



Monthly **GK** Mania



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Brazil's Amazonia-1 will be launched via ISRO

In August 2020, Brazil's first indigenously developed earth observation satellite named 'Amazonia-1' will be launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) via PSLV from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota. ISRO will be launching this micro-satellite of the Brazilian Space Agency (AEB) as per the 25th January 2004 agreement that was signed for cooperation in the field of outer space between India and Brazil. Amazonia-1 will join with the ChinaBrazil Earth Resources Satellite Program (CBERS). Amazonia-1 was originally scheduled to be launched via AEB's main satellite launch vehicle VLS-1 in 2018 but it was cancelled because of some technical reasons.

The Market Borrowings Data 2020

With a GST collection of Rs. 30,500 crore for 2020-21, Tamil Nadu emerged as the topper of the Market Borrowings Data 2020 of Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It has accounted for 17% of the borrowings done through the issue of bonds known as state development loans. Maharashtra Rs. 25,500 crore (14%), Andhra Pradesh ₹17,000 crore (9%) and Rajasthan Rs.17,000 crore (9%) followed Tamil Nadu. The state government has raised the amount via the issue of long tenure bonds rather than short-terms funding tools such as Ways and Means Advances (WMA) to meet the increased expenditure and to cope up with the dropping revenue situation amid the COVID-19. It is worth knowing that The GST collection of Tamil Nadu has reduced by 15% in June 2020, which is higher in comparison to the 3% fall in national GST collections due to the continuous lockdown.

India's First State-Level 'E-Lok Adalat'

Chhattisgarh High Court conducted the country's first state level 'E-Lok Adalat'. The Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court P.R.Ramachandra Menon did the inaugural ceremony for the same from the Conference Hall of the Chhattisgarh State's High Court in Bilaspur district. This E-Lok Adalat was conducted via video conferencing in 195 benches across the state of Chhattisgarh. A

total of 3133 cases were placed out of which 848 cases were attended by 24 benches from the capital city of Chhattisgarh, Raipur. This was the third National Lok Adalat of the year 2020 that was cancelled by the National Legal Services Authority in the first week of June 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to this, the National Lok Adalat scheduled for 11th April 2020 was also canceled due to COVID-19. Now the 4th and 5th National Lok Adalat of the year 2020 is scheduled on 12th September 2020 and 12th December 2020 respectively.

All India Tiger Estimation 2018 leapt in Guinness

All India Tiger Estimation is done every four years since 2006. The All India Tiger Estimation 2018 got registered in the Guinness Book of World Records for being the World's Largest Camera Trapping Wildlife Survey. This Fourth Cycle estimation spotted 2967 tigers across 141 different locations, which is 75% of the global tiger population. For this, a total of 26,838 outdoor photographic devices equipped with motion sensors were employed to record the movement of animals in a total 121,337 square kilometers (46,848 square miles) area. The 26,838 cameras captured 34,858,623 photographs, out of which 76,651 were of Tigers and 51,777 were of Leopards. And out of 76,651 Tiger photographs, 2,461 were photographs of Individual Tigers (excluding cubs). Prior to this, the first, second, and third cycles were conducted in the years 2006, 2010 and 2014 respectively.

Demise of Nagindas Sanghvi

Veteran Gujarati journalist, columnist, writer Nagindas Sanghvi died of acute asthma at 100. The deceased was Padma Shri awardee of 2019. He was author of books like Ramayan Ni Antaryatra and Narendra Modi: A Political Journey among others. He also wrote books on Mahatma Gandhi, Gujarat and other subjects. His work on Chitrlekha fetched him glory. His articles and books had an insight of history and philosophy and he had an extraordinary ability to analyze political events. He was a professor who taught at Bhavan's College Andheri from 1951 to 1980 and had later moved to Ruparel College, Mahim and Mithibai College, Vile Parle for teaching political science.

NITI Aayog is in action

National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog presented India's second edition of Voluntary National Review (VNR) at UN's High-Level Political Forum on "Decade of Action: Taking SDGs from Global to Local", which was held virtually between July 7, 2020 to July 16, 2020 under the aegis of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), amid COVID-19 pandemic. It included the three-day ministerial meeting of the forum from July 14 to July 16, 2020 on "Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for

sustainable development” theme. The VNR represented NITI Aayog’s efforts for the whole-of-society approach and its commitment towards localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Apart from this, NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission launched an ATL app development module for school students. It is an online free course having six project-based learning modules and features online mentoring on how to build mobile apps in various Indian languages.

World's First Reusable PPE Kits

Indian Manufacturing Company, Loyal Textile Mills launched the first of its kind reusable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits in the world. Loyal Textile Mills also introduced reusable garments and face masks with zero virus penetration. Loyal Textile Mills launched this in partnership with the textile manufacturing company headquartered in Reliance Industries Limited and Switzerland- HeiQ Materials AG. All the three items, which are available under the name Supera Shields are made with the Viroblock Technology of HeiQ Materials AG. The fiber employed for making the reusable masks, garments, and PPE kits was 'R ELAN Fibre' of Reliance Industries Limited that inhibits bacterial and viral growth. The fabric in the reusable mask and PPE kit has been engineered with viral barrier PU film lamination imported from the Republic of China (Taiwan). The garments and masks can be washed for up to 25 times for reuse while the PPE kit can be washed up to 10 times for reuse.

Odisha Pioneered Space Technology For Safeguarding Government Lands

The Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik launched a web and mobile-based solution named ‘BLUIS’ i.e. Bhubaneswar Land Use Intelligence System to monitor all government lands in Bhubaneswar and with this it became the first state of India to employ space technology and artificial intelligence for safeguarding the government lands. The state chose this option in wake of the lack of adequate transparency and accountability in the current manual mode of mechanism that is being used for decades for the detection of encroachments in government lands. BLUIS is a geo-tagged repository that will ride on high-resolution satellite imagery. In event of any attempt to change the use of government land in Bhubaneswar, BLUIS will raise alarm and guide the enforcement staff to the exact location of encroachment. Besides this, a Litigation Management System has also been launched for providing end to end communication between government officials and advocates, the Chief Minister. It is a smart technology-based solution meant for monitoring court cases from initiation to allotment of the cases to government advocates.

India's 1st NVIDIA AI Technology Centre

Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IIT-H) in collaboration with the US multinational technology company, NVIDIA has set up India's first AI Technology Centre to speed up the research work on AI and its commercial purpose. This collaboration will focus on improving AI research in the aspects of agriculture, smart cities and language understanding. They will devise innovative solutions to the unique Indian challenges and to real-world challenges like increasing crop yields, safe transportation systems and better ways to manage traffic among others. NVIDIA will also accelerate the research of faculty at IIT-H for NVIDIA DGX-1™ systems and NVIDIA DGX-2™ systems. It is worth remembering here that earlier, the Telangana government had also signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NVIDIA and declared year 2020 as the 'Year of AI' to establish Hyderabad among the top 25 global AI innovation hubs.

Death of Comedian Jagdeep

Celebrated Bollywood actor-comedian Jagdeep passed away at 81 in Mumbai. Born on March 29, 1939 in Datia, Madhya Pradesh, his real name was Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed Jafri. His role in Purana Mandir(1984), Andaz Apna Apna(1994) as Salman Khan's father, Subedar Ramaiyah in China Gate (1998) and Soorma Bhopali in the film "Sholay" and his expression 'khambha ukhadke' brought him in limelight. Afsana(1951) was his first movie in which he worked as a child artist. He has worked in over 400 films which include, 'Ab Dilli Door Nahin', K. A. Abbas's 'Munna', Guru Dutt's 'Aar Paar', Bimal Roy's 'Do Bigha Zamin' and AVM's 'Hum Panchi Ek Dal Ke' among others. His last film was "Masti Nahi Sasti"(2017). He was acknowledged with LifeTime Achievement Award in the International Indian Film Academy (2019) for Outstanding Contribution to Indian Cinema.

Generic Version Of Remdesivir 'DESREM' Got Green Flagged

The second-largest company in the world for the manufacturing of generic and specialty pharmaceuticals, Mylan N.V received the permission of the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for the launch of its generic version of Gilead Sciences Remdesivir drug for the treatment of COVID-19 positive patients in India. Under the supervision of a healthcare practitioner, the drug will be made available for hospitals and government healthcare agencies in a 100mg injectable dose at Rs 4,800 by the last week of July 2020. With this, Mylan N.V's DESREM became the third generic version of Remdesivir to get DCGI approval for sale in India, after the generic versions of Indian pharmaceutical companies, Cipla's CIPREMI and Hetero's COVIFOR'. It is worth remembering here that Japan was the first country to approve Remdesivir drug as a treatment for COVID-19

‘Golden Birdwing’: The Latest Largest Butterfly In India

The latest publication of newsletter, BIONOTES, declared the Himalayan butterfly named ‘Golden Birdwing (Troides Aeacus)’ as the largest butterfly in India. In the recent measurement, from the centre of the thorax to the tip of the forewing apex, it measured 194 mm. The study reveals that the female species of the Golden Birdwing (Uttarakhand’s Pithoragarh district) has a wingspan of 194 mm that is 4 mm larger than that of the Southern Birdwing with 190 mm wingspan, which so far enjoyed the status of being the largest butterfly of India. And the largest wingspan in the male species of the Golden Birdwing (Wankhar Butterfly Museum, Shillong)) was recorded 106 mm. Peter Smetacek (from Butterfly Research Centre in Nainital districts’ Bhimtal town) and Shistee Panthee (from University of Chinese Academy of Science in China’s Yunnan Province) conducted the new measurements. It is worth learning here in context to erstwhile largest butterfly of India i.e. the Southern Birdwing, that British Army officer cum Lepidopterist, Brigadier William Harry Evans in 1932, had recorded this butterfly’s measurement as 190 mm. Since then, for the last 88 years, it has been the largest butterfly in India.

India’s First NPNT Complaint Drone Flight

Mumbai based Quidich Innovation Labs Private Limited reported its success regarding completion of the first No-Permission No-Takeoff (NPNT) compliant drone flight of India. This first ambitious NPNT compliant drone flight of India was carried out in the green field near Karnataka’s Tumkur and the drone employed for this purpose was Asteria Aerospace (Bengaluru based company) manufactured A200 micro drone. The past shows that in October 2019, this A200 microdrone was the first drone in India, which was issued the Unique Identification Number (UIN) by the DGCA. The A200 micro drone with UIN ‘U0000001’ has completed the first NPNT compliant drone flight of India.

Karnataka’s Weavers’ Sammaan Yojana

Karnataka Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa launched Weavers Sammaan Yojana to provide annual financial assistance of Rs 2000 through Direct Benefit Transfer to 19,744 handloom weavers in the state. The state government has allocated 10.96 crore rupees under the scheme. Out of total 40,634 handloom weavers registered with Seva Sindhu software, 37,314 applications for financial assistance have been approved. In context to another announcement, which was made earlier to provide one-time financial assistance to workers employed in powerlooms, the Chief Minister said that out of 1.25 lakh workers in the sector, one time financial assistance worth Rs 2000 has been approved for 8,897 workers.

Injeti Srinivas : The First Chairman Of IFSCA

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet gave nod to the appointment of Injeti Srinivas as the first chairman of the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA). The appointee is the former corporate affairs secretary and 1983-batch IAS officer of the Odisha cadre, who will serve as chief of IFSCA for upcoming three years. He will regulate financial products like securities, deposits or contracts of insurance, financial services, and financial institutions which have been previously approved by any appropriate regulator in an IFSC. While at the helm of the Ministry Of Corporate Affairs (MCA), Srinivas played a key role in pushing through significant reforms in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) and the Companies Act. In order to improve the ease of doing business, Srinivas played a pivotal role in the decriminalisation of many minor, procedural and technical offences under the Companies Act. He also tried to ensure an increase in the threshold for initiating insolvency proceedings under the IBC to Rs 1 crore.

Railways & BHEL tied up for solar power generation

Railways in collaboration with Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) commissioned a project, which involves a first of its kind use of technology, in which Indian Railways will feed power generated from solar energy directly onto railways' overhead traction. In this innovative technology, Direct Current will be converted to single phase Alternating Current for feeding Railway's overhead traction system. The project is worth 1.7 MWp (megawatt peak) at Bina (Madhya Pradesh) which will be connected directly to the Overhead Traction System. The solar power plant has been set up near the Bina Traction Sub Station (TSS) that can produce approximately 25 lakh units of energy every year that will save around ₹1.37 crore for Railways annually.

Dehing Patkai wildlife sanctuary will be a national park

The Assam government decided to upgrade Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary into a national park. It is worth knowing here that the 111.942 sq km Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary is located within the larger Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve and the very first proposal to accord national park status to the region dates back to 1995. In 2004 Dehing Patkai was declared a wildlife sanctuary. It is a home to a vast variety of flora and fauna as well as a contiguous patch of rainforest with the highest concentration of the rare endangered White Winged Wood Duck. After upgradation, Dehing Patkai will be the sixth national park in Assam. Kaziranga, Nameri, Manas, Orang and Dibru-Saikhowa are the other five national parks of the state.

CBSE reduced syllabus for classes 9th to 12th by 30% for academic year 2020-21

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced the rationalisation of the syllabus up to 30% for classes 9 to 12 to make up for academic loss during COVID-19 lockdown. In this context, the Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank added that considering the importance of learning achievement the core concepts have been retained in the syllabus. It has been done on the pretext of the extraordinary situation prevailing in the country and the world. The revised curriculum will reduce the course load for the students of Class 9th to 12th.

Uttarakhand suspended Kanwar Mela

Uttarakhand Police has issued a notice of suspension of Kanwar Mela on pretext of COVID-19 and has requested devotees not to come to Haridwar as the district's borders have been sealed. Prior to this, Haridwar District Magistrate C Ravishankar had made this clear that Kanwariyas who enter Haridwar defying the ban on the annual Kanwar Yatra will have to serve a 14-days quarantine at their own expenses. In the month of Sawan, devotees of Lord Shiva go on Kanwar Yatra to Haridwar to collect holy water from the Ganges every year. However, this year, the Ganga water will be taken from Har ki Pauri and will be sent to all states for the devotees of Shiva.

Government blocked 40 websites of pro-Khalistan group

The government of India has blocked 40 websites of the pro-Khalistan group "Sikhs For Justice" and foiled its efforts to register voters to support its demand for Khalistan, a separate state for Sikhs via 'Referendum 2020'. Sikhs For Justice is an unlawful organisation that bloomed under the UAPA 1967. On July 1, 2020, the pro-khalistan group's lead campaigner, Gurpatwant Singh Pannu, was declared as a terrorist by the Union government under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. And on 4th July 2020, the pro-khalistan group had started this campaign in the memory of the Sikhs who were killed during the 1955 attack at Darbar Sahib. On recommendation of the Home Ministry, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has issued orders under Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000 to block the 40 websites employed for this purpose.

Akash : India's 66th Grandmaster

The International Chess Federation (FIDE) Council confirmed the 23 year old G Akash as India's 66th Grandmaster. Hailing from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, the boy has a rating of 2495. He is an engineering graduate from Anna University. Coached by a former National Champion, K.

Visweswaran, he booked a national title in 2012. He has played in Wijk Aan Zee (Netherlands), Copenhagen (Denmark), Prague and Liberec (Czech Republic) and in Bad Worishofen (Germany), where he attained his final norm. In 2019 Aakash welcomed third GrandMaster norm in the National senior chess 'A' championship in Majhitar(Sikkim) where he missed the required Elo Mark of 2500.

'Mobile Masterjee' of IIT Kanpur

In order to solve the education problem in rural India, IIT Kanpur has come up with a classroom-to-home teaching setup called 'Mobile Masterjee' that can record the lectures or instructions by the teachers. Developed in the Imagineering Laboratory of IIT Kanpur, the setup captures the videos of the classroom lecture in many positions. The lightweight product has adjustments to fit sheets and book on it for delivering instructions to the kids. The arrangement has a set graduated scale that aligns the sheet at the desired angle, followed by the rotational quick adjustment of the mobile holder.

Elyments: The First Indian Social Media Super App

Vice President of India, Venkiah Naidu launched India's first social media super app, 'Elyments' through which users can stay in touch via free video/audio calls, vibrant feed, and private/group chats. Created with the user's privacy as a priority, the app prohibits sharing of the users' data with the third party without the user's explicit consent. More than 1000 IT professionals under the guidance of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar created this homegrown application which is available in eight languages. Secured payments, audio/video conference calls, curated commerce platforms to promote Indian brands, and regional voice commands are the upcoming features of this app.

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee's birth anniversary

Nation paid tribute to the nationalist leader Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee on his birth anniversary on 6th July 2020. The legend was an accomplished barrister, philosopher and educationist of great repute, who fought relentlessly to preserve national unity and total integration of Jammu and Kashmir into India. He is remembered for his exemplary contributions towards India's development. He was the founder of Bharatiya Jana Sangh, who performed very innovative work to improve education and the industrial sector. He supported quality education and research work.

SAIL Recorded The Highest Ever Monthly Sales And Exports In June

Steel Authority of India (SAIL) succeeded in achieving the highest ever June month sales during June 2020. The domestic and export sales stood at 12.77 lakh tonnes which is over 18% increase in comparison to the corresponding period last year. The company exported 3.4 lakh tonnes steel during this period. This was the first occasion when SAIL flagged off the first rake of R-260 grade Vanadium alloyed high strength 260-metre rails to the Indian Railways, capable of delivering higher speed and bearing higher axle load. The record June sales and exports by SAIL indicates buoyancy and sharp recovery of our economy. Apart from this, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has also registered a national record by clocking 48 blows in a single day in a single converter of Steel Melting Shop-2 (SMS-2) on 2nd July 2020. On the same day, this Steel Plant set another benchmark, when Hot Metal Torpedo Ladle Number-5 surpassed its previous record of 2,331 lining life.

LPG business of India-Bangladesh

India and Bangladesh signed an agreement for the formation of a 50:50 Joint Venture Company (JVC) for LPG business in Bangladesh. The IOC Middle East FZE, Dubai, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and RR Holdings Ltd, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, the holding company of Beximco LPG of Bangladesh were the signatories for it. The proposed joint venture will adopt the 'neighbourhood first' policy of the government of India. This new venture is expected to reduce the cost of import of LPG and make it more affordable for the consumers in Bangladesh. There are future plans of diversifying LPG export to the north eastern states of India from Bangladesh which will be a win-win situation for both the nations.

The Drug Discovery Hackathon

Human Resources Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan jointly launched Drug Discovery Hackathon via video conferencing. They invoked students, academicians, researchers and professionals to take part in the Hackathon and work towards developing drugs to tackle Covid-19. This Hackathon is a joint effort of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR and All India Council for Technical Education, AICTE.

UV Pro UV-C disinfectant bag for household items

Maharashtra-based company developed UV Pro UV-C disinfectant bag for disinfecting personal household items as well as office belongings like fruits, vegetables, mobile phones, tablets, purse,

currency, covers of office files, etc. Equipped with Philips TUV 9w UV Lamp, the UV Pro UV-C disinfectant box uses strong ultraviolet radiation sterilization for sanitizing purposes, which can be achieved in one click. Being fully water-proof, the bag proved effective against a wide range of viruses & bacteria. The sanitization bag has the potential of killing up to 99.9% microbes on non-washable personal items in 10-20 minutes.

India's First NHAI Investment Trust 'InvIT'

National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) will be forming India's first government or semi government promoted Infrastructure Investment Trust 'InvIT', under the Indian Trust Act, 1882 and Securities and Exchange Board of India (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014 to facilitate investment in the highway sector. This was a proposal of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), which was approved by the cabinet in December 2019. In addition to this a new company will be established to act as the Investment Manager to NHAI InvIT for mobilising resources from the market for monetizing completed highway projects of NHAI that have a toll collection track record of at least one year. To have a professional management structure, NHAI has also constituted a search-cum-selection committee for the appointment of two independent Directors and one Chairman for the Investment Manager Board. Chairman of NHAI, Dr Sukhbir Singh Sandhu is the convener of the Committee and Deepak Parekh, Chairman (HDFC); Girish Chandra Chaturvedi (Chairman, ICICI)and Sanjay Mitra, Ex-Secretary of MoRTH are other members of this committee. It is worth knowing here that Chairman of NHAI, Dr Sukhbir Singh Sandhu has been granted 6 months extension (21st July 2020, till mid-January 2021) by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. SS Sandhu is 1988 Uttarakhand Cadre IAS, who received the President Medal for his service as Commissioner of Municipal Corporation of Ludhiana, Punjab.

Expansion of Madhya Pradesh Cabinet

Madhya Pradesh welcomed 28 new ministers, who have joined the BJP government headed by Shivraj Singh Chouhan in the state. Of these, 20 were appointed as cabinet ministers while 8 were ministers of state. Governor Anandiben Patel at the Raj Bhawan in Bhopal in the presence of Chief Minister Shivraj and many other senior leaders and central ministers, administered their oaths in this second expansion of the MP Cabinet. Prior to this, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inducted five ministers to the Cabinet in the month of April 2020 .

Further Postponement of JEE & NEET

On the recommendations of an Expert Committee formed by the government to review the feasibility of conducting the exams in July 2020, the government has again postponed National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) and Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) Main examination in wake of COVID-19 pandemic. JEE will be held from 1st to 6th September 2020 and JEE advanced exam has been scheduled for 27th of September 2020. The new date for NEET is 13th of September 2020. Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank broke this information via a tweet.

Indra Mani Pandey : India's Permanent Representative to UN

A 1990 batch IFS officer, Indra Mani Pandey has been appointed as the next Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva. Currently, Pandey is serving as an additional secretary in the External Affairs Ministry. He has succeeded Rajiv K Chander. In his 30- year long career, Pandey served in Indian missions in Damascus, Cairo, Islamabad, Kabul, Muscat and Geneva. He also served in the capacity of joint secretary in the Disarmament and International Security Affairs division of the Ministry of External Affairs at its headquarters in Delhi.

SERB's 'Accelerate Vigyan' scheme

The Science and Engineering Research Board has introduced a new scheme called 'Accelerate Vigyan' to provide a single platform for research internships, capacity building programs and workshops across India. This inter-ministerial scheme is meant to encourage high-end scientific research and create scientific manpower, which can lead towards research careers and knowledge-based economy. Accelerate Vigyan will strengthen mechanisms for identifying research potential, mentoring, training and hands-on workshops on a national scale.

MyGov Corona Helpdesk became CogX 2020 awardee

The technical partners of MyGov Corona Helpdesk- JioHaptik Technologies Limited won two CogX 2020 awards in 'Best Innovation for COVID-19-Society' & 'People's Choice Covid-19 Overall Winner' categories for their Artificial Intelligence enabled technology solution at the virtual Global Leadership Summit and Festival of AI & Emerging Technology, CogX 2020. MyGov, WhatsApp, and JioHaptik Technologies Limited together developed AI-enabled MyGov

Corona Helpdesk in just five days to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. This platform is a chatbox that has been helping the citizens of India to get the updated information related on COVID-19. The platform processed more than 41 million (4.1 crores) conversations to date, and has also received above 76 million (7.6 crores) messages. More than 28 million people have accessed the platform to date. Started in 2017, CogX is an annual event in London, United Kingdom. It is one of the largest events in AI worldwide that acknowledges the best-of-best emerging technologies in AI across the globe .

Demise of choreographer Saroj Khan

Renowned Bollywood choreographer Saroj Khan died of cardiac arrest this morning at the age of 71. She was hospitalized in Guru Nanak Hospital at Bandra, in Mumbai on June 17, 2020 because of breathing problems. In her career of more than 40 years, Saroj Khan choreographed over 2000 songs. She had started her career as a child artist at the age of three with the film Nazrana and a background dancer in the late 1950s. She learnt dancing while working under film choreographer B Sohanlal. Later, she herself began choreography, first as an assistant choreographer and later she got a break as an independent choreographer, with Geeta Mera Naam (1974). The deceased was a three-time National award winner, who was acknowledged for her work with Sridevi; Hawa Hawai in Mr India (1987), Nagina (1986) and Chandni (1989) and later with Madhuri Dixit starting with the super hit Ek Do Teen from Tezaab (1988), Tamma Tamma from Thanedaar (1990) and Dhak Dhak from Beta in (1992). After that she became one of the most successful Bollywood choreographers.

India's First Lichen Park

In order to conserve Jurassic Era Plants , the government of Uttarakhand developed India's First Lichen Park in Munsiyari, Pithoragarh district. With more than 150 Lichen species – Jurassic Era plant in 1.5 acres of land, this park will serve as a research centre and will be a source of employment for the locals. Lichen is a composite organism that represents a stable symbiotic association between Algae or Cyanobacteria with fungi species. It grows on the surface of the trees, walls, rocks and soil and has the ability to erode rocks and separate the minerals in them. As they require clean air to grow, so they also serve as bio-indicator to scale the air pollution. The Jhula Ghas Lichen species is used as a spice in cooking. They are also used in preparation of perfumes, sunscreen creams, dyes, medicines etc.

A glance of the top legal team of the central government

President Ram Nath Kovind extended the tenures of the 15th Attorney General (AG) of India K K Venugopal and Solicitor General (SG), Tushar Mehta for one and three years respectively. Venugopal succeeded Mukul Rohatgi in July 2017. After the approval of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the law ministry notified appointments of new Additional Solicitors General (ASGs) viz. Balbir Singh, Suryaprakash V. Raju, Rupinder Singh Suri, N. Venkataraman, Jayant K. Sud and Aishwarya Bhati. And the existing ASGs like Vikramajit Banerjee, Aman Lekhi, Madhavi Goradia Divan, K.M. Nataraj and Sanjay Jain have been given an extension of three years. Law ministry reappointed Anil C. Singh as the ASG for the Bombay HC and Satya Pal Jain (Punjab HC), while Yezdezard Jehangir Dastoor (Calcutta HC), Chetan Sharma (Delhi HC), Sankaranarayanan (Madras HC), Krishna Nandan Singh (Patna HC) and Devang Girish Vyas (Gujarat HC) have been appointed as ASGs for the High Courts.

The First Edition of 'Matsya Sampada'

The Union Minister of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Giriraj Singh launched the first edition of Fisheries and Aquaculture Newsletter. The newsletter Matsya Sampada will be published on a quarterly basis from the first quarter of 2020-21. It has operational guidelines for the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) scheme. This newsletter will act as a medium of communication between the Department of Fisheries and the fishermen of the country. It will educate the fish farmers and will provide the latest information and developments related to the fisheries. Launched in May 2020 with an investment of Rs 20050 crore, Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) will create 55 lakh (5.5 million) jobs over the next 5 years for meeting the target of 7 million tonnes of fish production per year.

MoU on Waste to Energy plant

South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) and two Maharatna Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) Indian Oil and NTPC Limited inked MoU on Waste to Energy plant. According to this, a Waste to Energy Plant will be set up at Delhi's Okhla to address the issue of Solid Municipal Waste and to proceed towards a more energy-efficient and greener future. In this demonstrative model, Gasification Technology will be used in which from combustible components of Municipal Waste, 17500 tons of Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) per annum will be produced. The produced RDF will be used for the production of Syngas, which will be further used to generate electricity via reciprocation in engines or turbines.

The 'Sankalp Parva'

The Union Ministry of Culture started a two week long 'Sankalp Parva' on 28th June 2020 , which will continue till 12th July 2020. It is a plantation drive that has been started at the call of Prime Minister Modi. Employees of all the Subordinate Offices, Institutions affiliated and attached to the Ministry and academies are required to plant saplings of Bargad, Awla, Peepal, Ashok and Bel or any other sapling of their choice and they are suppose to take care of the planted saplings until it survives and flourishes.

Plasma Therapy Is Stealing The Attention

Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced establishment of a 'Plasma Bank' at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) of the National Capital. People who have recovered successfully from the COVID-19 infection will be free to donate their plasma. In the case of COVID-19, the convalescent plasma will be used to transfer antibodies to the patient suffering from the COVID-19 virus. This will lead to generation of similar antibodies in victims' bodies for fighting the COVID-19. Besides this, Maharashtra government after getting approval from Indian Council of Medical Research launched the world's largest plasma therapy trial project 'Platina'. It is worth remembering here that Maharashtra has been the worst-hit state in India by the COVID-19 pandemic. Project Platina will help in creating a strong data for the use of Convalescent Plasma Therapy and the project will also help in setting up of an infrastructure for plasma treatment in the state. Under the trial project, two doses of 200 ml of convalescent plasma will be given to all critical patients in 21 State Government-run COVID-19 Hospitals of Maharashtra and the expenditure for the same will be borne by the State Government of Maharashtra. An amount of Rs 16.85 crores have been sanctioned for the project from Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

ISRO Chief K Sivan : The 2020 Von Karman Awardee

The International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) has chosen the Chief of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Dr. Kailasavadivoo Sivan for the 2020 Von Karman Award, which is the highest distinction of the IAA. He will be bestowed this award in March 2021 at Paris. This award was instituted in 1982 in memory of renowned aerospace scientist and the founder and the first President of IAA, Dr. Theodore Von Karman. It is meant to acknowledge the distinguished contributions and lifetime achievements in any branch of science. Sivan joined ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) project in 1982. He was the chief architect of SITARA – 6D trajectory simulation software and became the Chairman of ISRO in January 2018 succeeding AS Kiran Kumar.

Punjab wants to set up a Bulk Drug Park

The government of Punjab has recently requested the central government to approve establishment of a bulk drug park in Bathinda district. Finance Minister of Punjab Manpreet Singh Badal has handed over a letter for the same to Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers, DV Sadananda Gowda. In order to promote Make in India in the Healthcare sector, the proposed park will encourage the production of Medical Devices and Active Pharmaceutical Products (API). And once the Bulk Drug Park gets developed then it will result in the production of Rs 46,400 crore leading to significant increase in employment opportunities

Ashok Kumar will receive Lifetime Achievement Award of Mohun Bagan

Legendary Hockey Player Ashok Kumar will receive the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award of Mohun Bagan Football Club on the Mohun Bagan Day i.e. 29th July 2020. Ashok Kumar is the son of Hockey wizard Dhyan Chand. He was a key player of the 1975 World Cup winning Indian Hockey team that played against Pakistan in Kuala Lumpur. Ashok Kumar is the son of Hockey wizard Dhyan Chand. He represented Bengal in the late 1960s and was later selected to the Indian Hockey team. He won silver medals for the country in the three consecutive Asian Games of 1970, 1974 and 1978. 29th July is the foundation day of Mohun Bagan that commemorates the victory against East Yorkshire Regiment by 2-1 in 1911 Indian Football Association (IFA) Shield. With that Mohun Bagan became the first Indian Club to defeat British.



Lee Hsien Loong will continue as PM of Singapore

People's Action Party Registered comfortable win in the 2020 General Elections of Singapore that was conducted in July 2020 for its 105 seats unicameral Parliament. Under the leadership of incumbent Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, the People's Action Party (PAP) secured 83 seats out of the total 93 seats by winning 61.24% of the total valid votes. Among opposition parties, the Workers Party under the leadership of Pritam Singh won the remaining 10 seats by securing 11.22% of the total valid votes. After this, Lee Hsien Loong will continue as the Prime Minister of Singapore. It is worth remembering here that Singapore became the second country in Asia to conduct national polls amid COVID-19 global pandemic after South Korea that conducted national polls on 15th April 2020.

The Cancer Preparedness Index 2020

In the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) report on "Cancer preparedness in Asia-Pacific: Progress towards universal cancer control", Australia with a score of 92.4 emerged as the topper followed by South Korea (score 83.4) and Malaysia (80.3) among rest of the 10 Asia Pacific nations viz. China, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. While, India grabbed 8th rank with an overall score of 51.6 for cancer preparedness. This report was created upon the findings of the global ICP after evaluation of 28 countries on 45 separate indicators.

Sri Lanka & Maldives eliminated measles & rubella ahead of 2023 target

World Health Organization South-East Asia's Regional Director, Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh during the virtual fifth meeting of the regional verification commission for measles and rubella elimination, informed that Sri Lanka and Maldives eliminated measles and rubella ahead of the 2023 deadline and with this, the duo have become the first two nations in the South-East Asia region to weed out the two diseases ahead of the targeted time. As per the information, there is no evidence of endemic transmission for more than three years by a well-performing surveillance system. Maldives registered its last endemic case of measles in year 2009, and of rubella in October 2015, while the island nation Sri Lanka reported its last endemic case of measles in May 2016 and of rubella in March 2017. Bhutan, DPR Korea and Timor-Leste are other nations in the region that are free from measles.

Demise of Amadou Gon Coulibaly

Prime Minister of Ivory Coast, Amadou Coulibaly died at 61 at Abidjan, Ivory Coast within a few days after returning from two months of treatment in France. The deceased was the Prime Minister of Ivory Coast since 2017. Prior to that, he served in the capacities of the presidency's secretary general under President Alassane Ouattara from 2011 to 2017 as well as an ex officio member of the board of governors of the International Monetary Fund from 2017. Coulibaly was a presidential candidate in the upcoming election as President Alassane Ouattara was to leave the presidential office after his second term of Presidency.

Retirement of Raneem El Welily of Egypt

World's No.1 Women Squash Player Raneem El Welily of Egypt announced her retirement after 18 long years of sports career. She became the ace squash player in 2015 and the first Arab woman to secure the world's top ranking in any sport. She kept her top position intact for the past 19 months before announcing her retirement. The Professional Squash Association(PSA) world championship of 2017 was her first triumph. She has been a member of Egypt's WSF Women's World Team Squash Championship winning side in 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2018. It is worth knowing that Guinness World Records awarded Tarek Momen (Husband of Raneem and the PSA Men's World Championship 2019-20 winner) and Raneem El Welily for being the first married couple to become the squash world champions.

US Imposed Visa Restrictions For Chinese Officials

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made an announcement about the decision of visa restrictions for a certain group of Chinese officials under the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act. The imposed restrictions are in response to Beijing's continuous efforts of obstructing travel for US diplomats and other officials, journalists, and tourists to the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and other Tibetan areas. These visa restrictions are for the Chinese government and Chinese Communist Party officials involved in the formulation or execution of policies related to access for foreigners to Tibetan areas. It is worth knowing that access to Tibetan areas is increasingly important for regional stability as Beijing failed to prevent environmental degradation near the headwaters of Asia's major rivers. The US is well determined to continue to work to advance the sustainable economic development, environmental conservation, and humanitarian conditions of Tibetan communities in China and abroad.

Bangladesh Embassy in Vietnam Is Under Clutch of Illegal Migrants

Human traffickers lured 27 Bangladeshi nationals to Vietnam on pretext of offering them jobs. When the Hanoi embassy of Bangladesh in Vietnam learnt about it, they arranged a repatriation (process of returning persons, voluntarily or forcibly, to their homeland) flight for them. Since the government of Bangladesh does not have a provision to pay for the airfare of returning illegal workers, the embassy asked the illegal migrants to bear their own return expenditure. Over this the 27 Bangladeshi nationals dubbed as illegal migrants denied returning to Bangladesh at their own expense. They made derogatory comments against Bangladesh on social-media and began threatening that if their demands went unmet, they will occupy all Bangladesh embassies abroad. It is worth noting that a recent US State Department report on Trafficking in Persons (TIP), upgraded Bangladesh to tier-2 for its efforts in checking illegal migration from the country. And this entire episode is seen as an attempt of a certain quarter, which is trying to tarnish Bangladesh's recent success in controlling human trafficking. Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dr AK Abdul Momen informed the news officials of news agency BSS that a new organisation named 'Prabashi Odhikar Parishad' is patronising these illegal migrants.

Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary: China's new weapon against India

On 7th July 2020, the Royal Bhutanese Embassy in India clarified China's claim over Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary. Flashback reveals that in June 2020, during the 58th meeting of the U.N. Development Programme's Global Environment Facility (GEF), China objected to the funding for the development of Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary by claiming the area to be a disputed region between Bhutan and China. In response, Bhutan refused the claims of China, stating the Wildlife Sanctuary as an integral and sovereign territory of Bhutan, located in Trashigang Dzongkhag district in Eastern Bhutan that shares boundary with India's Arunachal Pradesh. And the fact that China does not have any boundary with the Trashigang Dzongkhag District of Bhutan, itself suspends all the claims of Republic of China over the area. Moreover, in the last 24 rounds of ministerial-level talks (between 1984 to 2016) conducted to date for demarcating the boundary between Bhutan and China, there are no records of talks regarding the Trashigang Dzongkhag district or the Eastern part of Bhutan as a disputed area, neither China had claimed any of the Eastern regions of Bhutan in the past at any international forum or during its talks with Bhutan. This sudden claim of China in an international forum is clearly meant to target and pressurize India.

Asia's largest solar plant in Madhya Pradesh

On July 10, 2020, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate Asia's largest 750 MW Rewa ultra mega solar plant in Madhya Pradesh via video conference. It is worth remembering

here that PM Modi has set the national goal to achieve the establishment of 100 GW of solar power generation capacity by 2022 when India will complete 75 years of its independence from British rule. This development followed PM Modi's launch of the auction process for 41 coal blocks for commercial mining that opened India's coal sector for private players, and dubbed as a major step in the direction of India achieving self-reliance. Presently, India is the third-largest producer of greenhouse gases in the world after the United States and China.

Nepal & Sri Lanka Are On Same Page In Economy

According to the 2020-21 World Bank's Country Classification based on Income level, Nepal and Sri Lanka have reached the same category of 'Lower-middle Income economy' with the Gross National Income per capita between USD 1036 to USD 4045. Here Nepal marginally crossed the line as its GNI in 2019 was found to be USD 1090, While Sri Lanka's GNI per capita in 2019 was USD 4020. Sri Lanka dropped to the Lower-Middle Income category from an Upper-Middle Income category. Using the Atlas Method i.e. conversion of Gross National Income (GNI) of a country into the current U.S. Dollars, the World Bank classified countries into four income groups viz. (i) Low (ii) Lower-Middle (iii) Upper-Middle (iv) High Income.

The SDG index 2020

In the latest Sustainable Development Index (SDG) for the year 2020, Sweden topped the index with an overall score of 84.7 among 166 nations. It is worth knowing that the SDG index framed the implementation of 17 SDG goals among UN member states in terms of six broad transformations viz education and skills, health and wellbeing, clean energy and industry, sustainable land use, sustainable cities, as well as digital technologies. It is worth knowing that Bangladesh moved 7 places up in this index at the 109th position with a score of 63.5 as compared to the 116th position in the year 2019. Bangladesh succeeded in achieving goals relating to poverty alleviation, quality education, decent work and economic growth and climate action. However, the country still needs to make efforts for the goals of zero hunger, good health, clean water and sanitation, innovation and peace, justice and strong institutions.

Rapper Kayne West : A Candidate for US Presidential Elections

International Rapper and Hip Hop artist, Kayne West announced his candidacy for US Presidential Elections 2020 with the hashtag 2020 Vision. The 43-year-old musician, who is married to reality TV star Kim Kardashian, will contest the US Presidential Elections, which are scheduled for November 3, 2020. SpaceX founder and CEO Elon Musk has extended his support to the rapper via tweet. So far both the main parties viz. the Republic and Democrats have announced their

official candidates. West will run in this race with competitors like Trump who is seeking re-election, and unopposed Democrat candidate Joe Biden. West is required to qualify for ballot access across 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as erect a new political organization from scratch without the support of any party.

Resignation of French PM Edouard Philippe

Amid the expected government reshuffle, French Prime Minister Edouard Phillipe laid his resignation after heading the government for three years. He is a rightwing politician who never joined President Emmanuel Macron's Republic on the move party. Macron decided to reshuffle the government as it has been facing obstacles and criticism before the election. Macron has planned to start a new chapter for the two remaining years to focus on efforts to relaunch the French economy that got crippled under the coronavirus crisis. Macron named 55 year old centre-right mayor Jean Castex as the next PM of France. Castex, being the senior civil servant played an important role in the government's response to the Covid-19. He attended the same elite university as Macron and Philippe and, like Philippe, he was also a member of the right-wing Republicans party in the past.

The World Allergy Week 2020

An annual event initiated by the World Allergy Organisation (WAO) to create awareness about the allergic diseases, disorders related to allergic diseases and the preventive measures of these diseases, World Allergy Week 2020 got concluded on 4th July which started from 28th June 2020. The theme of this week was "Allergy care does not stop with COVID-19". WAO in collaboration with the Biennial World Allergy congress in July 2005, organized the first event of the World Allergy Day. And the board of Directors of WAO approved the institution of the World allergy Week in 2011 to expand the scope of World Allergy day and to increase participation of the entire globe.

India & Japan PASSEX Naval Exercise

In order to promote mutual understanding, Indian Navy and Japanese Navy i.e. Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force conducted a day long Naval Exercise PASSEX (Passing Exercise) for tactical and communications training, towards the Malacca Strait in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This was the 15th exercise undertaken by the navies of these two nations in the last three years. It involved four warships viz. Rajput-class destroyer INS Rana and Kora-class missile corvette INS Kulish of Indian Navy as well as JS Kashima (TV 3508) and JS Shimayuki (TV 3513) of JMSDF's training squadron. It is worth noting here that apart from this exercise, India and Japan had started

an annual joint land military exercise named “Dharma Guardian” in 2018 and prior to this in 2015, Japan had also become the regular participant of naval combat exercise “Malabar” between India and the United States (US).

The General Elections of Myanmar

The Union Election Commission of Myanmar has announced the general elections for 1171 national, state and regional seats of the country on 8th November 2020. The voting will take place in all townships including self administered areas as well as conflict zones. According to the Election Commission among the total number of seats, 330 seats are for the Lower House of the Parliament dubbed as ‘Pyithu Hluttaw’ and 168 seats are for the Upper house and 12 for each state and region. The nominations will be opened from July 20 to August 7, 2020 and the scrutiny will get completed between August 11-17, 2020. The elections will involve over 37 million voters and 94 parties. This will be the first election that will be conducted under the civilian government in 60 years since 1960.

Vladimir Putin’s Resounding Victory In Presidential Polls

President of Russia Vladimir Putin during his recent address to the Federal Assembly proposed a Constitutional Referendum regarding Amendments to the 1993 Constitution of Russia. The latest amendment limits the election of one person to the Presidency to two consecutive terms. In other words from the earlier clause of "two consecutive terms", the word "consecutive" has been removed. It implies that since the constitution contains no ruling on a total number of terms that a President may serve, a former president may seek "re-election" after sitting out one complete term. Further in case of a person already holding the presidency, the previous terms will not be counted. The overall meaning is that now a person can become President of Russia for two terms and one term of the President of Russia is 6 years. As per the votes during the Referendum, 77.95 % of Russians have voted in support of this Amendment, while 21.23 percent of the Russians voted against the Amendments. This implies that Vladimir Putin’s previous term from 2012- 2018 will not be counted. His second consecutive term (2018-2024) will end in 2024, but now with a clear majority of the Russian’s having opted for the Constitutional Amendments, Putin can serve as President for two terms of six years each i.e. he can be a President of Russia until 2036. Some of the other important amendments include -Banning of same-sex marriages; Indexing of pensions; prohibition of any act that aims at the "expropriation" of Russian territory; Stopping senior officials from foreign passports, residency, or overseas bank accounts and the minimum wage will no longer be lesser than the subsistence minimum income among others.

Two renowned Indian-Americans honoured by prestigious American foundation

In the United States, two renowned Indian-Americans Pulitzer Prize-winning author and oncologist Siddhartha Mukherjee and Professor of Economics at Harvard University Raj Chetty have become '2020 Great Immigrants' honorees. They have contributed towards the efforts in mitigating the COVID-19 health crisis. Born in New Delhi, Dr. Mukherjee is a renowned biologist, oncologist and the author of various world acclaimed books, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning 'The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer'. In 2014, he was awarded the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian honours. In May 2020, he was selected by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo to serve on a 15-member Blue-Ribbon Commission that focussed on improving tele-health and broadband access in response to the COVID-19 health crisis. Born in New Delhi, Professor Raj Chetty has been one of the youngest professors to be granted tenure in Harvard's history. Besides being a Professor of Economics at Harvard University, Chetty directs a research lab, Opportunity Insights, that aims to identify barriers to economic and social mobility and develop scalable policy solutions to overcome them. He helped in starting a resource to monitor the real-time economic effect of COVID-19 on people, businesses and communities across the USA. And this tool enabled policy makers to make evidence-based decisions that balance vital public health priorities with the economic needs of their communities.

New Strain Of Swine Flu Virus Raised Hood In China

The National Influenza Centre of China during a pig surveillance program discovered the existence of a new virus named as 'G4 EA H1N1 or G4 virus' that has human pandemic potential. Under the surveillance program, the researchers collected 30,000 nasal swab samples from pigs across 10 provinces of China between 2011 to 2018 in which a total of 179 swine influenza viruses were identified. A sharp increase in new strain of the G4 Virus was observed since 2016. Some tests were conducted, which revealed that the virus can cause zoonotic infection (animal to human) but so far there hasn't been any evidence of person-to-person transmission of the virus yet. But the G4 virus can replicate in human cells.

'Demographic Genocide' campaign of China

United States-based news agency Associated Press (AP) conducted investigation and found that the Chinese Government has been running a number of inhuman campaigns dubbed as 'Demographic Genocide' to slash the birth rates among the minority Muslim population in its country. It is targeting most of the Uyghurs ethnic groups under these campaigns. They have set up detention camps in Xinjiang Autonomous Region of China and under the cover of offering voluntary education and training, the authorities are running high-security prisons with

punishments, no escapes, strict disciplines, etc. Ethnic minorities are often locked in these camps for having too many children. Minority women are regularly forced for pregnancy checks. The interviews and data revealed that thousands of these women have been forced for abortion. In the event of failure of birth control, the authorities are conducting mass detention and awarding punishments in the form of huge fines, regular police raids at homes for searching hidden children, etc. It is worth recalling here that earlier in the month, based on reports of continuous human rights violations on the Uyghurs population by the Chinese Government, the United States had imposed visa restrictions on Chinese officials under an approved bill named the 'Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act'.

Micheal Martin : The New Prime Minister of Ireland

The Irish Parliament (the Dail) at the Convention Centre, Dublin, chose Fianna Fail politician Micheal Martin as the new Prime Minister of the country. He has taken the place of Leo Varadkar. The speaker of the lower house, Sean O Fearghail announced the results. Martin, who received 93 votes out of 159 will lead the three-party coalition of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Green Party for the first two and a half years i.e. until December 2022, while the second half of the 5 year term will be led by Indian Origin Leader of Fine Gael Leo Varadkar. This is the first occasion when Fianna Fail and Fine Gael became governing partners and the new cabinet has ministers of all the three parties. It is worth noting that during the government of Fianna Fail between 1997 to 2011, Martin was the first national government minister to impose a workplace smoking ban including smoking in pubs during his term as health minister in 2004.

Bangladesh Veiled The Jute Mills

Although Bangladesh is a major global supplier of Jute products that produces around 1.5 million tonnes of Jute per year, yet the government of Bangladesh announced the shutting down of all the state-run jute mills in the country on account of recurring losses and low productivity. Bangladesh contributes to 80% global export of Jute but as the machinery of the said mills is 60-70 years old and their production capacity has come down to zero so the country decided this move. These mills will resume work later under the PPP or joint venture model. As far as the 25 thousand affected jute workers are concerned, the Bangladesh government will provide 5000 crore Taka for clearing their arrears and they will also be given the benefits of a voluntary retirement scheme.

Washington D.C: The Probable New State Of The USA

The Lower House of the United States Congress voted 232-180 in favour of the bill that seeks statehood status for the United States capital Washington D.C. This Bill was introduced by

Eleanor Holmes Norton, who is a non-voting member of the House of Representative from Washington D.C. Although the Bill won the will of the Lower House of Senate yet its chances of reaching the Upper House of Senate are quite dim. Moreover, the United States President has made it clear that he would 'veto' the Bill even if it gets approved at the Senate. 230 years ago in 1790, Washington D.C was carved out from the states of Virginia and Maryland. D.C stands for District of Columbia.

World's first-ever Online B.Sc. Degree in Programming & Data Science

The Indian Institute of Technology(IIT) Madras launched World's first-ever Online B.Sc. Degree in Programming and Data Science. This online course will be offered in three different stages, viz. Foundation Program, Diploma Programme and the third will be the Degree Programme. On completion of the Foundation program the student will be given a Certificate. For joining the Courses, students will have to appear in the qualifier exam for which they will have to fill a form and pay the fee for the qualifier exam of Rs 3000. For preparation of the qualifier exam students will be provided access to 4 week long online lectures on 4 subjects like Mathematics, Statistics, English, and Computational Thinking and then the qualifier exam will be conducted at the end of 4 weeks. The students who will secure more than 50% marks in the qualifier exam will be able to get themselves enrolled in the Foundation Programme.

Lazarus Chakwera : The New President of Malawi

Malawi government reconducted the Presidential elections in June 2020 after cancellation of 2019 Presidential elections result by the Constitutional Court of Malawi earlier in the month of February 2020. In the fresh elections Lazarus Chakwera emerged as the new President with 2,604,043 votes, which is 59.34 percent of the total valid votes. It is worth recalling here that in the 2019 Presidential Elections Peter Mutharika became the President of Malawi with the highest 38.57% of the total valid votes. But these elections were said to be stained with Tip-Ex correction fluid. The winning party was accused of using this popular correction fluid Tipp -Ex for tampering the votes. Eventually, the Constitutional Court of Malawi traced the irregularities and evidence of vote tampering during the investigations and therefore cancelled the results of 2019 Presidential elections. This was the second incidence of Annulment of Election in the African Continent in the last 4 years as prior to this in August 2017 the Presidential Election of Kenya was also annulled.

Pakistan-China Tripartite Power Purchase Agreement

Recently Pakistan and China entered into a Tripartite Power Purchase Agreement for the construction of the 1124 MW Kohala Hydro Power Project. The Government of Pakistan, State-

owned company of Chinese Government, China Three Gorges Corporation and the Government of Azad Kashmir (Part of Pakistan occupied Kashmir) were the signatories for the same. Located near the villages of Siran and Barsala in Muzaffarabad district of Pakistan Occupied over river Jhelum, the Kohala Hydro Power Project is part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor. A subsidiary of China Three Gorges Corporation, Kohala Hydropower Company Limited (KHCL) will complete this project at an estimated expenditure of USD 2,364 million. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) came into existence in May 2013 with the aim of developing Pakistan's infrastructure for strengthening its economy.

Nepali PM questioned the nationality of Lord Ram!!!

Nepal's Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli while attending the Bhanu Jayanti function in Kathmandu accused India of cultural encroachment. As per Nepal's Prime Minister's Knowledge, Lord Rama was Nepali, not Indian. He stated that Lord Rama was born in Parsa district's Birgunj city of Nepal and not in Ayodhya City of Uttar Pradesh, India. He further added that the holy place where King Dashrath had executed the rites to get the son and the Valmiki Ashram is also located in Nepal only. The Nepali Prime Minister even questioned Lord Rama's travel to Janakpuri for marrying Sita. He turned the Indian Epic 'Ramayana' upside down.

UK boycotted Chinese telecom company Huawei

The United Kingdom banned its companies from taking 5G equipment from Chinese telecom company Huawei. UK's Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden informed the British parliament that from the end of this year, telecoms providers will not buy any 5G equipment from Huawei. As per the new guidelines, the British telecom operators will have to remove all 5G-related equipment, supplied by the Chinese company, from their infrastructure by 2027. The UK took this bold step despite threats from Beijing.

US's bill that interfered with China's will

In support of Hong Kong's freedom, US President Donald Trump has turned a bill into a law to impose sanctions on Chinese officials implementing oppressive law against Hong Kong. The new law gives Trump's administration powerful new tools to hold responsible individuals and the entities involved in putting an end to Hong Kong's independence. Trump used this bill to end the preferential trade treatment, which Hong Kong has been receiving for years. It is worth recalling here that recently China had imposed a new security law to bring an end to Hong Kong's special status, agreed under a 1984 pact between China and the UK in which the former British colony was returned to China in 1997 with a law protecting freedoms of speech, assembly and the press until 2047.

Andrzej Duda: The President of Poland

The incumbent president of Poland, Andrzej Duda won the 2020 Presidential Election by a narrow margin. Andrzej Duda secured 1,04,13,094 (1 crore 4 lakh 13 thousand 94 votes) votes in the Second Round of the Election to achieve the majority figure marginally with 51.21 % of the total valid votes. While, his opponent Rafal Trzaskowski secured 99,21,219 (99 lakh 21 thousand 219 votes) to finish at second place with 48.79% of the total valid votes. Andrzej Duda's current term will expire on 6th August 2020 and now with this win, he will continue as the President of Poland for another five-year term. Andrez is a lawyer and politician, who served as president of Poland since August 2015. He has also rendered his services as a member of Polish Lower house (2011-2014) and European Parliament (2014-2015).

Lewis Hamilton : The Winner Of The Styrian Grand Prix

Mercedes Driver Lewis Hamilton, won the Styrian Grand Prix (GP) in Spielberg, Austria. He finished this race in 13.7 seconds, which is 3.7 seconds ahead of Valtteri Vottas of Mercedes and Max Verstappen of Red Bull respectively. This is the 85th career win for Hamilton and with this, he has entered the six of Formula one (F1) record of Michael Schumacher. It is worth registering here that his record-extending 89th career pole on a rain-drenched track was one of his best in extreme conditions.



IOA's new Branding & Visual Identity

In July 2020, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) adopted a new branding and visual identity on completion of 100 years of participation by Indian Athletes at the Olympic Games. The new branding and visual identity has an institutional and commercial logo of the Indian Olympic Association. The logo, which also celebrates Tiranga and the value of unity, friendship, and merit, has been approved by the International Olympic Committee. The new logo will be launched on 15th August 2020 to mark the contributions of the Indian Athletes in building a Team India under the Indian Olympic Association. It is worth registering here that in the 1920 Summer Olympics at Belgium's Antwerp, India had sent its first Olympic team comprising 3 Athletes and 2 Wrestlers. During this, India's Randhir Shindes won the first medal in the form of Bronze for India in Men's Freestyle Featherweight event.

Postponement of Asia Cup Cricket tournament

Asian Cricket Council (ACC) in wake of an upsurge in COVID-19 cases in the region, postponed the Asia Cup Cricket tournament to June 2021, which was previously scheduled to take place in September 2020. Initially Pakistan was to host the Asia Cup 2020 but because of security reasons, the tournament was later rescheduled to take place in Sri Lanka. After careful consideration and evaluation of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Board of the ACC took this decision.

Sri Lanka Gave Up 2011 World Cup Final Fixing Probe

On account of non availability of evidence, Sri Lanka punctuated the 2011 world cup final fixing probe with a full stop. Former Minister of Sports, Mahindananda Aluthgamage levelled allegations stating that the 2011 final between Sri Lanka and India was fixed. In this context the Special Investigative Unit Chief Senior Superintendent of Police Jagath Fonseka took statements of the three cricketers viz. former Captain Kumar Sangakkara, Aravinda de Silva and Upul Tharanga that showed no evidence to prove the allegations. Their statements reflected practical reasons for a change in squad during the tournament. The International Cricket Council too did not respond with regard to the allegations and had not commenced any investigations for the same.



Current Affairs

1. Which edition of the National Reading Day was celebrated on June 19, 2020?
 (a) 22nd (b) 23rd (c) 24th
 (d) 25th (e) 26th
2. Tata's Natarajan Chandrasekaran got re-nominated ason RBI Central board.
 (a) Part-Time Non-Official Director
 (b) Full-Time Non-Official Director
 (c) Part-Time Official Director
 (d) Full-Time Official Director
 (e) Part-Time Member
3. T. Rabi Sankar, who got appointed as Chairman of Indian Financial Technology & Allied Services (IFTAS), was the International Monetary Fund (IMF) consultant to the Government and Central Bank of
 (a) Argentina (b) Bangladesh (c) Comoros
 (d) Dominican Republic (e) Ecuador
4. In June 2020, EXIM Bank extended Line of Credit of USD 20.10 Million to
 (a) Panama (b) Costa Rica (c) Nicaragua
 (d) El Salvador (e) Guatemala
5. Which of the following banks launched a Co-Branded Healthcare Card Called 'Swasth Card' cashless card for healthcare needs ?
 (a) SBI (b) ICICI (c) IDBI
 (d) HDFC (e) YES
6. Which of the following observed Great June Uprising Day on 18th June?
 (a) Manipur (b) Mizoram (c) Tripura
 (d) Nagaland (e) Assam

7. Which of the following ministries prepared India's 1st ever Climate Change Assessment – Climate Change Tracker in June 2020?
- (a) Earth Science
 - (b) Environment, Forest and Climate Change
 - (c) Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying
 - (d) Science and Technology
 - (e) Jal Shakti
8. Which of the following state governments observed Mask Day on 18th June 2020 ?
- (a) Andhra Pradesh
 - (b) Karnataka
 - (c) Goa
 - (d) Tamil Nadu
 - (e) Kerala
9. Historian Dinyar Patel's biography of has been recently published.
- (a) Badruddin Tyabji
 - (b) Dadabhai Naoroji
 - (c) Womesh Chunder Bonnerjee
 - (d) Pherozeshah Mehta
 - (e) Dinshaw Edulji Wacha
10. Which of the following nations emerged as the biggest contributor to e-waste in the third edition of The Global E-waste Monitor 2020 report?
- (a) China
 - (b) India
 - (c) USA
 - (d) Belgium
 - (e) Peru
11. IRDAI formed-member working group headed by Anjan Dey to look into Drone Insurance.
- (a) 5
 - (b) 6
 - (c) 7
 - (d) 8
 - (e) 9
12. The second installment of the 'Bharat Bond ETF' of Edelweiss Asset Management Company has two new series having maturities of 5 years (April 2025) andyears to raise Rs 14,000 crore.
- (a) 9
 - (b) 10
 - (c) 11
 - (d) 12
 - (e) 13
13. In July 2020, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) released the picture of the closest and biggest moon "Phobos" of
- (a) Jupiter
 - (b) Saturn
 - (c) Uranus
 - (d) Neptune
 - (e) Mars

14. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change inaugurated a unique urban forest at the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India(CAG) in?
(a) Uttarakhand (b) Delhi (c) Uttar Pradesh
(d) Madhya Pradesh (e) Tripura
15. Ministry of Sports and Ministry oflaunched 'Fit Hai to Hit Hai India' webinar for School Students.
(a) Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
(b) Health and Family Welfare
(c) Science and Technology
(d) Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying
(e) Human Resource Development
16. Luxury Ride signed as its Brand Ambassador.
(a) Arijit Singh (b) Shaan (c) Sukhbir Singh
(d) Amit Trivedi (e) Sonu Nigam
17. Which of the following state governments posthumously honoured Dadasaheb Phalke and Sahitya Akademi Winner Ratnakar Matkari ?
(a) Gujarat (b) Maharashtra (c) Madhya Pradesh
(d) Bihar (e) West Bengal
18. M Venkaiah Naidu Virtually released a Book "Future of Higher Education – Nine Mega Trends" authored by
(a) Rakesh Jhunjhunwala (b) Kumar Mangalam Birla (c) TN Manoharan
(d) Naina Lal Kidwai (e) V Pattabhi Ram
19. Which of the following state governments honored Gulabbai Sangamnerkar & Madhuvanti Dandekar with a Lifetime Achievement Award ?
(a) Gujarat (b) Maharashtra (c) Madhya Pradesh
(d) Bihar (e) West Bengal
20. Which of the following state governments launched 'Ektu Khelo, Ektu Padho' for school students?
(a) Assam (b) Manipur (c) Mizoram
(d) Tripura (e) Arunachal Pradesh



ANSWERS



- 1.(d)** The 25th edition of the National Reading Day was celebrated on June 19, 2020 in honour of Kerala's Father of Library Movement, Puthuvayil Narayana (P.N.) Panicker & his significant contribution to the reading culture which made Kerala's universal literacy rate (100%) in 1990.
- 2.(a)** Tata's Natarajan Chandrasekaran got re-nominated as Part-Time Non-Official Director on RBI Central board for 2 years from 3rd March 2020. The government had first nominated him as the Director on RBI Central board for 4 years from March 4, 2016.
- 3.(b)** T. Rabi Sankar, who got appointed as Chairman of Indian Financial Technology & Allied Services (IFTAS), was the International Monetary Fund (IMF) consultant to the Government and Central Bank of Bangladesh. He also worked with the Ministry of Finance from 2008 to 2014.
- 4.(c)** In June 2020, EXIM Bank extended Line of Credit of USD 20.10 Million to Nicaragua for the reconstruction of Aldo Chavarria Hospital. Till now, with this agreement EXIM bank has extended 4 LOCs to Nicaragua, on behalf of Indian Government, with a total value of USD 87.63 million
- 5.(e)** YES Bank & Delhi-based fintech startup, Affordplan Jointly launched Co-Branded Healthcare Card Called 'Swasth Card' cashless card for healthcare needs. The card will have affordable recharges from Rs 100 up to a maximum balance of Rs 1 lakh plus Insurance cover, Cashback benefits and much more.
- 6.(a)** Manipur observed the 19th edition of Great June Uprising Day on 18th June in memory of the 18 people who lost their lives on 18th June 2001 in the protest termed as 'June uprising' to protect the territorial integrity of Manipur. The martyrs were protesting against the used words "without territorial limits" in a ceasefire agreement between Union government and National Socialist Council of Nagaland(NSCN). Later the union government removed those words from the agreement.

- 7.(a)** In June 2020, the Ministry of Earth Science (MoES) prepared India's first national report on the state of the climate crisis titled "Assessment of climate change over the Indian region" that has been published in Spring Nature. The scientists of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune edited it.
- 8.(b)** Karnataka observed Mask Day on 18th June 2020 to reinforce covid -19 norms of wearing a mask, using sanitisers, washing hands and maintaining social distancing.
- 9.(b)** Historian Dinyar Patel's biography of Dadabhai Naoroji, "Naoroji Pioneer of Indian Nationalism" has been recently published by the Harvard University Press. Naoroji was the first Asian to get elected to the British parliament in 1892. He was one of the co-founders of Indian National Congress.
- 10.(a)** China emerged as the biggest contributor to e-waste with 10.1 million tonnes (mt) in the third edition of the Global E-waste Monitor 2020 report. It was followed by the United States (US) with 6.9 mt and India with 3.2 mt at 2nd and 3rd rank respectively. The world dumped a record 53.6 million tonnes of e-waste in 2019.
- 11.(e)** IRDAI formed a 9-member working group headed by general manager of the New India Assurance, Anjan Dey to look into Drone Insurance and suggest insurance products covering several risks involved in the use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft System(RPAS)/Drones.
- 12.(c)** The second installment of the 'Bharat Bond ETF' of Edelweiss Asset Management Company has two new series having maturities of 5 years (April 2025) and 11 years (April 2031) to raise Rs 14,000 crore. It invested only in AAA-rated bonds of Public Sector companies.
- 13.(e)** In July 2020, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s Mars Orbiter Mission released the picture of the closest and biggest moon "Phobos" of Mars. The pictures were taken 7200 km from Mars and 4200 km from Phobos. It shows four craters of Phobos.
- 14.(b)** The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change inaugurated a unique urban forest at the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India(CAG) in Delhi. The Ministry employed the "Miyawaki method" of forest creation to reduce the temperature and increase the moisture.

- 15.(e)** Ministry of Sports and Ministry of Human Resource Development launched 'Fit Hai to Hit Hai India' webinar. Besides this, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) organized 'Fit India Talks' Sessions as well.
- 16.(c)** Luxury Ride signed Sukhbir Singh as its Brand Ambassador. The Prince of Bhangra's 1st album 'New Stylee', had won the 1996 Channel V Awards in three categories viz. Best Debut Album, Best Male Vocalist and Best Music Video for "Punjabi Munde"
- 17.(b)** Maharashtra posthumously honoured Dadasaheb Phalke and Sahitya Akademi Winner Ratnakar Matkari. The late Marathi writer and playwright won the Natvarya Prabhakar Panshikar award comprising a citation, a memento and a cash prize of Rs.5 Lakh.
- 18.(e)** M Venkaiah Naidu Virtually released a Book "Future of Higher Education – Nine Mega Trends" authored by Public Speaker, author and teacher, V Pattabhi Ram . The book is based on a survey of about 5000 educators and covers the new norms in the key areas of higher education like Student-Teacher relationship, Learning methods, Laboratories & Examinations etc.
- 19.(b)** Maharashtra Culture Minister Amit Deshmukh honored the senior tamasha (folk art) artist, Gulabbai Sangamnerkar with Vithabai Narayangaokar lifetime achievement award 2018-19 & Veteran theatre actress-singer Madhuvanti Dandekar with Sangeetacharya Annasaheb Kirloskar musical theatre lifetime achievement award 2019-20.
- 20.(d)** Tripura launched 'Ektu Khelo, Ektu Padho' for school students. It is an initiative for school students upto class VIII. About 5 lakh students study in 4,733 schools in Tripura.