Areas of co-operation:

- SFAC to share list of all clusters in various states with APEDA for achieving scale and aggregation with export orientation.
- APEDA to facilitate certification of organic produce / areas by the FPCs assisted or identified by SFAC.
- To take-up an Agri Business Promotion Unit in the North East and to mentor and handhold the FPOs in North East.
- APEDA will be able to reach to a large farmer base for improving the production base of agri products.

30. Agreement between India and Brunei for Exchange of Information notified

The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Brunei Darussalam for the exchange of information and assistance in collection with respect of taxes was signed in New Delhi. The Agreement was notified in the Gazette of India.



The Agreement enables exchange of information, including banking and ownership information, between the two countries for tax purposes and provides for representatives of one country to undertake tax examinations in the other country.

31. Center approved setting up of National Technical Textile Mission

The government approved the proposal for creation of National Technical Textiles Mission for a period of 4 years with an outlay of Rs.1,480 crores. The focus of the Mission is for developing on usage of technical textiles in various flagship missions, programmes of the country including strategic sectors.



The use of geo-textiles in highways, railways and ports will result in robust infrastructure, reduced maintenance cost and higher life cycle of the infrastructure assets. The use of technical textiles in agriculture, aquaculture, dairy, poultry, etc. will bring an overall improvement in cost economy.

32. Innovate for Accessible India campaign launched to empower PwD

Microsoft India and NASSCOM Foundation launched 'Innovate for Accessible India' campaign to empower people with disabilities. Innovate for Accessible India is a nation-wide innovation challenge aimed at empowering people with disabilities with the technology and tools required for better integration into society and access to equal opportunities.



The campaign will be an aggregator of workable technology solutions developed using Microsoft Cloud, Artificial Intelligence and other technologies that address gaps faced by people with disabilities. The key areas of focus that developers are encouraged to address include mobility, e-governance and health.

33. Shipping Ministry launched 'Ropax' ferry service in Maharashtra

Union Minister of State for Shipping Mansukh Mandaviya launched 'Ropax' passenger ferry service between Mumbai and Mandwa, Maharashtra. 'Ropax' is roll on-roll off cum passenger ferry service, capable of carrying 200 cars and 1,000 passengers. Since, the road distance between Mumbai and Mandwa is 110 kilometres, Ropax can reach speeds of 14 knots and complete the 18-kilometre sea journey in 45 minutes to one hour.



'Ropax' ferry service is built at Mumbai Port Trust at the cost of Rs.31 crore, whereas at Mandwa, it is built at the cost of ₹135 crore.

34. CRPF & Aditya Mehta foundation signed MoU to enable the 'Divyang Warriors'

Central Reserve Police Force & Aditya Mehta foundation inked MoU to enable the 'Divyang Warriors'. The deal will train its troops, who lost their limbs in operations, in various skills including cyber operations, artificial intelligence and para-sports. This will enable the 'Divyang Warriors' lead a self-esteem driven productive life in Hyderabad.



The novel idea that drives the MoU is to re-purpose the latent talent of the 'Divyang Warriors' of CRPF in diverse fields ranging from para-sports to cyber space.

35. Oil India signed COSA agreement with Numaligarh Refinery

India's second-largest national oil explorer, Oil India Limited (OIL) has inked the Crude Oil Sales Agreement (COSA) with Numaligarh Refinery. MoU was inked with an aim to streamline sale and purchase transactions of crude oil, which will be produced from fields in the North East India.



Oil India Limited is the second largest hydrocarbon exploration and production Indian public sector company engaged in the business of exploration, development and production of crude oil.

36. Benefits to COVID-19 affected workers under Atal Beema Vyakti Kalyan Yojana

The Ministry of Labour and Employment launched 'Atal Beema Vyakti Kalyan Yojana' that allow workers to avail benefits of unemployment insurance if they are impacted by the coronavirus. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019-20 coronavirus pandemic.



The scheme aims to provide unemployment insurance to workers who have subscribed to the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) scheme. ESI is a self-financing health insurance scheme for formal sector workers in India.

37. NAVIC Messaging System for Fisheries Department

Indian Space Research Organisation designed NavIC messaging system and developed a NavIC receiver and the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information System (INCOIS) is using this messaging system to broadcast emergency warning messages like cyclone, tsunami and high waves as and when it occurs and also for broadcasting of information of Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ).



The Fisheries Department of various coastal States have been made aware of this technology for the fishermen community. ISRO has distributed about 250 units each to the State Fisheries Department of Kerala and Tamil Nadu for the use of fishermen.

38. Government announced complete nationwide lockdown for 21 days to fight COVID-19

The government of India announced a complete lockdown of the entire country for 21 days to fight COVID-19. All road, rail and air services will remain suspended during the lockdown until 14th April, which came into force midnight beginning 25th March.



The government felt the need for uniformity across all states and invoked powers under the National Disaster Management Act, 2005, to enforce the countrywide lockdown. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a Central allocation of 15,000 crore rupees to strengthen the health infrastructure to tackle the disease.

39. Nation observed Janta curfew in fight against Covid-19

India observed Janata curfew on 22 March 2020 to help reduce community spreading of coronavirus disease in the country. It was introduced by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, in the wake of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. The Janata curfew was a 14 hour curfew (7am-9pm).



At 5 pm, all citizens stood in their doorways, balconies or windows, and clap their hands or ring their bells in appreciation for the professionals delivering the essential services. The 'essential services' included police, medical services, media, home delivery professionals and firefighters.

40. Cabinet approved Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing

The Union Cabinet has approved the Production Incentive Scheme (PLI) for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing. The scheme proposes production linked incentive to boost domestic manufacturing and attract large investments in mobile phone manufacturing and specified electronic components including Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) units.



The Scheme shall extend an incentive of 4% to 6% on incremental sales (over base year) for a period of 5 years. The total cost of the proposed scheme is approximately INR 40,995 crore.

41. Cabinet approved Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0) Scheme

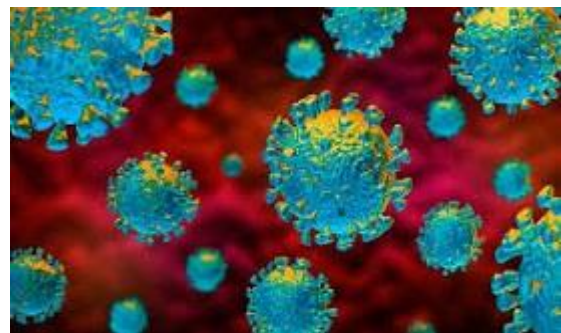
The Union Cabinet has approved financial assistance to the Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC2.0) Scheme for development of world class infrastructure along with common facilities and amenities through Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMCs). The total outlay of the propose EMC 2.0 Scheme is Rs. 3,762.25 crore.



The Scheme will create a robust infrastructure base for electronic industry to attract flow of investment in ESDM sector and lead to greater employment opportunities. India's electronics production has increased from US\$29 billion in 2014-15 to US\$ 70 billion in 2018-19. It accounts for 2.3% of India's GDP.

42. COVID-19 outbreak: Relief measures announced to boost economy

The Government has announced a slew of measures to provide relief to people and business community by relaxing the compliance and regulatory norms in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak. The last date for filing of income tax return for the financial year 2018-19 has been extended till June 2020. Interest on delayed payment of income tax has also been reduced to 9%.



Vivad Se Vishwas scheme, PAN-Aadhar linking, Sabka Sath, Sabka Vishwas scheme and last date for filling of GST return for the month of March, April and May have also been extended till June.

43. COVID-19: Government banned export of all ventilators, sanitizers

As a result of COVID-19 pandemic, Government has prohibited the export of all ventilators, including any artificial respiratory apparatus or oxygen therapy apparatus or any other breathing device. The government has also prohibited the export of all Sanitizers. The Ventilators were put in the prohibited category.



Directorate General of Foreign Trade further amended the export policy. It widens the ambit of products under the prohibited category and will prevent any scope of export of these items by any other classification.

44. Cabinet approves MoU between India and Germany in Railway sector

The Union Cabinet was apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Ministry of Railways, Government of India with DB Engineering & Consulting GMBH of Germany for technological cooperation in Railway Sector. The MoU will enable co-operation in the following areas:



- Freight operations.
- Passenger operations.
- Infrastructure building and management.
- Development of a modern, competitive railway organisation.
- IT solutions for railway operations, marketing and sales as well as administrative purposes.
- Predictive Maintenance.
- Private train operations.

45. Cabinet approved scheme for Promotion of manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors

The Union Cabinet has approved to offer financial incentive of 25% of capital expenditure for the manufacturing of goods that constitute the supply chain of an electronic product under the Scheme for Promotion of manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS).



The scheme will help offset the disability for domestic manufacturing of electronic components and semiconductors in order to strengthen the electronic manufacturing ecosystem in the country. The total cost of the scheme is approximately Rs.3,285 crore, which includes the incentive outlay of approximately Rs.3,252 crore and the administrative expense to the tune of Rs.32 crore.

46. Cabinet approved promotion of the Domestic Manufacturing of Medical Devices in country

The Union Cabinet has approved the following schemes:

- The scheme on Promotion of Medical Device Parks for financing Common Infrastructure Facilities in 04 Medical Device Parks with financial implications of Rs. 400 crore.
- The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for promoting domestic manufacturing of medical devices with financial implications of Rs. 3,420 crore.
- The expenditure to be incurred for the above schemes will be for the next five years i.e. from 2020-21 to 2024-25.



47. Cabinet approved promotion of Bulk Drug Parks

The Union Cabinet has approved the scheme on Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks for financing Common Infrastructure Facilities in 3 Bulk Drug Parks with financial implication of Rs. 3,000 crore for next five years.

Government of India will give Grants-in-Aid to States with a maximum limit of Rs. 1,000 Crore per Bulk Drug Park. Parks will have common facilities such as solvent recovery plant, distillation plant, power & steam units, common effluent treatment plant etc.



48. Cabinet approved Production Linked Incentive Scheme

The Union Cabinet has approved the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for promotion of domestic manufacturing of critical KSMs/Drug Intermediates and APIs in the country with financial implications of Rs 6,940 crore for next eight years.

Financial incentive will be given to eligible manufacturers of identified 53 critical bulk drugs on their incremental sales over the base year (2019-20) for a period of 6 years. Out of 53 identified bulk drugs, 26 are fermentation based bulk drugs and 27 are chemical synthesis based bulk drugs.



49. Cabinet approved signing and ratifying of the Extradition Treaty between India and Belgium

The Union Cabinet has approved the signing and ratifying of the Extradition Treaty between India and Belgium. The Treaty would provide a legal framework for seeking extradition of terrorists, economic offenders, and other criminals from and to Belgium. After ratification, the Treaty will enter into force from the date of exchange of instruments of ratification between India and Belgium.



Each Party agreed to extradite to the other any person found in its territory, who is accused or convicted of an extraditable offence in the territory of the other Party.

50. Cabinet approved inclusion of the AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres component of Ayushman Bharat in National AYUSH Mission

The Union Cabinet has approved the inclusion of AYUSH Health and Wellness Centre (AYUSH HWC) component of Ayushman Bharat in National AYUSH Mission (NAM). The proposal entails an expenditure of Rs. 3,399.35 Crore (Rs.2,209.58 Crore as Central Share and Rs. 1,189.77 crore as State share) for operationalisation of AYUSH HWCs within a period of five years, i.e. from financial years 2019-20 to 2023-24.



Ministry of AYUSH

The Ministry of AYUSH has proposed following two models for operationalisation of 12,500 AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres:

- Upgradation of existing AYUSH dispensaries (approximately 10,000)
- Upgradation of existing Sub Health Centres (SHCs) (approx. 2,500)

51. Reliance Industries sets up India's first Covid-19 dedicated hospital

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has set up India's first COVID-19 dedicated hospital in Mumbai. It includes a negative pressure room that helps in preventing cross-contamination and helps to control infection.



Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital in collaboration with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), has set up a dedicated 100 bedded COVID-19 centre at Seven Hills Hospital, Mumbai. All beds in the hospital are equipped with the required infrastructure, bio-medical equipment such as ventilators, pacemakers, dialysis machine and patient monitoring devices.

52. BRO opens new bridge over Teesta River in North Sikkim

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has opened a new bridge for traffic in North Sikkim. The bridge is located over Teesta River in Munshithang near Chungthang town and built under Project Swastik. It has been constructed by the 86 Road Construction Company (RCC) of 758 Border Roads Task Force (BRTF).



Government has approved a five year (2018-23) Long Term Roll on Works Plan (LTRoWP) to concentrate simultaneously on the Northern and North-Eastern Borders for the construction/improvement for 265 roads of length 14224.12 kilometer, 4 Ditch cum Bund (DCB) of length 353.22 km and 4 bridges (Br).

53. Centre announced relief package worth Rs 1.7 lakh crore for poor

- Prime Minister Gareeb Kalyan scheme: MNREGA wages increased from 182 to 202 rupees with effect from 1st April.
- Insurance cover of 50 lakh rupees per person for three months for COVID-19 warriors.
- Additional 5 kilo rice or wheat will be given for the next three months.
- One kilo of preferred pulses will be given per family for free under Pradhan Mantri Anna Yojana.
- Women Jan Dhan Account holders will get 500 rupees per month for the next three months.
- Poor senior citizens, widows and disabled will get an ex-graita of 1,000 rupees.
- Farmers will get 2,000 rupees in first week of April in their account under existing Prime Minister's Kisan Yojana.
- Government will contribute employees as well as employer's contribution to the provident fund for the next three months of companies with up to 100 employees with 90% earning not more than 15,000 rupees.
- Free gas cylinders to poor families for the next three months under UJJWALA scheme.
- Limit of collateral-free loans to women self-held groups doubled to 20 lakh rupees.
- Workers will be allowed to draw a non-refundable advance of 75% from credit in provident fund account or three months salary, whichever is lower.
- State Government to utilise the funds available under District Mineral Fund for supplementing and augmenting facilities of medical testing, screening and other requirements in connection with preventing the spread of COVID-19 pandemic as well as treating the patients affected with this pandemic.

54. Invest India Business Immunity Platform launched

Invest India, India's national Investment Promotion & Facilitation Agency, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has launched The Invest India Business Immunity Platform. It is designed as a comprehensive resource to help businesses and investors get real-time updates on India's active response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus).



The Business Immunity Platform (BIP) is the active platform for business issue redressal, operating 24/7, with a team of dedicated sector experts and responding to queries at the earliest. Invest India has also announced a partnership with SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) for responding and resolving queries for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

55. Government banned export of anti-malarial drug Hydroxychloroquine

The Government of India banned exports of anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine, which is claimed to be effective in treating Covid-19 patients. The exports will be allowed from special economic zones and to fulfil prior obligations or for humanitarian efforts by the government.



The utilisation of hydroxychloroquine has been recommended by the Indian Council of Medical Research for the treatment of healthcare workers who are handling suspected or confirmed coronavirus cases and also the asymptomatic household contacts of the lab-confirmed cases.

56. OFB designated 285 beds for coronavirus cases

The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) has designated a total of 285 beds for isolation wards to handle novel coronavirus cases. It includes:

- 40 beds in hospitals at Vehicle Factory Jabalpur.
- 30 beds each at Metal and Steel Factory Ishapore, Gun and Shell Factory Cossipore, Ammunition Factory Khadki, Ordnance Factory Kanpur, Ordnance Factory Khamaria, Ordnance Factory Ambajhari.
- 25 beds at Ordnance Factory Ambarnath.
- 20 beds each at Heavy Vehicle Factory Avadi and Ordnance Factory Medak.



ORDNANCE FACTORY BOARD

57. EC allows use of indelible ink for home quarantine stamps

The Election Commission of India has allowed the use of indelible ink to mark quarantined coronavirus suspected and confirmed cases. The ink would be used to stamp people who have been advised to stay under quarantine.



The ECI has instructed the concerned authorities to not use the indelible ink on any finger of the left hand of any persons because according to the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, the left forefinger is marked with indelible ink at polling stations before voting.

58. AIIMS started tele-consultation facility

All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi has started a tele-consultation facility for its follow-up patients called CoNTeC. The project CoNTeC is an acronym for COVID-19 National Teleconsultation Centre.



CoNTeC has been made operational at AIIMS with a view to connect the Doctors across the country to AIIMS in real time for treatment of the COVID-19 patients. Expert doctors from various clinical domains will be available 24x7 to answer the multifaceted questions from specialists from all over the country.

59. “Corona Studies Series” launched by National Book Trust

National Book Trust (NBT) launched Corona Studies Series books to provide relevant reading materials for all age-groups for the post-Corona readership needs. The book will provide suitable platform to authors and researchers willing to contribute in this genre. The 'Corona Studies Series' will be the long-term contribution to prepare and engage readers with the various aspects of the Corona times.



Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a new virus. The disease causes respiratory illness (like the flu).

60. CII created “CII COVID Rehabilitation and Relief Fund”

The Confederation of Indian Industry announced creation of CII COVID Rehabilitation and Relief Fund (CRR) to assist small enterprises or Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) in rehabilitation. The fund will help MSMEs tide over the crisis would help them to pay wages.



Setting up of a special MSME Factoring fund to enable MSMEs to discount their bills to approved retailers in 15 days and permit retailers to pay in 120 days would help in faster realisation. CII requested its members to contribute an amount from their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) allocation for the CII COVID Rehabilitation and Relief Fund (CRR).

61. India-Japan signed Rs. 15,295 crores rail project

India signed Rs. 15,295 crores rail project agreement with Japan for three mega rail infrastructure projects. As per MOU, Rs. 8,553 crore is assigned for phase-1 of the Dedicated Freight Corridor; Rs. 4,262 crore for Mumbai Trans Harbour Link Project (II) and Rs. 2,480 crore for the Mumbai Metro Line 3 Project (III).



Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd. (DFCCIL) is the executing agency of the project. The deal will increase in freight transport demand in India by constructing new dedicated freight railway system between Delhi and Mumbai and promote comprehensive regional economic development along the freight corridor.

62. Indian Army launched “Operation Namaste” to combat COVID-19

Operation Namaste was launched by Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane to extend assistance to the government in containing the spread of coronavirus. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.



Under 'Operation Namaste', Indian army established eight quarantine facilities across the country, Army Wellness Facility centers and command wise helplines. The Indian Army has code-named its anti-COVID-19 operations as Operation Namaste.

63. Government created PM-CARES Funds to fight against COVID-19

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the constitution of the PM's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM-CARES) fund. It is a dedicated national fund with the primary objective of dealing with any kind of emergency or distress situation, like posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Prime Minister is the Chairman of this trust and its Members include Defence Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister.



Citizens and organisations can go to the website pmindia.gov.in and donate to PM CARES Fund. Donations to this fund will be exempted from income tax under section 80(G).

Persons in News

1. Thinlas Chorol sets up first women's travel company in Ladakh

Thinlas Chorol of Ladakh has introduced woman trekking guide in the male dominated trekking industry. To train the other women as trekking guide, she setup the first women's travel company fully operated by women only. Every trekking season from April to September, she trains 20 to 30 rural women to work as trekking guide.



Government of India has awarded Chorol with Nari Shakti Puraskar and Women Transforming India award for her pioneering works in transforming life of rural women through trekking and entrepreneurship.

2. Former Senior Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia joined BJP

Former Senior Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia has joined Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). BJP President J P Nadda inducted him in New Delhi. His grandmother Vijayraje Scindia was among the founder members of the BJP and his aunts Vasundhara Raje and Yashodhara Raje are also in the party.



Mr Scindia, a four-time Lok Sabha MP from Guna, had reportedly been unhappy with Congress leadership for some time. He lost the race for chief ministership in 2018.

3. Singer Taylor Swift tops Google's 2020 list of most-searched woman

Singer Taylor Swift has been named as Google's most-searched-for woman in the music of 2020. The data was published by Google on the International Women's Day. Taylor Swift has won over 10 Grammys, 29 American Music Awards, 23 Billboard Music Awards, and has about six Guinness World Records.



Tennis player Serena Williams was the most-searched-for the female athletes. Actress Awkwafina was the most-searched-for woman in comedy, and novelist Toni Morrison was the most-searched-for a female author.

4. Amitabh Bachchan roped in as brand ambassador of IDFC FIRST Bank

IDFC FIRST Bank has appointed Amitabh Bachchan as its first ever brand ambassador. Mr. Bachchan is the country's most celebrated actor. He is a winner of countless prestigious national awards.

IDFC FIRST Bank was founded as a new entity by the merger of IDFC Bank and Capital First on December 18, 2018. IDFC First Bank raised up to Rs. 2,000 crore in February 2020 debt capital through bonds to strengthen capital base, boost reserves and support business growth.



5. Priyanka Chopra joined WHO to spread awareness over COVID-19

Indian Actress Priyanka Chopra announced to join World Health Organisation to spread awareness over COVID-19. Priyanka urged followers to rely on authentic sources of information about coronavirus. Actress released documented videos on Instagram about the highly contagious disease and self-isolation.

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.



6. Satyarup Siddhanta became 1st Indian to complete volcanic Seven Summit

Satyarup Siddhanta became first Indian to complete volcanic Seven Summit, entered 'Limca Book of Records'. He created history of being the youngest mountaineer in the world to climb both 7 peaks and 7 volcanic summits. Siddhanta holds record of Guinness Book of World Records for climbing highest volcano of Antarctica - Mt Sidley.

Satyarup Siddhanta holds various other records such as Asia book of Records, India Book of Records, Champions Book of Records, British Book of records etc. His major summits were Mount Everest, Mt Aconcagua, Mt Elbrus and Mt Blanc.



7. Sunil Chhetri chosen for FIFA campaign against COVID-19

India football captain Sunil Chhetri has been picked by FIFA along with 28 past and present stars for world governing body's awareness campaign to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. FIFA and the World Health Organization (WHO) have teamed up to combat the coronavirus by launching a new awareness campaign - 'Pass the message to kick out coronavirus'.



The campaign includes 28 players like Lionel Messi, Michael Owen, Philip Lahm, Iker Casillas and Carles Puyol.

8. Shilpa Shetty teamed up with "Fit India Movement"

In a first-of-its-kind step, the government's flagship fitness movement, Fit India, partnered with Bollywood actor and fitness icon Shilpa Shetty Kundra to provide her premium 21-Day Weight Loss Programme, including diet tips, free of cost on the Shilpa Shetty App (SS App), during the 21-day lockdown owing to Covid 19. Shilpa Shetty App will provide app's premium '21-Day Weight Loss Program' free for all Indian and global users during period of lockdown in India.



Fit India Movement is a nation-wide movement in India to encourage people to remain healthy by including physical activities and sports in their daily lives.

Places in News

1. Niue becomes the first dark sky nation

The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) has announced the tiny island nation of Niue as the world's first Dark Sky Nation. Niue has received certification as both a dark sky sanctuary and a dark sky community.

International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) is a conservation non-profit charged with preserving the naturally dark night-time environment, defending it from the intrusive disturbances of artificial light pollution. The harmful proliferation of electric light is so bad that it's estimated one-third of humanity can no longer see the Milky Way.



2. Mumbai Central station to be renamed after Nana Shankarsheth

The Maharashtra cabinet approved a proposal to rename Mumbai Central station in the city as "Nana Shankarsheth Mumbai Central Railway Station". Jagannath "Nana" Shankarsheth (1803-1865) was a Maharashtrian philanthropist and educationist famous for his contribution to Mumbai's development.

The proposal to rename the station has been sent to the Railway Ministry. Mumbai Central, formerly Bombay Central, was designed by British architect Claude Batley. It serves as a major stop for both local and inter-city/express trains with separate platforms for them.



3. Fourth Global Ayurveda Festival to be held at Kochi

The Fourth Global Ayurveda Festival, GAF will be held at Kochi in Kerala from 16th to 20th May. The theme for the five-day event is "Ayurveda Medical Tourism: Actualising India's credibility". It will be the largest Ayurvedic event ever to be held anywhere across the world and will witness the largest gathering of experts, stakeholders and business explorers from the field of Ayurveda.



More than 500 stalls, the participation of over 5,000 international delegates, ethnic food carnivals, exhibition of rich medicinal plants and workshops on Panchkarma will be the key highlights of GAF-2020.

4. “Ekam Fest” held to promote craftsmanship of divyang artisans

The week long Exhibition-cum-Fair “EKAM Fest” was organised by National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation (NHFDC) in New Delhi. More than 82 Divyangjan coming from 17 States/ UTs showcased their products at fest. Various stalls of textile, home décor, toys and gifts were displayed.



EKAM Fest (Entrepreneurship, Knowledge, Awareness, Marketing) is an effort for promoting entrepreneurship and knowledge among Divyangjan community, generating awareness among society about potentialities of PwDs. NHFDC is an Apex corporation under the aegis of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan).

NHFDC is an Apex corporation under the aegis of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan).

5. Pragyan Conclave 2020 held in Delhi

A two-day Indian Army International Seminar, “PRAGYAN CONCLAVE 2020”, was held at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi. It was organised by Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS). The event brings together a cross-domain national and international experts to deliberate on the complex subject of ‘Changing Characteristics of Land Warfare and its Impact on the Military’.



The themes were “Evolving Warfare: An Insight into the Changing Realm” and “The Technological Revolution – A Seminal Challenge”.

6. Competition Commission of India organised national conference on economics of competition law

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) organised the Fifth National Conference on Economics of Competition Law at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The Conference included two technical sessions where researchers presented papers on economic issues in competition enforcement and competition issues in digital markets, a Plenary session on ‘Competition for the Market’.



Competition Commission of India

Competition Commission of India is a statutory body of the Government of India responsible for enforcing The Competition Act, 2002 and prevent activities that have an appreciable adverse effect on competition in India.

7. 19th World Productivity Congress 2020 to be held in Bengaluru

The 19th edition of World Productivity Congress (WPC) will be held in the Bangalore from May 6 to May 8, 2020. World Productivity Congress is the world's largest convention for productivity development that shape future productivity growth. The theme of 19th World Productivity Congress is "Industry 4.0: Innovation and Productivity".



This 19th World Productivity Congress will bring together industry and academia from India and abroad as well as representatives from the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation. It will provide a platform for exploring economic and productivity development in India.

8. Antar Rashtriya Yog Mahotsav held in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand

Antar Rashtriya Yog Mahotsav was inaugurated in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Yoga teachers and practitioners from eleven countries participated in event. Yoga was primarily developed as a medium to attain harmony of body, mind and soul.



The 'Yog Mahotsav' is held in Rishikesh every year from March 1 to March 7. Rishikesh is considered as the birthplace of yoga and Yoga Capital of the World. The annual International Yoga Festival is organised by Parmarth Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh.

9. Wings India 2020 held in Hyderabad

The three-day civil aviation business exhibition and air show, Wings India 2020 was held in Hyderabad. The biennial event was organised by Ministry of Civil Aviation and Airports Authority of India along with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). Wings 2020 featured a Global Aviation Summit, Global CEOs Forum, CEOs of airlines and airports.



Over the next 20 years, Indian companies are estimated to acquire 2,100 new aircraft worth the US \$ 290 billion. By 2022, the Indian aviation market will be third largest globally, after the United States and China.

10. Leh to host International Yoga Day's main event

Leh, the capital of Union Territory of Ladakh, has been selected as the venue for the main event for International Yoga Day on June 21. PM Narendra Modi will attend the event along with 15,000 to 20,000 people. Last year the event was held in Ranchi.



The AYUSH ministry, which is the nodal body to oversee the annual celebrations, has organised several programmes since the inception of International Yoga Day in 2015.

11. National Conference on Women in Police and CAPFs held in New Delhi

The National Conference on Women in Police and CAPFs was organised in New Delhi by the Bureau of Police Research and Development. The main objective of the National Conference was to discuss and deliberate on the following two themes:

- Cyber Stalking and Bullying of Women : Steps for Protection.
- Challenges faced by CAPF Women in Operational Areas.



The Government of India established the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), under the Ministry of Home Affairs in the 1970s.

12. IIT Madras to host Global Hyperloop Pod Competition

Indian Institute of Technology Madras is organising India's first Global Hyperloop Pod Competition in July 2020. The objective of the 'Indian Hyperloop Pod Competition' is to increase awareness and enthusiasm about Hyperloop in India.



This competition is open to all the engineering colleges across the world, to ideate, design and implement their ideas for the Hyperloop Pods. Hyperloop is the 5th mode of transportation, a high-speed train that travels in a near-vacuum tube.

Regional

1. Andhra Pradesh ranked first in country for overall implementation of Poshan Abhiyan

Andhra Pradesh has been ranked first in the country for overall implementation of Poshan Abhiyan as per the recent report shared by NITI Aayog. The State has trained all Anganwadi Workers on modules created based on lifecycle approach, i.e first 1000 days of life, with the support of incremental learning Approach (ILA).



Government is implementing Poshan Abhiyan earlier known as National Nutrition Mission, since 18th December, 2017. The goals of Poshan Abhiyan are to achieve improvement in Nutritional status of children from 0-6 years, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers in a time bound manner.

2. Tamil Nadu topped in Poshan Abhiyan's participants list

Tamil Nadu topped the list of the states in terms of the number of participants in the programme. The Integrated Child Development Scheme has been in force for long in the southern state that has got rejuvenated with the Centre's Poshan Abhiyaan mission.



Government is implementing Poshan Abhiyan earlier known as National Nutrition Mission, since 18th December, 2017. The goals of Poshan Abhiyan are to achieve improvement in Nutritional status of children from 0-6 years, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers in a time bound manner.

3. Telangana State annual budget for year 2020-21

Telangana State Finance Minister, T Harish Rao presented the annual budget proposals for the year 2020-21, with an expenditure of Rs. 1,82,914.42 in the state Assembly. This includes over 1.38 lakh crore rupees of revenue expenditure and 22,061.18 crore rupees of capital expenditure.



The government projected 33,191 crore rupees of fiscal deficit and announced loan waiver of crop loans up to 25 thousand rupees. This will benefit 5.83 lakh farmers.

4. Three day Namaste Orchha festival held in Madhya Pradesh

The Madhya Pradesh Tourism organised a three-day 'Namaste Orchha' cultural festival with an aim to make Orchha part of the the 'Golden Circle', due to its close proximity with Delhi. The historic town situated on the banks of Betwa river brings a rich potential of tourism in Madhya Pradesh.



Orchha is a hidden gem of architectural wonders. With a population of only 11,000, the town boasts of a string of palaces, forts and monuments. To beautify Orchha, all the houses of the main road of Orchha have been painted with cream color on the lines of Pink City Jaipur.

5. Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma tabled budget for year 2020-21

Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma tabled budget for the year 2020-21. The budget proposed to provide free and dedicated bus services for women and senior citizens in Guwahati under the Bhraman Sarathi scheme. An amount of 2800 crore rupees is earmarked for the Orunodoi scheme under which annually 10 thousand rupees to be given to 27 lakh poor households through DBT.



The government will provide 25 lakh rupees per school to 200 elementary schools on pilot basis for infrastructure development. The budget announced to start 5 new polytechnic institutes, 7 new government colleges and 2 medical college among others.

6. Student Health Card scheme for school children launched in J&K

Lt. Governor G.C. Murmu launched Student Health Card scheme for student of Jammu and Kashmir. The scheme will ensure regular medical check-ups of school-going children. The Student Health Card scheme aims to ensure good health of school-going children.



Under the Student Health card scheme, regular health checkup facilities will be set up at the school level, which will ensure regular health checkups of school-going children. This would help keep a check on the issue of malnutrition among school-going children.

7. J&K government adopted nine pronged strategies to realise goal of doubling farmers' income by 2022

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has adopted following nine pronged strategy to realise the goal of doubling farmers income by 2022:

- Crop diversification and introduction of hybrid seeds.
- Expansion of area under vegetable cultivation.
- Adoption of robust market-driven agriculture policy.
- Promotion of value addition of certain crops.
- Assured modern irrigation facilities.
- Creation of farm machinery banks at panchayat level.
- Promotion of cottage industries.
- Efficient use of cultivable wastelands.
- Capacity building of farmers with transfer of technology through trainings and exposure visits for farmers.



8. Chapchar Kut, the biggest and most joyful festival of Mizos, celebrated

The biggest and most joyful festival of Mizos, Chapchar Kut festival, was observed in Mizoram. The Chapchar Kut is also regarded as the most popular spring festival to the people of the state. This festival is a public holiday in the state.

Chapchar Kut is one of three annual festivals of the Mizos celebrated to mark three different stages of the agricultural cycle. The other two are Mim Kut and Pawl Kut, also revived in the last century.



9. UP CM Yogi Adityanath launched projects worth Rs 2821 cr

Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath launched projects worth rupees 2821 crores including country's biggest multi-level parking in Gautam Buddha Nagar City, Noida. Chief Minister inaugurated a total of 13 projects worth Rs. 1,452 crore while laid foundation stones for 10 projects worth Rs. 1,369 crore.



The total cost of the country's biggest multi-level parking is Rs. 580 crores. The government is developing Gautam Buddha Nagar City as a smart city.

10. Chhattisgarh CM presented state budget for 2020-2021

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel presented budget, without any new tax proposals, for fiscal 2020-21. With an outlay of about 95,000 crore rupees, the budget focused on health, education and rural development. Improvement of school education was on the top priority of the government with about 16% of total budget provision. Around 6% of budget allocation was for health sector.



A new scheme, 'Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana', was announced to provide good returns to farmers for agricultural products with a provision of Rs. 5,100 crore.

11. 'Pension Adalat' inaugurated in Jammu

The Union Minister of State Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated the 'Pension Adalat' and National Pension System (NPS) Awareness and Grievance Redressal Programme at Jammu. Pension Adalats will help in on-the-spot redressal of pensioners' grievances, which has given the right of "Ease of Living" to the pensioners. It will help in on-the-spot redressal of pensioners' grievances.



The Pension Adalats are being convened with the objective of bringing on a common table the aggrieved pensioner, the concerned department, the bank or CGHS representative.

12. Chilli Festival celebrated in Madhya Pradesh

The two-day unique Chilli Festival was celebrated in Khargone district of Madhya Pradesh. Chilli Festival is a big business opportunity for traders, investors and exporters. It helps in fulfilling the Central Government's goal of doubling the income of farmers. Chilli-based cuisine stalls were set up on the occasion.



Thousands of farmers from many districts of the state participated to promote the Nimari brand of chillies. Nimar and Malwa regions are the highest chilli producing regions of the state. The red chillies of these regions are exported to China, Pakistan, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

13. AAI & Tripura Government signed MoU for construction of equipment hiring centers

Tripura State Government and Airport Authority of India signed a memorandum of understanding for the construction of six equipment hiring centers. The project has been taken as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility scheme.

The equipment hiring centers, equipment related to agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries will be kept. The types of equipment will be rented out to the needy farmers, Self Help Groups and to any other needy at a minimal cost. The project aims to benefit 6000 families.



Government of Tripura

14. Arunachal Pradesh assembly implemented e-Vidhan project

The Arunachal Pradesh Assembly went paperless with the implementation of e-Vidhan, a project under the Digital India programme. The e-Vidhan project will help MLAs to access every information regarding the Assembly, see the list of business and read questions and other documents pertaining to House proceedings through their laptops and tablet computers.



The initiative will help in bringing all the legislatures of the country on a single platform and creating a massive data depository. Paperless Assembly or e-Assembly is a concept involving the use of electronic devices to facilitate House proceedings.

15. Maharashtra government approved implementation of "happy hour" for auto rickshaws

Maharashtra government has approved the implementation of "happy hour" for autorickshaws as recommended by Khatua panel. A government resolution states that fares will be slashed by 15% between 12 noon and 4 pm. The decision will, however, not be applicable to local taxis and app based taxis.



The panel had said that the new concept will turn lean hours to happy hours, especially for housewives and senior citizens who normally don't have a fixed schedule for their outings.

16. Poshan Pakhwada celebrated in Nagaland from March 8-22

To celebrate the second anniversary of POSHAN Abhiyaan, Poshan Pakhwada was celebrated in Nagaland from 8th-22nd March. The focus area of Poshan Pakhwada 2020 is 'Men for Nutrition - Increasing Male Engagement in POSHAN Abhiyaan to Improve Nutritional Indicators'.



The key activities included Poshan Melas, rally on nutrition, Prabhat Pheree, session on nutrition at schools, self help group meetings, anaemia camps, growth monitoring of children, home visits of newborn babies by ASHA/AWW, Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition, etc.

17. Traditional 'Fagli' festival celebrated in Himachal Pradesh's Kinnaur

The traditional 'Fagli' festival was celebrated in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh with great fervour. The festival is organised to observe the "victory of good over evil".



This festival is celebrated to mark the end of winter or the beginning of spring. It is celebrated in the entire valley on the moonless night or Amavasya. It is also celebrated to receive blessings from Deota(God) for the upcoming harvest season.

18. AP state government launched "NIGHA" app

The Andhra Pradesh government headed by Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has launched Nigha app to curb the irregularities in ensuing local body elections. Any person can complain about the irregularities, which they encounter during the campaign through this app.



People can also inform about the distribution of money, gifts, and liquor and about the continuation of the campaign even after the permitted time is over. The identity of the citizens will remain anonymous to ensure privacy and security.

19. Gujarat ranks first in domestic solar rooftop installations

Gujarat has topped the chart in the country in the area of solar rooftop installations. Gujarat has a total of 261.97 megawatts (MW) of installed rooftop solar capacity as on July 23, 2019. As per the Central government data, total rooftop solar installation in India is 1700.54 MW.



Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have solar rooftop installations at 198.52 MW and 151.62 MW respectively. The State government of Gujarat has adopted a solar rooftop scheme "Surya Gujarat" to cover about eight lakh domestic electricity consumers under the scheme by 2022.

20. New World Bank Project to benefit over 400,000 farming households in Himachal Pradesh

The Government of India, Government of Himachal Pradesh, and the World Bank signed an \$80 million loan agreement to improve water management practices and increase agricultural productivity in selected Gram Panchayats (Village Councils) in Himachal Pradesh. The loan has a final maturity of 14.5 years, including a grace period of five years.



THE WORLD BANK

The Integrated Project for Source Sustainability and Climate Resilient Rain-Fed Agriculture will be implemented in 428 Gram Panchayats in 10 districts benefiting over 400,000 smallholder farmers, including women, and pastoral communities.

21. Manipur announced scheme for welfare of sportspersons and artists

Manipur has announced the biggest ever scheme for the welfare of sports persons and artists of the State: 'Chief Minister's Akhannaba Sanaroising gi Tengbang (CMAST)' and Chief Minister Artist Sing gi Tengbang (CMAT)'.
(CMAT)'



Under the CMAST Scheme, a suitable employment in government services will be provided to sports persons, who have won medals in notified disciplines in selected International Sports events. Also, cash awards for Olympic participants have been enhanced up to Rs. 1 crore. CMAT is designed to encourage the artists in different fields and targeted to cover 4000 artistes in a year.

22. UP government launched schemes for skill development & employment generation for youths

Uttar Pradesh government has launched three ambitious schemes for skill development and employment generation for youths in the state: Kaushal Satrang, Yuva Hub and apprenticeship scheme. The government also announced to depute "Arogya Mitras" at all primary health centres to inform people about government health schemes.



Kaushal Satrang will have seven components which will provide opportunities to the youth. 'Yuva Hub' scheme was allocated Rs. 1,200 crore in the state budget. It will facilitate setting up of 30,000 startups in state while CM apprenticeship scheme will provide stipend of Rs. 2500 to the youth of state.

23. Assam government to construct 33 stadiums in state under Uttran scheme

The Assam government plans to construct 33 stadiums in the state under Uttaran scheme. 300 crore rupees will be spent to build the stadiums across the state. 500 playgrounds are being developed at the state to encourage rural talents.



State of the art sports facilities are being set up in Assam. The state government will give 50,000 rupees to one thousand players while 2500 clubs will get a grant of Rs. 75,000.

24. India's first digital parcel locker service launched in West Bengal

The Department of Posts, Kolkata (West Bengal circle), has launched free digital parcel locker service in 2 post offices Nabadiganta IT post office of Salt Lake City & post office in New Town's Action Area. Under this service, customers will be able to collect their parcel from the post office according to their convenience.



Postman will now drop the parcels in the Digital Locker Kiosks, placed just outside the post office building and are accessible 24x7. This facility is quite popular in European countries, but is starting for the first time in India. This service has been done for such people of working-class, who do not have to receive any parcel at home.

25. “Phool Dei” festival celebrated in Uttarakhand

The traditional harvest festival of “Phool Dei” was celebrated in Uttarakhand. It is celebrated on the first day of Chaitra or in mid-March (according to Gregorian calendar). The festival also showcases the inner bonding between the communities who all are residing in the hills.



The festive occasion derives its name from the word 'Dei', which refers to a ceremonial pudding. This festival of flowers is unique to the hill state and has a dimension of colour and love. During the festivity, the young girls pluck the first flowers of the season.

26. Odisha cancelled annual Chaitra Jatra festival

The Odisha Government cancelled the famous Chaitra Jatra festival due to the threat of Corona Virus. The Chaitra Jatra festival is celebrated in the month of Chaitra during Tuesdays at Tara Tarini hill shrine.



The shrine is located in the Tara Tarini hill on the banks of Rushikulya river. Indian Navy's sailboat INSV Tarini was named after Tara Tarini hill shrine. The first Indian all-woman crew had circumnavigated the globe in INSV Tarini.

27. UP Government approved ordinance to recover damage to public, private properties

The UP state government has passed the Uttar Pradesh recovery of damage to public and private property ordinance 2020. It allows to recover damage to public and private properties in any violent protest or demonstration from the miscreants.



The state cabinet also cleared proposal of renovating 23 bus stations on the PPP model and creation of consolidated sinking fund, based on the recommendations by the central finance commission and state accountant general.

28. Meghalaya Chief Minister presented deficit budget of Rs 1532 crore

Meghalaya Chief Minister, Conrad K Sangma presented the budget amounting to 17,375 crore rupees for the year 2020-21 with a fiscal deficit of 1,532 crore rupees, which is around 3.53% of the GDP. The estimated total receipt stood at 17,375 crore rupees of which Revenue receipts stood at 15,353 crore rupees and the total receipts estimated at 15,830 crore rupees excluding borrowings of 1,995 crore rupees.



The budget focused on education, health, agriculture, infrastructure, air and surface connectivity, promoting entrepreneurship, tourism, uplifting rural economy, etc. with a view to take State on the path of development.

29. 'Break the Chain' campaign launched by Kerala state to combat coronavirus

In a bid to contain the spread of coronavirus or COVID-19 virus across the state, the Kerala government has launched a mass hand washing campaign named as 'break the chain' to combat coronavirus. The campaign aims to break the chain of virus infection and educate people about the importance of public and personal hygiene.



Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.

30. Shivraj Singh Chouhan took oath as MP CM for the 4th time

Shivraj Singh Chouhan took oath as the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh for the fourth time. He was sworn in by Governor Lalji Tandon. Chouhan was sworn in chief minister of Madhya Pradesh thrice earlier in 2005, 2008 and 2013.



Congress had won the December 2018 Assembly elections, after which, the Kamal Nath government came to power. However, after Jyodiraditya Scindia joined BJP and following resignations of 22 Congress MLAs, Nath resigned as chief minister that paved the way for Chouhan to form the government.

31. Mayiladuthurai to become Tamil Nadu's 38th district

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy announced that Tamil Nadu's newest, 38th district will be formed in Mayiladuthurai. The existing district of Nagapattinam will be bifurcated and Mayiladuthurai will become the headquarters of the new district.



Currently, in Tamil Nadu, there are 37 districts out of which 5 districts were formed in 2019. Mayiladuthurai is located at a distance of 281 kilometres from Chennai. It is home to several temples dating back to the medieval Chola era.

32. Former J&K CM Chief Minister Omar Abdullah released

Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah was released after nearly eight months of detention. His release order was issued after charges under the Public Safety Act (PSA) were revoked.



Abdullah had spent 232 days in custody after he was detained on August 5, 2019 under Section 107 of CrPC (security for keeping the peace), and once, he had served the maximum period of detention, was slapped with charges under PSA on February 5.

33. Highlights of Delhi Budget 2020

The Delhi government presented a budget of Rs. 65,000 crores for the financial year 2020-21. Rs.50 crore is dedicated to tackle the coronavirus epidemic. The education sector received the highest share of allocation of Rs.15,815 crore, which is 24.33% of the total budget.



- Rs.7,704 crore to health sector.
- Rs.250 crore allocated for the procurement of 2,485 new DTC buses.
- Rs.1,720 crore for the development of unauthorised colonies.
- Delhi Government will implement Centre's flagship Ayushman Bharat Yojana.

34. Uttarakhand abolished quota in promotion for government employees

Uttarakhand state government abolished reservation in promotion in the state government jobs. The government employees from the General-OBC category in the state protested, demanding the implementation of the Supreme Court's decision on the issue. The strike of more than 1.5 lakh general-OBC employees severely affected the work in government offices. The state government also issued orders regarding departmental promotion committee (DPC).



Uttarakhand state government in 2012 decided to fill up state government posts without providing reservation in promotion, after which, the decision was challenged in Uttarakhand high court.

35. Gujarat Police became 1st state police to introduce taser guns

The Gujarat Police became the first state Police of India to introduced taser guns. Taser guns ensure public safety and security. Taser guns are sort of electrical weapon that use compressed nitrogen to fire, by sending electricity through two small barbed darts of attached wires thus, causing disrupt voluntary control of muscles and "neuromuscular incapacitation.



Various other countries use taser guns such as UK, Los Angeles and New York Police Department. Taser guns temporarily incapacitate muscles therefore, allowing officers to safely restrain and handle the situation.

36. Uttar Pradesh government constituted 'Team-11' to beat COVID-19

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath constituted 'Team-11' to beat corona virus causing disease COVID-19. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.



11 inter-departmental committees consists of over 2 dozen senior government officials working at crucial levels under the CM's supervision. The Team-11 would be headed by the Chief Minister Yogi Aditya Nath, while each of the 11-committees will be headed by a senior bureaucrat of the state.

1. Maharaja Ranjit Singh named World's Greatest Leader in BBC Poll

The founder and ruler of the Sikh Empire in India, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, has been voted to be named the "Greatest Leader of All Time", from around the world in a poll conducted by 'BBC World Histories Magazine'. Singh was praised for creating a new tolerant empire.



African independence fighter Amílcar Cabral was second in the poll, who is remembered for united over a million Guineans to free themselves from Portuguese occupation. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill came in third in the list.

2. Byju, Zomato founders on WEF's Young Global Leaders list

Byju Classes' founder Byju Raveendran and Zomato's co-founder Gaurav Gupta are among the five Indians named by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in its new list of 115 Young Global Leaders.



The other three Indians on the list are Tara Singh Vachani (CEO of Antara Senior Living), Vinati Mutreja (Managing Director and CEO, Vinati Organics Limited), and Swapan Mehra (CEO, Iora Ecological Solutions). This year, over half the new members are women and nearly half of YGLs are from emerging economies.

3. India the second largest arms importer in the world

India remained the world's second largest arms importer during the period 2015-19. The annual report "Trends in international arms transfers 2019" is published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).



The top five arms importers during the five-year period are Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China. The report placed India 23rd among the world's 25 largest arms exporters, with its main clients being Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Mauritius.

4. India ranks 12th in presence of women in boardrooms

According to a recent study on 'Women On Board 2020' by global recruitment tendering platform MyHiringClub.com and Sarkari-Naukri.info, India ranked 12th worldwide in women member presence on board. This study was done online amongst 7,824 listed companies across 36 countries, including India. It found that women's director on board percentage is 14.87%.



Norway continued to top the list with 40.72% women on board, followed by Sweden with 30.84%, Finland 29.91%, Germany 29.70%, South Africa 19.84% and the US 20.41%.

5. India became third largest producer of electricity in the world

As per the latest key world energy statistics published by the IEA in 2019, India is the third largest producer of electricity in the world and it ranked 106th in terms of per capita consumption in 2017.



India has become power surplus from power deficit situation. Thus, power sector reforms now, focus on supply of 24x7 quality power to consumers, higher standards of service, promotion of renewable energy sources and development of hydro power. Reforms linked distribution scheme and changes in tariff policy are some of the measures under consideration in this regard.

6. UN released World Happiness Report 2020

The World Happiness Report 2020 was released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network of United Nations. Finland was ranked as the world's happiest country followed by Denmark and Switzerland among 156 countries. The remaining countries in the top ten are Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, New Zealand, and Austria, followed by top-10 newcomer Luxembourg.



India was ranked 144 in report. World Happiness Report 2020 for the first time ranked cities around the world by their subjective well-being.

Resignations & Retirements

1. RBI Deputy Governor N.S. Vishwanathan resigned

RBI Deputy Governor N S Vishwanathan announced his resignation, due to health problems. He was first appointed as the Reserve Bank's deputy governor for a three-year term in 2016, following which, he was reappointed for one year.



As deputy governor, he was handling key supervisory and regulatory functions in the departments of banking regulation, co-operative banking regulation, non-banking regulation, Deposit Insurance & Credit Guarantee Corporation, the financial stability unit, and departments of inspection. Vishwanathan has served under three governors Raghuram Rajan, Urjit Patel and Shaktikanta Das.

2. Wasim Jaffer announced retirement from all forms of cricket

Wasim Jaffer announced his retirement from all forms of cricket. He became the first player in Indian cricket to feature in 150 Ranji matches. He represented India in 31 Tests between 2000 and 2008, scoring 1,944 runs including five hundreds and 11 fifties.



Overall, Jaffer has played 260 first-class games, scoring 19,410 runs at an average of 50.67. He has scored 57 hundreds and 91 fifties with 314 being his highest score.

3. Bill Gates resigned from Microsoft board

Bill Gates has resigned from the board of Microsoft Corp. to devote more time to philanthropy. He had founded the company in 1975. He says he wants to focus on global health and development, education and tackling climate change.



Mr Gates has also left the board of Warren Buffett's massive holding company, Berkshire Hathaway. Mr Gates is listed by Forbes as the world's second richest man after Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, and is worth \$103.6bn (£84.4bn).

4. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath resigned

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath resigned ahead of the scheduled floor test in the state assembly. Supreme Court had directed to conduct the floor test in Madhya Pradesh assembly and the floor test proceedings. Congress government came into power in Madhya Pradesh in December 2018 but, plunged into crisis after exit of 22 MLAs and former union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.



The Legislative Assembly has 230 MLAs. Majority in the House of 206 MLAs require the support of 104 MLAs. The BJP had 107 MLAs and the Congress had 92.

5. Arundhati Bhattacharya resigned from CRISIL board

Arundhati Bhattacharya, an Independent Director of the company, has submitted her resignation as a director of the company Crisil Ltd, which will take effect on April 15, 2020. CRISIL is a global analytical company providing ratings, research, and risk and policy advisory services.



Arundhati Bhattacharya is a retired Indian banker and former Chairman of the State Bank of India. She has worked as Chairman of international payment platform Swift India.

1. Google announced its plans to open Delhi Cloud Region

Google announced its plans to open a Delhi Cloud Region. This will be the company's second cloud region in India, since it launched one in Mumbai three years ago in 2017. The new cloud region will expand Google's existing network which stands at 8 regions in the Asia Pacific and 22 regions globally.



Google cloud regions bring Google Cloud Platform services to global organisations in industries like media and entertainment, retail and manufacturing. It is projected to be launched in 2021.

2. New explosive detection device developed by DRDO & IISc Bangalore

RaIDer-X, a new explosive detection device, was unveiled at the National Workshop on Explosive Detection (NWED-2020) in Pune. It has been co-developed by High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL) Pune and Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.



RaIDer-X has the capability to detect explosives from a stand-off distance. The data library can be built in the system to expand its capability to detect a number of explosives in pure form as well as with the contaminants. Bulk explosive in concealed condition can also be detected by the device.

3. Scientists identified bacteria that can replace fertilizers & fungicides in tea plants

Researchers at Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST) Guwahati have found significant plant-growth-promoting and antifungal activities of endophyticactino bacteria associated with Tea plant and related genera, Eurya to find potent plant growth-promoting strains. Application of endophyticactino bacteria could reduce chemical inputs in Tea plantation.



Due to higher demand of chemical residue-free made tea by the importing countries has led to a decline in the export of tea. The present study attempts the use of endophyticactino bacteria having plant beneficial characteristics to reduce and replace the use of chemical inputs in the tea industry.

4. Scientists of ARCI developed Fuel Cell Technology for disaster management

Scientists at International Advanced Research for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI), Hyderabad developed Polymer Electrolyte Membrane fuel cells (PEMFC). PEMFC have an advantage of operational capability at low-temperatures with applications in decentralised power generation systems.



ARCI is now planning to set up a PEMFC system up to 10 kW capacity at Tamil Nadu State Emergency Operation Centre (TN SEOC) to operate the systems like early warning systems, VHF set, IP phone, BSNL Ethernet and office equipment like scanner, computers, printers, phone, FAX and normal requirements like lighting and fan.

5. India plans to launch Chandrayaan-3 by first half of 2021

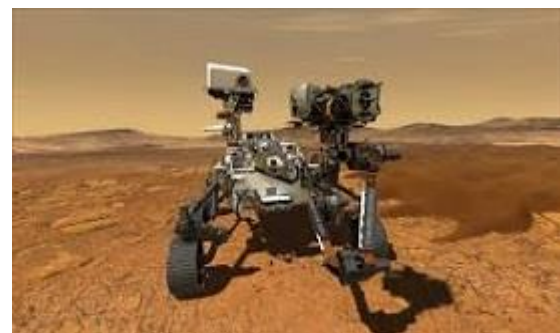
ISRO announced to launch Chandrayaan-3 in the first half of 2021. Chandrayaan-3 is a planned third lunar exploration mission by Indian Space Research Organisation. Chandrayaan-3 is prepared with better planning and overcoming failures from the previously launched Chandrayaan-2, a Moon mission, which was launched in 2019 and a snag in the communication led to subsequent failure of soft landing.



Chandrayaan-3 is better designed with increased capacity at cost of around Rs. 610 crore, including Rs. 360 crore for the launch rocket.

6. NASA named Mars 2020 rover as “Perseverance”

NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) announced the name of the 5th Mars (red planet) rover as Perseverance. The name was suggested by Alexander Mather, 7th standard student. The Perseverance rover will be the 5th exploratory vehicle after Sojourner, Spirit, Opportunity and Curiosity.



NASA's Perseverance rover is a robotic scientist weighing just under 2,300 pounds. Perseverance, currently is undergoing final assembly and checkout at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. It's targeted to land on Mars' Jezero Crater after Feb. 18, 2021.

7. Pune to host 108th Indian Science Congress in 2021

Pune will host the annual session of 108th Indian Science Congress in January 2021. The theme of the ISCA will be "Science and Technology for Sustainable Development with Women Empowerment" based on focus on economic growth, environmental protection and social inclusion of all communities using science and technology. Indian Science Congress will focus on providing equal opportunities to women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) while achieving sustainable development.



Indian Science Congress commenced in 1914 from then Calcutta with 105 members. It has more than 60,000 members at present.

8. Discovery of bi-luminescent security ink to curb fake printing of currency notes and passports

Scientists from the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi and the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research, Ghaziabad have developed a special safety ink. The bi-luminescent security ink glows in red and green colours when illuminated by two different excitation sources at 254 nano meters (nm) and 365 nm, respectively.



The ink is found comparable to the standards that are in use. The formulation can be used to check the authenticity of passports, Government documents, tamper evident labels, identity cards, etc.

9. Microsoft launched COVID-19 Web Tracker

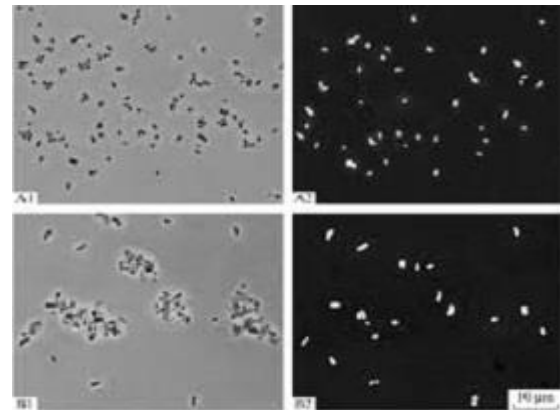
Microsoft has officially launched a tracking website that reveals all the details about the number of people affected by the coronavirus outbreak globally. This includes the number of total confirmed cases, active cases, recovered cases and fatal cases.



Data is being aggregated from sources like the World Health Organization (WHO), the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

10. Methanotrophic Bacteria Culture first time in India

The Agharkar Research Institute of Pune has isolated 45 strains of methanotrophic bacteria. These bacteria are capable of reducing methane emissions in rice plants. The scientists have also created methanotrophic culture.



Methanotrophs are environmental organisms that have a major role in cycling of methane. They oxidize methane in the environment. After carbon-dioxide, methane is the second largest green house gas contributor. With the use of methanotrophic bacteria in agriculture, emission of methane shall be greatly reduced.

Methane traps 84 times of heat trapped by carbon-dioxide.

11. United States began first human trial to evaluate vaccine against COVID-19

The first human trial to evaluate a candidate vaccine against coronavirus disease 2019 began in Seattle, US. The open-label trial will enroll 45 healthy adult volunteers aged 18 to 55 years over approximately 6 weeks. A Phase 1 clinical trial evaluating an investigational vaccine designed to protect against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) began at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute (KPWHRI) in Seattle.



The vaccine called mRNA-1273 is tested on participants with the help of evaluating different doses to check for safety and its ability to induce an immune response in participants.

12. INST developed starch-based ‘hemostat’ material

Scientists from the Institute of Nano Science and Technology developed a starch-based ‘hemostat’ material that concentrates the natural clotting factors in blood by physically absorbing excess fluid. The biodegradable microparticles that combine to form a gel on a wound offer significant improvements over existing alternatives. The product has increased absorption capacity, improved absorption, inexpensive, biocompatible as well as biodegradable.



Hemostat materials absorb excel fluid by concentrating the natural clotting factors in the blood that are critical for stopping the blood flow; however, the bleeding can restart when non-biodegradable materials are removed.

13. World's first commercial flying car PAL-V to be built in Gujarat

World's first commercial flying car named 'PAL-V Liberty' will be developed in Gujarat, India. PAL-V (Personal Air and Land Vehicle) is a Dutch company, that is currently developing the first commercial flying car called the PAL-V Liberty.



The PAL-V Liberty is a combination of a car and an autogiro, or gyroplane. The PAL-V flying car, having two engines can run at a speed of 160 kilometres on road and can fly at a speed of 180 km. The car can turn into a flying vehicle in 3 minutes and cover a distance of 500 km on a full tank.

14. Scientists of ARI developed bio-fortified, high protein wheat variety

Scientists from Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India, have developed a biofortified durum wheat variety MACS 4028, which shows high protein content. MACS 4028 is a semi-dwarf variety, which matures in 102 days and has shown the superior and stable yielding ability of 19.3 quintals per hectare.



The wheat variety has shown high protein content of about 14.7%, better nutritional quality having zinc 40.3 ppm and iron content of 40.3ppm and 46.1ppm respectively, good milling quality and overall acceptability.

15. First 'Made in India' COVID19 Test Kit gets CDSCO approval

A Pune based testing services MyLab has become the first Indian company to get commercial approval from Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation for the sales of "Mylab Patho Detect COVID-19 Qualitative PCR kit". COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). India-based Mylab Discovery has become the first company in the country to receive approval for its coronavirus (Covid-19) diagnostic test kits, called reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests.



Mylab Discovery Solutions Pvt. Ltd is a biotechnology company that develops and commercializes molecular diagnostic detection kits.

16. New Hanta Virus emerged in China

Amidst the coronavirus pandemic, a man in China's southwestern Yunnan province has died of hantavirus, a disease spread by rodents. Hantaviruses are a family of viruses spread mainly by rodents and can cause varied disease syndromes in people worldwide.

Hantavirus or Orthohantavirus is an old family of viruses, which mainly spreads through rodents or rats. It can cause various diseases including hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS). It can also cause hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS).



17. SpaceX won NASA award to supply planned lunar space station

NASA picked a new space capsule from Elon Musk's SpaceX to ferry cargo and supplies to the agency's planned lunar space station, a crucial building block to its plans to build a permanent post on the moon and mount future missions to Mars.

SpaceX will get a portion of a \$7 billion NASA contract to use its biggest rocket, Falcon Heavy, to send a new "Dragon XL" spacecraft to the Lunar Gateway. Dragon cargo and astronaut capsules, will carry research supplies that will help future astronauts on the surface of the moon collect lunar samples.



18. Mutation and Pangolins main source of COVID-19

Researchers of "Pathogen" unveiled that probable cause of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is SARS-coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) found in bats and pangolins. Researchers found genomic and evolutionary evidence of the occurrence of a SARS-CoV-2-like CoV (named Pangolin-CoV) in dead Malayan pangolins. Pangolin species are a natural reservoir of SARS-CoV-2-like CoVs.

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.



19. India became first in the world to start antibody tests for Corona Virus

India began antibody tests to confirm Covid-19 exposure. The government approved 12 rapid antibody test kits for COVID-19 diagnosis. Overall, 16 companies can now market their test kits in the country. The test determines, if the person had viral infections based on the presence of antibodies in their blood. The test comes positive only after 7 to 10 days of infection.

One of the best feature of test kit is that, it can provide test results within 30 minutes. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 virus.



1. Australia won 5th ICC Women's T20 World Cup title

Defending champions Australia won the ICC Women's T20 World Cup for record fifth time. Australia defeated India by 85 runs in the summit clash at Melbourne. Alyssa Healy was the Player of the final.

Poonam Yadav was the highest wicket-taker of the tournament with 10 wickets and Alyssa Healy of Australia was the highest run-scorer with 236 runs in total. Beth Mooney of Australia was awarded the Player of the Series award.



2. Sunil Joshi named BCCI's selection committee Chairman

Former India spinner Sunil Joshi was named Chairman of the national selection panel by the BCCI's Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC also picked ex-pacer Harvinder Singh for a place in the five-member group.

The CAC, comprising Madan Lal, RP Singh and Sulakshana Naik, picked the two selectors with Joshi replacing South Zone representative MSK Prasad. Harvinder replaced Gagan Khoda in the panel. Joshi played 15 Tests and 69 ODIs for India while Harvinder played 3 Tests and 16 ODIs.



3. Mumbai set to host IOC session in 2023

Mumbai is set to host the 2023 International Olympic Committee's session after the IOC Executive Board recommended the Indian city for the annual conference. The IOC Executive Board decided to put Mumbai's candidature to a vote of the members. The decision is to be ratified at the 136th IOC session in Tokyo in July this year.

After ratification, this will be the second-ever IOC session to be held in India after a long gap of 37 years. India last hosted an IOC session way back in 1983 in New Delhi.



4. Times of India Sports Awards (TOISA) 2019

- Sportsperson of the Year: PV Sindhu.
- Unbreakable Spirit of Sports award: PV Sindhu.
- Lifetime Achievement award: Bhaichung Bhutia.
- Icon of the Century award: Hockey legend and three-time Olympic gold medalist Balbir Singh Sr.
- Mentor of the Year award: Pulella Gopichand.
- Coach of the Year: Jaspal Rana.
- Female Badminton Player of the Year: PV Sindhu.
- Male Badminton Player of the Year: B Sai Praneeth.
- Recognition among male boxers: Amit Phanghal.
- Recognition among female boxers: Lovlina Borgohain.



5. FIH rankings: Indian men's hockey team climbs to fourth position

The Indian men's hockey team has climbed to the fourth position, their highest since the inception of the FIH world rankings in 2003, in the recently released chart. India's rise comes at the expense of Olympic champions Argentina, who dropped to fifth place.



World champions Belgium remains in pole position, with Australia 2nd and the Netherlands 3rd also holding their positions in the top three. Germany and England remain in sixth and seventh positions, while New Zealand is static at the eighth place and Spain at ninth.

6. First KIU Games concluded in Bhubaneswar

The Khelo India University Games concluded in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Panjab University, Chandigarh took home the champions trophy-winning 46 medals including 17 gold, 19 silver, and 10 bronze. Savitribai Phule Pune University claimed the second position and Punjabi University, Patiala declared as the second runners up.

RANK	UNIVERSITY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
1.	PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CPRI	17	19	10	46
2.	SAVITRIBAI PHULE PUNE UNIVERSITY, MS	17	11	9	37
3.	PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA (PB)	13	6	14	33
4.	M O U, ROHTAK, HARYANA	11	11	11	33
5.	MANDALAKI UNIVERSITY, KARNATAKA	9	7	9	25
6.	LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY, UP	9	6	8	23
7.	JAIN UNIVERSITY, KARNATAKA	8	6	2	16
8.	GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMBIEGAR	7	6	12	25
9.	UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS	7	6	3	16
10.	UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI	6	9	10	25
11.	UNIVERSITY OF DELHI	6	7	13	26
12.	MAHATMA GANDHI UNIVERSITY, KOTTAYAM, KERALA	6	4	3	13

Savitribai Phule Pune University won 37 medals including 17 gold, 11 silver, and 9 bronze medals. Punjabi University, Patiala won 33 medals including 13 gold, 6 silver, and 14 bronze medals. A total of 113 universities took part in the games.

7. West Indies skipper Kieron Pollard became first player to play 500 T20s

West Indies skipper Kieron Pollard became the 1st player in the history of T20 (Twenty20) cricket to feature in 500 matches during the field against Sri Lanka for the first T20I in Pallekele, Sri Lanka. The list is followed by Dwayne Bravo with 453 matches at second position and Chris Gayle at third position with 404 T20 matches.



Pollard is a medium-pace bowler and big-hitting batsman in the middle-order. He was the joint highest paid player in the 2010 Indian Premier League, playing for Mumbai Indians.

8. Philippines will host the Badminton Asia Championships

The 2020 Badminton Asia Team Championships (also known as the 2020 Smart Badminton Asia Manila Team Championship) will be held in the capital of Philippines, i.e. Manila. It was earlier scheduled to be held in Wuhan, China but, due to novel Coronavirus outbreak in China, it was re-scheduled in Philippines. China, being the epicentre of the coronavirus (COVID-19) reported more than 3,000 deaths.



2020 Badminton Asia Team Championships serves as the Asian qualifiers for the 2020 Thomas & Uber Cup in Denmark.

9. Tiger Woods to be inducted into World Golf Hall of Fame in 2021 class

American golfer Tiger Woods will be inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame as part of the class of 2021. The hall of fame is located in St. Augustine, Florida. Woods, winner of 15 major titles, will be inducted in the male competitor category.



Woods was among 10 finalists named in March as candidates for 2021. His 93 worldwide victories include a record-tying 82 US PGA Tour titles.

Woods is a three-time winner of the career Grand Slam and in 2000-01 completed the "Tiger Slam".

10. PV Sindhu named BBC Indian Sportswoman of Year

Indian badminton player PV Sindhu won the inaugural BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award. The other players nominated for the award were sprinter Dutee Chand, boxer Mary Kom, wrestler Vinesh Phogat and para-badminton player Manasi Joshi.

Sindhu became the first Indian to win badminton World Championship gold in Basel, Switzerland. Sindhu has five World Championship medals and is the first Indian singles badminton player to win an Olympic silver medal.



11. Achanta Sharath Kamal clinched men's singles title of Oman Open

Ace Indian paddler Sharath Kamal won the 2020 ITTF Challenger Plus Oman Open men's singles title. The Indian veteran defeated top-seeded Marcos Freitas of Portugal 4-2 in the final played in Muscat.

Sharath last bagged a title in 2010, when he won Egypt Open. It was in 2010 when Sharath had bagged his last title at Egypt Open. Since then, he made two semi-final appearances -- Morocco Open in 2011 and India Open in 2017 – but, couldn't manage to get through it.



12. ATK crowned Hero ISL 2019-20 champions

The 2019–20 Indian Super League season was the sixth season of the Indian Super League. ATK (previously known as Atlético de Kolkata) won the final against Chennaiyin F.C.

Key award winners:

Golden Boot: Chennaiyin FC's Nerijus Valskis.
Golden Glove: Bengaluru FC's Gurpreet Singh Sandhu.

Emerging Player of the League: ATK's Sumit Rathi.

Hero of the League: FC Goa's Hugo Boumous.
Winning Pass: FC Goa's Hugo Boumous.



13. Saurashtra won its maiden Ranji Trophy title

Saurashtra won its maiden Ranji Trophy title at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium. It is Saurashtra's first-ever win in the history of India's premier domestic competition.

Saurashtra won against Bengal after earning a 44-run lead in the first innings. As per the rules, if the final of the Ranji Trophy is headed towards a draw, then the winner is decided on the basis of a first-innings lead. Saurashtra was led by Jaydev Unadkat.



14. Viktor Axelsen and Tai Tzu Ying won All England Championships 2020

Viktor Axelsen of Denmark won his maiden men's singles title at the All England Championship. Two-time former winner Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei regained the women's singles crown. Axelsen defeated Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien-chen. Tai Tzu Ying defeated Chinese Chen Yu Fei.



Japanese Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota beat China's Du Yue and Li Yin Hui to win the women's doubles crown. Indonesian pair of Praveen Jordan and Melati Daeva Oktavianti defeated Thailand's Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai to win the mixed doubles title.

15. Greece handed over Olympic flame to Tokyo 2020

Hellenic Olympic Committee President Spyros Capralos handed the torch over to the Tokyo Organising Committee. Olympic gymnastics champion Leteris Petrounias ran a lap with the flame and Olympic pole vault champion Katerina Stefanidi lit a cauldron inside the all-marble Panathenaic stadium, where the first modern Olympics were held in 1896. The flame was then handed to Tokyo 2020 representative Naoko Imoto, a swimmer who competed in the Atlanta 1996 Olympics.



The Tokyo Olympic games, slated to be held from July 24 to August 9, has been postponed to July 2021.

16. Tokyo Olympics postponed to 2021

Japan's Prime Minister and the head of the International Olympic Committee Shinzo Abe agreed to postpone the Tokyo 2020 Games by a year in an extraordinary move due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Tokyo had won widespread praise for its organization of Olympics with venues finished well ahead of time and tickets massively oversubscribed. The Olympics was scheduled to start on July 24. Canada became the first major country to withdraw from Tokyo Olympics 2020 before, it was postponed to 2021.

