



Monthly **GK** Mania



May - 2020

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No Hike In Tuition Fee For Academic Year 2020-21

Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank in New Delhi instructed Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) not to hike tuition fee for the academic year 2020-21. The decision came after consultation with the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the IIT Council and Directors of IITs. Hence, the centrally-funded IIITs, will not follow the standard 10-per cent hike in the tuition fee for undergraduate programmes this year. And the IIITs run in the public-private partnership mode will not raise the tuition fee for the coming academic year for any of their courses.

The Set Up of International Financial Services Centre Authority

The Government of India has set up an International Financial Services Centre Authority via a notification which will be headquartered in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The notification issued by the Government of India has brought International Financial Services Centres Authority Act, 2019 into effect. It has 9 members with a term of three years, appointed by the Government of India. Chairperson, two members from Ministry of Finance, one each from RBI, SEBI, IRDAI and PFRDA and two members based on the recommendation of the search committee are its members. The establishment will look into the financial markets and will regulate financial products like contracts of insurance, deposits, securities of the financial institutions that have been approved by regulators. RBI, SEBI, PFRDA, IRDAI will be the regulators for the same.

Aadhaar Updation Via CSC

Unique Identification Authority of India, UIDAI has allowed Common Service Centres (CSCs), which are designated banking correspondents of banks to offer Aadhaar updating services. With this 20,000 such CSCs will now be able to offer this service to citizens. The CSC Village Level Entrepreneurs have been asked to begin the Aadhaar work with responsibility as per instructions of UIDAI in this regard. The CSCs will start these services in June after requisite formalities. The decision will boost the efforts of achieving the goals of Digital India as envisaged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Exit Of Veteran Star Rishi Kapoor

Prithviraj Kapoor's grandson and Raj Kapoor's son, heart throb of Indian cinema, Rishi Kapoor, who has had a glorious career in the world of Hindi cinema spanning more than 40 years passed away at the age of 67 in Mumbai. After being diagnosed with cancer in 2018, he underwent treatment in New York for almost a year and returned to India in September 2019. He had charmed millions with films like Bobby, Chandni, Karz, Prem Granth, Prem Rog, Nagina, Damini, Do Dooni Chaar, Besharam, Love Aaj Kal, Kabhi Kabhie, Zahreela Insaan, Zinda Dil, Khel Khel Mein, Rafoo Chakkar, Amar Akbar and Anthony, Doosara Aadmi, Anjane Mein, Dhan Daulat, Patiala House and many more. It is a "Terrible Week For Indian Cinema" that lost two legendary actors Irfan Khan and Rishi Kapoor in a row.

New appointments in different Ministries

The Union Government appointed new Secretaries, Special Secretaries and Additional Secretaries in different Ministries and Departments. The names of appointees include Ravi Mittal (Sports Secretary), Amit Khare (additional charge of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting), Anita Karwal (Secretary, School Education and Literacy), Tarun Kapoor (Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas) and Tarun Bajaj (Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs in Ministry of Finance). Besides them, Health Secretary Preeti Sudan has been given a three month extension.

Four New Inter Ministerial Central Teams

The Ministry of Home Affairs formed four new Inter Ministerial Central Teams for Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Surat and Chennai for Covid 19 pandemic redressal. The teams have public health specialists and officers of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), whose expertise can be leveraged by the state governments for management of COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to this, the ministry had sent the six previous teams to Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal to review the implementation of the lockdown measures after making ground evaluation of the situation prevailing in selected districts.

CSIR's Herbal Decongestant Spray

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Botanical Research Institute (CSIR-NBRI) has developed herbal decongestant spray to curb COVID-19 infection and ease wearing of masks. Wearing a mask for a long time causes difficulty in breathing and congestion in the respiratory system. Having a blend of four plant based oil, the proposed herbal spray will help to address this problem. The spray clears windpipe and thus helps in removing mucus or cough that helps to ease breathing. In addition to this, the spray will also help to reduce the stress caused by excessive decongestion.

Irfan Passed Away

On 29th April 2020, an icon of Indian cinema who had a string of Anglo-American successes under his belt, Irrfan Khan died of colon infection at the age of 53 in Mumbai. In March 2018, he was diagnosed with a neuroendocrine tumour, which he fought well and managed to recover to act in his last film Angrezi Medium. The deceased gave outstanding performances in The Amazing Spider-Man, Michael Winterbottom's A Mighty Heart, Inferno, Slumdog Millionaire, Life of Pi, Jurassic World, Rog, Life in a Metro, Haider, Piku, Hindi Medium etc. He got a break in Cinema via British director Asif Kapadia's low budget "The Warrior", which was shot in India and released in 2002. And The Warrior was selected for the prestigious San Sebastian film festival and won the Bafta award for best British film.

Demise of Eminent theatre actor Usha Ganguly

An Indian theatre director-actor and activist, Usha Ganguly best known for her work in Hindi theatre in the 1970s and 1980s, died at the age of 75 in Kolkata, West Bengal. She was founder of Rangakarmee theatre group in 1976 and produced Mahabhoj, Rudali, Court Martial and Antaryatra. Mukti and Manasa were her renowned Bengali productions. She was honored with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Direction given by Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's National Academy of Music, Dance & Drama in 1998. The West Bengal government adjudged her as the "Best Actress" for the play 'GudiaGhar' and was felicitated with "Girish Samman" honour in 2016 for her contribution to theatre.

Battle against Covid 19

After getting approval from the Indian Medical Council of Medical Researches (ICMR), IIT-Delhi developed the first economical probe free detection assay for detecting the COVID-19 without making any compromises on the accuracy of the testing. This assay is meant to reduce the expenditure of testing. The ICMR validated the assay with 100% sensitivity and specificity and with this, IIT Delhi became the first academic institute to get the ICMR approval for a real time Polymerase Chain Reaction based diagnostic assay. Apart from this, the Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management- Kerala (IIITM-K) has developed an Artificial Intelligence semantic search engine "Vilokana"/ www.vilokana.in to help researchers to get deeper insights into scientific studies and to find an early solution to the COVID-19 crisis. The user can enter keyword-based queries, the meaning of which the search engine will be able to understand, and find the relevant text from the scientific papers.

Transcorp got green signal for co-branding arrangements

A 25 year old BSE-listed company and the leading forex and payment solutions provider, Transcorp International Limited (TIL) became the first non-bank company to receive Reserve Bank of India (RBI) 's approval for entering into co-branding arrangements for prepaid Instruments to be used in over 35 lakh stores and online gateways due to COVID-19 pandemic. Transcorp will introduce Application Programming Interface (API) based co-branded partnerships for digital, physical and contactless cards with selected marquee clients in its own Bank Identification Number (BINs). The said cards can be used by partners, financial institutions and corporate houses to simplify their core business activities and will facilitate the accounting department to manage expenses by not having to check every individual bill and will eliminate cash as a medium of paying for company expenses.

The Magnetic Nanoparticle-based RNA Extraction Kit

Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute developed magnetic nanoparticle-based RNA extraction kit "Chitra Magna" for Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), Loop-mediated isothermal amplification (LAMP) tests as well as Reverse transcriptase- Polymerase chain reaction testing for COVID-19. Working under the aegis of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, the Institute has filed for a patent for this technology. The magnetic nanoparticle-based RNA extraction kit provides a highly purified and concentrated level of RNA of the causative virus of COVID-19 pandemic i.e. SARS-COV-2 from swab samples. They are converted into DNA and amplified using the PCR technique or LAMP technique and in event of some viral RNA disintegration during storage and transportation of the patient samples, all of it is captured by the magnetic bead-based extraction technology of Chitra Magna. The technology of Chitra Magna has been transferred to the Agappe Diagnostics Ltd Ernakulam.

IIFL Wealth acquired LTCM

An investment and financial advisor, IIFL Wealth Management purchased 100% equity shares of Larsen & Toubro Capital Markets (LTCM), which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of L&T Finance Holdings for Rs 230 crores plus available cash balance of LTCM. LTCM possessed a total income of Rs 124.81 crores and its net worth stood at Rs 82.45 crore at the end of March 2019. It had assets worth Rs 20,807 crores as of April 21. IIFL Wealth Management is an adviser to more than 5,600 influential families in high net worth individuals (HNIs) and ultra HNI segments in India and foreign countries, with aggregate assets of over 24 billion dollars under management.

Beneficiaries under PMGKY

162 crore rupees have been transferred to more than 68 thousand establishments as Employees Provident Fund contribution, that benefited 10.6 lakh employees under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY). A total of 2.17 crore building and construction workers have been given financial support amounting to 3,497 crore rupees. The said package was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on 26th of March to protect the poor from the flame of the lockdown due to COVID-19. The package also included free food grains and cash payment to women and poor senior citizens and farmers.

Tripura broke Coronavirus cage

After Manipur, Tripura became the second Northeastern region to get rid of coronavirus infection. The sample of the second COVID-19 patient in the state has also tested negative for the third consecutive time, while the first positive patient was discharged from hospital seven days ago after getting recovered and tested negative. As per the report from the Health Department, under 338 persons are under quarantine including both home and facility quarantine and so far samples from 4,038 people have been collected out of which 3,512 have tested negative . The rest of the reports are yet to come.

Record 2.8 lakh metric tonnes food grains supply in a single day!

On 22nd April 2020, Food Corporation of India (FCI) set a new benchmark by moving 102 train loads carrying about 2.8 Lakh Metric Tonnes -LMT food grains. The maximum movement was from Punjab (wheat and raw rice) which loaded 46 train loads followed by Telangana (Boiled rice) with 18. With this movement, the total food grains stocks moved by FCI during the lockdown period crossed 5 Million Metric Tonnes at a daily average of 1.65 Lakh Metric Tonnes. Simultaneously, FCI unloaded 4.6 Million Metric Tonnes stocks and distributed 9.8 Million Metric Tonnes to the state governments under various schemes including Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY).

Fish gills for rechargeable metal-air battery

The Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST) used “Fish gills” as a low-cost electrocatalyst for the development of environment friendly energy conversion devices and storage technologies like fuel cell, biofuel cell, and metal–air battery. The low-cost bioinspired electrocatalyst proved better than the commercial Platinum on carbon (Pt/C) catalyst and therefore it can be employed as the next-generation non-precious carbon-based electrocatalyst for energy conversion and storage applications in the future.

India's 1st mobile laboratory

Defense Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated India's 1st Mobile Virology Research and Diagnostics Laboratory (MVRDL), "Mobile BSL-3 VRDL Lab" via video conference. The lab is courtesy of Defence Research and Development Organisation, Employees' State Insurance Corporation Hospital, Hyderabad and Private industry. Having the testing potential of over 1000 to 2000 samples on a daily basis, this mobile laboratory will speed up COVID-19 screening and R & D activities like virus culturing for drug screening, Convalescent plasma derived therapy, comprehensive immune profiling of COVID-19 patients towards vaccine development. The lab also has electrical controls, LAN (Local Area Network), Telephone cabling and CCTV (Closed-circuit television). Having the combination of a Bio-Safety Level (BSL)-3 and a BSL-2 lab essential equipment, the lab rings true to WHO and ICMR Bio-safety standards to meet international guidelines.

FCI Will Convert Surplus Rice To Ethanol

Food Corporation of India (FCI) received a green signal from the National Biofuel Coordination Committee (NBCC) for converting the available surplus rice to ethanol to utilize it in making alcohol-based hand-sanitizers as well as for the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme. NBCC approved this in a meeting presided by Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan referring National Policy on Biofuels (2018) under Para 5.3 that states that during an agriculture crop year when there is oversupply of food grains as anticipated by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, the policy will allow conversion of these surplus quantities of food grains to ethanol, based on the approval of NBCC. It is worth noting that as of March 10, 2020, a total of 58.49 million tonne (mt) of food grains were produced, which consisted of 30.97 mt of rice and 27.52 mt of wheat in the FCI godowns. The food grains stock was found higher than the requisite norm of maintaining a reserve of about 21 million tonnes as on April 1, 2020.

April 21 : Administrative Professionals Day

Nation celebrated Administrative Professionals Day, which is also dubbed as Secretaries day or Admin Day on April 21, 2020 to acknowledge the work of secretaries, receptionists, administrative assistants and other administrative support professionals. Harry F. Klemfuss of Young and Rubicam instituted National Professional Secretaries Week and National Secretary's Day in 1952 to highlight the significance of the secretarial position, to a company or business and to management and his goal was to encourage more women to become Secretaries. In context to International Administrative Professionals Day, the observation varies from country to country. The United States (US), Canada, Hong Kong and Malaysia celebrate this day annually on Wednesday of the last full week of April; New Zealand on the third Wednesday of April and Belgium, France, Netherlands on the third thursday of April.

The 'Chief Minister COVID-19 Yoddha Kalyan Yojana'

Madhya Pradesh Women and Child Development department's (WCD) Principal Secretary Anupam Rajan broke the news of introduction of the 'Chief Minister COVID-19 Yoddha Kalyan Yojana', which is meant to benefit the Anganwadi workers and Assistants of the state. Under the scheme, the state government will provide a special health insurance cover of Rs 50 lakhs to MP Anganwadi workers and assistants. One lakh Anganwadi workers, who are taking risks and going door-to-door survey in every district, providing nutritional food to the children amid Covid-19 pandemic will be beneficiaries of this scheme.

Hepatitis Medication for Coronavirus infection

Pharmaceutical company Zydus Cadila in conformation with Cuba and China stated that Pegylated Interferon alpha-2b used in treatment of Hepatitis is a potential cure for Coronavirus infection. Zydus Cadila has been manufacturing Pegylated Interferon alpha-2b under the brand name of PegiHep since 2011 for the treatment of Hepatitis B and C. The drug is one of the options to reduce the effect of coronavirus. The researchers illustrated around 10,000 fold reduction in virus titre in cells which were treated with interferon-alpha 48 hours earlier.

Section 115BAC of Income-tax Act, 1961

The Central Board of Direct Taxes issued a circular providing clarification with respect to option under section 115BAC of the Income-tax Act, 1961. It is the newly-inserted Section that provides that a person, being an individual or from an undivided family having income other than income from business or profession may opt to be taxed under the section along with his return of income to be furnished under sub-section (I) of section 139 of the Act for each year. Although the section offers a concessional rate, yet it is subject to the condition that the total income shall be computed without specified exemption or deduction, set off of loss and additional depreciation. The Central Board of Direct Taxes, under the exercise of its powers under section 119 of the Act, issued the clarification stating that an employee, having income other than the income under the head "profit and gains of business or profession" and intends to opt for the concessional rate under section 115BAC of the Act, may intimate the deductor of such intention for each previous year and the deductor, being the employer, shall then compute his total income and make TDS thereon in accordance with the provisions of section 115BAC of the Act. But in case, if the employee fails to make such intimation, then the employer shall make TDS without considering the provision of section 115BAC of the Act.

Introduction of Draft of Electricity Amendment Bill

The Ministry of Power introduced the fourth draft of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill since 2014 to settle the disputes between power generation companies (gencos) and power distribution companies (discoms). The first draft of the bill was introduced in 2014 in Lok Sabha by the Ministry mentioning the separate carriage and contend electricity distribution business. But it was lapsed after the dissolution of Lok Sabha. The second and third drafts were circulated in 2018 and 2019. Now the fourth draft of the amendment bill suggests establishment of an Electricity Contract Enforcement Authority (ECEA) with a power of civil court for the settlement of disputes. The proposed ECEA will have a power of judgment on the matters regarding the purchase or sale of power, performance of contracts between gencos and discoms. The purpose of this bill is to privatise discoms and ensure payments to the private generator and the proposed amendments in the acts will raise the electricity tariff.

It is worth knowing that currently, the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission and State Electricity Regulatory Commission settle the state level and interstate Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) disputes.

Ionospheric Electron Density Can Help In Communication & Navigation

Researchers of Indian Institute of Geomagnetism, Navi Mumbai have developed a global model to predict the ionospheric electron density with larger data coverage, which is presently a crucial need for communication and navigation. It is a new Artificial Neural Networks based global Ionospheric Model made by using long-term ionospheric observations to predict the ionospheric electron density and the peak parameters. As per observation, the Artificial Neural Networks replicate the processes in the human brain to solve problems regarding pattern recognition, classification, clustering, generalization, linear and nonlinear data fitting, and time series prediction.

Air Evacuation Pod

Indian Navy's Southern Command, Kochi has developed an Air Evacuation Pod (AEP) to airlift COVID-19 infected patients safely from remote areas in a fully sealed patient transfer capsule. Designed under guidance of Principal Medical officer of the naval air station, INS Garuda, Kochi, in consultation with specialists from the naval hospital Indian Naval Hospital Ship Sanjivani, the pod is made up of aluminium, nitrile rubber and perspex and weighs only 32 kg. It is worth registering here that the manufacturing cost of this pod was Rs 50,000 which is just 0.1 percent of cost of an imported equivalent (Rs 59 lakh).

Finding heavy metal in water is now easy

Researchers of the Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS), Bengaluru (Karnataka), have developed a portable compact solid-state sensor to detect the heavy metal ions like lead (Pb²⁺), mercury and cadmium in water up to 0.4 parts per billion (ppb). The film in this sensor is made of a composite material of Manganese Doped Zinc Sulfide Quantum Dots and Reduced Graphene Oxide (RGO) made on a glass substrate. The quantum dots employed in the film are water soluble and have the highest photoluminescence (~30%) quantum efficiency, that befits them for luminescence-based sensing. The moment the composites in the water sensor containing heavy metal ions (mercury, lead, cadmium, etc.) are exposed to the film, the emission from the film is extinguished within a few seconds, confirming the presence of heavy metal ions in the water.

Intangible Cultural Heritage of India

Union minister Prahlad Singh Patel launched the National list of intangible cultural heritage of India in New Delhi to create awareness about the various intangible cultural heritage sites from different states of India at national and international level and ensure their protection. This exercise is a part of the vision 2024 of the Culture Ministry and has been made in collaboration with Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA). The list has been classified into 5 categories viz. Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; Performing arts; Social practices, rituals and festive events ; Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe and Traditional craftsmanship. The complete list can be viewed at <https://www.indiaculture.nic.in/national-list-intangible-cultural-heritage-ich>

Sudha Murty's book "How the Onion Got Its Layers"

Indian engineering teacher, Kannada and English author, Sudha Murty's book "How the Onion Got Its Layers" was released in its e-book and audio form for young children on 20th April 2020. Published by Puffin, the book seeks answers to various questions related to the bulb like its many layers and why it brings tears to the eyes when cut. This is the second book of the Chapter series by Murty after "How the Sea Became Salty", which was the first one. The author has been honored with the R.K. Narayan Award for Literature (2006), the Padma Shri (2006) and the Attimabbe Award from the Government of Karnataka for excellence in Kannada literature (2011) previously. She has also worked in the capacity of the Chairperson of the Infosys Foundation and a member of the public health care initiatives of the Gates Foundation.

The Proposal of National Institute of Valuers

An eight member committee of experts headed by Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) Chairperson M S Sahoo has submitted a report on “valuation professionals” and proposed an institutional framework for valuers via establishment of National Institute of Valuers (NIV) and submitted a Draft Valuers Bill, 2020 for the same. The draft bill is now open for comments till May 14, 2020. It should be noted that a valuer like chartered accountant etc, is a professional who carries out inspections in order to help determine the current market value of property and/or land. The proposed NIV is expected to act as a statutory body to look into the development and the regulation of the valuation profession in India and registration and regulation of valuers, valuer institutes and valuation professional organisations (VPO).

The New Chief Justices for Bombay, Meghalaya & Orissa High courts

The Supreme Court Collegium led by Chief Justice of India Sharad Arvind Bobde has recommended the appointment of new Chief Justices for three High Courts. Calcutta High Court judge, Justice Dipankar Datta, has been appointed as Chief Justice of Bombay High Court in place of Bhushan Dharmadhikari, who is retiring on 27 April, 2020. The Allahabad High Court judge, Biswanath Somadder has been made Chief Justice of Meghalaya High Court in place of Mohammad Rafiq, who held this post from November 2019. The Meghalaya High Court judge Mohammad Rafiq has been appointed as Chief Justice of Orissa High Court in place of Sanju Panda.

Uttar Pradesh became the first state to geotag community kitchens

Uttar Pradesh became the first state in the country to geotag its 7,368 community kitchens and community shelters across 75 districts that produce 12 lakh food packets a day from onset of COVID-19 lockdown. The Uttar Pradesh State government has also tied up with Google to “Geo-map” for the location of all these establishments through the Google Maps app for ease of beneficiaries. Among 7,368 community kitchens, 668 are being run by NGOs, religious institutions and more than 2 crore food packets have been distributed in UP since March 25, 2020. The location of all shelter homes and community kitchens have been integrated with Google Maps and anyone can access them by searching with the keyword ‘community kitchen’, followed by the district’s name.

GBRC succeeded in decoding whole genome sequence of Coronavirus

Scientists of Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC) reported their success in decoding the complete genome of Coronavirus. According to Director of GBRC, Chaitanya Joshi the lab

has found three new mutations in the virus, which are different from the six mutations that have been found in the virus in China and other countries. The breakthrough will help in tracking the origin of the virus as well as development of vaccines and drugs in an ongoing fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The virus can mutate two times in a month's time for manifold reasons and the impact of the mutations is under study.

Book "Shuttling to the Top: The Story of P V Sindhu"

Amid Covid 19 sports journalist Krishnaswamy's book "Shuttling to the Top: The Story of P V Sindhu " got published. The book conveys the story of one of the finest badminton players of the world and the biography gives account of her life from the time when she lived in the colony of Secunderabad and travelled over 40 km every day by train to get to P Gopichand's academy. P V Sindhu has been a proud recipient of four World Championship medals besides those at Olympics, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games.

India lifted a ban on export of Paracetamol formulations

The Indian Government lifted the ban on the export of formulations made from Paracetamol amid COVID-19 outbreak. The restriction was imposed on the export of 26 pharma ingredients and medicines including paracetamol on 3rd March 2020. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) notified that the formulations made from Paracetamol including fixed-dose combinations will be made available for export with immediate effect. However, the restriction on export of Paracetamol Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) will be still intact. Paracetamol or acetaminophen is mainly used to treat fever and provide mild to moderate pain relief. This drug was introduced in 1877 and is sold under trade names viz. Tylenol and Panadol.

CBSE's first ever live fitness sessions

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) along with Fit India is conducting first-ever live fitness sessions for school students in the second phase of lockdown that started from 15th April 2020 morning 9:30 am. Students have been provided its access on Facebook and Instagram handles of Fit India Movement and CBSE. All these sessions have been made available on YouTube as well so that students can access it at their convenience. The live sessions involve all aspects of children's fitness from daily workouts to yoga, nutrition to emotional well-being. The sessions are featuring distinguished fitness experts like Aliya Imran, nutritionist Puja Makhija, emotional wellness expert Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, yoga professional Heena Bhimani and several others. The CBSE and Fit India have taken this unique initiative to ensure fitness of all school children.

Tata Power became Edison Awardee 2020

India's first, energy & resource conservation club, Tata Power company limited's 'Club Enerji #Switchoff2SwitchOn' campaign won silver in the Edison Award 2020 under Social innovation's subcategory, social energy solution. 'Club Enerji' is a 12-year old sustainability initiative which targets school children. #Switchoff2SwitchOn' is a 360 degree campaign that has children as brand ambassadors to educate & engage the community to decrease carbon footprint and construct a sustainable future. Around 533 schools of India are participating in this campaign and saving more than 29.8 million units of power since its inception in 2007.

The Post Merger Appointments

Recently Union Bank of India appointed Andhra Bank's Managing Director (MD) J Packirisamy as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) and Canara Bank appointed Syndicate Bank's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mrutyunjay Mahapatra as its OSD. Packirisamy will serve the Union Bank of India till the age of his retirement in February 2021 and Mahapatra will also hold this new post in Canara Bank till the age of his retirement. It is worth recalling here that Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank have merged with Union Bank of India, while Syndicate Bank merged with Canara Bank from April 1, 2020.

The Ongoing Battle Against Covid 19

Recently researchers at National Institute of Technology-Karnataka developed a cost-effective disinfectant chamber called 'ZERO-COV' to sanitize personal protective equipment (PPE) tools, surgical masks, vegetables, packaged food items, currency notes and other day-to-day items within 15 minutes. Equipped with three UV- C lamps each consuming 11 watts of power, the chamber has been built on an old unused refrigerator and consumes 254 nanometres (nm) wavelength of C-type UV(Ultraviolet) radiation that can destruct or inactivate all surface contamination of bacteria and viruses up to 99.9 %, including coronavirus. Apart from this, the government has also introduced 'CovidGyan' a multi-institutional, multi-lingual science communication initiative to aggregate the collection of resources, which are generated by public supported research institutions in India and associated programs in response to the outbreak of COVID-19. It will play a 'go-to' repository of information regarding COVID-19. It is user-friendly authentic, reliable, trustworthy and can be accessed via <https://covid-gyan.in/>

Call centre for agri logistics

The Agriculture Ministry has recently established a call centre to solve the difficulties in agri logistics, specifically the inter- State movement of perishable vegetables and fruits as well as agri

inputs such as seeds, pesticides and fertilisers. This All India Agri Transport Call Centre will coordinate movement of produce and agri inputs, and will be accessible at 1800-180-4200 and 14488 from any mobile or landline phone. It is meant to help stakeholders including truck drivers, traders, retailers and transporters who are facing difficulties in inter-State movement of commodities.

Bank credit growth decelerated to 6.14% in FY20

According to the latest Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, Bank credit growth has shown deceleration of 6.14% in the fiscal ended March 31, 2020 because of lower demand and risk aversion among banks. This deceleration is said to be five-decade low. Bank advances growth in FY20 was found the slowest since March 1962. On March 27, 2020, advances stood at Rs 103.71 lakh crore in comparison to Rs 97.71 lakh crore on March 29, 2019. In stark contrast bank deposits grew by 7.93% to Rs 135.71 lakh crore as against Rs 125.73 lakh crore in 2019. The reported economic growth of India is 5.6% in the first quarter of the current fiscal i.e. FY 20-21.

Emerald will acquire 9.93% stake in Apollo Tyres

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has given its approval to Emerald Sage Investment Limited to purchase 9.93% stake in Apollo Tyres Limited (Apollo). Emerald is an investment company incorporated under the laws of Mauritius and its partners are private equity funds managed by Warburg Pincus LLC, which manages for some private equity funds. It is worth knowing here that the portfolio companies that own these private equity funds are functional in a variety of sectors like energy, financial services, health and consumer, industrial and commercial services, technology, media and telecommunications. Apollo manufactures and sells automotive tyres, its product portfolio includes tyres of passenger car, sports utility vehicle, multi utility vehicle, light trucks, etc. and retreading material.

World Bank reported Indian economy growth at 1.5-2.8%

According to the latest “South Asia Economic Focus: The cursed blessing of public banks report” of the World Bank for the FY 2020-2021 (started from April 1, 2020) is likely to be India's worst growth performer fiscal year since 1991 due to COVID-19 impact. For 2020-21, Indian economy is likely to grow 1.5% to 2.8% which is lower than the 5.4 to 4.1% estimate of October 2019. Besides this, the report states that on the South Asian front, the economy is growing by 1.8 to 2.8% in FY 20-2, which is a sharp growth deceleration from the 6.3% which the World Bank predicted six months ago. This is said to be the region’s worst performance in the last 40 years.

India : The Top Hydroxychloroquine Producer & Exporter

Amid COVID-19 pandemic, India emerged as the largest producer and exporter of Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) with 70% of annual global production according to the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA). Currently, the top pharma companies viz. Ipca Laboratories Ltd, ZydusCadila and Wallace Pharmaceuticals Ltd are collectively producing 40 tonnes, or 20 crore tablets of 200 mg each, of HCQ every month. Between April 2019 and January 2020, India shipped HCQ Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) worth \$1.22 billion. Simultaneously, the exports of formulations made from HCQ stood at \$5.50 billion. Originally hydroxychloroquine is an anti-malarial drug, which is presently being used for prevention and not as a cure of coronavirus for health workers across the globe. It is worth knowing here that since malaria is virtually non-existent in developed nations like the USA, this drug is not manufactured in the developed nations.

Goa Integrated Allopathy & Ayurveda

The government of Goa proposed integration of Allopathy and Ayurveda in war against COVID-19 pandemic. According to Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant although Ayurveda cannot cure COVID-19, yet it will certainly increase patients' immunity. Further, the treatment will be administered in consultation with Ayurvedic practitioner doctors who are dealing with COVID-19 patients. With this, Goa has become the first Indian state to implement joint Allopathic and Ayurvedic treatment for Covid 19 patients and the quarantined population.

The Indian Recipients of the Guggenheim fellowships 2020

Recently four Indians viz. Pradeep Sharma (mechanical engineer at the University of Houston), Kavita Ramanan (professor of Applied Mathematics at Brown University), Dilip Da Cunha (architect, planner and teacher at Harvard University and Columbia University) and Mukul Sharma (professor of Earth Sciences at Dartmouth College) have been honored with the Guggenheim fellowships 2020 for their exceptional capacity for productive scholarship and exceptional creative ability in their respective fields. Instituted in 1925 by former United States Senator and Mrs. Simon Guggenheim, in the memory of 17 year old John Simon Guggenheim, the award recognizes artists, writers, scholars and scientific researchers, who are chosen based on their previous accomplishments and what foundation officials describe as their "exceptional promise".

Another chance for 9th & 11th failures

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in its recent announcement said that all the failed students of class ninth and eleventh will be provided an opportunity to reappear in school based online, offline or innovative tests. CBSE extended this opportunity as one time measure in the

extraordinary situation of covid-19 pandemic for Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, State/UT government schools, private schools, schools located in India and abroad, etc. Initially the Board decided to promote Class 9 and 11 students on the basis of internal assessments of schools including projects, periodic tests, term exams, etc. conducted so far. But then it found that many of its affiliated schools completed their examination, evaluation and promotion process for students who were studying in grades 9 and 11 in the 2019-20 academic session. The latest decision of the Board read : “In view of the requests of the parents and students, all the failed students of 9th and 11th will be provided an opportunity to appear in a school based test again....Opportunity will be extended to students irrespective of whether their examinations have been completed and the exam results have been released or their exams have not been completed. This facility is to be extended irrespective of number of subjects and attempts.....Before holding the test, the schools will give sufficient time to the students to prepare.”

Reduction in TDS and TCS rates by 25 %

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made a major announcement that Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) and Tax Collected at Source (TCS) have been reduced by 25% till 31st March 2021. This decision is likely to increase cash flow of more than 50 thousand crore rupees benefitting common people. Besides this, the date for filing Income Tax return for the last financial year has also been extended till 30th November 2020 and the last date for filing tax audits has been extended from 30th September to 31st October 2020 .Apart from this, announcement of reduction of statutory provident fund contribution by both employers and employees to 10% of basic wages from the existing 12% for the next three months has also been made. The decision has been taken to facilitate more take-home salary for employees and give a sigh of relief to employers in payment of PF dues, resulting in a liquidity ease of 6,750 crore rupees.The decision is applicable on all the establishments covered under the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). Besides this, the Finance Minister has also extended another scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP) for three months till August 2020.

CHAMPIONS portal of MSME

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, MSME Ministry has launched CHAMPIONS portal, www.Champions.gov.in, which is a technology driven control room-cum-management information system. The CHAMPIONS is an acronym for ‘Creation and Harmonious Application of Modern Processes for Increasing the Output and National Strength’. The system is well equipped with Artificial Intelligence, Data Analytics and Machine Learning and fully integrated on a real time basis with Government of India's main grievances portal CPGRAMS and MSME

Ministry's web based mechanisms. It is meant to assist Indian MSMEs in becoming national and global champions. The portal will transform the smaller units into bigger ones via solving their grievances, encouraging, supporting, helping and handholding.

The 18th webinar 'Odisha-India's Best kept secret'

The Ministry of Tourism's Dekho Apna Desh webinar series titled, 'Odisha-India's Best kept secret' took the participants on a virtual journey into Odisha to create awareness and promote various tourism destinations including the lesser known destinations and lesser known facets of popular destinations. It covered Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary, Udaipur Beach , Mangalajodi - unique wetland, Satpada, Chilika lake known having unique Irrawaddy dolphin (*Orcaella brevirostris*), Simlipal National Park , Debrigarh National Park -Ecotourism site at Hirakud reservoir, waterfall, Silent Valley - Gorge, Daringbadi nature Camp, Mahanadi Gorge, Bhetnoi, Beach Locations, Tribal heritage , arts and crafts, textiles, dance forms , festivals and cuisines.

SAI's Panel On Phased Resumption of Training

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) constituted a six-member committee to prepare a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for phased resumption of training across sporting disciplines at all the centers once the coronavirus-forced national lockdown gets over. SAI secretary Rohit Bharadwaj is head of this panel and CEO, Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) Rajesh Rajagopalan, Executive Director (Operations) SS Roy, SS Sarla, Col BK Nayak and Assistant Director TOPS Sachin K are its members. The panel has been assigned the task of drafting a SOP, laying protocols and preventive measures to be observed by all stakeholders, trainees, coaches, technical and non-technical support staff, National Sports Federations, administrators, mess, hostel staff and visitors once training resumes. Besides this, a separate committee has been formed to prepare a SOP for swimming, as the sport involves different health risks as compared to other sports.

Historian Hari Shankar Vasudevan passed away

Eminent historian Hari Shankar Vasudevan died of coronavirus infection in Kolkata at 68. He started his career as the UGC Emeritus Professor in the Department of History and China Centre from 1999 at Calcutta University. He was best known for his works in the Russian and Central Asian history. He worked in the capacity of the Director of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. He was the Chairman of Syllabus Committees and Textbook Development Committees for Social Science, NCERT from 2005 to 2015. He authored books like Shadow of Substance: Indo-Russian Trade and Military-Technical Cooperation and Footsteps of Afanasii Nikitin: Travels Through Eurasia and India in the Early 21st Century.

Vadhan's "Fear of God"

Bommadevara Sai Chandravadhan under the Pen Name, Vadhan released his third book "Fear of God " recently. Published by TreeShade publications, the novel presents law, corruption, vigilantism and courtroom drama that follow the three central characters who are looking to achieve the same end via different means. The story portrays an anti-hero taking law into his hands to enforce law through a fiery & extreme form of judicial system. It is all about right and wrong, religion, corruption, patriotism and the army. Prior to this, his second book was 'Agniputr: When Agni First Spoke' and 'Shatru' was his first book.

Three new species of fishes : 'Dawkinsia'

Scientists from the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) based in Mumbai (Maharashtra), the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) and the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune (Maharashtra), have together discovered a three new fish species under the genus 'Dawkinsia' viz. *Dawkinsia apsara* (found in Karnataka's Sita and Sowparnika rivers), *Dawkinsia austellus* (Muvattupuzha river in Kerala), *Dawkinsia crassa* (Netravati river of Coastal Karnataka). The discovery is significant as it will help clear taxonomic confusions regarding the small cyprinids of the genus *Dawkinsia*, to stabilise the specification of *Dawkinsia assimilis* & *Dawkinsia lepida* (the species of filament barbs described by British ichthyologists in the 1800s).

The latest of UGC

University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued guidelines on Examinations and Academic Calendar in view of COVID-19 pandemic. It has requested Universities to set up a cell for handling grievances of the students regarding examinations and other academic activities amid covid-19 crisis. It has established a dedicated Help Line Number: 011-23236374 and has created an email address, covid19help.ugc@gmail.com for entertaining queries. Besides this, students can also lodge their grievances on the existing Online Students Grievance Redressal Portal of UGC. In addition to these, UGC has also constituted a Task Force to monitor concerns and grievances of students, teachers and institutions and redress them accordingly. It has asked all the universities and colleges to upload a copy of the public notice on their official websites and share it with the teaching and student community through e-mail and other digital media.

Human Monoclonal Antibodies "hmAbs" Trial Of CSIR

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) under its New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI) developed human monoclonal antibodies (hmAbs)

that are meant to neutralise COVID-19 virus in patients. The project is generating hmAbs from patients that are recovering from illness and after this hmAbs clones will be generated. These clones will neutralize the mutated virus. In context to clones it is worth knowing that monoclonal antibodies are those recovered from a single recovered cell and Israel was the first country to develop monoclonal antibodies. So far there were only polyclonal antibodies recovered from multiple recovered cells. It is also worth remembering here that NMITLI is the largest Public-private Partnership model of Research and Development programme in the country that catalyses innovation and technological developments. Fuel cells based on high temperature proton exchange membrane technology was the recent accomplishment of the NMITLI programme.

NIT Tiruchirappalli has cutting edge Supercomputer

The Union Ministry of Science and Technology sanctioned a cutting edge Supercomputer worth Rs 17 crores to National Institute of Technology, (NIT) Tiruchirappalli. With this, the premier engineering institute has become a part of the National SuperComputing Mission (NSM), of the Government of India. The NSM is meant to empower engineering and technology institutions with high-performance computing capabilities to devise solutions for intensive and multi layered problems. The granted supercomputer will be installed at the NIT by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Pune, at an additional cost of about Rs 2 crores. NIT Trichy has received the privilege of becoming a part of the Union Human Resources Development ministry's Prime Minister's Research Fellow (PMRF) scheme and the coveted Supercomputer is expected to increase the academic and research quality according to well placed sources.

Narinder Batra will continue the role of FIH President

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) extended the terms of its president Narinder Dhruv Batra & the Executive Board(EB) members until the 47th FIH Congress in May 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These EB members are Danae Andrada(Uruguayan), Hazel Kennedy (Zambia), Erik Cornelissen (Netherlands) and Tayyab Ikram (Macao) Their tenures were expiring in October 2020. The decision is based on Article 12.1 of the FIH Statutes, which involves cases of force majeure. It is worth registering here that Hockey National Associations and Continental Federations from across the globe aggregate every 2 years to raise the global status and popularity of hockey, making it a global game that inspires the next generation.

National Technology Day : 11th May

National Technology Day was celebrated on 11th May 2020 to reboot the economy through Science and Technology. The day commemorated two big events viz. successful test of the Shakti-

A nuclear missile in Indian Army's Pokhran test range, Rajasthan, that was conducted on May 11, 1998 headed by Late President Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and the second was the flight of the first indigenous aircraft Hansa-3 developed by the National aerospace laboratories. On this occasion, Scientists, Technocrats, Diplomats, WHO officials and dignitaries from national and international Industry, Research Institutions and Academic Institutions discussed a comprehensive action plan to devise technological solutions against Covid-19 that involves medical technologies and allied advanced technologies. The day applauded achievements of innovations and technological excellence in the country. This day was instituted by the former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Abolition of 9,304 posts in Military Engineering Service

Minister of Defence Rajnath Singh on the recommendation of the Committee of Experts (CoE), headed by Lt General DB Shekatkar, approved the proposal of abolition of 9,304 posts in Military Engineering Service (MES) out of the total 13,157 vacancies of the Basic and Industrial staff. The move will make MES an effective organisation with a leaner workforce so that complex issues can be handled in an efficient economical manner. In addition to this, there will be an increased combat capability and over the next five years there will be savings of up to Rs 25,000 crore in defence expenditure. The point to remember here is that an 11-member Shekatkar Committee was formed by late Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar that has made nearly 99 recommendations so far.

Cooperative banks brought under SARFAESI Act, 2002

A five judge Constitution Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra of the Supreme Court gave verdict that co-operative banks established under a State law or multi-State level societies come under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act of 2002. The Act is about prescription of a procedure for faster recovery of dues that permits secured creditors to take possession of the assets of a borrower who fails to pay dues within 60 days of demanding repayment. It enables banks to reduce their non-performing assets by adopting measures for recovery or reconstruction. In this way the Act enables cooperatives to get edge over defaults on the negotiation table with defaulters. Further, the apex court allowed Parliament to prescribe a recovery process for cooperative banks.

Coir Board & IIT Madras will establish Centre of Excellence

Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) informed about a recently inked Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Coir Board and Indian Institute of Technology Madras for setting up a Centre of Excellence (CoE) to boost the use of Coir applications

(exclusively or in combination with other natural fibres). Under this agreement, the Coir Board will also provide Rs 5 crores in financial assistance initially for two years for establishment and operation of the Centre of Excellence. The proposed CoE is meant to support the development of relevant technology and improve production and processing standards through specific projects and monitor research projects. It will also support the creation of intellectual property rights and technology transfer. India's coir and coir products export during the FY 2020 was worth Rs 2,272 crore and in this Kerala alone accounted for 80-90 per cent of the exports.

India has more internet users in rural areas than urban

According to 'Digital in India' report of the Internet & Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) & Nielsen, our country for the first time has more internet users in rural areas than urban. Rural India had 227 million active internet users, which was 10% more than urban India that had about 205 million users, as of November 2019. India has exceeded another milestone with 504 million active Internet users aged 5 years old or above, which is 53 million more than 451 million in March 2019, which made it the second-largest internet user after China, which has about 850 million users. The United States has about 280-300 million users.

Maharashtra government permitted 12- hour shift for factories

The Maharashtra government allowed the 12-hour shift for workers in factories across the state from 6th May 2020 to 30th June 2020 as the factories are facing the labour shortage as migrant workers headed back to their homes. Shrikant Pulkundwar, Deputy Secretary (labour) in response to the request received by two industries issued the order allowing for a 12-hour with certain conditions. There are 36,623 registered factories in the state with 28.54 lakh workers. Out of them, 5,458 factories have been operating with 2.41 lakh labourers as reported on May 6. The factories will be paying double the regular wages to the labourers who will be working additional four-hour shifts.

The Vizag Gas Tragedy

Styrene Gas ($C_6H_5CH=CH_2$) was leaked from the LG Polymers Plant at Gopalapatnam on the outskirts of Visakhapatnam on 7th May i.e. Thursday at 2 AM when the workers were preparing for the reopening of the plant. The poisonous gas had spread across a radius of 3 km affecting at least 5 villages and more than 3000 people. According to the latest update this gas leakage in the vicinity of RR Venkatapuram has so far claimed 11 lives in Andhra Pradesh. Dubbed as ethylbenzene, vinylbenzene, and phenylethene, Styrene gas is a by-product of Styrene, which is used as raw material in electric fan blades, cups and cutlery as well as containers in which cosmetic

products are stored. Styrene gas is a poisonous colourless and odourless compound that causes upper respiratory irritation and burning chest sensation, chest congestion, muscular weakness, abrupt paralysis, full respiratory paralysis and death from oxygen deprivation. The Centre has also decided to send a special team of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) from Pune. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy announced Rs 1 crore compensation to the kin of the dead. The government also offered jobs to people who are victims of the gas leak and the kin of the family of the dead.

Birth Anniversary of Maharana Pratap Singh I

Birth Anniversary of the 13th king of Mewar, Maharana Pratap Singh was celebrated on 9th May 2020. He was popularly known as “Maharana” and was born on May 9, 1540. He fought the Battle of Haldighati, which happened as the “Siege of Chittorgarh” led to the loss of the fertile eastern belt to the Mughals in 1568. Akbar wanted to set up a secure route to Gujarat via Mewar. Therefore, he sent a number of envoys to King Rana to become a vassal just like the other Rajputs. But Rana denied it. This battle was fought on 18 June 1576 between Maharana and the forces of Akbar. Rana lost the battle and escaped only to fight once again against the Mughals after six years and won the battle in 1582. After this defeat, Akbar stopped his military campaigns against Mewar. Rana recaptured Udaipur, Gogunda and Kumbhalgarh.

Saurabh Lodha: Young Career Awardee 2020

IIT-Bombay Professor Saurabh Lodha became a proud recipient of Young Career Award 2020 in Nano Science and Technology for his contribution to the development of two dimensional Van der Waals material based logic transistor technologies beyond silicon and nanoelectronic. After having worked with one of the world’s largest semiconductor equipment manufacturers, Applied Materials Inc, he developed new materials and processes to improve the thermal stability and reliability of the thin (1-2 nm) gate dielectric of the transistor and lower the resistance of metal contacts to the transistor and to obtain electrical impurities at a higher level and decrease the failure rate. He succeeded in discovering the flat two dimensional materials analogous to graphene.

The Operation “Samudra Setu” has begun

The Centre government has initiated India’s biggest evacuation plan, ‘Vande Bharat Mission’ to bring back its citizens stranded in foreign countries on the pretext of Covid-19 pandemic. Indian Navy launched Operation “Samudra Setu” (Sea Bridge) on 8th May 2020 to bring back 1000 Indians from Maldives via two India Naval Ships (INS) viz. Jalashwa and Magar for the first phase of the evacuation operation. The amphibious warfare ship, INS Jalashwa (meaning Hippopotamus

in Sanskrit) was also known as USS Trenton as it was bought from the United States in 2006 and was renamed as INS Jalashwa after the purchase. INS Magar is the lead ship of Magar-class amphibious warfare vessels of the Indian Navy capable of carrying around 500 troops.

Under the multi-agency operation 'Vande Bharat Mission' Indians from the Gulf, countries in the neighbourhood as well as from the United States, the United Kingdom and Singapore will be brought back in the country. In the second phase two other ships will be sent to the United Arab Emirates.

NITI Aayog's Surakshit Dada-Dadi & Nana-Nani Abhiyan

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog in collaboration with Piramal Foundation (the philanthropic arm of the Piramal Group) launched virtually a 'Surakshit Dada-Dadi & Nana-Nani Abhiyan' campaign to ensure well being of senior citizens amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign creates awareness about different aspects of senior citizens' health and lifestyle including preventive measures and requisite behavioural changes in view of the devastating pandemic. The campaign will cover 2.9 million senior citizens in 25 Aspirational Districts having poor socio-economic indicators, across Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan & Uttar Pradesh.

Development of Nanomedicine for COVID-19

The Scientists of S. N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences (SNBNCBS), Kolkata reported development of a safe and economic nanomedicine to treat coronavirus infection and many diseases by altering oxidative stress in the body. The medicine has nanoparticles extracted from magnesium salt with citrus extract from citrus fruits like lemon. It alters the reactive oxygen species (ROS) in the human body based on the situation to cure the disease. It is worth learning here that the immune system of humans generates ROS or generative oxidative stress to kill foreign bodies like viruses, bacterias and infected cells.

African Swine Flu in Assam

The government of Assam reported the death of more than 2,500 pigs in 306 villages due to African Swine Flu in the state. The National Institute of High-Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) of Bhopal confirmed the occurrence of African Swine Flu. A double-stranded DNA virus is a causative agent of African Swine fever that infects the pigs. According to the 2019 census, the pig population in Assam was 21 lakhs. It is worth noting here that although the central government has passed an order to cull i.e. to reduce the pig population by selective slaughter, yet the state government is looking for alternative measures to save the pigs before culling them under the

Wildlife (Protection) Act and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. It is worth noting here that when an animal species is declared 'vermin' i.e. harmful then the animal can be culled freely as in that circumstance, the protection over the animal under the Wildlife Protection Act is removed.

The Bamboo Conclave

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh presided over the Bamboo Conclave, which was conducted via video conferencing. The aim of the conference was to highlight the importance and promote production of Bamboo. Bamboo is likely to provide an opportunity for India to emerge as an economic power in the post-COVID-19 period. The North-Eastern region is fully dedicated to development of the Bamboo sector and is looking for Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in this sector. Government launched the National Bamboo Mission in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Odisha, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Even during the lockdown period the Ministry of Home Affairs allowed the functioning of bamboo related activities like planting, process etc. from April 16, 2020, onwards. Presently, the total requirement of "Agarbatti" in India is about 2,30,000 per annum and the market value of it is up to Rs 5000 crore. India has been importing it from countries like China and Vietnam. Bamboo can be processed into multiple products like bio-diesel and green fuel, wooden lumbers and plywood, and has potential of creating employment opportunities in multiple sectors. The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), the Union Ministry of Agriculture and stakeholders from different sectors were the participants of this conclave.

DRDO's Ultra Violet Disinfection Tower

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed an Ultra Violet Disinfection Tower for rapid and chemical-free disinfection of high infection-prone areas. Laser Science and Technology Centre has designed and developed equipment named UV blaster, which is an Ultraviolet based area sanitiser. Equipped with six lamps each with 43 watts of UV-C power, the equipment is well suited for a room of about 12 x 12 feet dimension with a disinfection time of about 10 minutes and 30 minutes for a 400 square feet area. It has been designed for high tech surfaces like electronic equipment, computers and other gadgets in laboratories and offices, areas with large flow of people like airports, shopping malls, metros, hotels, factories and offices.

The Case Of Burial Of Covid-19 Victims

The Supreme Court has refused to interfere with the April 27 verdict of the Bombay High Court that directed the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to remove locks put by some locals on the gates of three connected cemeteries at Bandra (West) and to make the grounds available for burial of Covid-19 victims. The flashback reveals that the burial grounds in Mumbai are located in densely-populated localities and burial of COVID victims can spread infection in the adjoining areas. Viewing this, BMC decided to cremate bodies of all Covid-19 patients at the nearest crematorium instead of authorized burial grounds, irrespective of their religion on March 30, 2020. Pratap Nimbalkar, representative of the Navpada Masjid and the Santacruz Golibar Dargah Trust, which manage the private Muslim cemeteries, had pointed out that on April 13, some locals supporting the BMC's decision created trouble in burial of a 63-year-old Muslim in cemetery, who died from the Covid-19 infection. Police officers also failed to pacify the locals and eventually the body was buried elsewhere. He further added that the trust had taken all precautions and identified isolated spots for the burial of Covid-19 patients, but despite that, the locals were found non-cooperative. So he urged the Bombay High Court to direct the BMC to reopen the burial ground. Over this, Justice Colabawalla of Bombay High Court directed the civic body to reopen the cemetery on April 9. But as this verdict ran against the BMC's decision of cremating bodies at the nearest crematorium, therefore a petition was filed for the same asking the SC to prevent the burial of Covid-19 victims at the three Muslim cemeteries.

Professor Shobana Narasimhan : The New International Member Of American Academy Of Arts and Science

Professor Shobhana Narasimha, head of the Computational Nanoscience group from the Theoretical Science Unit (TSU), Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), has been elected as an International Honorary Member to the American Academy of Arts and Science. The elected professor is a fellow of National Academy of Sciences, India, who worked on the rational design of nanomaterials, examining how the lowering of dimensionality and reduction of size affect material properties in JNCASR, which is an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India. She promotes the women in STEM in India and abroad and organizes Career Development Workshops for Women in Physics since 2013 at the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), Trieste, Italy and ICTP-EAIFR, Kigali, Rwanda. She was honoured with the Stree Shakti Samman Science Award in 2010 and the Kalpana Chawla Women Scientist Award of the Government of Karnataka in 2010.

The New Dates of JEE & NEET Exams

Human Resources Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank announced fresh dates for various exams on 5th May 2020. As per the announcement, the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Mains (April) will be held in July from 18th to 23rd July 2020. **JEE-Advanced will be held on 23rd of August 2020** The Minister declared 26th July 2020 as the exam date of National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET). The decision on CBSE Class 10th and 12th board exams is still pending. He has asked students to continue preparation for various exams via the official website of the National Testing Agency, Swayamprabha DTH channel, IIT PAL of SWAYAMPURABHA, DIKSHA, E pathshala, National Digital Library, SWAYAM, e-PG Pathshala, Shodhganga, e-ShodhSindhu, e-Yantra, Spoken Tutorial and Virtual Labs.

Detection of Covid 19 via X-ray

IIT-Roorkee professor of Civil Engineering Department, Kamal Jain developed a software to detect COVID-19 within 5 seconds using X-ray scan. The doctors just need to upload the pictures of an individual's X-ray, in the software and the software will not only classify whether the patient has any sign of pneumonia but will also tell whether it is due to COVID-19 or other bacteria and will also measure the severity of the infection. As per this innovation, pneumonia caused by COVID-19 is severe than other bacteria-caused pneumonia. In pneumonia caused by COVID-19, the lungs get completely affected than smaller portions of lungs in other cases. Further, the software will analyse bilateral opacity, the pattern of fluid build-up in the lungs & nature of clump or clot if any. For this innovation, Professor Jain first developed an artificial intelligence-based database after analysing more than 60,000 x-rays, including those of COVID-19, pneumonia and tuberculosis patients to differentiate between the kind of chest congestion suffered in the 3 ailments and he also analysed the Chest x-ray database of the United States (US) National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical Center. He developed this within 40 days to reduce testing cost and the risk of exposure to healthcare professionals.

Fee reimbursement scheme, Jagananna Vidya Deevena

The State government of Andhra Pradesh launched a fee reimbursement scheme for students, Jagananna Vidya Deevena with an outlay of Rs 4,000 crore to provide full fees reimbursement to about 14 lakh college students, including those in professional courses. In addition to this, the government cleared Rs. 1,880 Crore pending dues of the previous government. It is worth registering here that none of the previous governments have reimbursed the fee arrears at such a huge scale to make education accessible to the poor and the needy in the state acknowledging education as the real asset of the students. The scheme is ready to support higher education aspirants in the state.

New Code to decode magnetosphere of the earth

Researchers of Indian Institute of Geomagnetism have developed one-dimensional fluid simulation code to study electric field structure in the magnetosphere of the earth. The study will help to plan the future space missions and will also lead to control fusion experiments to cater the ever-expanding energy demands of humanity. It is worth knowing that the sun is the major source that deposits plasma around the earth via its solar wind, which creates interplanetary magnetic field that is carried by the solar magnetic field. And the interaction of the earth's magnetic field and the interplanetary magnetic field creates the magnetosphere of the earth.

Use Of Microwave As Sterilizer To Disintegrate Covid-19

The Defence Institute of Advanced Technology, deemed university operating under Defence Research and Development Organization has designed microwave sterilizer, "ATULYA" to disintegrate COVID-19. The 3 kg innovation employs differential heating to disintegrate the virus in the range of 56 degree Celsius to 60 degree Celsius. The time of sterilization varies according to the size of the object. This cost-effective device can be run in fixed and portable installations as well. It is worth understanding here that sterilization is the process by which different forms of life, especially microorganisms viz. fungi, virus, bacteria, spores and other Eukaryotic organisms like Plasmodium are eliminated, killed, removed or deactivated. It differs from sanitization, pasteurization and disinfection. Sterilization involves dry heat, pressure, gas vapour, ultraviolet radiation, chlorine dioxide gas, flaming, incineration, tyndallization, glass bead sterilizers and chemical sterilization via ethylene oxide or nitrogen dioxide or ozone, formaldehyde, hydrogen peroxide.

Biennial Elections Of Maharashtra Legislative Council

The Election Commission of India announced that it will conduct biennial election for 9 vacant seats for the members of Legislative Council of the Maharashtra State Legislature under Article 324 to end the current uncertainty in the state. This Article gives authority of conducting parliamentary and state legislature elections to the Election Commission of India, which has Chief Election Commissioner and other commissioners (in case of need) that may be appointed by the President from time to time citing the requirement. It is worth knowing here that the Legislative Council is the upper house in a state legislature and every member of the Legislative Council serves for 6 years. The terms of one-third of the state Legislative Council members expire every two years and at present Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray is not a member of either house of the State Legislature Council. As per sources, elections will take place before the deadline of May 27 for Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to get elected as the member of the Legislative Council.

Demise of Legendary footballer Chuni Goswami

Legendary footballer Chuni Goswami died of prolonged illness at the age of 82 in Kolkata. He was the captain of the gold medal-winning Indian football team of Jakarta Asiad which took place in 1962. He was well acknowledged with prestigious awards like Arjun, Padmasree, Mohun Bagan Ratna (2005), Banga Bibhushan of West Bengal (2013) and many other awards for his outstanding contributions in the field of Sports. He was captain of Bengal Ranji Cricket team as well as Sheriff of Kolkata.

TS Tirumurti: India's Permanent Representative to UN

On April 29, 2020, 1985 batch IFS officer, TS Tirumurti was appointed as India's next Ambassador or Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Presently, he is working in the capacity of the Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. He will be taking the place of Sayyad Akbaruddin, who will retire shortly. Besides him, India has announced the next ambassadors for Slovenia and Austria. Senior diplomat Namrata S Kumar is now India's next ambassador to Slovenia and Jaideep Mazumdar is the country's next envoy to Austria.

IMD released the list of 169 names for upcoming tropical cyclones

An agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India, India Meteorological Department (IMD), has put out a detailed list of 169 names of upcoming tropical cyclones that are likely to hit the north Indian Ocean (NIO) including the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. The list has the names of 13 cyclones each for the 13 member nations viz. Bangladesh, India, Iran, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the UAE and Yemen of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) or United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), totalling to 169. Among them, Gati, Tej, Murasu, Aag, Vyom, Jhar, Probaho, Neer, Prabhanjan, Ghurni, Ambud, Jaladhi and Vega are the cyclones, which are likely to hit India. The list will help in the warning system.

Glenmark Pharma received a green signal for Favipiravir tablets

Glenmark Pharma won Drug Controller General of India (DCGI)'s approval for conducting clinical trials of Favipiravir tablets and with this it became the first pharma company of India to do so. Glenmark Pharmaceuticals had internally developed the Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) and the formulations for this product. The Favipiravir antiviral drug sold under the brand name Avigan is used against influenza viruses and has been approved in Japan for the treatment of novel influenza virus infections. Some nations are using this drug against coronavirus infection. So far Fujifilm has reached phase 3 trial on this drug and has also increased its production. Besides this, Strides Pharma has already begun shipping the drug to countries in the Gulf region.

CWMA is now under Jal Shakti Ministry

The Central government has fetched the Cauvery Water Management Authority(CWMA) under the Jal Shakti Ministry, which was earlier under the aegis of Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. Cauvery Water Management Jal Shakti Ministry. Although the move will have no impact on the independent nature of the functioning of the authority, yet it will need to report to the Ministry of Jal Shakti now. It is worth recalling here that the Central government had constituted the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal on June 2, 1990 to dissolve the dispute regarding the Inter-State river Cauvery and the river valley among the States of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Union territory of Puducherry. In June 2018, the government had constituted the 'Cauvery Water Management Authority' and the 'Cauvery Water Regulation Committee' to give weight to the decision of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal as modified by the Court on 16th February 2018

Record fertilizer sales during the lockdown period

Government informed that during 1st to 22nd April 2020, the sale of fertilizers to farmers community was more than 10 lakh tonnes which is 32 % higher than the last year of sale during the same period. While dealers purchased over 15 lakh tonnes fertilizers which is 46% higher than last year of sale during the same period. It became possible via efforts of the Department of Fertilizers, Railways, States and Ports production and supply of fertilizers in the country.

EPFO settled about 13 lakhs claims under PMGKY

Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) has settled about 13 lakhs claims, including more than 7 lakh COVID-19 claims under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana package (PMGKY). More than four thousand 684 crore rupees which includes more than two thousand crore rupees COVID claims under PMGKY package have been disbursed. More than 875 crore rupees have been disbursed to over 79 thousand PF Members as an advance for COVID-19. Besides these, Non-refundable withdrawal to the extent of the basic wages and dearness allowances for three months or up to 75% of the amount standing to member's credit in the EPF account, whichever is less, is provided.

Development of Alzheimer Inhibitor

Jawaharlal Nehru Centre of Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) developed Alzheimer Inhibitor under the aegis of Department of Science and Technology. In order to understand this, it should be noted that Alzheimer's disease degenerates brain cells and leads to a continuous decline

in thinking, behavioural and social skills that disrupts a person's ability to function independently. Alzheimer is caused due to abnormal buildup of Amyloid Beta protein around the brain cells. For Alzheimer Inhibitors, Berberine, which is used in traditional medicines has been converted into Ber-D. The invented Ber-D is an antioxidant and Soluble that prevents the generation of Reactive Oxygen Species and saves biomacromolecules from oxidative damages and prevents the accumulation of metal-dependent and independent Amyloid Beta. JNCASR has also employed a natural product called Isoquinoline used in traditional medicines.

The e-Gram Swaraj Yojana platform

Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Issued a detailed guideline of the SVAMITVA Scheme to provide the right to document the residential properties to people residing in rural parts. Besides this a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) regarding the e-Gram Swaraj Yojana platform has been launched. e-Gram Swaraj Yojana is a single platform for all planning and accounting needs of the Village Panchayats.



The Controversial USCIRF 2020 Annual Report

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has put out an annual report regarding significant developments during 2019. It placed Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, India, Nigeria, Russia, Syria, and Vietnam under “countries of particular concern” saying that their governments engaged in or tolerated “systematic, ongoing, egregious violations. It placed 15 nations viz. Cuba, Nicaragua, Sudan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Central African Republic (CAR), Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and Turkey under Special Watch List (SWL) for severe violations. Besides these, it has placed six non-state actors viz. al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Houthis in Yemen, Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) in Afghanistan, the Taliban in Afghanistan and Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in Syria under “Entities Of Particular Concern” (EPCs) for systematic, ongoing, egregious violations. In context to India, USCIRF quoted the Citizenship Amendment Act, the proposed National Register for Citizens, anti-conversion laws and the situation in Jammu and Kashmir in support of its argument . In response, the External Affairs spokesperson Anurag Srivastava condemned the report dubbing it as biased and tendentious comments against India, which are not new. In the past also the organization did the same thing and this time it's misrepresentation has reached new levels.

The first merger of two unequal-mass black holes

The gravitational wave observatories at Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Laboratory (LIGO) have reported the recording of the first merger of black holes that were of unequal masses and their actual merger took place at a distance of 2.5 billion light years away. The merged black holes were of 30 Solar Mass and 8 Solar Mass. Solar Mass is the standard of mass in astronomy that is used to indicate masses of other masses. One solar mass is equal to 2×10^{30} Kg. In context to Black holes, it is worth knowing that they revolve around each other and the black holes of equal masses return to the same position after they complete their revolution in each of their respective orbits and they generate gravitational wave frequency that is twice their orbital frequency. On the other hand, the black holes of uneven masses produce additional (second) weaker gravitational wave frequency and generate emission at a frequency that is three times the orbital frequency

Cancellation of Pitch Black 2020

In April 2020, Australia cancelled premier multilateral air combat training exercise Pitch Black 2020, which was scheduled between July 27 to August 14 because of COVID-19 pandemic. Now the next edition will take place in 2022. This is a biennial three week multinational large force employment exercise conducted primarily from RAAF Base Darwin and RAAF Base Tindal. The exercise presents a unique opportunity for an exchange of knowledge and experience with Offensive Counter Air (OCA) and Defensive Counter Air (DCA) combat practice in a simulated war environment and tests and improves the force integration, by utilising one of the largest training airspace areas in the world viz. Bradshaw Field Training Area and Delamere Air Weapons Range. This year around 3500 personnel and 120 aircraft from worldwide were about to participate in this exercise. Japan was also about to take part for the first time.

SIPRI on Global military expenditure

According to the latest report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the United States Of America has topped the Global military expenditure (732 billion USD) followed by China (261 billion USD) and India (71.1 billion USD) on second and third spots respectively. It is worth knowing here that the US, China, India, Russia and Saudi Arabia are the five largest spenders, which accounted for 62% of the total global military expenditure. The report further elaborates that the US grew by 5.3% to a total of USD 732 billion in 2019 that accounted for 38% of global military spending. China spent USD 261 billion in 2019, a 5.1% increase compared to 2018, while India grew by 6.8% to USD 71.1 billion. The average military spending burden was found to be 1.4% of GDP for nations in the Americas, 1.6% for Africa, 1.7% for Asia and Oceania and 4.5% for the Middle East.

The First Digital Geological Map of the Moon

The scientists of US Geological Survey Astrogeology Science Center in collaboration with NASA and the Lunar Planetary Institute have virtually released the first ever digital, unified, global, geological map of the moon, “Unified Geologic Map of the Moon”. In this NASA mapped the surface features of the moon which included crater rim crests, buried crater rim crests, fissures, grabens, scarps, mare wrinkle ridges, faults, troughs, rilles, and lineaments. This map provides important information including Polar Regions of the moon. The moon’s South Pole’s area is much larger than the North Pole and there is the possibility of presence of water. Also, the South Pole region shows the fossil record of the early Solar System. This map will serve as a blueprint for future human missions as well as a source of research and analysis for the educators and the general public interested in lunar geology.

Brazilian Astronomers discovered 19 interstellar asteroids

According to the findings published in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, Astronomers of the Universidade Estadual Paulista in Brazil, have discovered 19 interstellar asteroids (asteroids from outside our solar system) orbiting the sun between Jupiter and Neptune. These asteroids belong to a group of space objects called Centaurs. The findings will help scientists in comprehension of the chemical & physical similarities and differences between the solar system born asteroids and interstellar asteroids. It is worth remembering here that the first interstellar visitor asteroid called ‘Oumuamua’ was the last interstellar interloper to hit the headlines in 2017.

April 25 : World Veterinary Day

The World Veterinary Association (WVA) observes World Veterinary Day every year on the last Saturday of April. It is meant to highlight the significance of Veterinary doctors across the world who serve to protect animals. “Environment Protection for Improving Animal and Human Health” was the theme for this year. World Veterinary Association is a federation of over 80 veterinary medical associations worldwide. Headquartered in Paris, France, it promotes animal health and welfare and spreads the awareness that animals and man live interconnected lives.

Mathias Boe announced retirement

39 years old, badminton doubles player from Denmark, Mathias Boe announced retirement from international badminton. He won a silver medal at the 2012 London Olympics and 2013 World Championships. Initially he had planned to retire after either the Badminton World Federation (BWF) Thomas Cup in May or the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, both of which have been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Boe has partnered with Michael Jensen, Thomas Hovgaard and Michael Lamp, before striking up a successful long-term combination with Carsten Mogensen in his 20 year long career. He made his international debut in 1998, along with Mogensen had reached the final of their first tournament together in the US Open 2004. He was part of the team that won the Thomas Cup in 2016. They were frequently on the podium at the Superseries events and succeeded in winning the coveted All England (2011, 2015) twice apart from three straight World Superseries Finals (2010, 2011, 2012) titles.

International Delegate’s Day : 25th April

The United Nations celebrated the 75th anniversary of San Francisco Conference on 25th April 2020 as the first official International Delegate’s Day. On April 25, 1945, more than 850 delegates from 50 countries came together in San Francisco for the first time with the aim of restoring world peace and imposing rules after the world war. It is worth noting here that the Charter of United

Nations was framed after two months of this conference i.e. on June 25, 1945. The United Nations adopted the resolution 73/286 to acknowledge the significant role played by the Delegates on April 2, 2019 and instituted 25th April as the International Delegate's Day. Delegates are people selected by their respective countries to live up to the goals of the United Nations to maintain international peace, promote effective multilateralism and boost respect for fundamental freedom and human rights. They negotiate agreements with the other member countries, coordinate with their countries and follow interests of the governments they serve.

China's First Mars mission : Tianwen-1

During its online celebration of "Space Day", China National Space Administration (CNSA) named its first Mars exploration mission as "Tainwen-1" that implies "Questions to Heaven" after a poem written by China's well known poet Qu Yuan and also released its logo "Lanxingjiutian" that includes representations of the Latin letter 'c', referring to China, cooperation, and the cosmic velocity required to undertake planetary exploration. On 24th April 2020, the country celebrated the 50th anniversary of the launch of the country's first satellite Dong Fang Hong-1 in 1970. Tianwen-1 will be launched in July 2020 with an aim to complete orbiting, landing and roving in one mission. With this, China will join India, US, Russia and the European Union to reach the red planet and the Tianwen-1 mission will join NASA's Perseverance Mars 2020 rover and the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) Hope Mars orbiter.

WHO Said "NO" to "immunity passports"

The World Health Organization restricted the governments from issuing "immunity passports" or "risk-free certificates" as a way of easing lockdowns. Based on presented evidence from researchers worldwide, WHO issues guidelines. Since so far there is no evidence that persons who became victims of this virus once can't be revictimized for the second time. And so the idea of issuing an "immunity passport" to people who recovered once from the deadly virus would be a very risky one. In order to smooth the crippled economies some governments have considered permitting people who have recovered to travel or return to work. More than 2.8m cases of the virus have been confirmed worldwide and nearly 200,000 people have died. Germany, Italy and the UK are beginning to test samples of their populations for antibodies.

Chile planned issuing "health passports" to people deemed to have recovered from the illness.

The Launch Of 60 satellites Starlink

A private American aerospace company, Space Exploration Technologies Corp or SpaceX) succeeded in launching 60 Starlink broadband satellites aboard Falcon 9 rocket from the Launch Pad 39A at National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, US. Starlink is meant to provide cheap internet service in some parts of the US and Canada and

has become the fastest broadband worldwide. It is worth remembering here that this is the 84th Falcon 9 flight as well as the 7th Starlink launch for an internet project that eyes to place more than 420 of the nearly 12,000 planned satellites into orbit.

South Korea began Rapid Antibody Testing kits in India

In order to cater the growing demand of medical equipment in India and other parts of the world, South Korean firm, SD Biosensor began production of COVID-19 Rapid Antibody Testing kits in its Indian subsidiary located in Manesar, Gurgaon of Haryana. As per the latest press release issued by the Indian embassy at Seoul, the firm is producing the test kits with a capacity of 5,00,000 tests per week. Young-shik Cho, Chairman of SD Biosensor and India's Ambassador to South Korea, Sripriya Ranganathan carved a plan to deal with the coronavirus pandemic. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), India will procure five lakh rapid test kits from South Korea. Humasis Ltd will ship the consignment in four batches of which the first batch of the same has already been rolled out on April 19, 2020.

Volvo & Daimler Truck tied up for fuel cells

Swedish luxury vehicles brand Volvo Group and German automotive corporation Daimler Truck AG aka Mercedes partnered to establish a Joint Venture with equal partnership for the development and production of fuel cell systems that use hydrogen to create electricity for heavy vehicles. In this proposed Joint Venture Daimler Truck will employ all its current fuel cell activities, and Volvo Group will purchase a 50% share in the venture for 600 million euros (\$652 million). As an independent and autonomous organization, the Joint Venture will aim for a Green Deal for sustainable transport and a carbon neutral Europe by 2050.

The Discovery Of Six-planets System

According to the latest publication of journal Astronomy & Astrophysics, Scientists of the University of Geneva (UNIGE), Switzerland have discovered a six-planet system (a 'super-Earth' & five 'mini-Neptunes') orbiting the star HD 158259 in the Draco constellation via the SOPHIE spectrograph installed at the Haute-Provence Observatory in the South of France and Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) exoplanet-hunting space telescope. Star HD 158259 is 88 light-years away from Earth, which has been under observation of Astronomers for the last seven years. These six-planets have masses two and six times that of the Earth and the distance of the outermost planet to its star is 2.6 times smaller than the distance between Mercury and the Sun. Besides this, every planet in the HD 158259 star has the same orbital resonance from its later planet i.e. 3:2. It implies that when the inner planet makes three rounds, then immediately the outer planet makes two rounds. The information will pour insight into the understanding of the formation of the solar system.

Demise of Tom and Jerry Director 'Gene Deitch'

The American Oscar-winning illustrator and animator, Gene Deitch, who directed timeless classic cartoon series Tom and Jerry and Popeye, died at the age of 95. The deceased was best known for bringing to life timeless characters. Popeye the Sailor Man, Munro, Tom Terrific and Nudnik were his most popular animated cartoons. He was honored with the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film in 1960 for his film 'Munro'; he was nominated for Academy Award for Sidney's Family Tree in 1958; he was also nominated for Oscar Award for Best Animated Short Film in 1964 for 'Here's Nudnik and How to Avoid Friendship' and year 2004 fetched him the Winsor McCay Award for his lifelong contribution to animation.

NIIT & US-based EdTech company entered into a contract

NIIT (USA) Inc has inked a managed services agreement of five years with a US-based EdTech company to provide virtual services to education providers. NIIT (USA) Inc is a wholly owned subsidiary of NIIT Limited. The duo envisage this as a significant partnership where two market leaders will jointly provide innovative solutions in the testing and certification marketplace. It is worth knowing that NIIT is a skill and talent development corporation that pervades in more than 30 nations across the globe. It offers both long-term and short courses for college students and graduates. NIIT which came into existence in 1981, has over 35 million learners globally and it offers an industry mapped curriculum. In the recent past, NIIT has launched a 'Remote Work Excellence Kit' free course to support remote working for corporate executives and management students. This course teaches how to set up a remote office, run virtual meetings and manage time while working from home during coronavirus lockdown.

World Press Freedom Index 2020

Reporters Without Borders released the World Press Freedom Index 2020 in which Norway emerged as the topper for the fourth consecutive year. It was followed by Finland and Denmark in the second and the third positions respectively. And North Korea occupied the last 180th position. Ranks of some other nations are Germany (11); France (34); United Kingdom (35); United States (45); Japan (66) ; Brazil (107) ; Egypt (166); Eritrea (178). India dropped two places in this index to 142nd position in comparison to last year on account of the Kashmir situation. PM abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution and imposed a communication blackout for many months. In addition to this, the Indian government made it "virtually impossible for journalists to cover what was happening in what has become a vast open prison," as per the report.

Merger of Eros International & Hollywood's STX Entertainment

Indian movie producer and distributor Eros International announced an all-share merger with 6 year old, privately held Hollywood's STX Entertainment to create an equally-held global entertainment company worth USD 1 billion. It should be noted that the existing shareholders of Eros & STX will hold each about 42% of the merged entity, while the remaining 15-odd% will be with the new shareholders. It is said that a fresh capital of USD 125 million will be raised from STX's existing investors, which will include TPG, Hony Capital and Liberty Global etc. Eros issued value rights to STX's shareholders, which will in the due course get converted into shares before the merger. Kishore Lulla will be executive co-chairman and Robert Simonds of STX will be the co-chairman and chief executive of the merged entity "Eros STX Global Corporation".

Indian-American Sudarsanam Babu on Science Board of USA

US President Donald Trump appointed Indian-American Sudarsanam Babu to the country's top science board on 20th April. Coming from the prestigious Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), the appointee has become a member of the National Science Board for a six-year term. With this, Babu has become the third Indian American on this prestigious board. Besides him, Sethuraman Panchanathan from Arizona State University and Suresh V Garimella from University of Vermont are already there in the Board.

UN Chinese Language Day

20th April 2020 was celebrated as UN Chinese Language Day. In this annual observance, the United Nations commemorates contribution of Chinese Literature, poetry, and Language as well as celebrates multilingualism and cultural diversity and promotes the use of Chinese as one of its six official languages among Arabic, English, French, Russian, Spanish of UN. Chinese became one of the official languages of the UN in 1946. It became a working language in the General Assembly from 1971 and in the Security Council from 1974. It is worth knowing here that initially the Chinese Language Day was celebrated on the 12th November of 2010 but from 2011 the date has been changed to 20th April in correspondence to the the celebration of Guyu in the Chinese Calendar in honor of Cangjie, a mythical character with four eyes and four pupils who invented the Chinese characters some 5000 years ago. The term Guyu indicates "rain of millet", which is the 6th of 24 solar terms, the legend has it that the deities and ghosts cried and it rained millet on the day Cangjie invented the Chinese characters.

Coronavirus in Bats !

According to the latest publication of Journal of PLOS ONE, Scientists of Myanmar discovered six new coronaviruses outbreaks in bats. This study of new coronaviruses will help in

comprehension of their diversity in bats and will guide in preventing and responding to this infectious disease. The newly discovered coronaviruses are not closely associated with Coronaviruses- Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS CoV-1) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) or SARS-CoV-2. From May 2016 to August 2018, over 750 saliva and faecal samples of bats were collected from the site. Those samples were tested and compared to known coronaviruses and researchers identified six new coronaviruses. It is worth noting that according to experts, thousands of Coronaviruses are present in bats, which are not yet discovered. Besides Myanmar, in India as well, the Indian Council of Medical Research along with scientists from the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, have found the presence of different kinds of 'Bat coronavirus' in 2 Indian bat species viz. Pteropus (Indian Flying Fox) and Rousettus (old world fruit bats).

Gartner 2019 Survey of digitally dexterous countries

According to the Gartner 2019 Digital Workplace Survey, India topped the index followed by the United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US). India is said to have Generation Z or Gen Z i.e. those born between 1995 and 2009 workforce, that are keen to learn new digitally powered skills in the workplace. The digital workforce in India uses real-time messaging and social media networks more frequently for real-time in comparison to the workforce of China, France, Germany, the US and the UK. The analysis reveals 27% of the Indian digital workers or technophiles are skilled experts in digital technology for work purposes. Moreover, 39% of digital workers wish to be trained on-the-job (OTJ) and just-in-time (JIT) to keep their knowledge updated on Artificial intelligence (AI), Machine learning (ML), Internet of things (IoT) up to date, which is the highest amongst the survey respondents.

Discovery of Earth-like planet & biggest star explosion

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has discovered an Earth-size exoplanet, called Kepler-1649c, orbiting in its red dwarf star's habitable zone. This planet is located 300 light years away from Earth and is only 1.06 times larger than the Earth. Its temperature is the same as that of the earth and so it takes 75 % of its energy from its sun as our planet does. Apart from this, scientists of the University of Birmingham in the UK and the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in the US have observed the biggest supernova (stellar explosion) named SN2016aps. This supernova is not only 10 times more powerful in comparison to a normal supernova but is also about 500 times brighter than that. SN2016aps was discovered in 2016 via the Panoramic Survey Telescope and Rapid Response System in Hawaii. Matt Nicholl, a lecturer at the University of Birmingham in England and his team tracked the event for two years with NASA's Hubble Space

Telescope and a variety of instruments on the ground, watching as the supernova's brightness faded to just 1% of its peak output. Located 4.6 billion light-years from Earth, it has an amount of energy equivalent to an explosion of 200 trillion gigatons of TNT (Trinitrotoluene). This implies that this supernova must have been formed due to the joining of two stars like our Sun.

Abdelouahab Aissaoui: Winner of 13th International Arab fiction prize 2020

Algerian Novelist Abdelouahab Aissaoui won the 13th edition of International Arab fiction prize 2020 for his novel 'The Spartan Court'. It will fetch USD 50,000 and funding will be provided for the English translation. Published by Dar Min in 2018, the novel relates the power struggle between Ottoman and French colonial powers in Algeria where it interconnects the lives of 5 characters in Algiers at the beginning of the 19th century (1815 to 1833). It is worth knowing that his debut novel 'Jacob's Cinema' (2012) was the novel category of the President of the Republic Prize; his second novel 'Mountain of Death' (2015) won Assia Djebar Priz and his third novel 'Circles and Doors' (2017) won the Kuwaiti Suad al-Sabah Novel Prize and in addition to these he has won many more prizes.

Resignation of IWF President Tamas Ajan

81 year old International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) President Tamas Ajan has put forth his resignation on account of allegations of corruption and doping violations. Coming from Hungary, Tamas Ajan had been at the IWF since 1976. He served 24 long years as general secretary and 20 years as President. During his service he ensured an anti-doping programme which met the standards of the (International Olympic Committee (IOC) and World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). Now Ursula Papandrea will be the acting president of IWF. She is a former International lifter for the United States and is the first woman to lead IWF that has been in existence under different names since 1920. It is worth registering that the IWF had only two presidents viz. Ajan and the Austrian Gottfried Schoedl since 1972.

US permitted H-1B visa extension

The US government announced that it will accept H-1B visa applications for an extended stay in the country which gave a sigh of relief to thousands of stranded foreign students and professionals in the US as all international passenger flights have been suspended globally and their visa permits are on verge of expiry. The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa through which US companies employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Now the applicants need to put in their forms for an extension of stay (EOS) or change of status (COS) permit within the specified time frame so that their presence will not be taken as "unlawful".

The recent notification of the US Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) further says, “employment authorization with the same employer, subject to the same terms and conditions of the prior approval, is automatically extended for up to 240 days when an extension of stay request is filed on time.” It is worth knowing that as per rules, if an employer terminates the contract of an H-1B holder, then the employee will have to find new employment within 60 days, in order to retain the visa status. Indian IT workers have been seeking an extension of this 60 day grace period to 180 days.

US will sell Harpoon missile and torpedoes to India

According to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the United States President Donald Trump’s administration gave nod to the sale of Harpoon Block II air launched missiles & MK 54 lightweight torpedoes worth \$ 155 million to India. 10 AGM-84L Harpoon Air Launched Missiles will cost \$ 92 million, while 16 MK (Mark) 54 All Up Round Lightweight Torpedoes and three MK 54 Exercise Torpedoes will be available at \$ 63 million. Manufactured by Boeing, the 3.84 metre long anti-ship Harpoon missiles (multi-mission aircraft) with a high-explosive blast warhead is capable of having 500-pound penetration and can destroy coastal defence and surface-to-air missile sites, industrial installations and docked ships. Torpedo is meant to provide the capability to conduct anti-submarine warfare missions. India will integrate both Harpoon missiles and Torpedoes to its P-8I aircraft (also known as the “submarine killer”) to perform surface-to-surface warfare in defense of critical sea lanes.

South Korea's ruling party is celebrating its victory in election landslide

According to the Yonhap news agency, after counting of votes, South Korea’s ruling party, President Moon Jae-in’s Democratic party and its smaller affiliate won 180 seats in the 300-seat assembly on 16th April 2020. It is said to be the biggest majority in the national assembly by any party since South Korea’s transition to democracy in 1987. It is said that Moon had been rewarded for his success in portraying the outbreak as an “opportunity for South Korea to restructure its economy – capitalising on industries like AI and biopharma”. The voters had been impressed by international recognition of the administration’s coronavirus response. The conservative opposition United Future party and its smaller sister party won 103 seats. This turnout was 66.2%, higher than any parliamentary elections held in South Korea since 1992.

UN’s aid for cyclone-ravaged Vanuatu

The United Nations humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock announced and released 2.5 million dollar from its emergency humanitarian fund to help thousands of people in the South Pacific island

nation of Vanuatu , who became victims of Cyclone Harold. On April 6, 2020, The cyclone made landfall on the largest island Espiritu Santo in Vanuatu and left more than two dozen people dead, destroyed homes, buildings and crops. The cyclone later proceeded to Solomon Islands, Fiji and Tonga for further destruction. Vanuatu has roughly 80 islands stretching about 1,300 kilometers and a population near 3,00,000.

NASA succeeded in measuring wind speed on Brown Dwarf

According to the latest publication of the journal Science, scientists of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) reported wind speed of 1,425 mph (2,293 kph) on a Brown Dwarf named 2MASS J10475385+2124234 via the National Science Foundation's Karl G. Jansky Very Large Array (VLA) & NASA's recently retired infrared observatory and the Spitzer Space Telescope. Scientists also detected a slight difference in the speed of the brown dwarf's atmosphere and its interior. Brown Dwarf has atmospheric temperature of more than 1,100 degrees Fahrenheit (600 degrees Celsius) and emits a small amount of infrared light. It is interesting to note that this Brown dwarf which is located 32 light-years from Earth is larger than Jupiter of our solar system which has winds moving at a speed of 230 mph.

Saudi Arabia will raise VAT from 5% to 15% from 1st July

Saudi Arabia has taken a major decision of raising Value Added Tax (VAT) from 5% to 15% from 1st July 2020 and will suspend the cost of living allowance from 1st June 2020. Besides these, the Kingdom has also decided to cancel, extend, or postpone some operational and capital expenditures for some government agencies and has reduced provisions for initiative of a number of Vision Realization Programs and major projects for the fiscal year 2020. According to the Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Economy and Planning, Mohammad Aljadaan, the measures will protect the Saudi economy and will help in overcoming the unprecedented financial and economic ramifications of the global coronavirus pandemic in the best possible way.

US said yes to new coronavirus antigen test

US regulators gave nod to a new type of coronavirus test for rapid testing of coronavirus in the country. The Food and Drug Administration announced emergency authorization for an antigen test that can rapidly detect fragments of virus proteins in samples collected from swabs swiped inside the nasal cavity. This antigen test is the third type of test that has been authorized by the FDA. It is worth knowing that previously the primary way to diagnose active COVID-19 was to test a patient's nasal swab for the genetic material of the virus, which takes hours and requires expensive, specialized equipment mainly found at commercial labs, hospitals or universities. The

second method of diagnosis of disease was testing of blood for antibodies. But this third method of testing antigen in the nasal swab is superior to the first method as it lays emphasis on detecting the earliest toxic traces of the virus rather than genetic code of the virus itself. Moreover, the antigen test can provide an accurate, automated result in 15 minutes. It is courtesy of Quidel Corporation of San Diego.

Work permits of spouses of H1B visa-holders

Recently the Trump administration has requested a federal district court not to block an Obama-era rule permitting certain categories of spouses of H-1B visa-holders to work in the United States. In this major development, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in a submission before the US District Court, District Washington argued that the American technology workers, who had challenged the 2015 ruling on giving work permits to H-4 visa-holders, have not been irreparably harmed by such work authorization. It is worth knowing that an H-4 visa is issued to the immediate family members of the H-1B visa-holders.

Benjamin Netanyahu can form government

Although Benjamin Netanyahu is under indictment for corruption charges, yet the 11-judge panel of the Supreme Court of Israel, failing to find grounds to prevent the government from taking office, finally permitted Prime Minister Netanyahu to form a new government. Netanyahu along with his rival, a former military chief Gantz decided to form a coalition government ending a 17-month political stalemate and prevented Israel from plunging into a fourth consecutive election in just over a year. After contesting three inconclusive elections over the past year, both the men decided to put aside their rivalry and agreed on a coalition deal that makes them equal partners, with virtual veto power over each other's decisions. Under the controversial deal, Netanyahu and Gantz will be sworn-in together, with Netanyahu serving first as prime minister and Gantz as the designated premier. After 18 months, the two will swap positions. Critics and good-government groups had challenged this decision as being an official charged with serious crimes, Netanyahu cannot continue as the Prime Minister. However, the newly created post of alternate prime minister, will allow Netanyahu to remain in office throughout his corruption trial. Over this, the court clarified that Netanyahu will need to abide by a conflict of interest arrangement while prime minister whenever dealing with law enforcement affairs.

Global Energy Review 2020

The International Energy Agency has put out the Global Energy Review for 2020. The report prepared by collecting data from 30 nations across the globe, draws attention towards the global

energy demand in 2020 and carbon dioxide emissions. According to the report 15% of the daily electricity demand has been reduced because of complete lock down in countries such as India, Italy, France and UK. This decline was seen sharp particularly in service sectors including hospitality, retail, tourism and education. The lockdown also resulted in decreased fossil-fuel based power generation. The Global Coal Demand also witnessed reduction by 8% as compared to 2019 as the coal-based economy of China suffered badly, cheap gas was easily available and renewables were used on a large scale. Like others, the oil sector also showed a fall in demand by 5% due to decreased transport connectivity worldwide. The Carbon Dioxide Emissions have also declined by 8% i.e. around 2.6 giga tonnes as compared to 2019 levels.

IIBR's Passive vaccine against Covid-19

The Israel Institute for Biological Research (IIBR) has developed an antibody or passive vaccine which can attack and neutralise the virus responsible for COVID-19 within the bodies of victims. IIBR tested its antibody-based vaccine prototype on rodents and succeeded in achieving a 'major breakthrough'. After this the country is looking forward to establish its first vaccine production facility in the small southern town of Yeruham, which will manufacture tens of millions of vaccine units of various types to ensure the country's self-sufficiency even in times of pandemics. The proposed facility is yet to win approval of the Israeli government.

UK announced 'once in a generation' transport sector investment

Recently the UK government has announced a 'once in a generation' transport sector investment worth 2 billion pound, with a major chunk ear-marked for emergency improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure for its green recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. The proposed investment in transport will support the use of more greener travel options to avoid overcrowding in public transport as travel restrictions are likely to get eased in the coming weeks. UK Transport Secretary Grant Shapps during the daily 10 Downing Street briefing, informed that the official death toll in hospitals and the wider community from COVID-19 so far is 31,587.

The 40th Anniversary Of Eradication Of Smallpox

The UN postal agency along with the World Health Organization have released a commemorative postage stamp on 9th May 2020 i.e. the 40th anniversary of the eradication of smallpox. The stamp acknowledges the global solidarity in fighting smallpox and honours millions of people working together for the same. It is worth remembering here that WHO's smallpox eradication campaign was launched in 1967 and in May 1980, the 33rd World Health Assembly declared the global eradication of smallpox. It was a triumph of the 10-year global effort of the World Health Organization and thousands of health workers across the globe that administered half a billion vaccinations to stamp out smallpox.

World Athletics Day 2020: May 7

The International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) celebrated World Athletics Day by organizing many competitions like track and field, road running, race walking and cross country running, etc. to increase awareness about athletics and to encourage youth to take up sports on 7th May 2020. Instituted by Primo Nebiolo, former president of IAAF, this day has been celebrated in the month of May every year since 1996. But this year the IAAF designated 7th May for this observation. Initially, the age group between 7 to 15 years was involved in this but later the age group was changed to 13 to 17 years. It is worth learning here that the first-ever World Athletics Day was themed around the Centennial edition of the Olympic Games in Atlanta, USA. Two boys and girls from the event were chosen from each of the continental areas by the International Federation to attend the Atlanta Olympics.

Mustafa Al Kadhimi: Iraq's new Prime Minister

Mustafa Kadhimi has become Iraq's first proper Prime Minister after Adel Abdul Mahdi resigned in November 2019 on account of massive anti-government protests. He has been chosen via proper elections that were held on 7th May 2020. The sixth Prime Minister of the country is a former intelligence chief. His cabinet has 15 ministers. Besides him, Juma Anad, the land forces commander, has been elected as the new Defence Minister of Iraq, the chief of staff for Iraq's armed forces Othman Al Ghanmi became the new Interior Minister and Historian and politician, Ali Allawi became the new Finance Minister of the country.

'Toman': The new currency of Iran

On the pretext of weakness in Iranian currency and increased inflation, the parliament of Iran has approved a bill on national currency denomination, which advocates cutting off four zeros from its national currency Rial and renaming it as 'Toman' which is equal to 10,000 rials. Now, this bill is waiting to win the approval of the committee headed by Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei and then the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) will be given two years' time to change the currency. Background reveals that the US withdrew from the nuclear power deal with Iran in 2015. It was followed by large-scale sanctions on Iran by the USA, which led to a 60 % fall in the Iranian currency.

The Brown Dwarf Luhman 16A Has Cloud Bands

According to the latest publication of Astrophysical Journal, a Brown dwarf 'Luhman 16A' showed Jupiter like cloud bands. Before proceeding further it is worth knowing that Brown dwarfs are objects that are lighter than the stars but heavier than the planets. Luhman 16A is 13 to 80 times the mass of Jupiter. Found in a binary system with a second twin Brown dwarf Luhman 16B, Luhman 16A is the third closest system to our sun, at a distance of 6.5 light-years after Alpha Centauri and Barnard's star. Astronomers employed a technique of polarimetry that has been used

for the first time to determine the properties of atmospheric clouds that are outside of the exoclouds or solar system via a large telescope of Chile. The atmosphere of Luhman 16A matched with the model of atmospheres with cloud bands. A strange fact is that it can rain things like silicates and ammonia, making pretty awful weather.

Global Report on Food Crisis, 2020

Global Network against Food Crisis has put out the Global Report on Food Crisis for the year 2020. According to the report around 135 million people are living under a food crisis. The figure has increased in comparison to the year 2019, where 113 million people were living under food crisis conditions. This year Yemen topped the list, with 15.9 million people under food crisis. This comprises 53% of the population of the country. Yemen, D R Congo, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria, Sudan, Northern Nigeria and Haiti emerged as the top ten nations that are presently victims of the food crisis. This amounts to 65% of the world population. Unfortunately, more than 75 million children were reported to be stunted across 55 food crisis Countries. Conflict and insecurity continue to be the reason for the same in 2020 as well as the previous year.

Egyptian tennis player Youssef Hossam got banned

The organisation responsible for investigating match-fixing in tennis, Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU), has banned 21-year-old Egyptian tennis player Youssef Hossam for life on the pretext of his involvement in a number of match-fixing and corruption cases. He had violated the anti-corruption rules related to (Section D.1.b, Section D.1.d, Section D.1.e, Section D.2.a.i and Section F.2.b) 21 times between 2015 and 2019 which includes, 8 cases of match-fixing; 6 cases of facilitating gambling; 2 cases of soliciting other players not to use best efforts; 3 failures to report corrupt approaches and 2 failures to co-operate with a TIU investigation. Hossam currently holds No. 820th rank in the ATP singles rankings and reached number 291 in December 2017, which was his career-best ranking.

The Corona Virus Copy Machine

In order to increase the efficacy of the drug “Remdesivir”, which is currently being used to block polymerase, the researchers at the Max Planck Institute in Germany, have recently invented a 3D structure of the copy machine enzyme. It is found that COVID-19 virus after invading a human cell via spike protein corona, begins to replicate or copy itself. The virus uses its enzyme called “copy machine” for the same. The researchers recently designed a 3D structure of this copy machine enzyme which will decipher the working of drug Remdesivir. The drug is currently under trial at the World Health Organization and in India, the Gujarat hospitals are participating in these trials.

World Asthma Day 2020

Every year the first Tuesday of May is observed as World Asthma Day. This year 5th May 2020 was observed as the World Asthma Day on “Enough Asthma Deaths” theme. Like every year, the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) organized events to improve asthma awareness and care around the world. It is worth registering that this year GINA instituted 5th May as World Asthma Day. The first World Asthma Day (WAD) was observed in 1998 in more than 35 countries for which the first World Asthma meeting was held in Barcelona, Spain. Asthma is a chronic disease of the lungs affecting about 1.5 to 2 crore population across the globe. Breathlessness, coughing, wheezing and a feeling of tightness in the chest are symptoms of Asthma.

The Nikkei Asia Prizes 2020

It is a Japanese award conferred in acknowledgement of individuals who contribute towards sustainable development and create a better future in Asia. This prize is awarded in three categories and the names of winners for this 25th edition of awards include Mr Anthony Tan, CEO, Grab, Malaysia & Ms Tan Hooi Ling , Co-Founder, Grab, Malaysia (category: Economic and Business Innovation); Dr Thalappil Pradeep, Professor, IIT-Madras (category: Science and Technology); Mr. Ram Prasad Kadel, Founder Music Museum of Nepal, Nepal (category: Culture and Community). In context to Indian Professor Thalappil Pradeep, it is worth knowing that he has been honoured for his pioneering work in nanotechnology-based water purification. He was also honoured with the Padma Shri award in the past.

The 2020 Pulitzer Prizes

Columbia University announced the winners of the 2020 edition of Pulitzer Prizes to honour achievements in newspaper, magazine and online journalism, literature, and musical composition in the United States (US). The names of winners include Anchorage Daily News with contributions from ProPublica (Alaska, USA, in category : Public Service); Staff of The Courier-Journal, Louisville, Ky. USA (Breaking News Reporting); Brian M. Rosenthal of The New York Times (Investigative Reporting); Staff of The Washington Post (Explanatory Reporting); Staff of The Baltimore Sun (Local Reporting); Dominic Gates, Steve Miletich, Mike Baker and Lewis Kamb of The Seattle Times & T. Christian Miller, Megan Rose and Robert Faturechi of ProPublica (National Reporting) ; Staff of The New York Times (International Reporting) ; Ben Taub of The New Yorker (Feature Writing); Nikole Hannah-Jones of The New York Times (Commentary); Christopher Knight of the Los Angeles Times (Criticism); Jeffery Gerritt of Palestine (Tx.) Herald Press (Editorial Writing); Barry Blitt, contributor, The New Yorker (Editorial Cartooning); ChanniAnand, Mukhtar Khan and Dar Yasin of Associated Press (Feature

Photography); Staff of This American Life with Molly O'Toole of the Los Angeles Times and Emily Green, freelancer, Vice News (Audio Reporting).

The names of winners in books, drama and music categories are *The Nickel Boys*, by Colson Whitehead (Doubleday) (fiction); *A Strange Loop*, by Michael R. Jackson (Drama); *Sweet Taste of Liberty: A True Story of Slavery and Restitution in America*, by W. Caleb McDaniel (Oxford University Press) (History); *Sontag: Her Life and Work*, by Benjamin Moser (Ecco) (Biography); *The Tradition*, by Jericho Brown (Copper Canyon Press) (Poetry); *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America*, by Greg Grandin (Metropolitan Books) (General Nonfiction) and *The Central Park Five*, by Anthony Davis (Music).

The Mega Dubai Expo

Bureau International des Expositions announced the dates of the Mega Dubai Expo which will be held from 1st Oct 2021 to 31st March 2022. The two-thirds majority of this organization voted for the delay of Expo 2020 by one year and Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman of Dubai Airports, President of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, Chairman and CEO of Emirates Group, and Chairman of the Expo 2020 Dubai Higher Committee supported this decision in wake of COVID 19. The delayed World Expo is expected to play a pivotal role in shaping the post-pandemic world at a time when it will be most needed. 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future' will be the theme of this Expo. Businesses, multilateral organisations and educational establishments from 192 nations will celebrate humanity's resilience, creativity, culture and innovation involving major technological advances in the fields of medicine and science.

Arktika-M satellite of Russia

Russia has announced the launch of its first satellite 'Arktika-M' for monitoring Arctic climate at the end of this year. Elaborating on this, General Director of Lavochkin aerospace company Vladimir Kolmykov informed Sputnik news agency that this satellite will be launched on December 9, 2020, via Soyuz -2,1b carrier rocket with frigate booster. This remote sensing Artika-M satellite is meant to monitor the meteorological conditions in the polar region to help improve weather forecasts and enable scientists to better study climate change. This launch is significant for Russian territory, which stretches along the Arctic Ocean for thousands of kilometres. The country faces many challenges while trying to balance the economic development and environmental protection of its northern regions.

Boris Johnson opened virtual global conference on COVID-19

Prime Minister of Britain, Boris Johnson inaugurated a virtual global conference on COVID-19 invoking countries to elevate their efforts and work together on fighting the coronavirus pandemic. This Coronavirus Global Response International Pledging Conference was co-chaired by the UK

and eight other countries viz. Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, Saudi Arabia, and the European Commission and other organisations. In this conference, Johnson committed UK's pledge of 388 million pounds aid funding for research into vaccines, tests and treatments, which is part of a larger 744 million pounds existing UK aid commitment to end the pandemic and support the global economy. It includes 250 million pounds for the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations to develop vaccines against coronavirus and it is the biggest such donation to the fund by any country.

Australia topped the ICC rankings

In the recently released ICC rankings, Australian cricket team emerged as the top cricket test team surpassing the Indian Cricket team. It has dethroned India for the first time since 2016. Australia had briefly occupied No 1 spot on the ICC's Test charts in 2014 than in 2016, but had slipped to No. 5 on account of the Cape Town cheating scandal and subsequent suspensions for Steve Smith and David Warner. And in the domain of T20 format of the game, Australia has also displaced Pakistan to become the No. 1 T20 team. The T20 ascension of Australia has come after four consecutive series wins in the shortest format. It is the first time Australia has occupied the top spot on the T20 rankings, introduced by the ICC in 2011, and it succeeded in ending Pakistan's 27-month reign at No 1. While in the ODI rankings, England has retained the No. 1 spot.

Nomenclature of NASA's 1st Mars helicopter: 'Ingenuity'

A 17-year old Indian-origin girl Vaneesa Rupani got the privilege of naming the first helicopter to be built for Mars as 'Ingenuity' i.e. the inventive character of a person. She seized this opportunity via her participation in National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)'s 'Name the Rover' competition. Prior to this, it was called the "Mars Helicopter". 'Ingenuity' will be launched in July 2020 and will land in February 2021 in the Jezero Crater of Mars, the site of a lake that existed 3.5 billion years ago. The rover is meant to collect samples of Red Planet Mars. The 1.8-kilogram helicopter will try to fly there and give information about the geographical location of Mars.

Joe Biden won Ohio's Presidential Primary

American politician and Presidential candidate from Ohio, Joseph Robinette Biden won Ohio's Presidential Primary elections. He served as the 47th Vice President of the United States from 2009 to 2017 and represented Delaware in the U.S. Senate from 1973 to 2009. He belongs to the Democratic Party. Former Senate staffer Tara Reade accused Joe Biden of sexually assaulting her but the latter denied the allegation publicly for the first time on 1st May 2020. The primary elections were initially scheduled for March 17th but were postponed due to a coronavirus

outbreak. Citing a health emergency, Republican Governor Mike DeWine recommended postponement of in-person balloting till 2nd of June. Amid legal challenges, officials moved balloting to this week and converted in-person balloting to an email balloting honoring coronavirus battle guidelines. The primary was the first major test of statewide elections through mail amid this outbreak. In these elections most of Ohioans casting absentee ballots had to run at least three pieces of mail - an application, a blank ballot and a completed one - through the U.S. Postal Service. And only homeless, disabled people and anyone not receiving ballots by mail in time was encouraged to cast in-person ballots at county election board offices. Currently, five states viz. Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington and Utah conduct all elections entirely by mail.

Demand of Refugee status for Afghan Sikhs & Hindus

Indian-American Congressman Ro Khanna has sought refugee status for the minority Sikh and Hindu families in Afghanistan from the Trump Administration. The said communities are increasingly facing persecution by terror outfits in the Asian country. Khanna wrote a letter to the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad F Wolf for the same as the US proposed resettling 18,000 refugees in this fiscal year, including up to 5,000 individuals who are persecuted for their religion or other protected grounds. And up to 7,500 individuals can be referred to the US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) by a US embassy in any location.

Canada employing algae for COVID-19 test kits

Researchers from the University of Western Ontario in Canada devised a new cost-effective method to overcome shortfalls of existing processes for COVID testing. They collaborated with Canadian integrated energy company Suncor to develop algae as a production factory to make necessary proteins to identify COVID-19 antibodies. This serological test kit for COVID-19 will determine if someone has been previously infected and has the antibodies for the virus. They are employing algae as a way to produce the testing reagent. Other tests, which are currently being developed rely on proteins made in reagents such as insect or mammalian cells which are expensive and difficult to scale. Algae are cheap to grow and can easily be engineered to produce the viral proteins. According to Mitacs, a non-profit national research organization that partners with Canadian academia and private businesses to advance industrial innovation, Suncor was developing this testing technology for wastewater treatment, which had no connection with COVID-19. But they recognized the same technology could be used to develop an antibody test with minor modifications to their basic process.

John Bolton's "The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir"

Former National Security Advisor to President Donald Trump, John Bolton's book titled "The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir" will be available on Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble bookseller company from June 23, 2020. Published by an American publishing company Simon & Schuster, the book criticises President Trump's actions on Ukraine. The author has quoted an August 2019 conversation in this book that when he left the White House on acrimonious terms, Trump told him that he urged to withhold hundreds of millions of dollars in security aid from Ukraine until it helped him with investigations into political rival Joe Biden. This anticipated criticism placed the book in the top 20 on Amazon's bestseller list. And the Associated Press reported in November 2019 that Bolton's book deal was worth \$2 million. The author has served as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations from 2005 to 2006 and held high-level positions in the Administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and George W. Bush as well.

The Latest Situation in Yemen

Emirati-backed southern separatists' Southern Transitional Council again claimed control of Aden, a Red Sea port that serves as the seat of the internationally recognized government as Yemen's Shiite rebels, known as Houthis, hold the country's capital, Sanaa. The council's decision has complicated the severe war in Yemen that has pushed the Arab world's poorest nation to the brink of famine and resulted in the killing of more than 1,00,000 people. It is worth recalling here that the November 2019 Riyadh Agreement, which seemed to end battle between the separatists and the government forces after the council seized control of Aden just a few months back, has failed terribly. Now Saudi-led coalition reminded the separatists to honour terms of a Riyadh peace deal and return control of the port city of Aden to the country's internationally recognized government. Prior to this, when the separatists announced to self-govern the vital southern port city of Aden and other southern provinces, accusing the government of corruption and mismanagement, then local and security authorities in the provinces of Hadramawt, Abyan, Shabwa, al-Mahra and the remote island of Socotra dismissed the move as a clear and definite coup.

The Passage of Near-Earth Asteroid 1998 OR2

After learning from its 'Near-Earth Asteroid Tracking program', the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) informed passage of asteroid 1998 OR2, which is one of the large near-Earth asteroids, measuring about 1.5-mile-wide (2-kilometer-wide) that passed by earth within 3.9 million miles (6.3 million kilometres), which is about 16 times farther away than the moon. It was 13 to 24 feet (4 to 8 meters) in size. In 2079, it will again pass by the earth. NASA's

Jet Propulsion Laboratory under Near-Earth Asteroid Tracking program has been tracking it for the past 20 years since July 1998. Although after studying its orbital trajectory it is confirmed that it won't pose any threat to the earth for next 200 years, yet it is categorized as a large "potentially hazardous asteroid" because after thousands of years, even a very slight change in the asteroid's orbit is expected to present more of a hazard to Earth than it does now. It should be registered that when the orbits of asteroids and comets that orbit the Sun, bring them into Earth's neighbourhood within 30 million miles of Earth's orbit then they are termed as near-Earth objects.

Virtual workshop on "Contract Management during Emergency situations"

World Bank in collaboration with All India Management Association (AIMA) conducted Virtual workshop on "Contract Management during Emergency situations". The aim of this workshop was to educate participants about the expected adverse impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the bank funded projects, its possible implications on contract management and to forearm them with the several mitigations measures. It is worth knowing here that the World Bank is funding the Project Management Unit of Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project in the Union Territory of J&K.

Times Higher Education's Impact rankings 2020

The University of Auckland, New Zealand with a score of 98.5 has topped in the second edition of Times Higher Education's Impact rankings 2020. It was followed by University of Sydney(98.1), Western Sydney University (97.9) in Australia, La Trobe University Australia (96.6) and Arizona State University(Tempe) the United States (96.3) at second, third, fourth, and fifth spots respectively. Among them, Indian IIT Kharagpur secured 57th rank.

Indian-American got nominated as US envoy to OECD

Veteran Indian-American diplomat Manisha Singh was nominated as America's next envoy to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) by the President of USA Donald Trump. At present she is serving in the capacity of Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs at the State Department. The OECD is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries to stimulate economic progress and world trade that has Headquarter in Paris, France. Prior to this, she was playing the Acting Under Secretary of Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment, and as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs at the State Department.



Umar Akmal Will Not Play For Upcoming Three Years

Pakistan Cricket Board banned Umar Akmal for three-years for match fixing. According to Pakistan Cricket Board Disciplinary Committee, the 29-year-old Akmal violated the ICC Anti-corruption code 2.4.4 by not disclosing the details of the approaches that tried to engage him in corrupt conduct as well as 2.4.5 as he concealed information about other participants who were like him approached to engage in corrupt conduct. He was approached at the time of the ICC World Cup in 2015 edition played in Australia and New Zealand. On another occasion he was offered 200,000 dollars for leaving two deliveries in the matches against India. Therefore, the Chairperson of the Disciplinary panel Justice(retired) Fazal-e-Miran-Chauhan imposed a three-year ban on Umar Akmal and now he will not be able to play in any format of cricket. The ban is said to be in effect from February 20. The convict was already suspended on 2nd February from Pakistan Super League.

Sana Mir signed off International Cricket

Former Pakistan skipper Sana Mir announced retirement from International Cricket at the age of 34, ending her 15 year old career. She holds 9th rank in ICC's ODI and 41st in T20I bowlers list. The right handed batter made her debut in One Day International (ODI) against Sri Lanka in Karachi in December 2005 and she also appeared in the ODI in Lahore against Bangladesh in November 2019. In total 120 ODIs, she took 151 wickets and in 106 T20Is, she took 89 wickets and scored 802 runs. She appeared in a total of 226 international matches which includes the 137 matches from 2009 to 2017 as the team captain for her nation. She topped the International Cricket Council (ICC) Women's Ranking for the ODI bowlers in October 2018 and she is one of the nine women cricketers who had taken 100 wickets and scored 1000 runs in the ODIs. Pakistan won 26 ODI, and 26 T20Is under her captaincy.

New Logo of 11th World Games Birmingham

Logo and title for the 11th edition of World Games 2022, which will take place in Birmingham, Alabama, United States, have been unveiled. On account of the delay caused because of the

Coronavirus pandemic, the World Games 2021 Birmingham has been renamed as the World Games 2022 Birmingham. Initially the Games which were scheduled for July 2021 will now be held from July 7 to 17, 2022 to accommodate the one-year postponement of the 2020 Summer Olympics. Acrobatic gymnastics, ultimate, orienteering, karate, powerlifting, finswimming, squash, korfbal, billiards, water skiing, and dance sport will be featured in this event. Governed by the International World Games Association (IWGA) and recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the World Games are organised every 4 years. Santa Clara, California, United States (US) hosted the first edition of these Games in 1981.

‘Fei Fei’ birds : Mascot for Hangzhou 2022 Asian Para Games

The organizing committee of Hangzhou Asian Games, released ‘Fei Fei’ birds as an official mascot for the 4th edition of Asian Para Games 2022, which will take place in Hangzhou, China from 9th to 15th October 2022. The design “Feifei” is an inspiration from the motif of the ‘Divine Bird’ in the Liangzhu Culture and represent both Hangzhou city’s heritage and its innovation in technology. Among the two ‘Fei Fei’ birds, the first fei bird mascot represents the flying birds implying inclusiveness, respect, and fraternity of human society, whereas the second fei bird represents the mental tenacity of the athletes with disabilities pursuing dreams and reaching beyond themselves. The bird’s body features “i” on its crown, which is a symbol of intelligence as well as the characteristics of Hangzhou’s Internet city. It also has 45 dots circle on its chest representing the joyful gathering of Asian Paralympic Committee’s (APC) members, while the Games logo is in the centre. The bird radiates blue light while exercising representing happiness.

The Recent Loss In Cricket World

April 2020 witnessed the deaths of former New Zealand Wicketkeeper Jock Edwards and former Pakistan first-class cricketer Zafar Sarfraz. Jock Edwards died at the age of 64 years and had played six tests and eight one-day internationals for New Zealand and also appeared in 67 first-class matches between 1974 and 1985. Zafar Sarfraz died of coronavirus at the age of 50 years. He was a left-handed batter and slow left-arm orthodox bowler, who appeared in first-class cricket from 1988 to 1994 and List A cricket from 1990 to 1992. He scored 616 runs from 15 first-class games for Peshawar and also posted 96 runs from six one-day games before his retirement in 1994. After that he served as coach for both the senior and the Under-19 Peshawar teams in the mid-2000s. He was the brother of late Pakistan international cricketer Akhtar Sarfraz. Earlier last month, great Pakistani squash player Azam Khan had also lost his life because of coronavirus at the age of 95. Azam had won four consecutive British Open titles between 1959-62,

Berth for quadrennial 50-over Women World Cup 2021

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has informed New Zealand followed by the next four highest-placed teams-viz. Australia (37 points), England (29), South Africa (25) and India (23) on the points table have qualified directly for ODIs - the quadrennial 50-over Women World Cup 2021, which will take place in New Zealand from February 6 to March 7 in 2021. India reached the 2017 Women's World Cup final, won 10 matches and lost 8 out of the 21 matches they have played in the current cycle of ICC Women's Championship.

Badminton Association of India is all set to host India Open

Badminton Association of India has accepted the offer of Badminton World Federation to host a slot of BWF World Tour Super 500 tournament i.e. an Olympic qualifier, India Open worth USD 400,000 in upcoming December 2020 or January 2021 provided the COVID-19 pandemic subsides and the government gives its approval. It was suspended in March 2020 along with the other Tokyo Games qualifiers on pretext of the coronavirus outbreak. This India Open Super 500 event was about to take place in New Delhi from March 24 to 29, 2020.



Current Affairs

- Which of the following IT firms tied up with IBM to establish innovation centres?
(a) TCS (b) Tech Mahindra (c) Wipro
(d) HCL (e) Oracle Financial Services Software
- Mazumdar-Shaw , who founded Biocon India in, secured place in world's top 20 inspirational leaders in Biopharma under Medicine Maker Power List 2020
(a) 1975 (b) 1976 (c) 1977
(d) 1978 (e) 1979
- Which of the following governments launched the "Pravasi Raahat Mitra" App to connect migrants with schemes and jobs ?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Himachal Pradesh
(d) Jharkhand (e) Haryana
- Which of the following banks released a song titled #HumHaarNahiMaanenge to keep hopes up amidst Covid-19?
(a) YES (b) AXIS (c) IDBI
(d) ICICI (e) HDFC
- Which of the following became the first state to get an in-house facility of virtual courts ?
(a) Punjab (b) Haryana (c) Uttarakhand
(d) Uttar Pradesh (e) Himachal Pradesh
- World Thalassaemia Day was observed on
(a) 5th May (b) 6th May (c) 7th May
(d) 8th May (e) 9th May

7. Former world champion Peter Ebdon of the UK announced retirement from the sport.
(a) Billiard (b) Snooker (c) Tennis
(d) Football (e) Basketball
8. Union Culture Minister released e-book “Prof. B. B. Lal -India Rediscovered” to mark the centenary year of Prof B. B. Lal, who was a great
(a) Botanist (b) Astronaut (c) Journalist
(d) Archaeologist (e) Painter
9. Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) in association with several technology partners, announced a launch of a national e-commerce marketplace.....
(a) Bharat ka maan (b) Bharat market (c) Bharat bhagya
(d) Swadeshi (e) Unnat bharat
10. Reserve Bank Of India cancelled which of the following banks’ license ?
(a) Abhyudaya Co-operative Bank
(b) CKP Co-operative Bank
(c) Pratap Co Operative Bank
(d) State Transport Co-Operative Bank
(e) Maharashtra State Co-Operative Bank
11. In October 2020, a book titled “Shivaji in South Block: The Unwritten History of a Proud People” by will be released.
(a) Shivaji Sawant (b) Girish Kube (c) Ranjit Desai
(d) V. P. Kale (e) Suhas Shirvalkar
12. Who among the following has been named for the Fed Cup Heart Award ?
(a) Rohan Bopanna (b) Sania Mirza (c) Mahesh Bhupathi
(d) Leander Paes (e) Sumit Nagal
13. Which of the following governments launched an agro entrepreneur facilitation desk to boost the economy ?
(a) Assam (b) Manipur (c) Mizoram
(d) Tripura (e) Nagaland

14. Which of the following forces has launched an e-office application named 'e-karyalay'?
- (a) CRPF (b) BSF (c) ITBP
(d) SSB (e) CISF
15. Deepak Mittal has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to
- (a) Bahrain (b) Kuwait (c) Oman
(d) Qatar (e) Saudi Arabia
16. Which of the following administrations signed MoU with Tata Technologies to build 2 Centres for Invention, Innovation, Incubation and Training (CIITs) ?
- (a) J&K (b) Andaman and Nicobar Islands
(c) Chandigarh (d) Daman and Diu
(e) Dadra and Nagar Haveli
17. Which of the following organizations launched #WeWillWin campaign for health workers?
- (a) FIFA (b) ICC (c) IOC
(d) IAAF (e) ITF
18. Which of the following states unveiled 'Jeevan Amrit Yojana' to help people fight against COVID-19 ?
- (a) Gujarat (b) Maharashtra (c) Rajasthan
(d) Madhya Pradesh (e) Andhra Pradesh
19. Who topped scientific publication for 2019-20 ?
- (a) Russia, (b) Hungary (c) UK
(d) USA (e) China
20. What is India's position in the world's solar market ?
- (a) First (b) Second (c) Third
(d) Fourth (e) Fifth



ANSWERS



- 1.(b) An Indian multinational subsidiary of the Mahindra Group, **Tech Mahindra** tied up with US based IBM to establish innovation centres in Bengaluru to strengthen digital transformation and encourage adoption of more hybrid cloud-based technologies among its global customers.
- 2.(d) Mazumdar-Shaw , who founded Biocon India in **1978**, secured a place in world's top 20 inspirational leaders in Biopharma under Medicine Maker Power List 2020. She has been featured on this list for six consecutive years since 2015.
- 3.(b) **Uttar Pradesh** launched the “Pravasi Raahat Mitra” App to connect migrants with schemes and jobs. It has been developed in coordination with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to monitor the health of the migrants, connect them to government schemes and collect their data to help them get a job as per their skills.
- 4.(e) **HDFC** bank released a song titled #HumHaarNahiMaanenge to keep hopes up amidst Covid-19. It has been composed by Oscar and Grammy Award-winning musician AR Rahman, with lyrics by Prasoon Joshi.
- 5.(d) **Uttar Pradesh** became the first state to get a software-based in-house facility of virtual courts. It has requisite infrastructure in all its courts for hearing cases through video conferencing.
- 6.(d) World Thalassaemia Day was observed on **8th** May to create awareness about the disease and help thalassaemia patients to lead a normal life. Theme for this year was “The dawning of a new era for thalassaemia: Time for a global effort to make novel therapies accessible and affordable to patients.”

- 7.(b)** Former world **Snooker** champion Peter Ebdon of the UK announced retirement from the sport. He won the 2002 world championship after defeating Stephen Hendry in a 18-17 final thriller. The 1992 UK Championship fetched him World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association Newcomer of the Year award.
- 8.(d)** Union Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel released e-book “Prof. B. B. Lal -India Rediscovered” to mark the 100th birthday year of Prof B. B. Lal, who was a great **archaeologist**. He was the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India from 1968 to 1972.
- 9.(b)** Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) in association with several technology partners, announced a launch of a national e-commerce marketplace ‘**Bharat market**’ (www.bharatemarket.in) for all retail traders in India, who have served Indian consumers for years.
- 10.(b)** Reserve Bank Of India cancelled Mumbai’s 105-year-old **CKP Co-operative Bank**’s licence as it failed to meet minimum capital requirement of 9%.
- 11.(b)** In October 2020, a book titled “Shivaji in South Block: The Unwritten History of a Proud People” by **Girish Kube** will be released. It is about Maharashtra’s evolution from the past to the modern times and its contribution to the country’s culture, politics, history and society.
- 12.(b)** **Sania Mirza** has been named for the Fed Cup Heart Award and with this, she has become the first Indian to get nominated for the award.
- 13.(d)** **Tripura** launched an agro entrepreneur facilitation desk to boost the economy by helping the entrepreneurs of the state to get subsidies and incentives from Central government funding agencies. It will be operated from the Directorate of Horticulture and Soil Conservation in Agartala.

- 14.(e)** The Central Industrial Security Force (**CISF**), which is a part of the Central Armed Police Force in India, launched an e-office application named 'e-karyalay'. The application is meant to move files and documents of CISF without physical touch.
- 15.(d)** Deepak Mittal has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to **Qatar**. He is a 1998 batch Indian Foreign Service officer.
- 16.(a)** **J&K** administrations signed MoU with Tata Technologies to build 2 Centres for Invention, Innovation, Incubation and Training (CIITs), one each at Government Polytechnic Colleges at Jammu and Baramulla with a cost of Rs 360 crore to improve the academic and training curriculum in technical education.
- 17.(a)** **FIFA** launched #WeWillWin campaign, which is a special video to pay tribute to health workers and other professionals working in COVID-19 pandemic. 50 past and present football stars including former India football captain Bhaichung Bhutia were featured in this video.
- 18.(d)** CM of **Madhya Pradesh** unveiled 'Jeevan Amrit Yojana' to help people fight against COVID-19. Under this yojna an ayurvedic product called 'Trikatu Churna (means three peppers)' will be provided to the people to boost their immune system.
- 19.(d)** According to the National Science and Technology Management Information (NSTMIS) survey on Research and Development Statistics and Indicators 2019-20, **USA** topped the scientific publication. It was followed by China and India, who secured the second and third spots respectively.
- 20.(c)** According to 'India Solar Market Leaderboard 2020' report India has installed 7.3 Giga Watt (GW) of solar power in CY 2019 and consolidated its position as the **third** largest solar market in the world after China and U.S.