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National

Pune Woman behind First Indian made testing tool “Pathodetect Covid-19 Kit”

Virologist **Minal Dakhve Bhosale** from Pune had headed the designing team for the coronavirus testing kit called ‘**Mylab PathoDetect COVID-19 Qualitative PCR kit**’. She is the research and development chief of **Mylab Discovery Solutions in Pune**, the first Indian company have received full approval to make and sell Covid-19 testing kits.



- i. India is currently testing 6.8 per million populations which considered as lowest compared to other countries in this difficult circumstance.
- ii. ‘Mylab PathoDetect COVID-19 Qualitative PCR kit screens and detects the infection within **2.5 hours**, compared to 7+ hours taken by current protocols.

Government of India launches coronavirus tracking app Corona Kavach

The **Government of India** has launched a Coronavirus risk-tracking Application (app) called “**Corona Kavach**”. The app was jointly developed by the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) & the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).

The app uses a person’s location to assess whether they are in the high risk geographical zone or not and the app is available on the Google Play Store.

Key Points:

- i. **About Corona Kavach:** The app is designed to provide information about COVID-19 and capture information. The app uses the information of all the identified positive cases identified in the country so far.
- ii. The app makes users sign in, using their mobile phones & uses the GPS (Global Positioning System) to track their movement.
- iii. The app tracks the data of the users every one hour to alert the people whether they have crossed paths with any person who has tested positive for the infection. This helps in identifying the relevant chain of contact.
- iv. The app uses a colour code to figure out whether the user has come in contact with a COVID-19 carrier or not.
- v. One colour will identify a user who has never come in contact with an infected person, another will indicate if a user is in close proximity.

Shokoofeh Azar authored a book titled- The Enlightenment of The Greengage Tree

Shokoofeh Azar’s *The Enlightenment of The Greengage Tree* was originally published in 2017 by ReadHowYouWant.com, Limited & has been reprinted by Europa Editions in January 2020. The book has been named (among 13) in the **longlist of Booker Prizes (annual) 2020** for a £50,000 (USD 98,000) prize, which is shared between the author & translator of the winning book.



Key Points

- i. She becomes the **1st Iranian author** to be named in the Prize. She has authored essays, articles, & children’s books.
- ii. It is her **1st novel** to be **translated** in **English** which was originally written in **Farsi(Persian)** & also was shortlisted

for Australia's Stella Prize for Fiction.

iii. The novel is about the unbreakable connection between the living and the dead. The core of the story is based on the hardships and sorrows of everyday life in Iran after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 which is narrated by the ghost of a **13-year-old girl, Bahar**.

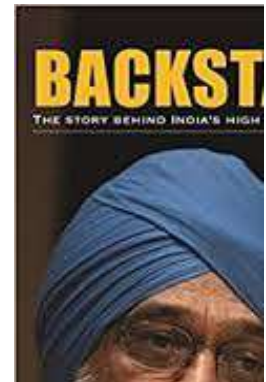
iv. The prize is given to a single novel or short-story collection translated into English and published in Britain or Ireland.

The book titled- 'Backstage: The Story Behind India's High Growth Years' authored by Padma Vibhushan Montek Singh Ahluwalia

The Economist, civil servant & Deputy Chairman of the Indian Planning Commission, with the rank of Cabinet Minister, from July 2004 to May 2014 & Padma Vibhushan awardee(2011) **Montek Singh Ahluwalia** authored a book titled '**Backstage: The Story Behind India's High Growth Years**' which captures the **essence of policymaking** between 1985 and 2014.

Key Points

- i. The book states about India's spectacular **economic growth** and its historic achievements in poverty alleviation during the 10-year tenure of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), as well as allegations of policy freeze and **corruption** in India's **recent history** & is published by Rupa Publication.
- ii. He has served in a number of positions in Government of India like, – Special Secretary to the Prime Minister, Commerce Secretary etc., and also worked with the World Bank & the International Monetary Fund.



Satyarth Nayak authored a book- 'Sridevi: The Eternal Screen Goddess'

Author & screenwriter **Satyarth Nayak** authored his **1st non-fiction book** titled as '**Sridevi: The Eternal Screen Goddess**' which is about the late actress Sridevi. It is published by Penguin eBury Press

Key Points:

- i. The book states about her cinematic journey from child star to megastar & also give glimpses of her as a person, sister, mother & wife.
- ii. Satyarth Nayak is known for his bestselling novel The Emperor's Riddles (2014), a historical thriller.
- iii. He has won the Youth Inspiration Award (Literature) 2017, Shri Award for Men Achievers (Literature) 2016, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Honour Award 2008.



Finance Minister participates in the 2nd Extraordinary G20 FMCBG virtual meeting

Union finance & corporate affairs minister, **Nirmala Sitharaman** participates in the **2nd Extraordinary G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG)** virtual meeting to discuss the impact of COVID-19 in the global economy & coordinate efforts to respond to this global challenge hosted by the Saudi Arabian Presidency.

Discussions made by Finance Minister

- i. Supported the proposal of G20 Action Plan & highlighted that these will provide a chance for immense cross-learning and critical insights.
- ii. Made specific interventions to review & improve the International Monetary Fund (IMF) toolkit and further expand the swap line network.
- iii. Suggested that the IMF can **develop innovative and unique mechanisms** to meet COVID-19 financial requirements, as policy space is severely restricted in most countries under these unprecedented circumstances.

Central govt redefines domicile for J&K; Perks and Privileges of ex-CMs of J&K Withdrawn

A new definition for domicile for Jammu and Kashmir was introduced which has stated that a person residing in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir for at least **15 years** or has studied for a period of **seven years** in Jammu and Kashmir and appeared in **Class 10 or 12 examinations** will now be eligible to be a permanent resident of the UT. The notification has been issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in the exercise of powers conferred by section 96 of the J&K Reorganization Act, 2019, under section 14 referred to as The J&K Civil Services (Decentralization and Recruitment Act). This new rule was issued under the Section 3A of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Adaptation of State Laws Order 2020, under the Jammu and Kashmir civil services decentralisation and recruitment Act.

The perks and privileges of former Chief Ministers (CMs) of Jammu & Kashmir have been withdrawn after the central government repealed **section 3-C** of the **State Legislature Members' Pension Act, 1984**. Former J&K CMs were enjoying a long list of privileges since 1984.

Hindustan Unilever completes its merger with GSKCH India

Hindustan Unilever (HUL), India's largest fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) company, has completed the merger of **Glaxo SmithKline Consumer Healthcare Limited (GSKCH India)** with itself.

Key Points:

- i. This merger, announced on December 3, 2018, is one of the biggest deals in the FMCG field and it will result in better value creation for all stakeholders of the firm.
- ii. Following the merger, GSKCH's other brands such as Boost, Maltova and Viva will be HUL's brand portfolio.
- iii. Apart from this merger, HUL has also acquired the famous health drink brand Horlicks for India from GSK for an amount of 375.6 mln Euro (Rs. 3045 Crore).
- iv. The merger is a part of HUL's aim to build a sustainable and profitable foods and refreshment (F&R) business in India by increasing the big trend of health and wellness.

Donations for PM-CARES Fund granted 100% tax exemption under IT Act, 1961

The donations made under newly-formed Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM-CARES FUND) to provide assistance to the persons affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, are made eligible for 100% deduction under section **80G** of the Income Tax (IT) Act, 1961.

- For this, the provisions of the IT Act are amended through the **Taxation and other Laws (Relaxation of Certain Provisions) Ordinance, 2020** which has also made the tax features of PM-CARES Fund at par with Prime Minister National Relief Fund (PMNRF).

- It should be noted that the date for claiming deduction under section 80G of IT Act has been extended up to **June 30, 2020**, so the donation made up to that date will be eligible for deduction from income of FY 2019-20.
- Also, individuals and corporates paying concessional tax on the income of FY 2020-21 under the new regime can make a donation to the PM CARES Fund up to June 30 and can claim a deduction against income of FY 2019-20.

Corona Care: India's first coronavirus hospitalization insurance by PhonePe for Covid-19 treatment

The accelerated pace of coronavirus is affecting mankind adversely despite government efforts for curbing the situation. It is posing an additional financial burden on individuals or families to get hospitalization treatment for COVID-19. To provide support for such cases, Digital payments company PhonePe has launched India's first COVID-19 hospitalization insurance policy called **Corona Care** in collaboration with **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance** for people who have been infected and hospitalised for covid-19 treatment.



- The policy will provide an insurance cover of **50,000** on a one-time payment of **Rs 156** for people who are under **55 years** of age.
- The insured person will be eligible for the claim only if he/she is diagnosed with COVID-19 after 15 days from the date of purchase of this insurance.
- The policy will be valid at any hospital that is offering treatment for covid-19. It will also cover 30 days of expenses on pre-hospitalization and post-care medical treatment.

For enrolment of policy, customers don't need to undertake any medical tests. They can instantly purchase through the PhonePe app's My Money section while sitting at home amid lockdown.

Government launches its 1st comprehensive COVID-19 tracking app called Aarogya Setu

The **Government of India (GoI)** has officially launched its 1st comprehensive **coronavirus (COVID-19) tracking app** called '**Aarogya Setu**' (which translates from Sanskrit to 'A bridge of health') for Android and iOS (iPhone Operating System) users to connect health services with the people to fight the novel coronavirus outbreak.



Key Points:

i. The app has been developed by the National Informatics Center (NIC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in just 4 days.

Aarogya Setu app: What is it?

The app notifies the user via smartphone location data & Bluetooth whether they came in contact with someone infected with Coronavirus within 6 feet radius. It is available in 11 languages including English, Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, among others and it is now in beta version with almost all the functions of beta version.

The privacy of users in the app has been taken care of and therefore the data is not shared with any third party app.

The app is equipped with many more features like a chatbot. With this, one can identify the symptoms of corona virus

and it answers their queries. This app also gives the Health Ministry updates and a list of Corona virus helpline numbers for every state of India.

This app is different from other COVID-19 tracking apps - MyGov app & Corona Kavach developed by the National e-Governance Division of MeitY in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).

Geo-fencing app to locate quarantine violators

The

government has tested an application named, **Geo-fencing app** to trigger emails and SMS alerts to an authorised government agency, if a person has jumped **quarantine** or has **escaped** from **isolation**, based on the person's mobile phone's cell tower location.

Key Points

i. The Centre under the **Indian Telegraph Act 1885**, uses powers to “fetch information” from telecom companies every 15 minutes to track COVID-19 quarantine violators across the country & is accurate by up to 300 m.



World Bank approves \$1 billion emergency funds for India: COVID-19

The World Bank has approved total aid of USD 1.9 billion for 25 countries to tackle COVID-19 pandemic. The largest amount of assistance was **USD 1 billion** for **India** followed by USD 200 million for Pakistan, USD 129 million for Sri Lanka, USD 100 million for Afghanistan and USD 83 million for Ethiopia.

Bione launches India's 1st home screening test kit for COVID-19

Bengaluru based startup **Bione**, a genetic and microbiome testing firm has launched **India's 1st home screening test kit** for **COVID-19** & is approved by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

Key Points

i. To take the test using the kit one has to clean the finger with an alcohol swab and use the lancet provided to finger-prick & the provided cartridge reads the results within 5-10 minutes.

ii. The prices of the kit ranges from Rs 2,000 to 3,000 & it will be delivered within 2-3 days of ordering.

iii. The easy-to-use kit will be deployed in the market after quality checks & approvals from the regulatory authority.

iv. Regardless of the results in the screening kit, the company advises people to undergo laboratory testing if someone shows signs of coronavirus.

v. Earlier the company had also developed a Microbiome test kit to check gut dysbiosis and also genetic tests to predict susceptibility to contagious diseases.



About ICMR:

Headquarters– New Delhi, India

Director General– Balram Bhargava

About Bione:

It is founded by a world-renowned genomicist, and the 1st person to bring Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) in India. It is 1st & only organisation to offer personalised Genetic and Microbiome testing services in India

Headquarters– Bengaluru, Karnataka

Coronavirus: IIT Roorkee in association with AIIMS-Rishikesh prepares low-cost portable ventilator 'Prana-vayu'

IIT (Indian Institute of Technology)- Roorkee, Uttarakhand in collaboration with **AIIMS** (All India Institute of Medical Science) **Rishikesh, Uttarakhand**, has developed a low-cost portable ventilator called '**Prana-vayu**' costing just Rs.25,000.

The commercial product will be around 1.5 feet by 1.5 feet for better portability.

Key Points:

- i. This closed loop ventilator equipped with state-of-the-art facilities & can prove useful in ensuring the safety of coronavirus (Covid-19) patients.
- ii. The ventilator is based on the controlled operation of the prime mover to deliver the required amount of air to the patient. Its automatic process regulates the pressure and flow rate according to breathing and release. The ventilator also has an arrangement that can control the tidal volume and breath per minute.
- iii. The ventilator is beneficial for patients of all ages, especially the elderly, with being useful in major obstructions of the respiratory tract.
- iv. The research began at the Tinkering Laboratory in IIT-Roorkee by a team of IIT Roorkee consists of Prof. Akshay Dvivedi and Prof. Arup Kumar Das who received online support from Debendra Tripathi from AIIMS, Rishikesh.

Tamil Nadu topped in micro-irrigation coverage under PMKSY for FY 2019-20

The state of Tamil Nadu has topped the all-India level for micro-irrigation (MI), under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), with coverage of **2,06,853.25 ha** for the year financial year 2019-20. The state is followed by **Karnataka** and **Gujarat** with 1,41,103.56 Ha and 1,08,322.00 Ha of coverage respectively.



- On the other hand, the cumulative total coverage of MI during 2015-2020 has been topped by **Karnataka** (8,15,690.31 ha) followed by Andhra Pradesh (7,17,421.08 ha) and Gujarat (7,00,858.35 ha). Tamil Nadu occupies the fourth spot with about 5,62,059.11 ha.

Central government constitutes 10-member group headed by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant to fight corona

In order to deal with this coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic, the **central government** has constituted a 10-member group under the chairmanship of NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog CEO (Chief Executive

Officer) **Amitabh Kant.**

Key Points:

i. The work of this group will primarily identify issues through 3 groups of stakeholders, the **empowered group** set up for coordination with **private sector**, **NGOs** and **international organisations** then present effective measures to address solutions to the issues related to the formulation of plans for counter-activities related to COVID-19. The 3 groups includes

- The UN agencies, World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Civil Society Organisations and development partners
- Industry associations – CII (Confederation of Indian Industry), FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry), ASSOCHAM (Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India), NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies).

ii. NITI Aayog write to the over 92,000 NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) / CSOs (civil society organisation) registered on its 'Darpan' portal to help the government identify hotspots, the elderly, the differently-abled, children & other vulnerable groups to fight against the virus.

Indian Railways' RCF unit developed low-cost ventilator 'Jeevan' to fight COVID-19

The Indian Railways has developed a low-cost ventilator 'Jeevan' at its premier coach production unit, **Rail Coach Factory (RCF), Kapurthala** in Punjab. The cost of "Jeevan" is around **Rs 10,000** without the compressor and it will not rise over Rs 30,000 even after adding a few more indicators. The ventilator is now awaiting the final clearance from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).



- It should be noted that this ventilator has produced at a time when the nation needs them utmost due to COVID-19 effect. Currently India has 57,000 ventilators but their requirement can be reached between 110,000-220,000.
- Also, Jeevan will produce low cost-effective service as other ventilators cost between Rs5- Rs15 lakh.

Key Points:

-If Jeevan receives final clearance from ICMR then RCF will produce 100 such devices every day.

-The **reason behind its low cost** is that it is produced from materials which were already available in the factory. For eg: the portable compressor has been made from an air cooling machine, the body from coach components, the argon flow has been taken from a laser welding machine, while the microprocessor has been taken from the coach information system.

Two new books providing a better understanding of COVID-19 will release in May 2020

To provide better understanding and prevention of novel coronavirus (**COVID-19**), two new books are all set to release in May 2020. The books are:

- How Contagion Works: Science, Awareness and Community in Times of Global Crisis" by Italian physicist **Paolo Giordano**.
- Deadliest Enemy: Our War Against Killer Germs" by epidemiologist **Michael Osterholm** and author **Mark Olshaker**.



Both books will be published by **Hatchette**, United States (US).

Key Points:

- “How Contagion works” will explain how contagion works and why people should limit their exposure to the outside world. It should be noted that Giordano’s first novel, “The Solitude of Prime Numbers”, was translated into more than 40 languages worldwide and won the Premio Strega, the most prestigious Italian literary award.
- On the other hand Deadliest Enemy is a high scientific drama, a chronicle of medical mystery and discovery, a reality check and a practical plan of action.

Cabinet approved 30% salary cut of PM, Ministers, MPs for FY 20-21 to manage COVID-19; MPLAD suspended for 2 yrs

Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi has approved an ordinance of 30% cut in the salaries of all Members of Parliament (MPs) for FY 20-21 and a **two-year suspension** (2020-21 and 2021-22) of the MP Local Area Development (MPLAD) scheme so that the amount saved can go to the Consolidated Fund of India to fight COVID-19. This announcement was made by **Prakash Javadekar**, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

- In regard to the 30% salary cut, the passed ordinance has amended the **Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act, 1954**. The remuneration cut is effective from **April 1, 2020** for a period of one year.

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal announces 5T plan to control the spread of COVID-19

Delhi Chief Minister(CM) Arvind Kejriwal announced a **5T plan** which includes- **Testing, Tracing, Treatment, Teamwork & Tracking and monitoring** to control the spread of COVID-19 in the state.

Key Points

- i. Testing- Only through testing, the infected person can be detected & aggressive testing is crucial to prevent the spread of the virus.
- ii. Tracing- Persons associated with a positive patient are identified and asked for self-quarantine.
- iii. Treatment- If someone is infected with COVID-19, they will be provided treatment.
- iv. Teamwork- The virus can be combated & defeated through teamwork.
- v. Tracking & Monitoring- Active tracking & monitoring the developments will help to take action to deal with the spread of the virus.



Smart cities joining hands with medical practitioners to provide online consultation; Ahmedabad India's No.1 Smart City

To keep the social distancing norm fulfilled amid COVID-19, smart cities are collaborating with certified doctors and health experts to provide online medical consultation facilities to citizens. This decision of collaboration was taken on the lines of guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) along with NITI (**National Institution for Transforming India**) Aayog and Indian Medical Council (ICM) to allow remote delivery of medical services during the lockdown period.

India's 40.59% environment-related crimes reported in Rajasthan during 2014-16: CAG

In accordance with the report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) for the year ended March 31, 2018, 40.59% of the crimes related to the environment in the country were committed in Rajasthan (RJ) during 2014-16. The major crimes were violation of **Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980** and **Wildlife Protect Act, 1972** which resulted in using of forest land for non-forest purposes without approval of government and acapturing, poisoning, snaring or trapping of wild animals respectively.

- A total of 15,723 crimes related to the environment were registered in the country during 2014-16 and the number of cases in RJ during this period was 6,382, which is 40.59%

GoI approved Rs.15000 cr for COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package

Indian Government has approved Rs.15000 crores for 'India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package' to build health infrastructure in states and UTs till **March 2024**. Of the 15,000 crore, Centre would release **Rs.7,774 crore** for immediate COVID-19 Emergency Response use till June 2020 and the rest will be set for medium-term support of 1-4 years.

- The package will be given to state governments and Union Territories on the basis of their size and number of positive cases.
- It is to be provided in **three phases** — January 2020 to June 2020, July 2020 to March 2021 and from April 2021 to March 2024.

Objective:

The objective of this package is to limit the spread of COVID-19 through the development of diagnostics and dedicated treatment facilities. This will allow the state government to ramp up the number of Corona testing facilities, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Isolation Beds, ICU beds, ventilators and other essential equipment..

Bharat Biotech ties-up with FluGen & US virologists to develop intranasal vaccine for coronavirus 'CoroFlu'

In view of increasing Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases rapidly worldwide, **Bharat Biotech International Ltd**, a leading vaccines & bio-therapeutics manufacturers in India, has joined hands with US (United States) **FluGen Inc** and virologists at the **University of Wisconsin-Madison in Wisconsin, US**, to begin the development and testing of a new intranasal vaccine for COVID-19 called '**CoroFlu**'.



Key Points:

- i. The vaccine is being developed on the basis of FluGen's flu vaccine candidate known as M2SR, a self-limited version of influenza virus. It induces an immune response against the flu. Based on an invention by UW–Madison virologists and FluGen co-founders **Yoshihiro Kawaoka and Gabriele Neumann**, M2SR is a self-limiting version of the influenza virus that induces an immune response against the flu.
- ii. The vaccine will be built by FluGen's lab that insert gene sequences from SARS-CoV-2, the novel coronavirus that causes the disease COVID-19, into M2SR so that the novel vaccine will also induce immunity against the coronavirus.
- iii. Different trials of this vaccine may take three to six months. Once prepared, a drop of this vaccine will be administered through the nose to the mucosal layer of the corona patients. The company will produce 300 million doses

if the test is successful.

iv. Pharma majors like Ahmedabad (Gujarat) -based Zydus Cadila and Pune (Maharashtra)-based Serum Institute have already engaged in the process to make vaccines against corona.

ICMR approves use of TB diagnostic machine for coronavirus

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the apex body in India for the formulation and promotion of biomedical research, has allowed the use of a diagnostic machine used to test drug-resistant TB (Tuberculosis) for conducting coronavirus tests. In this regard, it had recognized the 'TruenatTM beta COV test on the TruLabTM workstation' and recommended it as a screening test.

- Currently, India is using RT-PCR (Real Time-Polymerase Chain Reaction) test recommended by the US (United States) and approved by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration).



Key Points:

i. During the investigations, samples will be taken from the nose and throat and sent to the viral transport medium (VTM) provided with the kit.

ii. Earlier ICMR has also recommended the use of the Truenat beta CoV test on Truelab workstation, which is used to detect drug resistant TB.

Ahmedabad railway station becomes first station of IR to install sanitizing tunnel

The **Ahmedabad railway station** at Kalupur, Gujarat of Western Railway became the first station of Indian Railways (IR) to install a **Walk Through Mass Sanitizing Tunnel** to ensure the safety of staff and passengers in the view of the COVID-19. The tunnel was inaugurated by Ahmedabad DRM (Divisional Railway Manager) Deepak Jha.

Key Points:

i. **About Sanitizing tunnel:** The tunnel uses WHO (World Health Organization) approved sanitizer and fitted with a sensor, so that when a passenger approaches the tunnel entrance it starts fogging automatically.

ii. The distance of the tunnel is 20 feet long which can be covered within 10 seconds. The tunnel has a capacity of sanitizing 25 to 30 people per minute & consumes approximately 20 ml sanitizer per person.

iii. The sanitization system runs on the principle of Vaporization process which converts the sanitizer mixture into vapour which forms a uniform layer over the surface & dries up quickly.

Google and Apple ties-up to create coronavirus contact tracing technology by smartphone

Apple Inc., an American multinational technology company, has partnered with **Google LLC** have jointly create a coronavirus (COVID-19) contact tracing technology using Bluetooth signals.

i. Both companies are launching a tracing tool for Google Android phones and Apple iPhones through which it will be easy to notify people via smartphone if they come in contact with any patient infected with covid-19.

ii. The coming together of the two firms will help governments and health agencies reduce the spread of the virus, where If a person tests positive for corona, they could notify public health authorities through an app. then, those public health apps would then alert anyone whose smartphones had come near the infected person's phone in the prior 14 days.



ICMR nods: Kerala becomes the first state to commence clinical trial plasma therapy treatment

The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has given approval to Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, to commence **convalescent plasma therapy**, which uses antibodies from the blood of cured patients, to treat critically ill COVID- 19 cases on a trial basis. Therefore, **Kerala** becomes the first state in the country to start clinical trial plasma therapy treatment.

India becomes top Hydroxychloroquine producer & exporter with 70% annual global share

India has become the largest producer and exporter of

Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ), the most talked out medicine to curb the COVID-19 disease, with 70% of annual global production according to the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA); Sec-General Sudarshan Jain.



- **India as largest HCQ producer:** Currently, our nation is producing 40 tonnes, or 20 crore tablets of 200 mg each, of HCQ every month. The top pharma companies manufacturing this drug are Ipca Laboratories Ltd., ZydusCadila and Wallace Pharmaceuticals Ltd.
- **India as largest HCQ exporter:** Between April 2019 and January 2020, India shipped HCQ Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) worth \$1.22 billion. During the same period, exports of formulations made from HCQ stood at \$5.50 billion.

It should be noted that the drug is not manufactured in developed nations such as the United States (US) because malaria is virtually non-existent there.

Originally hydroxychloroquine is an **anti-malarial drug**.

Goa becomes the first state to integrate allopathy and Ayurveda to treat COVID-19 patients

Goa Chief Minister (CM) Pramod Sawant announced that **Goa** becomes the first state to integrate **allopathy** and **Ayurveda** to treat COVID-19 patients and those who have been quarantined.

Key Points:

- i.The CM also added that although Ayurveda cannot cure COVID-19, it will certainly **boost patients' immunity**.
- ii.The treatment will be administered in consultation with doctors who are dealing with COVID-19 patients, who is also an Ayurvedic practitioner. He also said they have launched a mobile app 'AyurGoaCovid-19' in collaboration with the Union Ayush ministry.

Nationwide lockdown extended till May 3, 2020 to contain COVID-19 spread

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Damodardas Modi extended the nationwide lockdown till May 3, 2020, to halt COVID-19 spread. He made **7 points appeal (Saptapadi)** to the citizens of India as a preventive measure from COVID-19 disease. These are:

- i.Extra care of **senior citizens** as they are prone to COVID-19 infection due to weak immunity.
- ii.Follow the protocols of lockdown and social distancing.
- iii.Adopt guidelines issued by the Ayush Ministry to boost immunity.
- iv.Download the Aarogya Setu App launched by the central government to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
- v.Help the poor within means and fulfil their basic needs such as food.



vi. Businessmen and companies should not terminate their employees.

vii. To respect 'corona warriors', i.e. doctors, nurses, sweepers and police officers on ground.

Uttar Pradesh became first state to initiate Pool Testing of COVID-19

The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has given its approval for pool testing to Uttar Pradesh (UP), making latter the first state to do so. The decision has been taken to maximize the sample testing on a daily basis as the cases of COVID-19 positive patients are increasing in the state. As of April 13, 2020, the tally for coronavirus positive cases in the state is 558.

What is pool testing?

If 10 samples are mixed and tested for COVID-19 and if they test negative, then it will indicate that all samples are negative. But if the test is not negative, then individual testing will be done. This will increase the testing capacity at a time as well as accelerate the process using RTPCR (Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction).



Jim Corbett National Park of U'khand becomes India's 1st quarantine centre for animals

Jim Corbett National Park, the India's oldest forested wildlife sanctuary located in the Nainital district of **Uttarakhand**, has become the India's 1st **quarantine centre for animals** with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Key Points:

- i. At least 10 quarantine centers are being set up within the complex to handle the corona virus prey animals & Cameras will be installed in the park to monitor the cold and cough symptoms of animals.
- ii. **Background:** After humans, the threat of COVID-19 is now hovering over wildlife. The NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority) has alerted the officials of country's sanctuaries, forests and zoos after the Coronavirus infection was detected in the Malayan tiger 'Nadia' in the Bronx zoo of US (United States).



Asia to stall at 0% growth in 2020 for 1st time in 60 years: IMF

International Monetary Fund's (IMF) report titled 'COVID-19 Pandemic and the Asia-Pacific Region: Lowest Growth Since the 1960s' stated that Asia will stall at **0% growth in 2020** for the 1st time in 60 years which includes the Global Financial Crisis (4.7%) and the Asian Financial Crisis (1.3%).

- It also stated that the region will be "severe and unprecedented" due to the impact of the pandemic & Asia is still doing better than other regions in terms of activity.

Key Points

- i. The global economy is expected to shrink by 3%, which is the worst recession since the Great Depression & Asia's key trading partners are expected to shrink sharply including the United States by 6 % and Europe by 6.6 %.
- ii. It expects a 7.6% expansion in Asian economic growth in 2021 on the assumption that it contains a successful policy implementation with a highly uncertain outlook.
- iii. Downward revision are considered ranging from 3.5% points in the case of Korea to over 9% points in the case of Australia, Thailand and New Zealand.
- iv. IMF in its latest edition has placed India & China as the fastest-growing emerging economies of the world with a positive growth rate in 2020, where China's economy is expected to grow by 1.2% in 2020, from 6.1% growth (2019) & is expected to rebound later in 2020, with growth expected to rise to 9.2% 2021.

India's Aarogya Setu becomes world's fastest app to reach 50 million downloads in 13 days

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Amitabh Kant stated that Centre's mobile app, **Aarogya Setu**, which is developed for tracking COVID-19 patients, has become the world's

fastest app to reach **50 million** (5 crore) downloads in just **13 days**.

Key Points

- i. The app is developed by the National Informatics Center (NIC) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in just 4 days, it supports 11 languages.
- ii. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is working on testing and some of the other aspects, whereas Tech Mahindra and the Mahindra group is working with the committee on the next version of this application and developing next-generation technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, and data science.
- iii. Tech Mahindra is also working on expanding the reach of Aarogya Setu on all types of phones, where the current version of the app is only suitable for use on smartphones.

'Bat coronavirus' in 2 Indian bat species: ICMR

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in a 1st of its study in collaboration with a team of scientists from the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, have found the presence of different kind of 'Bat coronavirus' (BtCoV) from 25 bats in 2 Indian bat species namely, **Pteropus** (Indian Flying Fox) and **Rousettus** (old world fruit bats).

It also stated that the origin of the novel coronavirus has been traced in bats and pangolins, but there is no evidence that BtCoV can be transmitted to humans.



Advisory issued on secure use of Zoom meeting platform: MHA

The Cyber Coordination Centre (CyCord), under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), has issued an advisory to safeguard private individuals who use the video-conferencing app, **Zoom** for private purposes like a meeting platform & states that it is not for use by government officers/officials for official purposes.

Objective of the advisory

To prevent unauthorized entry in the conference room, prevent an authorised participant from carrying out malicious attacks on the terminals of other users in the conference & avoid Denial-Of-Service(DOS) attack by restricting users through passwords.

MHA's advisory

Set new user ID and password for each meeting, Enable meeting room, Disable join before host, Allow screen sharing by host only, Disable allow removed participants to re-join, Restrict or disable file transfer option, Lock meeting once all attendees have joined, Restrict the recording feature, End meeting (and not just leave, if you are the administrator).

Key Points

- i. The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (**Cert-In**) has been informed that it is not a safe platform on February 6 and March 30, 2020.
- ii. **Taiwan** becomes the 1st country to ban it from government business over cyber security concerns on April 7, 2020.

Tata AIA becomes the 1st Life Insurance company in India to announce additional benefits: COVID-19

Tata AIA becomes the **1st** Life Insurance company in India to announce **additional benefits** for its **policyholders & agents** so as to support them during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

- Recently Tata Trusts and Tata group have announced their contribution towards the management of COVID-19 in India.

Additional Benefits

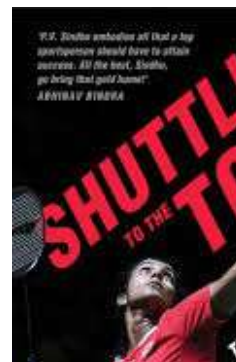
- i. All policyholders will get additional benefit equal to the base sum assured or **Rs 5,00,000** (no additional cost) whichever is lower, it is applicable for all valid death claims with a date of death on or before June 30th 2020.
- ii. All 'active' agents with their spouse and children are entitled upto **Rs 25,000** hospitalization cover if diagnosed with COVID-19 within the period as mentioned for the policyholders.

Shuttling to the Top: The Story of P V Sindhu authored by Krishnaswamy V

A book titled **"Shuttling to the Top: The Story of P V Sindhu"** authored by **Krishnaswamy V** was published by **HarperCollins** in Amazon digital platform along with other two books, amid the lockdown due to Coronavirus.

Key Points:

- i. "Shuttling to the Top: The Story of P V Sindhu", conveys the story of one of the finest badminton players in the world. The biography tells her life from the time when, while living in the colony of Secunderabad, she travelled over 40 km every day by train to get to P Gopichand's academy and train.
- ii. P V Sindhu has achieved so much, including four World Championship medals besides those at Olympics, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games.
- iii. **About Krishnaswamy V:** He is a sports journalist who has covered seven Olympic Games and numerous international championships in badminton. He is also the author of *Sachin: A Hundred Hundreds Now*.
- iv. The other two books published by HarperCollins include **"Shameless"** by **Taslima Nasreen**. The book was translated from Bengali written by Arunava Sinha.
- v. The third book is **"The Big Questions of Life"** authored by **Om Swami** which marks the way to enlightenment through mindful thinking.



Health Ministry formulated colour codes for Lockdown 2.0 to manage COVID-19 pandemic

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) formulated a new set of guidelines for the nationwide **lockdown-2.0** or **Smart Lockdown**, which started from 20th April 2020 and continues till May 3, 2020. It decided to divide all Indian districts into **hotspots** (red zones); **non-hotspots** (orange zones) and green zones on the basis of absolute number of cases and the speed of growth in cases.

- Any district reporting **more than six cases** classified as hotspot district or red zone.
- The new guidelines have allowed partial economic activities in selected Orange and green Zones adhering to the protocol of social distancing while red zones will continue to have the current lockdown measures.

Key Points:

- A house with positive cases or a cluster with positive cases is marked as the epicentre of the containment zone with only essential services available.
- Also, a buffer zone is marked where people with severe and acute respiratory illnesses (SARI) are checked and monitored.

Rajasthan: First Indian State to carry out Rapid Testing for Covid-19

Rajasthan became the first state in the country to carry out Rapid Testing for Covid 19. State's urban primary health centre of **TopkhanaDesh** (also known as Jaju Dispensary) in Jaipur started rapid tests at 5 p.m where 52 persons were tested and all were found COVID-19 negative.

- This test will be done at a large scale to assess the prevalence of Covid 19 in hotspots or red zones.
- Apart from this, Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests or laboratory tests will continue to be done in acceleration in the containment zones all over Rajasthan.

About Rapid Testing:

This test requires a drop of blood just like a diabetes test and gives instant results. Though this is not a confirmatory test but helps in quick isolation of person tested COVID-19 positive to prevent spread.

TVS motor acquires 122-year-old UK-based firm Norton motorcycles for Rs 153 cr

TVS (Thiruvallur Vengam Sundram) **Motor Company Ltd**, an Indian multinational motorcycle company, has acquired the 122-year-old iconic British company **Norton Motorcycle (UK) Ltd** for **Rs 153 crore** (£16 million).

Key Points:

- i. TVS now owns some of the UK properties of Norton in administration (Norton Motorcycles Holdings Ltd and Norton Motorcycles (UK) Ltd) through one of its overseas subsidiaries, TVS Motor Singapore Pte. Ltd.
- ii. It would be one of the most interesting deals of the historic motorcycle brand in recent times and would reflect India's rapidly growing prominence & TVS Motor Company in the international two-wheeler market.
- iii. TVS has also tied up with BMW Motorrad i.e. BMW G 310R and BMW G 310 GS are being manufactured at the TVS plant itself. Along with this, TVS also has its own motorcycle based platform TVS Apache RR 310.

Gujarat's GBRC: 2nd Indian institute to decode COVID-19 genome sequence; 3 new mutations found

Gujarat's Gandhinagar-based **Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC)** has become the second institute in India after the **National Institute of Virology (NIV)** in Pune, Maharashtra to decode the entire genome sequence of the COVID-19 virus but with three new mutations.



- GBRC has found **nine** mutations in its genome sequence. However, six of the mutations were already found by other research institutes globally but the three new mutations will help in developing medicines or vaccines needed to stop the spread of the deadly virus.
- The first genome sequence of the COVID-19 virus was found by **Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention** (China CDC) in Beijing, China on January 10, 2020.

Key Points:

- As per finding, the virus mutates (changes its form) in order to survive in different situations. It mutates when medicines try to control it.
- It should be noted that COVID-19 biological macro molecule is **RNA** (ribonucleic acid) not DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid).
- 100 Positive COVID-19 samples have been collected in different parts of Gujarat. After analyzing their genome a strategy will be formed to curb the COVID-19 virus.

Centre formed high-level task force headed by Vinod Paul & K Vijay Raghavan for development of Covid-19 vaccine

In the wake of increasing death toll, the central government has constituted high level task force for vaccine and drug testing for coronavirus disease (Covid-19) co-chaired by **Vinod Paul**, member NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog, and **Professor Krishnaswamy Vijay Raghavan**, principal scientific advisor to the government.

- The objective of the task force is to catalyze national and international efforts towards vaccine development to treat Covid-19.
- The task force members include Director General of Health Services, **Dr. Rajiv Garg**, Drug Controller General of India, **Dr. VG Somani** and representatives of Ayush (Ayurvedic, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha

and Homeopathy) ministry, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), department of biotechnology, among others.

Key Responsibilities of Task Force:

–**Department of biotechnology** would act as a nodal agency for the development of the vaccine to fight COVID-19 and to provide government facilitation.

Uttar Pradesh becomes first state to geotag community kitchens

Uttar Pradesh (UP) became the first state in the country to geotag its 7,368 community kitchens and community shelters across 75 districts which produce 12 lakh food packets a day, due to the sudden onset of COVID-19 lockdown.

Key Points:

- i. The Yogi Adityanath 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.
- ii. Out of these 7,368 community kitchens, 668 are being run by NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations), religious institutions and more than 2 crore food packets have been distributed in UP since March 25, 2020.
- iii. Relief Commissioner Sanjay Goyal, added that the concept of relief camps and community kitchens is not new as every year, the DMs (District Magistrates) work out similar plans in areas affected by yearly droughts and floods.
- iv. The IT (Information Technology) Department of the state approached the Remote Sensing Applications Centre (RSAC), Lucknow, due to the lack of information among the people regarding the location of shelter homes and community kitchens.
- v. As a result, the location of all shelter homes and community kitchens in and around Aligarh, UP, have been integrated with Google Maps and anyone can access them by searching with the keyword ‘community kitchen’, followed by the district’s name.



Centre has amended FDI Policy, 2017 for curbing opportunistic takeovers

Government amends the extant **FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) policy** for curbing opportunistic takeovers/acquisitions of Indian companies from neighboring nations due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the Centre has amended **para 3.1.1** of extant FDI policy as contained in Consolidated **FDI Policy, 2017**.

Amendments:

- As per amended 3.1.1(a) FDI proposals from countries sharing border with India will now be able to invest only with government approval. At present this restriction applies only to FDI from Bangladesh and Pakistan.
 - As per amended 3.1.1(b) any change in beneficial ownership will also require government approval.
- The above decision will take effect from the date of FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act) notification.

A book titled “How the Onion Got Its Layers” authored by Sudha Murty

A book titled “**How the Onion Got Its Layers**” authored by Sudha Murty was published by Puffin. The book is being released in its e-book and audio form for young children.

Key Points:

- i. The book seeks answers to several questions related to the bulb like its many layers and why it brings tears to the eyes when cut.
- ii. “How the Onion Got Its Layers” marks the first ever audio book by Murty and will be released on World Book Day, ie, April 23, 2020.
- iii. This is the second book of the Chapter series by Murty, the first being “How the Sea Became Salty”.
- iv. **About Sudha Murty:** She is an Indian engineering teacher, Kannada and English author. She serves as the Chairperson of the Infosys Foundation and a member of the public health care initiatives of the Gates Foundation.



v. Sudha Murty is the recipient of 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).

FCI allowed to convert surplus rice to ethanol: Government

i. The National Biofuel Coordination Committee (NBCC) meeting under the chairmanship of Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas has approved & allowed Food Corporation of India (FCI).

- To convert the **available surplus rice to ethanol** so as to utilize it in making alcohol-based hand-sanitizers & also for the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme.

ii. It is approved in reference to the National Policy on Biofuels (2018).

RBI cancels license of Goa's oldest bank, Mapusa urban co-operative bank of Goa Ltd.

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has cancelled the license granted to the **Mapusa Urban Co-operative Bank of Goa Ltd.**, Goa to conduct banking business which includes acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits as defined in Section 5 (b) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

The RBI gave 5 specific reasons for cancelling the licence including the bank doesn't maintain the adequate capital structure & income potential.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Institute becomes 1st in country to carry out plasma research in view of Covid-19

i. **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (SVP) Institute** of Medical Science and Research or SVPIMSR has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) & becomes the **1st** authorized **study centre** in the country to carry out **study the plasma research** under trial in view of COVID 19.

ii. The plasma collected from a recovered person was administered to a patient at the medical facility

Facebook buys 9.99% stake in Reliance Jio, largest FDI in India's tech sector

The US tech giant Facebook has bought a 9.99% stake in the telecom unit of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), Reliance Jio for \$5.7 billion, or **Rs 43,574 crore**. This is the largest investment for a minority stake by a technology company anywhere in the world and the largest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the technology sector in India.

- The partnership will help in realizing **Digital India Mission** with its two ambitious goals viz. Ease of Living and Ease of Doing Business.
- The focus of the partnership is to modernize India's small businesses which include 60 million micro, small and medium businesses, 120 million farmers, 30 million small merchants and millions of small and medium enterprises in the informal sector.

Defense Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurates India's 1st mobile laboratory by DRDO to test COVID-19 samples

Defense Minister **Shri Rajnath Singh** inaugurated **Mobile Virology Research and Diagnostics**

Laboratory (MVRDL) namely " **Mobile BSL-3 VRDL Lab**" via video conference. The lab was developed by DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) in association with ESIC (Employees' State Insurance Corporation) Hospital, Hyderabad and Private industry. This mobile lab has the testing capacity of more than 1000 to 2000 samples daily.

Uttar Pradesh becomes the 1st state with a software based in-house facility of virtual courts

- i. Uttar Pradesh(UP) becomes the **1st state** with a software based in-house facility of **virtual courts**, where a requisite infrastructure in Allahabad High Court and all district courts of Uttar Pradesh to hear cases through video conferencing.
- ii. The courts can conduct multiple court proceedings through virtual courts within the court premises without any internet connection.

Government freed DA & DR for 1.1 crore employees & pensioners: COVID-19

- i. The central government has frozen the Dearness Allowance (**DA**) & Dearness Relief (**DR**), an inflation-linked allowance to its **1.1 crore employees & pensioners** respectively due from January 1, 2020 to combat the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.
- ii. The additional instalment of DA and DR due from July 1, 2020, and January 1, 2021, will not be paid.

Govt to suspend 3 sections of IBC, 2016 upto 1yr to avoid insolvency proceedings amid COVID-19

- i. This will act as a relief measure for corporate borrowers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as pave the way for banks to restructure loans.
- ii. An ordinance would be promulgated to suspend three sections of IBC viz. **Section 7, 9 and 10** for six months, if the current situation continues beyond April 30, 2020, and the suspension time can be extended up to one year based on the economic situation.
- iii. The effective date of the amendments coming into force would be the date of promulgation of the ordinance.



#MyBookMyFriend campaign launched by HRD Minister on World Book Day

On account of the **World Book Day** the Union Minister of Human Resource and Development(HRD), Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched **#MyBookMyFriend campaign** in his social media along with the video message saying that when you open a book you open a new world and he said that books are the best friends of a person which inspires and provides a way of thinking and guide in difficult times.

He said that this World Book Day is celebrated in the lockdown and he asked the students to read books of their interest in addition to the subject books and share about the book they are reading with him in the social media using **#MyBookMyFriend**.



Chemicals, Petrochemicals contributed 14.35% of total exports; becomes top exporting sector for 1st time

In a progressive move, the chemical & petrochemical industry became the Indian top exporting sector for FY 2019-20 as the export of chemicals increased by **7.43%** to **Rs 2.68 lakh crore** during the April-January period of FY 2019-2020 in comparison to the corresponding period of 2018-19. This industry contributed **14.35%** of the total exports.

- Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers **Devaragunda Venkappa Sadananda Gowda** has assured full support to the chemical industry towards and appreciated the efforts made by the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals making India a leading global hub for manufacturing of chemicals and petrochemicals.

KGMU becomes the 1st govt hospital in India to successfully launch CPT Treatment: COVID-19

- i. The King George Medical University (**KGMU**), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh became the **1st government (govt) hospital** in India to successfully launch the Convalescent Plasma Therapy (**CPT**) treatment for the COVID-19 patients
- ii. The 1st dose of CPT was administered to a 58-year old patient.

Karnataka tops in total installed renewable capacity: CRISIL Research report

- i. According to a **CRISIL Research report**, **Karnataka** retained its 1st position in terms of **total installed renewable capacity** in FY20 followed by **Tamil Nadu (2nd) & Gujarat(3rd)**.
- ii. The top 3 states in overall solar energy capacity addition are- Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka & in wind energy- Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

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

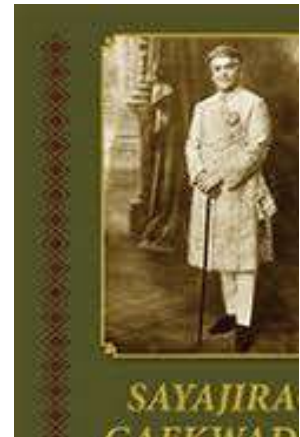
Kamal Jain, professor at Civil Engineering Department, IIT(Indian Institute of Technology)- Roorkee, Uttarakhand, has developed a software which can detect COVID-19 within 5 seconds using x-ray scan of the suspected patient. The software will not only reduce testing costs but will also reduce the risk of exposure to healthcare professionals.

Sayajirao Gaekwad III: The Maharaja of Baroda, New book by Uma Balasubramaniam published by Rupa Publications

Uma Balasubramaniam's "**Sayajirao Gaekwad III: Maharaja of Baroda**", a historic epic published on December 5, 2019, by **Rupa publication** on how a Maratha farmer's 13-year-old boy becomes the King of Baroda and also how the fate twists for the favourite son of the British empire gets himself to the brink of being deposed by the British.

Key Points:

- i. The book focuses on his ascendancy to the throne, his association with the British government in India, his administrations like schools for girls and training institutes for female teachers and reforms like abolishment of child marriage and reintroduction of widow remarriage
- ii. This book was written for the people to understand about one of India's unsung heroes who worked to build a free and modern India.



About Uma Balasubramaniam:

- i. She is a history graduate from the Faculty of Arts of the M.S. University of Baroda.
- ii. She began her career in 2002 as a freelance writer for publications like The Hindu, The Indian Express and the Deccan Chronicle

India slipped two places to 142nd on global press freedom index 2020; Norway tops

- i. The decline in India's rank is showing an improvement in the security of Indian media as in 2019 there were no murders of journalists were recorded as against six in 2018.
- ii. The World Press Freedom Index is compiled by Paris-based **Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF)**, or Reporters Without Borders.
- iii. The index has been topped by **Norway** with a score of 7.84 while **North Korea** stood at last rank of 180 with a score of 85.82.

Goa and Manipur became India's first two states to have zero covid-19 cases

Goa and Manipur became India's first two states to have zero covid-19 cases, Tripura Chief Minister on Thursday announced that the state has become coronavirus- free after its second Covid-19 patient tested negative.

Govt brings ordinance to check attacks against health staff

The amendment, done through an ordinance cleared by the union cabinet, makes changes into the Epidemic Disease Act 1897 to make attacks on health workers a cognizable and non-bailable offence.

The ordinance also allows for a stringent punishment for the attackers who will face up to 7 years in prison and or a penalty of Rs 5 lakh.

International

Poverty to increase by 11 mn in East Asia and Pacific due to COVID-19: World Bank April 2020 Update

World Bank in its April 2020 Economic Update for East Asia and Pacific (EAP) titled “East Asia and Pacific in the Time of COVID-19” has stated that if the economic situation become worsen further due to **COVID-19** consequences then the poverty is estimated to increase by about 11 million people in the EAP region.

- The update has projected slow growth in the developing EAP region to 2.1% from an estimated 5.8% in 2019. Growth in China is also projected to decline to 2.3% from 6.1% in 2019.
- If the uncertainty of COVID-19 were not arisen then under the baseline growth scenario, nearly 35 million people would have escaped across the EAP region in 2020.

UNSC firsts: Adopts 4 resolutions remotely; including “2518” on safety, the security of peacekeepers

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted **four resolutions**, voting for the first time remotely or through video-conferencing as the United Nations (UN) staff work from home due to the coronavirus outbreak. Importantly, UNSC is currently under China’s Presidency and China’s Ambassador to the UN Zhang Jun is the Council President.

For Improving safety and security of peacekeepers; first of its kind

Resolution 2518 adopted

To ensure safety and security of the peacekeepers, the UNSC has unanimously adopted a first of its kind Resolution 2518. The resolution was sponsored by **China** and co-sponsored by **43 countries**.



United Nation’s COP 26 climate change summit postponed till 2021

The 26th session of the **Conference of the Parties (COP 26)** to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was planned to take place from 9-19 November 2020, in Glasgow, Scotland in the United Kingdom (UK) has been postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19. The date and location for the same is unspecified. **Pre-COP** and ‘**Youth for the Climate**’ event were also postponed supposed to be held in Italy.



- This decision has been taken by the **COP Bureau** of the UNFCCC after discussion with the UK and Italian partners.
- It should be noted that around 30,000 people, including 200 world leaders, had been due to attend the 10-day conference for crucial talks regarding rising global temperatures. Currently, the focus of countries is on saving lives and fighting COVID-19.

About UNFCCC:

Establishment– 1992

Headquarter– Bonn, Germany

India, China mark 70 years of diplomatic relations

India and China have marked 70 years of diplomatic relations, both countries exchanged warm words of greetings and spoke of the partnership between the world's two most populous nations. India became the first non-Communist country in Asia to establish diplomatic ties with China on April 1, 1950.

USAID announces \$2.9 million aid to India to fight Coronavirus

The US (United States) Government, through its aid agency **USAID** (United States Agency for International Development), has announced a grant of USD (United States Dollar) **2.9 million** to India to fight against Coronavirus.



Key Points:

- i. US ambassador to India Kenneth Juster mentioned that the assistance will further support India's response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus).
- ii. The US government, through USAID (one of the leading aid agencies globally), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other relevant agencies, is working closely with India to fight against COVID-19.
- iii. The funds will support the USAID's health strengthening project, implemented by Jhpiego, an international non-profit health organization affiliated with John Hopkins University and will also support World Health Organization (WHO) initiatives in India.

SAARC Development Fund allocates USD 5 million for COVID-19 projects

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Development Fund (SDF) has allocated **USD 5 million** (about Rs 38 crore) for **COVID-19 projects** in 8 member countries, in an effort to mitigate the financial losses and severe socio-economic impact of the pandemic.



Key Points

- i. The approval process, project implementation, funding disbursement, management, monitoring and reporting will be in accordance with the existing SDF-Board approved policy and the procedures of the SDF and social Window.
- ii. This project will be funded by the SDF under its Social Window thematic areas. SDF's social window primarily funds projects on poverty alleviation, social development focusing on education, health, and human resource development, among others.
- iii. Currently, SDF operates 90 projects in SAARC countries under its 3 funding windows, with a total financial commitment or allocation of USD 198.24 million.

About SAARC:

8 members– Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

UNSC met for 1st time to discuss COVID-19 impact through video-conference

The United Nation Security Council (UNSC) met for the first time through



closed video-conference session with Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the issues that fall under the UNSC's mandate.

- During the video meet, UNSC has supported all the efforts of UN Secretary-General **Antonio Manuel de Oliveira Guterres** and also underlined the need for unity and solidarity with those affected by the COVID-19.

It should be noted that Antonio Guterres warned the UN Security Council that COVID-19 is threatening international peace and security. UNSC is UN's most powerful body, which has been silent on COVID-19 since the latter started circling the globe. This was for the first time that UNSC shared its view on COVID-19 impact.

China's central bank increases its stake to 1% in HDFC; SAMA also bought 0.7% stake

People's Bank of China (PBOC) increased its stake in Housing Development Finance Corp Limited (HDFC) to **1.01%** from 0.8% on behalf of the Chinese sovereign wealth fund SAFE. With this, now China's central bank holds 1,74,92,909 crore equity shares in HDFC Ltd in accordance with the quarterly (ending March 2020) shareholding pattern disclosure by the latter to the stock exchanges.

- As per the latest shareholding pattern, foreign portfolio investors (FPI) hold 70.88% stake in the HDFC Ltd including 3.2% stake of the Government of Singapore.
- Similarly, Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA), the central bank of Saudi Arabia has also picked up a 0.7% stake in HDFC on behalf of Saudi sovereign wealth fund.

HDFC Ltd owns 19.43% stake in HDFC Bank and 52.7% in HDFC Asset Management Company and 51.45% in HDFC Life Insurance Company. While HDFC Bank owns 96% stake in HDB Financial services and 98% in HDFC Securities.

UN releases \$ 2.5 million to help cyclone-ravaged Vanuatu

The United Nations (UN) 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** affected by **Cyclone Harold** and offered support to other hard-hit countries.



Key Points:

- i. The cyclone made landfall on the largest island in Vanuatu, Espiritu Santo, on April 6, 2020, before hitting the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Tonga, which left more than two dozen people dead, destroyed homes, buildings and crops in four countries.
- ii. Initial assessments suggest as much as 90 percent of the population in Sanma, the most affected province.
- iii. Vanuatu, with roughly 80 islands stretching about 1,300 kilometers and a population near 3,00,000 was jointly controlled by the United Kingdom (UK) and France as the New Hebrides before it gained independence in 1980.

About Vanuatu:

Capital– Port vila.

India becomes World's most digitally dexterous country; 39% technophiles want OTJ & JIT training: Gartner 2019 Survey

In accordance with the **Gartner 2019 Digital Workplace Survey**, India has become the world's most digitally dexterous (skilful) country in the world as it has a vast **Gen Z** workforce who are keen to learn new digitally powered skills in the workplace. India is followed by the United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US). It should be noted that Generation Z or Gen Z are the ones born between 1995 and 2009.

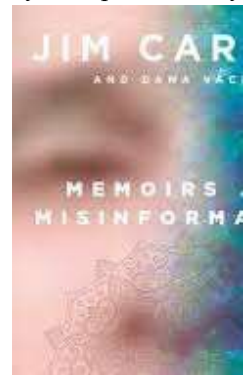
- Sixty-seven per cent of digital workers in India said emerging technologies such as machine learning (ML), artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) are increasing their effectiveness
- The digital workforce in **India** and **Singapore** use real-time messaging and social media networks more frequently for real-time collaboration than the workforce of China, France, Germany, the US and the UK.

Actor Jim Carrey & writer Dana Vachon authored a novel "Memoirs and Misinformation"

Canadian American comedian & actor **Jim Carrey** and writer **Dana Vachon** authored a novel "**Memoirs and Misinformation**" a fearless and semi-autobiographical novel about the reconstruction of personality. It is published by Alfred A Knopf, publishing house & will be published on May 2020

Key Points

- The novel is a tale of acting, Hollywood, agents, celebrity, privilege, friendship, romance, addiction to relevance, fear of personal destruction, our "one big soul," and a catastrophic ending of the world apocalypse within and without.
- Jim Carrey has written a children's fiction novel "How Roland Rolls" (2013), Disney's A Christmas Carol (2010) among others.
- Dana Vachon's essays and journalism have appeared in The New York Times, Slate, and Vanity Fair.



The Book titled 'The Wizenard Series: Season One'- created by Kobe Bryant & authored by Wesley King

The book '**The Wizenard Series: Season One**' is created by American Basket baller **Kobe Bryant** & authored by **Wesley King** tops the New York Times' middle-grade hardcover list, which is to be released on April 19, 2020. It is published by Kobe Bryant's Granity Studios (April 1, 2020).

Key Points

- The book had already topped the Amazon's bestseller list for children's basketball books
- It states about the strain and sacrifice, supernatural breakthroughs, and supreme dedication to the game where Bryant is the series creator who envisioned the story lines
- Kobe Bryant has authored a book- 'The Mamba Mentality: How I Play' (2018) which was also a best-seller and has been on Amazon's top lists.

The Pulitzer Prize winner, American reporter Mary Jordan authors a book- 'The Art of Her Deal: The Untold Story of Melania Trump'

The **Pulitzer Prize-winning** American reporter for The Washington Post, **Mary Jordan** has written a book titled '**The Art of Her Deal: The Untold Story of Melania Trump**'. It is published by Simon & Schuster.

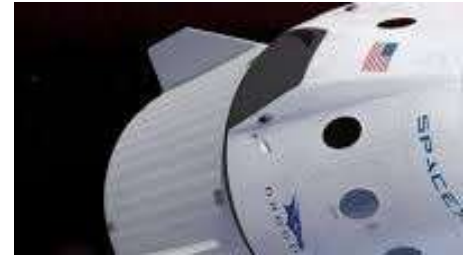
Key Points

- The book is based on 100 interviews, which depicts Melania Trump, the first woman to be more influential in the White House than most people realize.

ii. Mary Jordan's Books include the bestselling Hope: A Memoir of Survival in Cleveland is about 2 of the 3 women who were kidnapped and held in captivity for a decade.

NASA to launch 1st US astronaut mission to ISS since 2011

For the first time since July 21, 2011, a human mission from American Earth will go into space. That is after 9 years, the US space agency **NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)** & **SpaceX** will send two veteran astronauts –**Bob Behnken & Doug Hurley**- from the Florida's Kennedy Space Centre in indigenous 23-story Falcon 9 rockets to the International Space Station (ISS) on May 27, 2020.



Key Points:

- i. This mission is named Demo-2 mission & will lift off from the historic launch pad 39A complex on May 27, 2020. In the Demo-1 mission, the Dragon Spacecraft successfully transported goods to the space station
- ii. Both of the astronauts will spend as long as 110 days in space and they will return on Crew Dragon Capsule.
- iii. In this mission, Behnken will determine the docking of the spacecraft, the attachment to the space station, the undocking, the separation from the space station and determine its path. At the same time, Hurley will be the commander of the Dragon spacecraft & will be responsible for the launch, landing and recovery.

Near-Earth asteroid 1998 OR2 to pass within 3.9m miles of Earth: NASA

- i. Asteroid 1998 OR2 a large near-Earth asteroid, measuring about 1.5-mile-wide (2-kilometer-wide) will pass by earth within 3.9 million miles (6.3 million kilometers), which is about 16 times farther away than the moon.
- ii. Asteroid 2020 HS7, estimated to be 13 to 24 feet (4 to 8 meters) in size, passed Earth on April 28....

Lebanon becomes 1st Arab nation to legalise cannabis farming

Lebanon became the 1st Arab nation to legalise **cannabis** (also known as marijuana) **farming** for medicinal & industrial use with the aim to boost the exports & to beat the economic crisis created by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Lebanon faces the worst economic crisis due to lockdown since the 1975-1990 civil war.



Key Points:

- i. Along with the above decision, the Parliament of Lebanon has also approved the re-allocation of \$40 million from a World Bank (WB) loan to help fight COVID-19.
- ii. Earlier the Lebanon banned growing, selling and consuming cannabis. However the illicit production in the country's east fertile Bekaa Valley has developed over decades into a multi-million-dollar industry.
- iii. As per the United Nations (UN), Lebanon is the 3rd largest supplier of cannabis resin in the world after Morocco and Afghanistan

NASA develops VITAL, a high-pressure ventilator to fight COVID-19

NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) engineers developed a new, easy-to-build high-pressure ventilator named **VITAL** (Ventilator Intervention Technology Accessible Locally) specifically to treat COVID-19 patients.

Key Points:

- i. VITAL is designed to treat patients with milder symptoms, thereby keeping the country's limited supply of traditional ventilators available for patients with more severe COVID-19 symptoms.
- ii. The device passed a critical test at the Icahn School of Medicine in New York, an epicentre of COVID-19 in the US

(United States).

iii. NASA is now seeking FDA (Food and Drug Administration) approval for the device via an emergency use authorization, a fast track approval process developed for crisis situations that take just days rather than years.

iv. Like all ventilators, VITAL requires patients to be sedated and an oxygen tube is inserted into their airway to breathe.

Chinese Space Day on Apr 24, 2020: Mars mission named as Tianwen-1 & its logo launched

China National Space Administration (CNSA) has named its first Mars exploration mission as “Tianwen-1” and also released its logo “Lanxingjiutian” during the online celebration of “Space Day”.

ii. Tianwen-1 is set to be launched in July 2020 with an aim to complete orbiting, landing and roving in one mission.

iii. India became the first Asian country to have successfully launched its Mars orbiter mission, Mangalyaan in 2014.

NASA's Artemis: First human base camp on Moon's South Pole by 2024

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) unveiled its plan to setup ‘Artemis’, the first human base camp on Moon’s South Pole by 2024 through a 13-page report titled “NASA’s Plan for Sustained Lunar Exploration and Development”. The report was submitted to the National Space Council, an advisory group to United States (US) President Donald Trump, presided over by Vice President Mike Pence.

- The Artemis program aims to land **first woman and next man** on the moon by **2024**. The report offered a summary of how the space agency will accomplish the 2024 moon landing mission.
- The plan is to make a **one to two-month stay** at the South Pole of the moon to learn more about it and the universe.
- Base camp will need infrastructure for power, waste disposal and communications, besides radiation shielding and a landing pad.

The Artemis program is carried out by NASA along with European Space Agency (ESA), the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), Canadian Space Agency (CSA) and the Australian Space Agency (ASA).

First black hole merger of uneven mass observed by LIGO-VIRGO; indicated by GW190412 signal in April 2019

i. This discovery took place a year after when a gravitational wave (GW) signal dubbed “GW190412” observed by the LIGO and Virgo detectors on 12 April 2019, which actually a sign of merging of two black holes with unequal masses.

ii. This merger took place 2.4 billion light-years away.

iii. The difference of masses is so large that the one black hole is **30 times** the mass of the sun while the other is **8 times** the solar mass.

US clears sale of Harpoon missile and torpedoes priced a total of \$155 million to India

According to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the **US (United States)** President Donald Trump’s administration has approved the sale of **Harpoon Block II** air-launched anti-ship missiles & **MK 54 lightweight torpedoes** priced a total of **\$ 155 million** to India to combat regional threats and increase the security of its soil.



Iran launches its 1st military satellite, “Noor” into orbit by launch vehicle ‘Qased’

Iran launched its 1st military satellite into orbit named “Noor” (means ‘light’). The satellite has successfully reached an orbit of 425 kilometres above the Earth’s surface. It was launched by launch vehicle named **Qased** (means ‘messenger’) from a space center in Dasht-e Kavir, Iran’s largest desert bordered by Khorasan, Semnan, Tehran, Isfahan and Yazd

provinces.

Key Points

- i. The 3 stage satellite launch powered by a combination of solid and liquid fuels & was lifted off from Iran's Central Desert.
- ii. It comes amid the tensions between Tehran and Washington over its collapsing nuclear deal and after a United States (U.S.) drone strike killed Guard General Qassem Soleimani in January.
- iii. Iran has suffered several failed satellite launches in recent months, the current failure was satellite Zafar 1 from a Simorgh rocket on February 9.
- iv. The 1st civilian satellite was launched in 2009.

Appointments or Resign/Retired

UB Pravin Rao appointed as Chairman & Rekha Menon as Vice Chairperson of NASSCOM

The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) appoints Infosys Chief Operating Officer (COO) **UB Pravin Rao** as its chairman & chairman and senior managing director of Accenture in India **Rekha M Menon** as its vice president for 2020-21.

Key Points

- i. UB Pravin Rao succeeds **Keshav Murugesh**, Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of World Network Services (WNS) Global Services, who served as chairman of NASSCOM for the year 2019-20. Previously Rao was the vice chairman of NASSCOM.
- ii. The appointment was announced at the NASSCOM Executive Council meeting through video conference due to lockdown (COVID-19)

About NASSCOM:

Headquarters– Noida, Uttar Pradesh

President– Debjani Ghosh (1st women president of NASSCOM)

Shafali Verma named as brand ambassador by PepsiCo

Beverage Major **PepsiCo** has named **Shafali Verma**, 16 years old, Indian Women Cricketer, as one of its brand ambassadors for one year. Pepsi will be Shafali's first contract with a major brand. The beverage firm recently signed Bollywood star Salman Khan as its face for 2 years.



Key Points:

- i. Shafali Verma hails from Haryana is the explosive top-order Indian batswoman, who played the ICC (International Cricket Council) Women's T20I (Twenty20 International) World Cup against Australia in Melbourne.
- ii. She also claimed the top spot in ICC T20I rankings and also became the youngest woman cricketer to play for India when she debuted against South Africa.
- iii. Shafali broke the 30-year old record of Indian Cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, as the youngest Indian to score an international half-century in November 2019.

Raghuram Rajan named among 12 members of External Advisory Group: IMF

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director (MD) Kristalina Georgieva named former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor **Raghuram Rajan** and 11 others to its new **External Advisory Group**.

Objective

To provide perspectives from around the world on key developments, policy issues, policy responses to the exceptional challenges the world now faces due to the coronavirus pandemic and its economic impact.

Key Points

- i. The group consists of members who have expertise in high-level policy.

UGC constitutes 2 expert committees for examination & online education: COVID-19

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has constituted **2** expert committees to look after the examinations & academic calendar, and to promote online learning amidst the lockdown due to COVID-19.

Gist about the committees

- i. 1st Committee- It is a 7 member committee headed by the vice-chancellor of the Central University of Haryana- R.C. Kuhad, to look after the examination & academic calendar of students as Indian education system came to a standstill due to suspended classes, postponed examinations, and closed campuses. Based on the recommendations of the committee, the UGC will publish guidelines for universities.
- ii. 2nd Committee- Nageshwar Rao, the Vice-Chancellor of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is heading the committee on pooling e-resources and enhancing online education systems. It is formed in relation to students, teachers and the education system as a whole & also to promote online education.

About UGC:

Headquarters– New Delhi, India

Chairman– Dhirendra Pal(D.P.) Singh

MS Dhoni appointed as the brand ambassador of PokerStars India

PokerStars India has appointed former Indian captain Mahendra Singh **Dhoni** as its new brand ambassador. Prior to MS Dhoni's appointment popular Bollywood actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui was the brand ambassador of the company.

Key Points:

- i. Muskan Sethi and Sharad Rao are the other brand ambassadors of PokerStars India, while Aditya Agarwal quit the brand in December 2019.
- ii. PokerStars India's motive to bring MS Dhoni on board is aimed at increasing its market share in the industry as the cricketer has a fan following among millions of Indians.

About PokerStars:

PokerStars is an online poker cardroom owned by The Stars Group. It can be accessed through downloadable poker clients for the Windows, macOS (Macintosh Operating System), Android and iOS(iPhone Operating System). It is the largest real money online poker site in the world, controlling over two-thirds of the total online poker market.



IWF President Tamas Ajan resigns

International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) President **Tamas Ajan**, 81 years old, **resigned** in the wake of allegations of corruption and doping violations. The IWF Executive Board accepted the resignation of the IWF president. **Ursula Papandrea** will be the acting president of IWF.



Key Points:

- i. **Tamas Ajan:** He is from Hungary, had been at the IWF since 1976, serving 24 years as general secretary and 20 years as president.
- ii. The IWF thanks Tamas Ajan for more than 4 decades of service to weightlifting and most notably for his work in recent years to ensure an anti-doping programme which meets the standards of the IOC (International Olympic Committee) and WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency)..

World chess champion Viswanathan Anand becomes ambassador of WWF India's environment education programme

5 time world chess champion **Viswanathan Anand** was appointed as ambassador of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) **India's environment education programme**.

Gist about the programme

- i. The programme was started in 1976 as an initiative of Nature Clubs of India (NCI) with aim to create a generation of critical thinkers, problem solvers and environmentally conscious individuals.
- ii. It follows a 3 way strategy approach namely; building environmental awareness and knowledge; developing requisite capacity and skills; and enabling action for conservation and sustainability.
- iii. Currently there are 5 education programmes running in 16 states across India to reach out to over 5,00,000 children across 2000 schools & youth and citizens.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in's party wins election amid COVID-19 pandemic

The Democratic Party of South Korean President Moon Jae-in has won victory in parliamentary elections, with 163 seats in the 300-seat National Assembly, first country conducted election among COVID-19 pandemic. The capital and currency of South Korea is Seoul and South Korean won respectively

SC collegium names New Chief Justices for Bombay, Meghalaya & Orissa High courts

The Supreme Court (SC) Collegium led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad Arvind Bobde has recommended the appointment of new Chief Justices for the **Bombay, Orissa and Meghalaya High Courts (HC)**.



Key Points:

- i. Justice Datta is the second senior-most justice in the Calcutta High Court & has been serving for 14 years. He replaces the current Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court Bhushan Dharmadhikari, who is retiring on 27 April, 2020.
- ii. Justice Somadder, who worked as the judge of the Allahabad High Court, will replace Rafiq who was the Chief Justice of the Meghalaya HC from November 2019.
- iii. While, Justice Rafiq will replace Sanju Panda as Chief Justice of Orissa High Court.

HSBC appoints Noel Quinn as Chief Executive Officer

HSBC (Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation) Bank appointed **Noel Quinn** as its **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**. He served as the interim CEO of the



bank since August 2019. He was the successor of John Flint.

Key Points:

- i. Noel joined HSBC in 1987 and has proven the outstanding candidate to take on a role permanently as CEO.
- ii. Quinn will earn a base salary of 1.27 million pounds per annum.

PV Sindhu named as ambassador for BWF's 'i am badminton' campaign

BWF names **PV Sindhu** as one of its ambassadors for the "I am badminton" awareness campaign to create awareness among the young and para-badminton players on the importance of anti-match manipulation and anti-doping and to encourage and provide training to improve their level of playing.

Honours/ Awards

Chittaranjan locomotive works of Indian Railways creates world record of making 431 locomotives for FY 20

Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW), the manufacturing unit of Indian Railways based in Asansol, **West Bengal** (WB), has set the Limca Book of Records for producing record **431 locomotives** in the financial year 2019-2020 (FY20) in 292 working days. It is 2.15 times its installed capacity of 200 locomotives per year. This was achieved despite novel coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions that creating disruptions during the current financial year (FY20).

Key Points:

- i. The unit has surpassed its own previous year (2018-2019) record when it produced 402 locomotives in 297 working days.
- ii. CLW's Locomotive production has increased 75% over the last 6 years period from 250 in 2014-15 to 431 in 2019-20 in line to support 100% Electrification and 'Make in India' initiative of the central government.

Ben Stokes becomes first English player since 2005 to be named Wisden's Leading Cricketer

Wisden Cricketers' Almanack 2020 edition, named **Ben Stokes** of England and **Ellyse Perry** of Australia as the Leading male and female cricketer of the World 2020 respectively.

Key Points:

- i. **Leading Cricketers of the World 2020:** All rounder Ben Stokes becomes the first English Player since 2005 to be named Wisden's Leading Cricketer 2020. Andrew Flintoff was the last English player to be named as Wisden's Leading Cricketer of the year 2005.
- ii. Stokes succeeds India skipper Virat Kohli, who took the prize on the last three occasions.
- iii. Ben Stokes played a key role in England's first 50-over World Cup win in 2019 & played a memorable inning against Australia during the third Ashes at Headingley.
- iv. Australia's Ellyse Perry has also attained Leading Female Cricketer of the year 2016.
- v. **Five Cricketer of the year 2020:** Apart from Leading Cricketers, Wisden also named Jofra Archer, Pat Cummins, Simon Harmer, Marnus Labuschagne and Ellyse Perry as the Five Cricketers of the Year.
- vi. **Leading T20 Cricketer in the World 2020:** All-rounder Andre Russell has been named as Leading T20 Cricketer in the World 2020.



Jeff Bezos tops, Mukesh Ambani ranked 17th: 34th Forbes billionaires List 2020

Forbes published the 34th annual list of **Global Billionaires**

2020 which **topped** Amazon Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) **Jeff Bezos** for the 3rd time, followed by Microsoft co- founder and chairman of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation **Bill Gates**. The chairman & managing director of Reliance Industries **Mukesh Ambani (17th)** topped the Indian list, followed by The founder of Avenue Supermarts **Radhakishan Damani & family (65th)**.



Key Points

i. The Chairman and CEO of Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessy (LVMH) Bernard Arnault is positioned in 3rd place globally.

Four Indian-Americans awarded Guggenheim fellowships 2020

4 Indian-Americans have been awarded with **Guggenheim fellowships 2020** for their already demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or exceptional creative ability in the arts.

Key Points

i. The 4 Indian- Americans are: 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; Mukul Sharma- professor of Earth Sciences at Dartmouth College.

ii. About 175 such fellowships are awarded each year among 3000 applicants, the size of grant varies and is adjusted to the needs of fellows, by considering their other resources and the purpose and scope of their plans & the average grant in the 2008 Canada and United States competition was approximately USD 43,200.

About Guggenheim fellowships:

It is established in 1925 by former United States Senator and Mrs. Simon Guggenheim, in the memory of 17 year old **John Simon Guggenheim**. It is to honour artists, writers, scholars and scientific researchers, who are chosen based on their previous accomplishments and what foundation officials describe as their “exceptional promise” & has granted more than USD 375 million in fellowships to over 18,000 individuals since its inception.

Algerian Novelist Abdelouahab Aissaoui wins 13th International Arab fiction prize 2020

1st Algerian Novelist, **Abdelouahab Aissaoui**, to win the 13th International Prize for Arabic Fiction (**IPAF**) 2020 for his novel ‘**The Spartan Court**’ published by Dar Min in 2018 & will receive USD 50,000 and funding will be provided for the English translation. It is shortlisted from 6 novels, where the other 5 authors will each receive USD 10,000.

Essence of the book

It is a historical novel that 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).

Gist about the author



i. His debut novel (2012) 'Jacob's Cinema', became in the novel category of the President of the Republic Prize, 2nd novel (2015), 'Mountain of Death' won Assia Djebar Prize.

ii. The 3rd novel (2017), 'Circles and Doors' won the Kuwaiti Suad al-Sabah Novel Prize (2017) & in 2017 won Katara Novel Prize in the unpublished novel category, for Testament of the Deeds of the Forgotten Ones.

About the Prize:

It is the most prestigious and important literary prize in the Arab world, it aims to reward excellence in contemporary Arabic creative writing and to encourage the readership of high-quality Arabic literature internationally by translation & publication of winning and shortlisted novels in other major languages.

The Prize is run with the support of The Booker Prize Foundation in London and is funded by the Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi (DCT).

Tata Power wins Edison Award 2020 for social innovation

Tata Power company limited's 'Club Enerji #Switchoff2SwitchOn' campaign, which is India's 1st, energy & resource conservation club has won silver in the **Edison Award 2020** under Social innovation's subcategory, social energy solution. The company's 'Club Enerji' is a 12-year old sustainability initiative which targets school children.



Gist about the Campaign

i. It is a 360 degree campaign that has children as brand ambassadors to educate & engage the community to reduce carbon footprint & build a sustainable future. It has brought about 533 participating schools across India, saving over 29.8 million units of power since its inception in 2007.

ii. It is a call to action campaign, hosted on green community & is amplified through Digital, Below-the-line marketing, Public relations (PR), Internal Platforms and on-ground activities.'

iii. It holds several Contests, plastic cleanliness drives, educational Audio Visuals (AVs) and creatives to switch off irresponsible consumption and switch on smart practices leading to savings.

About Edison Awards:

It is to honor the excellence in new product and service development, marketing, design and innovation. The award winners represent game-changing products and services, excellence and leadership in innovation around four criteria: Concept, Value, Delivery, and Impact. It is established in 1987 in the memory of Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931).

Panchayat Awards 2020: Jammu and Kashmir's & Odisha's 3 panchayats get prestigious national award

On the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day on 24th of April 2020, **three Panchayats** in **Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Union Territory-UT** has clinched national awards under separate categories for their outstanding performance in strengthening rural democracy.

Biocon's Mazumdar-Shaw among world's top 20 leaders in Biopharma: The Medicine Maker Power List 2020

i. The **Texere Publishing Ltd** has published its "**The Medicine Maker Power List 20 For 2020**" consisting of world's top 60 inspirational leaders under three categories viz. Small Molecules, Advanced Medicines, and Biopharmaceuticals.



ii. **From India**, the list has named Executive Chairperson of Biocon Ltd Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw in the world's top 20 inspirational leaders in the field of **biopharmaceuticals**.

iii. In 1989, she was awarded **Padma Shri** and in 2005 she was conferred by **Padma Bhushan** by the Government of India

About Medicine Maker:

The Medicine Maker is a global magazine focused on the development and manufacture of both pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical products. It started Power List in 2015.

Sports

IOC: Tokyo Olympics rescheduled to July 23- August 8 in 2021

The IOC (International Olympic Committee) and the Japanese organisers of **Tokyo Olympic & Paralympic games headed by Yoshiro Mori**, announced the rescheduled dates of the 32nd edition of **Tokyo Olympics** that will be held in Tokyo, Japan from July 23 to August 8, 2021, almost exactly a year after the games were to commence in 2020.



The **Paralympics** dates were also confirmed from August 24 to September 5, 2021.

Key Points:

- i. The Tokyo Olympics were postponed due to Coronavirus (COVID -19).
- ii. The motto of the Tokyo Olympics is “**United by Emotion**”.
- iii. **World Swimming Championships:** The International Swimming Federation has postponed the World Swimming Championships to 2022, as it was scheduled on July 16 to August 1, 2021 in Fukuoka, Japan.

World athletics championships get postponed to 2022

The World Athletics organization announced that the new Tokyo Olympic dates will conflict with the scheduled World athletics championships going to be held in Eugene, Oregon, US (United States) will be postponed to 2022. The World Athletics Championships were scheduled on August 6 to August 15, 2021.

About International Olympics Committee (IOC):

Headquarters– Lausanne, Switzerland.

President– Thomas Bach..

Wimbledon Tennis Tournament cancelled for the first time since World War II due to COVID- 19

Wimbledon organisers cancelled the 134th Edition of **Wimbledon Tennis Tournament** for the first time since WWII (World War II) due to the threats of Coronavirus (COVID- 19). The tournament was scheduled between June 29, 2020 to July 13, 2020 and the next edition of the tournament will be from June 28 to July 11, 2021. Wimbledon was cancelled from 1915 to 1918 because of World War I and from 1940 to 1945 due to World War II.



Key Points:

- i. **About Wimbledon:** Wimbledon or The Championships is the oldest tennis tournament in the world. It has been held at the All England Club in Wimbledon, London, since 1877.

- ii. Wimbledon tournament is the only major still played on grass, which is widely considered as the classic tennis court. The tournament consists of men's (singles and doubles), women's (singles and doubles), mixed doubles.
- iii. Wimbledon is one of the four Grand Slam tennis tournaments, the others being the Australian Open, the French Open and the US (United States) Open.

Asian Youth Games to be held in China from November 20 to 28, 2021

The **Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)** announced the 3rd edition of Asian Youth Games, which will be hosted in the coastal city of Shantou in Southern China from November 20 to 28, 2021.

Key Points:

- i. OCA Director General Husain Al Musallam mentioned that the venue and dates of the programme were decided by OCA in coordination with the Shantou 3rd Asian Youth Games Organising Committee (SAYGOC).
- ii. The 3rd Edition of Asian Youth Games comprises of 18 sports: Athletics, Aquatics, Badminton, Basketball (3×3), Beach Volleyball, Dragon Boat Racing, Football, Gymnastics, Golf, Handball, Hip Hop dance, Rock Climbing, Rugby, Surfing, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, WindSurfing and Wushu.

2022 Asian Games mascot “smart triplets” unveiled at digital ceremony in Hangzhou, China

The official mascots of the **19th Asian Games**, to be from 10 to 25 September 2022, were unveiled at a 20 minutes digital launch ceremony in **Hangzhou, China**. The ceremony was conducted online due to the coronavirus pandemic. It was unveiled by Olympic Council of Asia (OCA).

- There are three mascots namely **Congcong**, **Lianlian** and **Chenchen**, which represents the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage sites of Hangzhou in eastern China.
- These three mascots for the XIX Asiad are collectively known as the “**smart triplets**”.

Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) **headquarters** in **Kuwait City**.

About 2022 Asian Games:

It should be noted that these will be the third Asian Games to be hosted by China following Beijing 1990 and Guangzhou 2010.

Motto– Heart to Heart, @Future

Location– Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China

2021 World Games in Birmingham, Alabama postponed to 2022

The International World Games organisers announced that **2021 World Games** to be held in **Birmingham, Alabama** has been postponed to the year 2022 due to the conflict of rescheduled dates of the Tokyo Olympics. The rescheduled dates of World Games are from July 7 to 17, 2022.

Key Points:

- i. The World Games which are held every 4 years & features 32 sports that are not part of the Olympic program were



scheduled on July 15 to 25, 2021

ii. The international event was set to host 3,600 athletes from over 100 countries to take part in a variety of sports such as martial arts, bowling, squash, billiards & wheelchair rugby.

About IWGA (International World Games Association):

President– José Perurena López.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)– Joachim Gossow.

Headquarter– Lausanne, Switzerland

American Basketball player Kobe Bryant inducted into Naismith Hall of Fame

American Basketball player & **5 time NBA champion Kobe Bryant** will be posthumously inducted into the **Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame**, Springfield, Massachusetts on August 29, 2020 along with 8 honourees.

Key Points

i. Los Angeles Lakers great Bryant was on the United States team that won the Olympic gold in 2008 and 2012 & also won the National Basketball Association's (NBA) Most Valuable Player Award (MVP) in 2008, a 2 time MVP finalists & earned 18 All-Star selections.

ii. Other inductees include-Tim Duncan, Kevin Garnett, coach Eddie Sutton, coach Rudy Tomjanovich, Tamika Catchings, coach Baylor Kim Mulkey, coach Barbara Stevens and longtime FIBA executive Patrick Baumann.

About Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame

It is an American history museum and hall of fame that serves as the most complete library for basketball in addition to promoting and preserving basketball history. It is named after Canadian-American physician and inventor of basketball, **James Naismith**.

India to host Asian Boxing Championships 2020 in Nov-Dec: BFI

According to the **Boxing Federation of India's (BFI)** Executive Director R K Sacheti, **India** will host the Women's and Men's **Asian Boxing Championships 2020** in November-December as he expressed confidence that by then the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic would have been completely under control. However, the host city will be decided by BFI after things return to normal.

Key Points:

i. India last hosted the Men's Asian Championship in Mumbai, Maharashtra in the year 1980, while the Women's Championship was hosted in 2003 in Hisar, Haryana.

ii. This competition is usually held once in two years but in the past it has also been held in consecutive years.



Former Pakistan skipper Sana Mir announces retirement from International Cricket

Former Pakistan skipper and Women Cricket team Captain, **Sana Mir** announced her retirement from international cricket at the age of 34, ending her 15 year career currently ranking 9th in ICC's ODI and 41st in T20I bowlers list

Career Highlights:

- i. Sana Mir, right handed batter made her debut in One Day International (ODI) against Sri Lanka in Karachi in December 2005 and her ODI in Lahore against Bangladesh in November 2019. In 120 ODIs she took 151 wickets.
- ii. She made her Twenty20 International (T20I) debut in Dublin against Ireland in May 2009 and her last T20Is in Lahore against Bangladesh in October 2019. In 106 T20Is she took 89 wickets and scored 802 runs.
- iii. She featured in a total of 226 international matches which includes the 137 matches from 2009 to 2017 as the team captain for Pakistan.

Pakistan Cricket Board bans Umar Akmal for three-years for match-fixing

Pakistan batsman, Umar Akmal was banned for three-years by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Disciplinary Committee for the violation of **ICC Anti-corruption code 2.4.4** failing to disclose the details of approaches to engage in corrupt conduct and **2.4.5** failing to disclose any incident that comes to the knowledge of any evidence that another participant received any approaches to engage in corrupt conduct.



Key Points:

- i. The Chairperson of the Disciplinary panel Justice (retired) **Fazal-e-Miran-Chauhan** handed the three-year ban to Umar Akmal from all cricket effective from February 20
- ii. He was suspended from the Pakistan Super League (PSL) on 2nd February with two charges under the anti-corruption code by the PCB for failing to report the approach to fix the games.
- iii. He mentioned that he was approached during the ICC World Cup in 2015 edition played in Australia and New Zealand and once he was offered 200,000 dollars for leaving two deliveries in the matches against India.

India lost hosting rights of 2021 Men's World Boxing Championships to Serbia: AIBA

The **International Boxing Association (AIBA)** terminated an agreement with India, signed in 2017, which resulted in losing of hosting rights of 2021 men's world boxing championship by the latter to Serbia.

- The reason behind termination is the inability of **Boxing Federation of India (BFI)** to pay the host fees of USD 4 million due on December 2, 2019. Now, India would have to pay a cancellation penalty of USD 500.

Iran's Alireza Firouzja beats world chess champion Magnus Carlsen to win Banter Blitz cup 2020

Alireza Firouzja, a 16-year-old **Iranian chess player**, has defeated world chess champion **Sven Magnus Oen Carlsen** of Norway in the final of the **Banter Blitz Cup 2020** with 8.5-7.5 scores to claim the \$14,000 prize. The tournament, hosted by chess24.com in association with Opera and JFD bank from September 25, 2019- April 15, 2020, was one of the most phenomenal blitz games ever played online.



Key Points:

- i. A grandmaster at the age of 14, Firouzja won the Prague Masters in February 2020.
- ii. **About Banter Blitz Cup:** It was a 128-player knockout tournament where players must comment verbally on their moves, and their opponents, during the game. It was telecast live online.

World Games Birmingham unveils new logo, title for 2022 edition

The **11th edition of World Games** which is set to be held in Birmingham, Alabama, US (United States), unveiled an updated logo and title after being delayed a year due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The World Games 2021 Birmingham

has been renamed to “World Games 2022 Birmingham”. The World Games was initially scheduled for July 2021, but it will now be held from July 7 to 17, 2022.

Mirabai Chanu and Jeremy Lalrinnunga qualifies for Tokyo Olympics confirmed by IWF

The International Weightlifting Federation confirms that **Mirabai Chanu** and **Jeremy Lalrinnunga** have been qualified for the Tokyo Olympics 2020 which has been postponed to the summer of next year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Obituaries

Legendary historian Arjun Dev passes away at 81

Professor Arjun Dev, the legendary historian and educationist passed away at the age of 81 in Noida, Uttar Pradesh (UP). He was born on November 12, 1938 in Leiah, West Punjab (now in Pakistan).



Key Points:

- i.About Arjun Dev:** He served as a historian at the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT). He also co-wrote some of the extremely popular textbooks with his wife Indira Arjun Dev.
- ii.**Arjun Dev served as Member Secretary of the National Steering Committee on Textbook evaluation.

Princess Maria Teresa of Spain becomes 1st royal to pass away from COVID-19

Spanish Princess Maria Teresa of Bourbon-Parma has become the first royal to pass away due to Covid-19 complications who was born on July 28, 1933, and studied in France and became a professor at Paris’ Sorbonne as well as a professor of Sociology at Madrid’s Complutense University. She was known for her outspoken views and activist work, which led to her nickname the “Red Princess.”

Nobel laureate Phillip Anderson passed away at 96

Philip Warren Anderson, a Nobel Prize- winning physicist who expanded the world’s understanding of magnetism, superconductivity and the structure of matter, passed away at the age of 96 in Princeton, New Jersey, US (United States). He was born on December 13, 1923 in Indianapolis, Indiana, US.



Key Points:

- i.About Philip Anderson:** The American theoretical physicist graduated from Harvard University in 1949 & then worked for Bell Telephone Laboratories until he began teaching at Princeton and the University of Cambridge.
- ii.Awards:** Anderson received **Nobel Prize in Physics in 1977**, along with **Nevill Francis Mott of Britain & the American John Hasbrouck van Vleck**, for their contribution on fundamental theoretical investigations of the electronic structure of magnetic and disordered systems.
- iii.**He advised other Nobel prize winners during his career in academia such as F. Duncan Haldane, who won the 2016 prize in physics and Brian Josephson, who won Nobel prize in 1973. Anderson served in the Navy during World War II & was assigned to work in the U.S. Naval Research Lab.

Tony Lewis of 'DLS method' cricket fame passed away at 78

Tony Lewis, one of the men behind the **Duckworth- Lewis- Stern (DLS) method**, the mathematical formula used in weather-affected limited-overs cricket matches, passed away at the age of 78. He was born on February 25, 1942 in Bolton, Lancashire, UK (United Kingdom).

Key Points:

- i. **About DLS method:** Tony was a mathematician who, along with Frank Duckworth, developed the **Duckworth- Lewis method** in 1997 of resetting targets in the interrupted cricket matches. The DLS method was adopted officially by the ICC (International Cricket Council) in 1999.
- ii. The method was renamed as the Duckworth- Lewis- Stern (DLS) method in 2014, followed across the globe.
- iii. **Honours:** Lewis received an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for his services to cricket and mathematics in 2010.

Prominent virologist Gita Ramjee passes away

World-renowned virologist **Gita Ramjee**, 63, passed away in Johannesburg, South Africa, due to Coronavirus. She was the stellar vaccine scientist and an HIV (Human immunodeficiency virus) prevention research leader.

Key Points:

- i. **About Gita Ramjee:** Gita was born on April 8, 1956, in Kampala, Uganda. She served as the Clinical Trials Unit Principal Investigator and Unit Director of the HIV Prevention Research Unit of the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) offices in Durban.
- ii. **Awards:** In 2018, Ramjee was presented with the **Outstanding Female Scientist Award** in Lisbon by the European Development Clinical Trials Partnerships (EDCTP) for her lifetime contribution in finding new HIV prevention methods.

American singer & 3 time Grammy awardee Bill Withers passed away at 81

American songwriter, soulful singer, guitarist & **3 time Grammy award winner Bill Withers** passed at 81, due to heart complications in Los Angeles. He was born on July 4, 1938, in the coal-mining town of Slab Fork, West Virginia, United States.

Key Points

- i. He is well known for these compilations- **Lean on Me**, **Ain't No Sunshine**, **Just the two of us** (for which he received Grammy awards) & **Lovely Day**.
- ii. He has produced 9 albums, his debut album is **Just As I Am**(1971) & the last album was **Watching You Watching Me**(1985).
- iii. In 2006 he was awarded the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) Rhythm & Soul Heritage Award, in 2007- Inducted into West Virginia Music Hall of Fame & in 2015- Inducted into Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.
- iv. Before his music career he served in the Navy as an aircraft mechanic.



Tom and Jerry, Popeye director Gene Deitch passes away at 95

Eugene Merrill Deitch, Oscar-winning illustrator and animator, film director and producer passed away at the age of 95 in Prague, Czech Republic. He was born on April 8, 1924 in Chicago, Illinois, US (United States).

Key Points:

- i. **About Deitch:** He was one of the directors behind world's most popular cartoons and directed 13 episodes of Tom and Jerry.
- ii. Deitch directed multiple episodes of the 'Popeye the Sailor' series and also directed popular animator cartoons such as Munro, Tom Terrific and Nudnik.
- iii. **Awards:** Deitch received the "Winsor McCay" Award for his lifetime contribution to animation in 2004. He also won the 'Academy Award' for his Best Animated Short Film named "Munro" in 1960.
- iv. He also received nominations for the same category twice in 1964 for Here's Nudnik and How to Avoid Friendship and another series, Sidney's Family Tree, which he had co-produced, was nominated for an Academy Award in 1958.



Former Bihar and Tripura Governor Devanand Konwar passed away at 86

Devanand Konwar, former Governor of Bihar and Tripura and Veteran Congress leader passed away at the age of 86 in Guwahati, Assam. He was born in 1934 in Sivasagar, Assam.

Key Points:

- i. **About Devanand Konwar:** He served as Governor of Bihar from July 24, 2009 to March 8, 2013, and of Tripura between March 25, 2013 and June 29, 2014. Konwar had also served as governor (additional charge) of West Bengal from December 2009 to January 2010.
- ii. Konwar had joined the Congress in 1955 as a student leader. He became a Cabinet minister in the governments of Assam headed by Hiteswar Saikia and later by Tarun Gogoi.
- iii. Being a constitutional head of three states and as a minister of the Assam government, He was also an eminent advocate who contributed immensely to the general welfare of the people and socio-political landscape of the country.

Padma Shri awardee and famous Bollywood actor Irrfan Khan passed away at 53

Famous Bollywood star **Sahabzade Irrfan Ali Khan**, whose international movie career included hits such as Slumdog Millionaire, Life of Pi and the Amazing Spider-man etc., passed away at the age of 53. He was born on January 7, 1967, in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Padma bhushan awardee and Former Attorney General Ashok Desai passed away at 77

The former Attorney General and Senior Advocate practicing in the Supreme Court of India (SC) **Ashok H. Desai** passed away at 77. He was born on 24th June 1942, Nagpur, Maharashtra.

About Ashok H. Desai:

- i. He started law practice in Bombay High Court in 1956 and became a Senior advocate on 8th August 1977.
- ii. He was the Solicitor General of India from 18th December 1989 to 2nd December 1990.
- iii. Held office as Attorney General of India From 9th July 1996 to 6th May 1998.
- iv. He was responsible for decriminalisation of homosexuality, allegation of corruption against high-ranking public



officials, striking down the censorship laws in Maharashtra and so on.

Awards:

He was awarded Padma Bhushan and the Law Luminary Award in 2001 by the Government of India. Golden Anniversary Rotary Prize for University of London in 1956.

Books:

Ashok H.Desai co-edited and contributed for the book “Supreme but not Infallible: Essays in honour of the Supreme Court of India” in 2000 and wrote Judicial Overreach: A critique in 2013.

Important Days with theme

World Autism Awareness Day 2020: April 2

World Autism Awareness Day is observed every year on April 2 globally to raise awareness about autism and problems faced by people suffering from it. The day has been observed since 2008. The day is one of the seven health based UN (United Nations) days.

Theme for the year 2020: “The Transition to Adulthood”.



National Maritime Day 2020: April 5

The 57th Edition of **National Maritime Day** (NMD) was celebrated on April 5, 2020. The day is observed annually to raise awareness in supporting intercontinental commerce and the global economy as the most well- organized, safe & sound, environmentally responsive approach of transporting goods from one corner to another corner of the world.

Key Points:

- i.About NMD:** The National Maritime Day was first celebrated on April 5, 1964. The saga of India shipping first started on April 5, 1919, when the SS Loyalty, the first ship of The Scindia Steam Navigation Company Limited travelled from Mumbai to the United Kingdom (UK).
- ii.Awards & recognitions:** On this day, an award called “**Varuna**” is conferred to those who made an outstanding contribution to Indian maritime sector.
- iii.About WMD:** World Maritime Day (WMD) is observed on the last week of September on Thursday annually and this year the day will be celebrated on September 24, 2020.
- iv.**The theme for WMD selected by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for the year 2020 is, “Sustainable shipping for a sustainable planet”.

World Health Day 2020: April 7

World Health Day is observed annually on April 7, under the sponsorship of the World Health Organization (WHO), to spread about equal healthcare facilities worldwide, the importance of Health and Wellness and to kill myths around Health.

Theme of the year 2020: Support nurses and midwives.

The theme celebrates the work of nurses and midwives and reminds world leaders of the critical role they play in keeping the world healthy.

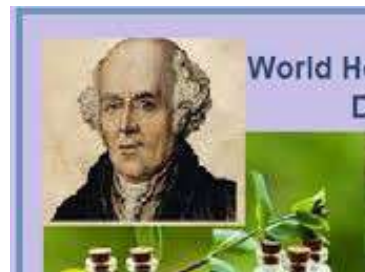


Key Points:

- i. The WHO designated 2020 as **International Year of Nurse and Midwife** in honour of the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale and this year highlights the current status of nursing around the world.
- ii. On this day, WHO launched the first-ever State of the World's Nursing report 2020.
- iii. WHO held the First World Health Assembly in 1948 and the Assembly decided to celebrate April 7 of each year, with effect from 1950, as the World Health Day.

World Homeopathy Day 2020: April 10

The **World Homeopathy Day** is celebrated every year on April 10. This year the day marks the 265th birth anniversary of the father of the Homeopathy systems of medicines **Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann**, German physician, who discovered the way to heal through the use of homeopathy. The term 'homeopathy' comes from the combination of the two Greek words, homeo- meaning similar & pathos- meaning suffering or disease.



Theme of the year 2020: "Enhancing the scope of Homeopathy in Public Health".

Indian Army observes 36th Siachen day on April 13, 2020

The **Indian Army** observed the **36th Siachen day** to pay tribute to the brave soldiers who laid down their lives while protecting the frontiers of the country in Ladakh at the Corps Headquarters in Leh and Siachen base camp, the world's highest and coldest battlefield.

Key Points:

- i. The 76.4 km long Siachen Glacier located in the Karakoram Range in the Himalayas of North-West India and covers about 10,000 sq km of uninhabited terrain.
 - ii. On April 13, 1984, the Indian Army launched 'Operation MEGHDOOT' to secure Bilafond La and other passes on the Saltoro Ridgeline from the Pakistani invasion and repulsed the enemy.
- Since then, fearless soldiers have been camping in Siachen, proving that no one can defeat the courage of the Indian Army. At temperatures below minus 50 degrees, the soldiers are protecting the borders by facing challenges like icy storms and avalanches.

1st International Mathematics Day 2020: March 14

The **International Day of Mathematics (IDM)** was celebrated for the first time on March 14, 2020 globally. On this day all countries will be invited to participate through activities for both students and the general public in schools, museums, libraries and other spaces. The day was proclaimed by UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) on the 40th session of the General Conference, November 26, 2019.

Theme for the year 2020: Mathematics is Everywhere.

Key Points:

- i. March 14 was chosen as the date for the IDM because it was already celebrated in many countries, as Pi Day, based on the fact that some countries write as 3/14 and the mathematical constant Pi is approximately 3.14.



World Art Day 2020: April 15

To celebrate the fine arts & to promote awareness of creative activity worldwide, The International Association of Art (IAA/AIAP), partner of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has declared the **World Art Day** on **April 15**.

Key Points

- i. The day is chosen to honor & mark the birthday of famous Mona Lisa's painter **Leonardo da Vinci** who is a symbol of world peace, freedom of expression, tolerance and brotherhood.
- ii. The day is 1st held on April 15th, 2012, & officially held in the City of Los Angeles on April 15th, 2015, and yearly after that. In 2017, IAA USA, the official U.S.-based chapter of the IAA, was formed.

World Heritage Day 2020: April 18

World Heritage Day, which is also known as the International Day for Monuments and Sites is an annual event which is celebrated every year on April 18, to promote awareness about the diversity of cultural heritage of humanity, their vulnerability and the efforts required for their protection and conservation.

Theme for the year 2020: Shared Culture, Shared Heritage and Shared Responsibility.

The theme recognizes the value of all types of heritage sites across varied diverse groups and communities.

Five Delhi monuments (The Red Fort, the Qutub Minar, Humayun's Tomb, Purana Qila and Safdarjung's Tomb) to be illuminated for World Heritage Day 2020.

World Liver Day 2020: April 19

World Liver Day (WLD) is observed every year on April 19, to spread awareness about the importance of liver in our body and liver related diseases. On 28th July 2018, **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, Government of India launched National Viral **Hepatitis Control Program** it aims at prevention and control of viral hepatitis in India to achieve Sustainable Developmental 2030.

Key Points:

- i. The liver is the second largest and most complex organ in the body, after the brain. It is a key player in your body's digestive system.
- ii. The liver performs many crucial functions related to digestion, immunity, metabolism and the storage of nutrients within the body and removing toxic substances from the body.
- iii. As per World Health Organization (WHO), liver diseases are the 10th most common cause of death in India. A healthy lifestyle (balanced diet and exercise) can keep your liver healthy.

National Civil Service Day 2020: April 21

On **April 21st** The **National Civil Service Day** is celebrated to celebrate the civil servants who dedicate their lives to serve the government and the citizens of the nation and to honour them for their services and to encourage them to continue to do their service with commitments and excellence. This is also to encourage the passion of the aspirants to get into civil service.

Earth Day 2020: April 22

Earth day is observed on April 22 of every year in order to create awareness about pollution and to celebrate the environment of our planet. This year is a special



occasion as it marks the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. The theme of the day this year is '**Climate Action**'.

World Book and Copyright Day 2020: April 23

World Book and Copyright Day, also known as World Book Day or International Day of the book, is celebrated every year on April 23 all over the world and the event was organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The day promotes the joy of books and the art of reading.

National Panchayati Raj Day 2020: April 24

National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD) is observed annually on April 24 in India which is organized by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to mark a defining moment in the history of decentralization of political power to the grassroots level. On this day, Prime Minister (PM) Shri Narendra Modi launched the **e-Gram Swaraj Portal** and mobile app and the **Swamitva scheme**....

National Fire Service Day 2020: April 14

The **National Fire Service Day** is observed on **April 14th since 1944** in remembrance of the 71 firemen who sacrificed their lives in the rescue operation that took place in the freighter SS Fort Stikine at the Victoria Dock of the Bombay port which resulted in the death of around 1300 people.

World Malaria Day 2020: April 25

25th April 2020 is observed as **World Malaria Day** to recognise the global efforts made to control malaria and to commemorate the Africa Malaria Day. It is one of the eight official global public health campaigns recognised by the World Health Organisation(WHO). The theme of World Malaria Day 2020 is "**Zero Malaria Starts with Me**".....

World Intellectual Property Day 2020 on April 26

World Intellectual Property Day established by the World Intellectual Property Organization (**WIPO**), is celebrated every year on April 26 to educate and learn about the role that Intellectual Property (**IP**) rights that support and encourage innovation and creativity in creating a green future. The day coincides with the date on which the convention establishing the WIPO entered into force in 1970. The theme of this year is "**Innovate for a Green Future**".



World Veterinary Day 2020: April 25

World Veterinary Day is celebrated every year on the last Saturday of April. The day was organized by the World Veterinary Association (WVA), which marks the importance of Veterinary doctors all over the world who serve to protect animals.

Theme for the year 2020: "Environment Protection for Improving Animal and Human Health".

International Dance Day 2020, April 29

The International Dance Day is celebrated annually on 29th April by the International Dance Committee(**IDC**) of the International Theatre



Institute(**ITI**) since 1982 to create awareness about the importance of the various dance forms and to encourage the dancers all around the world and to commemorate the birth anniversary of Jean-George Noverre(29th April 1727), the creator of modern ballet. The UNESCO allocated the ITI to organise the events.