

April 2021

BOLT

Monthly Current Affairs



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Banking & Finance

1. Govt to infuse Rs 14,500 crore in 4 PSU banks through recapitalisation bonds

The four lenders in which government will infuse capital include Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, Bank of India and UCO Bank. Central Bank of India will receive highest capital infusion of Rs 4,800 crore, followed by Rs 4,100 crore by Indian Overseas Bank. Similarly, government will infuse Rs 3,000 crore in Bank of India and Rs 2,600 crore in UCO Bank. The recapitalisation bonds will be issued with six different maturities.

2. SBI signs \$1 billion with Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

The loan is intended to promote smooth flow of funds for the whole range of business operations of Japanese automobile manufacturers in India. JBIC is a policy-based financial institution, wholly-owned by the Japanese government. SBI had signed a similar deal with JBIC in October last year.

3. National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) sets up subsidiary NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited (NBBL)

NPCI has transferred all its Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) transaction mandates to a NBBL, effectively hiving off its automated billing business. All leading banks/aggregators such as SBI, HDFC Bank and BillDesk etc on Bharat Bill Payment Operating Units platform, processing monthly bill payments, have been asked to start accounting their billing transactions under NBBL. It is effective from April 1.

4. RBI extends timeline for processing of recurring online transactions by 6 months

RBI has decided to extend the timeline for banks and other institutions to migrate to the framework for processing of e-mandates on recurring online transactions by six months to September 30. The earlier deadline to migrate to the Additional Factor of Authentication (AFA) ended on March 31.

5. PhonePe becomes first player to cross billion-transaction mark on UPI

PhonePe has overall clocked close to 1.3 billion transactions on its platform, across payment offerings of wallet, cards as well as UPI in March 2021. PhonePe also claimed that its annual payment value run rate hit \$388 billion in March. Overall UPI volumes in India have more than doubled, as transactions on the network touched 2.73 billion in March 2021. PhonePe: CEO: Sameer Nigam; HQ: Bengaluru.

6. Banks likely to see gross NPAs rise nearly 10% by year-end: ICRA Report

A report by ICRA expects banks' gross NPAs (excluding write-offs) to rise 9.6-9.7% by March 31, 2021. The rating agency further predicts GNPA's to rise over 10% by March 31, 2022. Therefore, it is a sharp rise in comparison to GNPA's of 8.6% as of March 31, 2020. The sharp rise in GNPA's will severely deteriorate banks' asset quality, spread over FY21 and FY22.

7. RBI Withdraws Restrictions On Youth Development Co-Operative Bank Ltd, Kolhapur

Several restrictions including a cap of Rs 5,000 on withdrawals from the Kolhapur, Maharashtra-based co-operative bank, were imposed by the Reserve Bank in the wake of its worsening financial position, initially for six months from the close of business on 5 January 2019. RBI withdrew its restrictions on the bank from April 05, 2021, itself. 25th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India: Shaktikanta Das

8. RBI doubles payments bank balance limit to '2 lakh

The earlier limit, which was in place since 2014, was set at '1 lakh per individual customer for the end of the balance for payment banks. Payments banks can operate both current as well as saving accounts and can provide all other services like ATM cards, fund transfers, bill payments, recharges, net banking among others to the account holders. Airtel Payments Bank is the first payments bank in the country to go LIVE.

9. Reserve Bank of India sets up G-SAP for orderly functioning of G-Sec market

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is putting in place a secondary market government securities acquisition programme or G-SAP 1.0 for this financial year to enable an orderly evolution of the yield curve. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank held the repo rate at 4 per cent in the April policy.

10. SBI and NPCI launch UPI awareness campaign for YONO users

This joint effort aims at encouraging users of SBI's banking and lifestyle platform YONO to opt for UPI payments which is easy, safe, and instantaneous. According to SBI, YONO since its inception in 2017, has observed 34,00,000 UPI registrations. Through this new campaign, both NPCI and SBI will put in efforts to onboard more customers into the YONO platform. Dilip Asbe is the MD & CEO of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

11. Jeep India ties up with Axis Bank to launch Jeep Financial Services

Jeep India has entered into a strategic partnership with Axis Bank to launch Jeep Financial Services. The new entity will provide financial solutions to not only Jeep customers but also Jeep brand dealers. With Jeep Financial Services, the Jeep customers will enjoy benefits like higher on-road funding solutions and longer tenures on vehicle loans from Axis Bank. Jeep has launched two new products-- 2021 Jeep Compass facelift and 2021 Jeep Wrangler.

12. Airtel Payments Bank announces 'Rewards123' savings account; offers benefits on digital transactions

Airtel Payments Bank launched its new 'Rewards123' savings account, which provides customers with perks and rewards. The Rewards123 Savings Account is built specifically that allows you to get access to a variety of perks when you save and transact digitally. Airtel Payments Bank's MD and CEO: Nubrata Biswas

13. SBI MF becomes first mutual fund house to cross '5 lakh crore average AUM mark

SBI Funds Management Pvt. Ltd becomes the first mutual fund house in India to cross the '5 lakh crore average assets under management (AAUM) mark. In the last one year, SBI MF's average AUM has grown to '5.04 lakh crore from '3.73 lakh crore, recording a growth of 35 % during the financial year 2020-21.

14. SEBI fines Yes Bank for fraudulent acts on customers in 'Super FD' scheme

Yes Bank has been fined Rs 25 crore by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for perpetrating "such fraudulent acts on its hapless and unsuspecting customers", in the sale of AT1 bonds. AT1 Bonds stand for additional tier-1 bonds. They have no maturity date. They have call option, which can be used by the banks to buy these bonds back from investors.

15. Punjab National Bank launches digital initiative PNB@Ease

PNB has launched a digital initiative PNB@Ease under which every transaction undertaken by a bank branch will be initiated and authorized by customers themselves. This facility will enable the customers to avail all banking services under one roof, PNB@Ease outlets would boost the bank's distribution capability and lower the cost of customer acquisition. PNB's 127th Foundation Day: Apr 12, 2021.

16. Citigroup to shutter retail banking operations in 13 countries including India

Citigroup announced that it will shutter retail banking operations in 13 countries. The 13 nations Citibank (the largest foreign bank in India) will pull out from are Australia, Bahrain, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Citigroup CEO Jane Fraser .

17. Mastercard Partners With RBL Bank To Offer First-Of-Its-Kind Payment Solution In India

Mastercard and Mumbai-headquartered private sector RBL bank announced a partnership, to launch a mobile-based customer-friendly payment solution - the Pay by Bank App. This will be a first-of-its-kind payment functionality in the country and suits the growing demand for digital, contactless payments.

18. FirstRand Bank, South Africa's second largest bank, to exit India after 12 years

FirstRand Bank, South Africa's second largest bank with \$118 billion in assets is the latest foreign bank to completely exit India ending almost 12 years of trying to build a local franchise in the country. The bank's net NPAs had risen to 5.18% of loans in fiscal ended March 2019 from next to nothing in March 2018.

19. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to Cancel Licence of Sambandh Finserve

RBI has issued a show-cause notice prior to cancelling the licence of fraud-hit Sambandh Finserve Pvt Ltd. after its net worth eroded below the regulatory minimum. According to the RBI norms, NBFC is required to maintain minimum capital levels consisting of Tier-I and Tier-II capital, of not less than 15 per cent of their aggregate risk-weighted assets. The Managing Director and CEO of Sambandh, Deepak Kindo.

20. RBI cancels licence of Maharashtra-based Bhagyodaya Friends Urban Co-operative Bank

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of Maharashtra-based Bhagyodaya Friends Urban Co-operative Bank Limited due to inadequate capital. On liquidation, every depositor is entitled to receive deposit insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to a monetary ceiling of Rs 5 lakhs from the DICGC subject to the provisions of the DICGC Act, 1961. Bhagyodaya Friends Urban Co-operative Bank location- Warud, Dist. Amravati, Maharashtra.

21. RBI restricts American Express Banking Corp, Diners Club International Ltd from adding new customers

Reserve Bank of India has imposed restrictions on American Express Banking Corp and Diners Club International Limited from adding new customers to their card networks from the 1st of May due to the non-compliance with the directions on Storage of Payment System Data. Repo Rate: 4%; Reverse Repo Rate: 3.35%; MSF Rate: 4.25%; Bank Rate: 4.25%

22. RBI allows commercial banks to pay up to 50% of pre-Covid dividends

RBI relaxed the dividend payout norms of commercial banks and allowed them to pay up to 50% of what they paid before Covid from the profits for the fiscal ended March 31, 2021. For FY20, the RBI had asked banks not to make any dividend payment on equity shares from the profits in view of the ongoing stress and heightened uncertainty on account of Covid-19.

23. RBI caps bank MD, CEO tenure at 15 yrs, puts upper age limit of 70 yrs

RBI capped the tenure of MD, CEO, and whole-time director (WTD) of private sector banks at 15 years and said the upper age limit for these posts will be 70 years. The maximum age limit for chairman and non-executive directors (NED) has been fixed at 75 years. The total tenure of an NED, continuously or otherwise, on the board of a bank, shall not exceed eight years.

24. RBI imposes Rs 40 lakh penalty on Himachal Pradesh State Cooperative Bank

The RBI has imposed a penalty of Rs 40 lakh on Himachal Pradesh State Cooperative Bank, Shimla, for non-compliance with certain regulatory directions issued by NABARD. The penalty has been imposed for non-compliance with regulatory directions issued by NABARD contained in 'Review of Frauds - Guidelines on Monitoring and Reporting System',

25. India GDP growth to rebound to 11% in FY21-22, moderate to 7% in FY22-23: ADB

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has projected India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth to rebound strongly to 11 per cent in current fiscal on the back of continued economic recovery boosted by increased public investment, vaccine rollout and surge in domestic demand.

26. ICICI Bank launches 'Merchant Stack'; a digital and contactless banking platform for merchants

ICICI Bank announced the launch of its 'Merchant Stack', a set of the country's most comprehensive digital banking services specially curated for retail merchants. This initiative is

in-line with the Bank's principle of 'Business with Care'. 'Merchant Stack' provides a bouquet of banking solutions and value-added services in 'one single place' for the retailer eco-system.



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Economy

1. Govt sets gross market borrowing target at Rs 7.24 lakh crore for first half of FY22

Centre will borrow Rs 7.24 lakh crore from the market in the first half of FY22, or just over 60% of the budgeted full-year target, continuing with the trend of front-loading the borrowing when the liquidity is high and private demand for funds low. Centre has also raised its gross market borrowing in FY21 to Rs.13.71 lakh cr, against the revised estimate of 12.80 lakh cr.

2. India's FY22 GDP may grow 7%, K-shaped recovery likely in APAC region: UNESCAP

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) said it expects Indian economy to grow 7% in FY22 despite roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccine and against a contraction of 7.7% in the preceding year. The Asia Pacific region, including India, is staring at a 'K-shaped recovery' of their economies, as per the UN agency. The National Statistical Office (NSO) has projected an 8% contraction in India's FY21 GDP

3. India Keeps Inflation Target Unchanged For The Next Five Years.

The Indian government has kept the inflation target for the next five years unchanged at 4 (+/-2)%. The inflation target, the first such in India's monetary policy history, was set in August 2016 and was valid until March 31, 2021. The six-member monetary policy committee, which includes three officials from RBI is entrusted with meeting the inflation target. No change in either the target band of 2-6% or mid-point at 4%.

4. At record high, GST mop-up tops 1L cr-mark for 6th month in a row

In line with the trend of constant recovery in GST revenues over the past five months, the gross goods and services tax (GST) revenue collected in March 2021 stood at a record high of over Rs 1.23 lakh crore. The total revenues earned for the month are 27% higher than the GST collected in the same month last year.

5. 6-digit HSN (Harmonised System of Nomenclature) code mandatory in invoices for biz with over '5 crore turnover

Businesses with turnover of more than '5 crore will have to furnish six-digit HSN or tariff code on the invoices issued for supplies of taxable goods and services from April 1. Those with turnover of up to '5 crore in the preceding financial year would be required to mandatorily furnish four-digit HSN code on B2B invoices. Earlier, the requirement was four and two-digits.

6. New jobs by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) hit record high in FY21 amid Covid

KVIC, the nodal agency for implementing Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), disbursed Rs 2188.78 crore margin money in FY21 to create a whopping 5,95,320 PMEGP jobs through 74,415 micro-enterprises set up across the country amid the Covid pandemic. FY21 disbursement by KVIC was 103.2 per cent of the targeted Rs 2,120.81 crore disbursement. PMEGP was launched in 2008.

7. India attracts total FDI inflow of USD 72.12 billion during April 2020 to January 2021

FDI equity inflows into the country during April-January 2020-21 grew by 28% to \$54.18 billion. Total FDI during the 10-month period in FY21 increased by 15% to \$72.12 billion. It is the highest ever for the first ten months of a financial year. In terms of investor countries, Singapore is at the top with 30.28% of the total FDI equity inflow followed by the US & the UAE. Computer software & hardware has emerged as the top sector with 45.81% of total inflows.

8. Hitachi to acquire US software developer GlobalLogic for \$9.6bn

Hitachi is set to acquire U.S. software developer GlobalLogic for \$9.6 billion in what is expected to be the largest acquisition by a Japanese electrical equipment company. The objective of this acquisition is to advance Hitachi's Internet of Things platform- Lumada and to accelerate global businesses. Silicon Valley-based GlobalLogic, founded in 2000.

9. According to International Renewable Energy Agency, the world added 260 GW of new renewable energy capacity in 2020

According to data released by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the world added more than 260 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy capacity last year, exceeding expansion in 2019 by close to 50 percent. IRENA's Renewable Capacity Statistics 2021 annual report shows that more than 80% of all new electricity capacity added in the last year was solar and wind. IRENA - Founded in 2009 HQ:- Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

10. MoU Signed For Rare Earth Extraction From Aluminium Waste Under Aatmanirbhar Mission

The Government of India took a bold technological step to extract REE from aluminium waste (Red Mud) under Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission. Under the initiative of the Government of India's NITI Aayog, city-based institute Jawaharlal Nehru Aluminium Research Development Design Centre signed an MoU with CSIR-Institute of Minerals & Materials Technology, Bhubaneswar. Aim: To reduce import dependence on China for Rare Earth Elements (REE),

11. Union Cabinet Approves PLI Scheme For ACs And LED Lights, To Create Four Lakh Jobs And Exports Worth Rs 64,400 Crore

The government approved a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for white goods ' Air Conditioners and LED Lights ' with a budgetary outlay of Rs 6,238 crore. The PLI scheme for white goods shall extend an incentive of 4 per cent to 6 per cent on incremental sales of goods manufactured in India for a period of five years.

12. Govt extends current foreign trade policy till Sept 30

The government extended the existing foreign trade policy (FTP) for six more months. The current policy will now be valid up to September 30, instead of March 31, stated the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Duty-Free Import Authorisation (DFIA) and Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) are incentives offered by the government under the FTP.

13. IBBI notifies regulations for pre-packaged insolvency resolution process

By way of an ordinance on April 4, the government amended the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) to introduce the pre-pack resolution process for MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises). The regulations detail the forms that stakeholders are required to use, and the manner of carrying out various tasks by them as part of the pre-pack resolution process. Since 2016, IBBI is the regulator for overseeing insolvency proceedings

14. Govt extends deadline for making payment under Vivad Se Vishwas scheme till June 30

Government has extended deadline for making payment under tax dispute resolution scheme Vivad Se Vishwas by two months till 30th of June. The scheme provides for settlement of disputed tax, interest, penalty or fees in relation to an assessment or reassessment order on payment of 100 per cent of the disputed tax and 25 per cent of the disputed penalty or interest or fee.

15. Ind Ratings and Research revises down India's FY22 GDP growth forecast to 10.1%

India Ratings and Research revised down India's FY22 real GDP growth forecast to 10.1%, from earlier projection of 10.4%, citing the second wave of COVID-19 infections and slower pace of vaccination. Earlier this month, the Reserve Bank maintained its 10.5% GDP growth estimate, but Governor Shaktikanta Das has flagged the rising cases as the biggest impediment to recovery. The economy is estimated to have contracted by 7.6 per cent in FY21.

16. India FY22 GDP growth revised down to 10.4% from 11%: SBI Research report

The State Bank of India (SBI) Research has revised India's FY22 growth to 10.4% from 11% projected earlier in view of the increasing COVID-19 related curbs across states. SBI Research further assessed that India would fully inoculate 15% of its populace only by December.

National

1. First-of-its-kind Cruise Service starts between Surat and Diu

Minister of State for Ports, Shipping & Waterways (I/C) Mansukh Mandaviya flagged off the Cruise service from Hazira Port of Surat to Diu. One side voyage time of the cruise service is approximately 13 to 14 hours. Cruise has the capacity of 300 passengers and has 16 cabins. This cruise will sail two round trips in a week. The Cruise has Gaming Lounge, VIP Lounge etc. In November, 2020, 'Hazira-Ghogha' RoPAX service was inaugurated.

2. Union Minister Prakash Javadekar Flags Off DEMU Train Services Connecting Phaltan To Pune via Lonand.

The regular service of this DEMU (Diesel Electric Multiple Unit) train commences from March 31. Phaltan, 110 kms south-east of Pune is known for agriculture produce & agro-based industries. Sugar cane, pomegranate, capsicum, okra etc are produced here. Owing to above products and companies, there is much movement of traders and aggregators from Phaltan to Pune & other cities.

3. West Central Railway becomes first fully electrified Indian Railways zone

On 30 March 2021, after CCRS Inspection and Commissioning of electrification of Kota ' Chittaurgarh railway section (Srinagar ' Jalindri) in the state of Rajasthan, West Central Railway has become the first fully electrified railway zone in the country. The zonal railway now boasts 3012 Route Km electrified network.

4. India's biggest floating solar power plant to be set up at Ramagundam in Telangana

India's biggest floating solar power plant with a capacity of 100 MW will be set up at Ramagundam in Telangana. The project expected to be opened in May & covers 450 acre of Ramagundam thermal power plant reservoir. The solar project is commissioned by NTPC at an estimated cost around Rs.423 crore and will have 4.5 lakh photovoltaic panels.

5. With over 6000 route km, Railways log highest ever figures in Electrification of routes

Indian Railways has logged highest ever electrification of sections covering over 6,015 Route Kilometer (RKM) in a single year during 2020-21. The latest Broad Gauge network of Indian Railways is 63,949 RKM and with 740 km of Konkan Railway is 64,689 RKM, out of which 45,881 RKM which is 71 % have been electrified by 31 March. Previous highest of 5,276 RKM was achieved in 2018-19

6. Delhi-Meerut Expressway opened for traffic

The 96 km-long 14-lane expressway will reduce travel time between Meerut and Delhi to 45 minutes from over two and half hours taken currently. The expressway will also reduce the travel time of commuters from Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Haridwar and Dehradun to Delhi. It has been constructed with over Rs.8000 crore and will also help in resolving congestion & pollution.

7. TRIFED launches 'Sankalp se Siddhi'- Village and Digital Connect Drive

TRIFED under Min of Tribal Affairs launched Sankalp Se Siddhi - Village & Digital Connect Drive. It is a 100-day drive which was started on 1st of April. The drive entails 150 teams visiting 10 villages each of which 10 in each region from TRIFED & State Implementation Agencies, visiting 10 villages each. The main aim of this drive is to activate the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras TRIFED stands for Tribal Co-operative Marketing Federation of India.

8. NIIF invests Rs 2,100 cr in Manipal Hospitals, its first in health space

National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIFL) announced an investment of Rs 2,100 crore in multi-speciality healthcare providers Manipal Hospitals, through Strategic Opportunities Fund (SOF), the direct private equity fund of NIIF. This investment marks SOF's first investment in the Indian healthcare sector. NIIF is India's first infrastructure specific investment fund. MD & CEO of NIIF: Sujoy Bose Manipal Hospitals Head Office: Bengaluru.

9. Greenman Viral Desai to stage Satyagraha against Environment Pollution as part of Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav: 75-week Celebrations

Viral Desai, the Greenman of Gujarat and a well-known businessman from Surat, has started a movement called 'Satyagraha against Pollution.' He has started this movement from Vanz village because Vanz village has a rich history of playing an important role in the success of two Satyagrahas in the history of India, namely Bardoli and Dandi. Viral Desai has decided to plant 275,000 trees in the next 75 weeks.

10. Ramesh Pokhriyal launches NanoSniffer, a microsensor based explosive trace detector

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' on Friday launched NanoSniffer, the world's first Microsensor-based Explosive Trace Detector (ETD). The Nanosniffer has been developed by NanoSniff Technologies which is an IIT Bombay incubated startup. It is being marketed by Vehant Technologies, a spin-off from a former IIT Delhi incubated startup Kritikal Solutions. NanoSniffer is a 100% Made in India product in terms of R&D & manufacturing

11. 2-day Scientific Convention on World Homoeopathy Day inaugurated in New Delhi

A 2-day Scientific Convention on 'Homoeopathy - Roadmap for Integrative Medicine' was inaugurated at New Delhi. MoS for Defence Shripad Yesso Naik was the chief guest on this occasion. The Convention was organized by the Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy, an autonomous apex research organization under Ministry of AYUSH to celebrate World Homoeopathy Day Founder of Homoeopathy: Dr. Samuel Hahnemann

12. 4-day long Teeka Utsav, special vaccination drive against coronavirus, across the country

The Vaccine Festival is commenced on the Birth anniversary of social reformer Jyotiba Phule and will end on the 14th of this month coinciding with Birth Anniversary of the Chief Architect of Indian Constitution Dr BR Ambedkar. Interacting with Chief Ministers regarding the COVID-19 situation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called for organizing Teeka Utsav Union Minister of State for health and family welfare - Ashwani Kumar Choubey

13. Education Minister launches implementation plan 'SARTHAQ' for school education

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal chaired a high-level meeting on the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 and released an implementation plan for school education called 'Students' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement through Quality Education (SARTHAQ)'. SARTHAQ has been developed by the Department of School Education and Literacy.

14. Jitendra Singh launches 75 series Pension awareness to mark 75 years of India's independence

Minister for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Dr. Jitendra Singh launched 75 series Pension awareness to mark 75 years of India's independence. As a part of the Amrut Mahotsav, the Department of Pension and Pensioners Welfare will organize a wide range of activities.

15. NITI Aayog Launches 'Poshan Gyan', a Digital Repository on Nutrition Information

NITI Aayog, in partnership with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation & Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, Ashoka University, launched Poshan Gyan, a national digital repository on health and nutrition. Under the guidance of Dr Rakesh Sarwal, the Poshan Gyan repository was conceptualized as a resource. The website can be accessed here:

<https://poshangyan.niti.gov.in/> NITI Aayog Vice Chairman: Dr Rajiv Kumar, CEO: Mr Amitabh Kant.

16. 'Aahaar Kranti' mission launched by Health Ministry to raise public awareness about nutrition

Vijnana Bharati (Vibha), 'Global Indian Scientists and Technocrats' (GIST) Forum, Vigyan Prasar, and Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (PRABHASS) have come together to launch mission "Aahaar Kranti" with the motto of 'Uttam Aahaar-Uttam Vichaar' (Good Diet-Good Cognition). "Aahaar Kranti" will renew the focus on nutritionally balanced diets. Union Health Minister: Harsh Vardhan.

17. NHAI makes Network Survey Vehicle mandatory to improve road quality

The data collected through NSV surveys will highlight deficiencies in road conditions, prompting BOT (build, operate, transfer) operators/NHAI officials to take corrective steps to bring the road condition to the desired level. The data shall be uploaded on NHAI's AI based portal Data Lake, where it will be analyzed by Road Asset Management Cell (RAMS Cell).

18. NIXI announces IP Guru, a new initiative aimed at raising awareness of the IPv6 protocol in India

The National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI), introduced a NISI IP-Index which will showcase the adoption rate for IPv6 in India and compare it against other economies in the world. An expert panel (IP Guru) will 'extend support' to Indian organizations looking to make the move to IPv6 systems. NIXI is also creating an education platform for IPv6, called NIXI Academy. NIXI is a company under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

19. Education Minister launches World 1st affordable and long-lasting hygiene product DuroKea Series

Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank launched the World's 1st affordable and long-lasting hygiene product DuroKea Series developed by Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad to combat the COVID-19 virus spreading. The DuroKea antimicrobial technology leaves behind the long-lasting protective nanoscale coating up to 35 days till the next wash.

20. Commerce and Industry Minister chairs first meeting of National Startup Advisory Council

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal chaired the first meeting of the National Startup Advisory Council. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade had constituted this Council to advise the Government on measures needed to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in the country. The council will act as the guiding light for budding startup entrepreneurs in India.

21. Housing & Urban Affairs Minister launches EatSmart Cities Challenge and Transport4All Challenge

Hardeep Singh Puri virtually launched EatSmart Cities Challenge and Transport4All Challenge. EatSmart Cities Challenge is an opportunity for India to develop the concept of integrating food systems into city planning & development. Transport 4 All Challenge aims to develop solutions that improve public transport to better serve citizens.

22. Piyush Goyal inaugurates e-SANTA, an electronic marketplace for aqua farmers

Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal inaugurated e-SANTA. e-SANTA is an electronic marketplace providing a platform to connect aqua farmers and buyers. The platform is available in many languages which will help the local population. The term e-SANTA stands for Electronic Solution for Augmenting NaCSA farmers' Trade in Aquaculture. NaCSA is an extension arm of Marine Products Export Development Authority.

23. Railways To Run Oxygen Express Trains Via Green Corridors To Fight Covid

Given the rapid increase in Covid-19 cases, Railways will operate 'Oxygen Express' trains to transport liquid medical oxygen (LMO) and oxygen cylinders for patients across India, using green corridors for expeditious delivery. The transportation of LMO would be done through the 'Roll on Roll Off' service with road tankers placed on flat wagons. Railway Board Chairman - Suneeet Sharma,

24. Vedanta Ltd launches Vedanta Saathi programme to support MSMEs with sourcing finances, raw material

Anil Agarwal-led Vedanta Ltd has launched the Vedanta Saathi programme through which the company will be creating industrial parks and clusters for the Micro, Small and Medium enterprises in metals, mining and oil & gas space to aid with sourcing finances, raw material and provide R&D facilities. Nitin Gadkari, Minister of MSME launched the programme. Nitin Gadkari is also Minister for Road Transport & Highways.

25. India becomes fastest country to administer 14 crore doses of Corona vaccine

India becomes the fastest country to administer 14 Crore Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine in just 99 days. These include over 92,89,000 Healthcare Workers who have taken the 1st dose and around 60 lakh Health care workers who have taken the 2nd dose, over one crore 19 lakh Frontline Workers have taken the 1st dose and more than 62 lakh front line workers have taken the 2nd dose.

26. IIT-Madras launches mentorship initiative to tackle underrepresentation of women in research

Intending to drive change, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras, launched the STEM women scholars' and researchers' development (STEWARD) initiative focused on mentoring women PhD research scholars at all levels. Under the programme, present PhD scholars at IIT Madras are connected with the alumni working in similar domains.

27. First 'Oxygen Express' carrying 7 tankers reaches Maharashtra's Nagpur from Visakhapatnam

The first 'Oxygen Express' carrying liquid medical oxygen reached Maharashtra from Visakhapatnam. The Oxygen Express train is carried 100 tonnes of medical oxygen from Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL) plant in Visakhapatnam. It reached the destination, passing through Vapi, Surat, Nandurbar, Bhusawal, Akole, Nagpur, Gondia, Raipur and Titagarh.

28. Madras high court blames Election Commission for surge in Covid cases

Madras high court observed that the Election Commission of India (ECI) was responsible for the second wave in the country and that its officials should probably be tried on murder charges for allowing political parties to hold massive rallies without following Covid-19 norms. The first bench of chief justice Sanjib Banerjee and justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy warned ECI.

29. ISRO Joins Hands With ARIES To Maximise Utilisation Of Data From India's First Dedicated Solar Space Mission Aditya-L1

The service centre called Aditya-L1 Support Cell (AL1SC) - a joint effort of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES) under the Ministry of Science and Technology - will be used by the guest observers in analysing science data and preparing science-observing proposals.

30. Truecaller launches Covid Hospital Directory feature for users in India

The directory is built right into the application and one can access it from either the menu or the dialer. The directory includes telephone numbers and addresses of various Covid-designated hospitals. These hospitals are spread across multiple states in the country and are sourced from official government databases. Rishit Jhunjunwala : Managing Director India, Truecaller

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International

1. New Zealand passes miscarriages bereavement leave law becoming only the second country in the world to do so after India.

New Zealand's parliament passed legislation giving mothers and their partners the right to paid leave following a miscarriage or stillbirth. The bereavement allowance gives employees three days leave when a pregnancy ends with a stillbirth without having to tap into sick leave. One in four New Zealand women have had a miscarriage. New Zealand was the first country in the world to give voting rights to women.

2. Suez Canal reopens after giant container ship 'Ever Given' is freed.

Suez Canal was blocked for six days in March 2021 after the accidental grounding of Ever Given, a Golden-class container ship longer than the Eiffel Tower. The 193-kilometer-long (120 miles) Suez Canal is among the most trafficked waterways in the world, used by oil tankers shipping crude from the Middle East to Europe and North America.

3. PayPal Launches Cryptocurrency Checkout Service in US

In a move that could significantly boost use of digital assets in everyday commerce, PayPal started allowing US consumers to use their cryptocurrency holdings to pay at millions of its online merchants globally. Customers who hold Bitcoin, Ether, Bitcoin Cash & Litecoin in PayPal digital wallets can convert their holdings into fiat currencies at checkouts to make purchases. President and CEO of PayPal: Dan Schulman

4. North Korea drops out of Tokyo Olympics over COVID fears

North Korea has announced it will not attend the Tokyo Olympic Games because of coronavirus concerns. The decision makes it the first time North Korea has missed a Summer Olympics since it boycotted Seoul in 1988 amid the Cold War.

5. 'Lost golden city of Luxor' discovered by archaeologists in Egypt

The 3,400-year-old royal city was built by Amenhotep III, abandoned by his heretic son, Akhenaten, and contains stunningly preserved remains. Egyptologist Betsy Bryan has called the discovery 'the second most important one since the tomb of Tutankhamun'.

6. US President Biden announces complete troop withdrawal from Afghanistan

US President Joe Biden has announced that US troops, as well as forces deployed by our NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Allies and operational partners, will be out of Afghanistan by September 11 this year, before the 20th anniversary of that heinous attack on September 11 (2001).

7. NASA Selects SpaceX Starship to Land Next Americans on Moon

NASA is getting ready to send astronauts to explore more of the Moon as part of the Artemis program, and the agency has selected SpaceX to continue the development of the first commercial human lander that will safely carry the next two American astronauts to the lunar surface.

8. New Zealand Makes World's 1st Climate Change Law For Financial Firms

New Zealand is about to become the world's first country to bring a law into force that demands environmental accountability from financial firms by asking them to report on how their businesses affect climate change.

9. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan launch construction of trans-border trade hub

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have launched the construction of an international center for trade and economic cooperation named "Central Asia" on the border of the two countries. The capsule was laid at the construction site of the logistics center, which is located in the vicinity of the border checkpoint Gisht Kuprik (called Zhibek Zholy in Kazakhstan). Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov and his Kazakh counterpart, Askar Mamin.

10. NASA's Ingenuity Helicopter Takes Flight On Mars, First On Another Planet

NASA successfully flew its tiny helicopter Ingenuity, the first powered flight on another planet. Ingenuity was on autopilot for its entire flight, out of sight, direct control, or contact with the

men and women on Earth who had ordered it aloft because radio signals take too long to travel between the planets for any human operator to intervene. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) - Founder: Dwight D. Eisenhower.

11. Project Luna 25: Russia plans to return to the moon later this year

Luna 25, also designated the Luna-Glob-Lander, is a Russian lunar lander mission planned for launch in October 2021. It is targeted to the south polar region of the Moon. There are two primary scientific objectives of the mission: to study composition of the polar regolith, and to study the plasma and dust components of the lunar polar exosphere. The last spacecraft 'Luna 24' was launched in August 1976 by the Soviet Union.

12. NASA's Perseverance Mars rover extracts first oxygen from Red Planet

According to NASA a toaster-size experimental instrument aboard Perseverance called the Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resource Utilization Experiment (MOXIE) accomplished the task. Mars' atmosphere is 96 per cent carbon dioxide. MOXIE works by separating oxygen atoms from carbon dioxide molecules, which are made up of one carbon atom and two oxygen atoms.

13. US joins high-level India-Swedish group

The US has joined the India-Sweden climate initiative, the Leadership Group for Industry Transition, LeadIT. LeadIT was set up by the governments of India and Sweden at the 2019 UN Climate Summit with the stated goal to enable collaboration between governments and industry. South Korea, the UK, Germany, and France are among the group's other member countries. Spicejet, Mahindra Group, and Dalmia Cement are also members.

14. PM Modi announces India-US partnership on clean energy and climate change

Addressing Leaders' Climate Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced the launch of the India-US climate and clean energy Agenda 2030 partnership, which can be a template of green collaborations to help developing countries access to affordable green finance and clean technologies.

15. China names its first-ever Mars rover "Zhurong" after an ancient fire god

China has named its first-ever Mars rover "Zhurong" after an ancient fire god ahead of a landing attempt on the Red Planet in May. The China National Space Administration (CNSA) revealed the name at the sixth China Space Day held in Nanjing. Chinese name for Mars, "Huoxing," literally means "fire star."

16. WHO validates Gambia for having eliminated trachoma as a public health problem

The World Health Organization (WHO) has validated Gambia for having eliminated trachoma as a public health problem, making it the second country in WHO's African Region to achieve this milestone. It has become the 2nd African state to achieve this feat after Ghana did in 2018. In 1996, WHO launched the WHO Alliance for the Global Elimination of Trachoma by 2020 (GET2020). Trachoma is an eye disease caused by infection with the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

17. Tiny newfound 'Unicorn' is closest known black hole to Earth

Scientists at Ohio State University have discovered a record-breaking black hole. It is both one of the smallest black holes ever detected and the closest to Earth (1,500 light-years away and still inside the Milky Way galaxy). The researchers spotted it by finding something tugging on the red giant star and changing its shape. That effect is called a tidal distortion.

18. China launches robot prototype capable of catching space debris with net

A Chinese space mining start-up launched a robot prototype into low Earth orbit, that can scoop up debris left behind by other spacecraft with a big net. The NEO-01, which will also peer into deep space to observe small celestial bodies, was launched on the government's Long March 6 rocket along with a handful of satellites. The 30kg robot developed by Shenzhen-based Origin Space.

State/UTs

Assam

1. Assam: Two rhinos translocated from Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary released in Manas National Park

With the release of these two rhinos, a total of 22 rhinos have been translocated to the national park under the IRV2020 program. The Rhino Task Force designed the IRV2020 programme in 2005 with a target to attain a population of 3000 rhinos over seven of the protected areas (PAs) by 2020. This was the 8th round of rhino translocation under the Indian Rhino Vision 2020.

Goa

1. Goa gets Advanced Antiquities Management System for preservation of historical objects

Goa Government's Directorate of Archives and Archaeology (DAA) launched the Advanced Antiquities Management System. Claimed to be the first of its kind facility in the country, this database provides information about 83 antiquities currently. Developed by Shailendra Phatak of Pune-based I-Tech Business Solutions, the system has been manufactured using native technology.

Haryana

1. Karnal administration rolls out 'Oxygen on wheels' to tackle oxygen crisis

In wake of the acute oxygen shortage across the country, the Karnal administration (Haryana) has rolled out 'Oxygen on wheels' to assist hospitals in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and oxygen crisis. It is a truck that can carry 100 cylinders. The initiative is functional 24*7 for all hospitals in the Karnal district.

Jharkhand

1. Indian Railways launches Hansdiha-Godda new line in Jharkhand; starts Godda-New Delhi Humsafar special train

At present, 36 rail projects are being executed in the state with an investment of Rs 20,000 crore. According to the ministry, an expenditure of Rs 663 crores has been spent, in total, for the development of infrastructure work as well as providing passenger amenities in Jharkhand. This Hansdiha-Godda project was approved in the year 2011.

2. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha first party to declare name of donor who contributed through electoral bonds

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) is the 1st party that has declared the name of the entity which made donations to it through electoral bonds, poll rights group Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said. The declaration of '1 crore donation was made in the party's 2019-20 contribution report. The donation was made by aluminium and copper manufacturing company Hindalco.

Madhya Pradesh

1. Govt approves Rs 726 cr highway projects in Madhya Pradesh

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has sanctioned road development projects of 291 km worth 726 Cr for the state of Madhya Pradesh. These projects include preparation of detailed project reports for upgradation of declared National Highway (572 Km) at a cost of 17.72 crore besides strengthening of road section of Sagar-Chhatarpur on NH 86/934 at a cost of 22.65 crore. Projects also include Bameetha-Khajuraho road at a cost of 73.43 crore

Maharashtra

1. Area at Amboli in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg named as biodiversity heritage site

A rare freshwater fish species was discovered in the area. Tejas Thackeray and his team had discovered the new freshwater fish species ' Schistura Hiranyakeshi ' near Amboli in Sawantwadi tehsil of Sindhudurg district. Schistura Hiranyakeshi is a rare sub-species of

Schistura, a freshwater loach. The fish was named after the Hiranyakeshi river near Amboli village.

2. India's 1st floating LNG storage & regasification unit arrives in Maharashtra

India's first Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU) 'Hoegh Giant', which sailed from Keppel Shipyard, Singapore has arrived at H-Energy's Jaigarh Terminal in Maharashtra. FSRU based LNG Terminals aim at providing the ability to enhance the pace of natural gas import capability in an environment-friendly and efficient manner".

Meghalaya

1. India's first disk-footed bat recorded in Meghalaya; dwells in bamboo grooves

A team of scientists have discovered India's first bat species with disk-shaped sticky feet in Meghalaya. The species, Eudiscopus denticulus, was found at Lailad close to Nongkhylllem Wildlife Sanctuary. Till now, the species was recorded in few localities in Southern China, Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar. With this find, the number of bat species in India increases to 130. The scientific name for bats is Chiroptera, which is Greek for "hand wing."

Nagaland

1. Nagaland to prepare register to protect indigenous people, their traditions

The Nagaland government in consultation with all the stakeholders would prepare a Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN) to protect the indigenous people and their traditional life and culture. The main purpose of RIIN is to identify the citizens who settled in Nagaland prior to December 1, 1963, the day the mountainous region became a full-fledged state.

Odisha

1. Odisha celebrates 86th statehood day | April 1

Odisha Day, also known as Odisha Divas and Utkala Dibasa, is celebrated on April 1 in the state in memory of its formation as a separate state out of Bihar and Orissa Province with the addition of Koraput and Ganjam from the Madras Presidency on 1 April 1936. Odisha became the first independent state on language basis in India on this day 85 years ago.

2. Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launches 'mask abhiyan' against Covid-19

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on launched 14-day 'mask abhiyan' as part of efforts to prevent the spread of coronavirus in view of rising cases and urged people to strictly follow the safety guidelines.

3. PM Modi releases Hindi version of 'Odisha Itihaas' by Harekrushna Mahtab

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the Hindi translation of the book 'Odisha Itihaas' written by 'Utkal Keshari' Dr Harekrushna Mahtab from Ambedkar International Center, Janpath, New Delhi. The book, available in Odia and English so far, has been translated into Hindi by Shankarlal Purohit. Dr Harekrushna Mahtab wrote the book 'Odisha Itihaas' in Ahmednagar Fort Jail (1942-1945)

4. Government clears '110 crore ROPAX jetty project on Dhamra river in Odisha

Centre has approved over '50 crore for developing all-weather ROPAX, Roll-on/Roll-off Passenger Jetty & allied infrastructure connecting Kaninali in Bhadrak & Talachua in Kendrapara, Odisha under the Sagarmala initiative. The project will come up on river Dhamra in Odisha. This project will reduce travel time for passengers from 6 hours by road to one hour by waterway. Odisha's Governor: Ganeshi Lal; Capital: Bhubaneswar; Chief minister: Naveen Patnaik.

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Punjab

1. Punjab cabinet okays free travel for women in state government buses from April 1

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had announced the free travel scheme in the Vidhan Sabha on March 5. The scheme will benefit over 1.31 crore women/girls across the state. Under this, women residents of Punjab can avail free bus travel in Government-owned buses, including PEPSU Road Transport Corporation, Punjab Roadways Buses and City Bus Services operated by Local Bodies

2. Jal Jeevan Mission: Punjab All Set to become 'Har Ghar Jal' State by 2022

Punjab State reiterated the commitment of the State to achieve 'Har Ghar Jal' target by 2022 as planned. Punjab has 34.73 lakh rural household, out of which 25.88 lakh (74.5%) have tap water supply. In 2021-22, the State plans to provide 8.87 lakh tap connections, thereby providing tap connection to every rural household.

Rajasthan

1. Rajasthan becomes first state to provide health insurance for all its residents

The State began the registration for its cashless 'mediclaim' scheme Chiranjeevi Health Insurance Scheme, announced by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in the state budget 2021-22. Under the scheme each family in the state can claim up to '5 lakh every year for medical expenses.

2. Rajasthan plans to provide 30 lakh Tap water connections by March 2022 under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

Rajasthan has planned to provide 30 lakh Tap water connections by March 2022 under JJM. The state has more than 1 crore rural households, out of which over 19% are getting tap water supply. In 2020-21, about 6,77,000 new tap connections were provided in rural areas. JJM, a flagship programme of Union govt, aims to provide piped tap water in every rural household by 2024.

Sikkim

1. 104-feet tall flag mast inaugurated by Sikkim Governor Ganga Prasad

A 104 feet tall flag mast hoisting the National Flag was inaugurated at the Mahatma Gandhi Marg in Sikkim. The flag mast will be a permanent structure there and the national flag will remain hoisted throughout. The flag mast has been set up by the state Roads and Bridges Department and is located in front of the Tourist Information Centre at the entrance of MG Marg.

Uttar Pradesh

1. Retired Judge Surendra Yadav appointed as Deputy Lokayukta, Uttar Pradesh

Surendra Yadav took oath & was appointed after consultation with the Lokayukta, and shall hold office for a term of six years. Governor Anandiben Patel had signed the notification appointing him as Deputy Lok Ayukta (III).

2. UP govt decides to establish 10 oxygen plants for unabated supply of oxygen to hospitals

Uttar Pradesh government has decided to establish 10 oxygen plants for unabated supply of oxygen to the hospitals. A team of DRDO officials will help the state administration in this task. On the other hand Hindustan aeronautics limited will help state administration in preparing a new all facility covid hospital in Lucknow.

Uttarakhand

1. ITBP Water Sports & Adventure Institute, Tehri (Uttarakhand) Inaugurated

Water Sports and Adventure Institute (WSAI) of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) [S. S. Deswal, DG, ITBP] established at Tehri Dam (Uttarakhand) was Inaugurated. ITBP's Mountaineering and Skiing Institute (M&SI), Auli, will independently run this institution and that the institute will impart the training in Aero, water and land related sports and adventure sports. Kiren Rijiju, Hon'ble Minister of State (IC) for Youth Affairs and Sports.

West Bengal

1. West Bengal contributes highest to small savings schemes

West Bengal accounts for the highest collection of about Rs 90,000 crore from small savings schemes such as NSC (National Savings Certificate) and PPF (Public Provident Fund) among the states and union territories. It is followed by Uttar Pradesh, the largest state in terms of population, with a gross collection of Rs 69,660.70 crore. Chief Minister of West Bengal:

Mamata Banerjee; Governor: Jagdeep Dhankhar

Delhi

1. DTU's 'Lab on Wheels' to impart education to govt school children

The Delhi Technological University (DTU) has started a 'Lab on Wheels' programme in which DTU students will travel across Delhi to teach government school students. 'Lab on Wheels' is a customized bus with 17 computers, two televisions, one 3D printer, cameras, and one printer. Students of DTU will be deployed in the bus to give educational lectures, tutorials.

Jammu and Kashmir

1. Dal Lake and 5 other lakes in Jammu & Kashmir to be declared protected wetlands

Srinagar's Dal Lake along with five other famous ones in Jammu and Kashmir are to be declared protected wetlands. The other lakes include Purmandal lake (also called Chotta Kashi), Sanasar, Manasbal in Jammu region and Wular, Dal and Nigeen in Kashmir region. There are a total number of 3,754 water bodies in the Union Territory.

2. Jammu and Kashmir Bank CMD R K Chibber Gets Another Extension For 6 Months

Chairman and Managing Director of Jammu and Kashmir Bank, R K Chibber got yet another extension. This is his seventh extension. With this Chibber has grown higher in the history of Jammu and Kashmir Bank to be the longest-serving Chief Executive whose services were extended for more than two years.

3. J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurates 5-day Tulip Festival

The 5-day-long Tulip Festival in Asia's largest tulip garden at the foothills of Zabarwan hills on the banks of world famous Dal Lake in Srinagar has begun in the Kashmir Valley. It will showcase Kashmiri folk music apart from a painting competition. Over 15 lakh flowers of more than 64 varieties are in full bloom on the foothills of Zabarwan Mountains.

4. World's highest railway bridge: Iconic Chenab bridge arch closure completed

The world's highest railway bridge, part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project (USBRL), set an important construction milestone with the completion of the steel arch of the iconic Chenab bridge. This was one of the most difficult parts of the bridge. It is the biggest civil-engineering challenge faced by any railway project in India in recent history. The concrete arch bridge between Bakkal & Kauri in the Reasi district of Jammu & Kashmir.

5. Mega tourism promotion event 'Tapping the Potential of Kashmir: Another Day in Paradise' organized recently at Srinagar

The Lt. Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, Shri Manoj Sinha and Union Minister of State for Tourism & Culture (I/c) Shri Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated and virtually addressed the delegates at the event.

Ladakh

1. Ladakh plans to provide tap water connection to every household by 2022

Ladakh has planned to accomplish the ambitious target of providing tap connection to every rural household, that is 100 per cent coverage, by 2022. Union Territory plans to provide tap connections to 32,514 households during 2021-22 fiscal, and to the remaining 11,568 households by next year. Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide tap water connections to all rural households by 2024

Sports

1. Tokyo Olympics 2020: 121-day torch relay kicks off countdown to delayed Summer Games

The Tokyo Olympics torch relay kicked off on March 25, 2021, a year late & without spectators. The Games are to begin on July 23. The rose-gold, cherry blossom-shaped Olympic torch was lit at the J-Village sports complex in Fukushima. First runner with the Olympic torch was Azusa Iwashimizu, a key player in the Japan team that won the Women's World Cup in 2011.

2. Nine cities in Australia, New Zealand to host 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup

The opening match will take place at Eden Park in Auckland, with Sydney's Stadium Australia hosting the final. Two semi-final matches will be split between Australia & New Zealand. It will be the first-of-a-kind World Cup, co-hosted by members of different confederations and will also be the first to feature 32 teams, up from 24 that participated in the 2019 France world cup. The US women's national team is the defending champion.

3. Aniyam Midhun wins gold at south Asian Wushu tourney

Aniyam Midhun of Nattika, Thrissur, Kerala won the gold at the South Asian Wushu Championship that concluded in Nepal on March 31. The 28-year-old youth represented the country in the 70-kg category in the championship. He is the first Wushu player from southern India to reach the Indian team.

4. 2023 Men's Boxing World Championships to be held in Uzbekistan's capital Tashkent

The city of Tashkent is awarded the 2023 AIBA Men's boxing World Boxing Championships after the successful bid presentation by the Boxing Federation of Uzbekistan. International Boxing Association (AIBA) President Umar Kremlev confirmed Tashkent as the host city during a visit to Uzbekistan.

5. Athlete Dutee Chand to Get Chhattisgarh state's Veerni Award

Dutee Chand, the Jakarta Asian Games silver-medalist in 100 and 200 metres will receive Chhattisgarh Veerni Award. The award, instituted by the Chhattisgarh state government, recognises contribution of Indian women in different fields, including sports. In 2019, the Odisha sprinter became the first Indian woman to win gold medal at the World University Games held in Italy 2021 World Athletics Relays will be held in Chorzow, Poland from 1 to 2 May 2021

6. JSW Sports ties up with India Accelerator to mentor sports startups

JSW Sports, the sports arm of the USD 13 billion JSW Group conglomerate has partnered with India Accelerator to mentor startups working in the sports arena. The partnership aims to mentor startups working in the sports arena, sports data, gaming and e-sports, and create a holistic ecosystem for them, JSW Sports, co-owns the Indian Premier League team Delhi Capitals

7. Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju inaugurates Khelo India State Centre of Excellence at Water Sports Academy in Srinagar

Union Minister for Sports & Youth Affairs Shri Kiren Rijiju inaugurated Khelo India State Centre of Excellence for Rowing discipline at the Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council Water Sports Academy in Srinagar on 10th April 2021. He also announced a host of new competitions at the Valley that the J&K Council are doing their best to make the Water Sports facility world-class 24 KISCEs across 23 States/UTs focuses on Olympics sports discipline

8. Kane Williamson awarded Sir Richard Hadlee medal for fourth time

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson has been awarded the Sir Richard Hadlee medal for the fourth time in six years, while women's allrounder Amelia Kerr and rising star Devon Conway also claimed top honours at the New Zealand Cricket Awards for the 2020-21 season.

9. India win 21 medals including 5 golds in Dubai Para Badminton International

World number one Pramod Bhagat won the men's singles gold in the SL4 category at the Dubai Para Badminton tournament after defeating compatriot Nitesh Kumar. SL4 players could have an impairment in one or both legs and a minimal impairment in walking/running balance. They must play standing.

10. India clinches seven medals in women's wrestling Asian Championship titles

Olympics-bound Indian wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Anshu Malik clinched their maiden Asian Championship titles at Almaty, Kazakhstan as India ended with seven medals from the women's event with four gold. The event marred by the absence of countries China and Japan due to COVID-19, India also bagged one silver and two bronze medals.

11. Asian Weightlifting Championships: India's Mirabai Chanu creates a new Clean and Jerk world record in Tashkent

Mirabai Chanu set a new World Record in the women's 49kg Clean and Jerk with a massive 119 kg lift at Asian Weightlifting Championships in Tashkent. The 26-year-old Indian won the bronze medal at the event. The gold medal went to Hou Zhihui of China who created a new world record in snatch. Asian Games, held once in every 4yrs, is the 2nd largest multi-sport event after Olympics

12. Stefanos Tsitsipas Wins Monte Carlo 2021 Title By Beating Andrey Rublev

Greek star Stefanos Tsitsipas landed the first Masters 1000 title of his career as he scored a thumping 6-3 6-3 win over Andrey Rublev in Monte Carlo. Rublev beat 11-time Monte Carlo champion Nadal in the quarter-finals.

13. Emilia Romagna Grand Prix: Max Verstappen pips Lewis Hamilton to win his 1st race of F1 2021 season

Red Bull's Max Verstappen won a chaotic Emilia Romagna Grand Prix to register his first race victory of the Formula One 2021 season ahead of his Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton, who still leads the driver's championship leaderboard with 44 points. McLaren's Lando Norris completed the top three.

14. World Table Tennis Championships to be held as per schedule from November 23 to 29 in Houston, USA

The World Table Tennis Championships will be held as per schedule from November 23 to 29 in Houston, USA, for the first time in the United States of America. The 2020 World Championships event in Busan, Korea, was cancelled. The ITTF Executive Committee also approved the new ITTF Team and Youth rankings. ITTF CEO Mr. Steve Dainton.

15. World Youth Boxing Championships: Indian women boxers create history with seven gold medals

In the World Youth Boxing Championships, Indian women boxers created history with seven gold medals in Kielce, Poland. All the women finalists Gitika, Naorem Babyrojisana Chanu, Poonam, Vinka, Arundhati Choudhary, T Sanamacha Chanu, and Alfiya Pathan registered their wins and finished on the top. Apart from the eight finalists, three others won bronze medals. Poland Capital: Warsaw; President: Andrzej Duda.

16. Rafael Nadal beats Tsitsipas, clinches 12th Barcelona Open title

Rafael Nadal beat Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 6-7, 7-5 to win his 12th Barcelona Open title. It was Nadal's 87th career title, and his 61st title on clay. This is the second tournament where Nadal has captured 12 or more titles. The 13-time Roland Garros champion, will return to No. 2 in the FedEx ATP Rankings.

17. WTA Porsche Tennis Grand Prix 2021 ' Ashleigh Barty Lifts Second Title in Stuttgart

World number one Ashleigh Barty (Australia) earned her third WTA title this year by defeating Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus) in the final of Stuttgart's clay-court tournament. After winning in Miami and a pre-Australian Open event in Melbourne on hard court, Barty added the Stuttgart title.

Agreements & MoUs

1. ICICI Bank, Axis Bank to co-lead New Umbrella Entity (NUE) with Amazon, Visa as partners

ICICI Bank & Axis Bank have tied up with Amazon and Visa to launch a retail payments entity, which will be a rival to state-owned NPCI, which currently delivers services like UPI-based payments. ICICI Bank and Axis Bank will be co-leading the consortium with a 20% stake each. Other partners, including Amazon, Billdesk, Pine Labs and Visa will be holding a stake of 15% each.

2. NSE Academy, GIFT SEZ sign pact to launch certification in international financial services

NSE Academy Limited (NAL), a wholly owned subsidiary of NSE has signed an MoU with GIFT SEZ Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary of Gujarat International Finance Tec-City Co. Ltd.). MoU lays down foundation for NAL & GIFT City to assist in capacity building of trained manpower by developing, launching & conducting training programs related to International Financial Services. Tapan Ray is MD & Group CEO, GIFT City and Vikram Limaye is MD & CEO, NSE.

3. Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) launches 'AIM-PRIME', in partnership with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) & Venture Center.

AIM, NITI Aayog launched AIM-PRIME (Program for Researchers on Innovations, Market-Readiness & Entrepreneurship), an initiative to promote and support science-based deep-tech startups & ventures across India. First cohort of the program is open to tech developers (early-stage deep tech start-ups, and scientists/ engineers/ clinicians) with strong science-based deep tech ideas. Venture Center is a Pune based non-profit technology business incubator.

4. World Bank, AIIB approve loan for USD 300 million canal-based drinking water projects in Punjab

The USD 300 million (about Rs 2,190 crore) project is aimed at ensuring quality drinking water and minimise water losses for Amritsar and Ludhiana. The entire project will be co-financed by IBRD (World Bank) - USD 105 million, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank - USD 105 million and the Punjab government - USD 90 million.

5. World Bank approves USD 32 million project to boost health services in Mizoram

The project titled "Mizoram Health Systems Strengthening Project" will strengthen governance & management structure of the Mizoram Health department and its subsidiaries. As a key strategy, the project will move towards a performance-based financing system where Internal Performance Agreements between state health department & its subsidiaries will foster accountability.

6. Spices Board India under Ministry of Commerce and Industry and UNDP India's Accelerator Lab sign MoU

Spices Board India under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and UNDP India's Accelerator Lab today signed an MoU with the aim to build a blockchain-based traceability interface for Indian spices to enhance transparency in the supply chain and trade. Blockchain is a decentralized process of recording transactions on an open and shared electronic ledger. This allows for ease and transparency in data management.

7. J.P. Morgan ties up with Bill Desk for online payments partnership

Payments aggregator BillDesk announced a partnership with global financial institution J.P. Morgan to offer online payments solutions to the bank's corporate clients in India. The solution integrates BillDesk's payments platform with the J.P. Morgan Access banking portal and uses application programming interface (API) technology to authenticate and verify payments instantly

8. Bharti Airtel sells 800 MHz spectrum in three circles to Reliance Jio for Rs 1,037.6 crore

Reliance Jio has signed a definitive agreement with Bharti Airtel for the acquisition of right to use spectrum in the 800MHz band in three circles through spectrum trading. The transferred spectrum comprises those in Andhra Pradesh (3.75 MHz), Delhi (1.25 MHz) and Mumbai (2.50 MHz). The aggregate value for the right to use this spectrum is Rs 1,497 crore. Gopal Vittal, MD & CEO (India and South Asia), Bharti Airtel.

9. India, Netherlands announce launch of strategic partnership in water sector

India and the Netherlands have announced the launch of the strategic partnership in water sector to further intensify ongoing cooperation and better coherence in the area. India - Netherlands Virtual Summit held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Netherlands counterpart Mark Rutte Netherlands is 3rd largest FDI investor in India & India the 4th largest in Netherlands

10. Atal Innovation Mission Partners With DSF To Promote STEM Based Innovation And Entrepreneurship

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog signed an agreement with Dassault Systemes Fondation(DSF) to jointly work towards providing a digitally rich ecosystem of Innovation in India and promoting STEM-based innovation and entrepreneurship among aspiring young minds across the country.

11. Centre, Microsoft sign pact to promote digital agriculture in 100 villages

The agricultural ministry and Microsoft India have inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a pilot project in 100 villages of six states to promote digital agriculture. Microsoft will start a pilot project in 100 villages in 10 districts of 6 states (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh).

12. India-France Ink Deal For Cooperation On Gaganyaan Mission

The Indian and French space agencies signed an agreement for cooperation for the country's first human space mission Gaganyaan. French equipment developed by CNES, tested and still operating aboard the International Space Station (ISS) will be made available to Indian crews by the virtue of this agreement. France President: Emmanuel Macron; Capital: Paris.

13. PNB signs MOU with SwitchON for Solar Pump Financing

SwitchON Foundation, a West Bengal-based not-for-profit organization, has partnered with Punjab National Bank to facilitate solar pump financing for small and marginal farmers. Under the partnership, SwitchON Foundation shall set up a first loss default guarantee fund through which Punjab National Bank will be financing solar pumps.

14. NTT, TCIL team up for 5G, AI, submarine systems

Japanese telecom company NTT and India's Telecommunications Consultants of India Limited (TCIL) have come together to cooperate in the areas of fifth generation (5G) technology, Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, and submarine cable systems. NTT will act as a technology provider for upcoming next generation (5G) networks. Sanjeev Kumar, Chairman, TCIL.

15. Army signs MoU with HPCL, NIEDO for 'Ladakh Ignited Minds' project

To secure a better future for Ladakhi youth, Army under the aegis of Fire and Fury Corps signed MoU for Ladakh Ignited Minds project with corporate partner Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and executing agency National Integrity and Educational Development Organisation (NIEDO) at HQ 14 Corps, Leh.

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Schemes

1. Govt to use sensor-based Internet of Things (IoT) devices to effectively monitor Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) implementation

For this, JJM with Tata Community Initiatives Trust and Tata Trusts recently completed pilot projects in remote villages of Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra & Himachal Pradesh. A key feature of these pilots has been the use of frugal yet sturdy sensors, which provides near real-time information without manual intervention. It makes the solution scalable & sustainable. Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide tap water connection to every rural household by 2024.

2. Cabinet approves investment of Rs 10,900 crore in food processing industry under PLI scheme

Objective of the scheme is to support creation of global food manufacturing champions and support Indian brands of food products in the international markets. Scheme will facilitate expansion of processing capacity to generate processed food output of Rs 33,494 crore & create employment for nearly 2.5 lakh persons by the year 2026-27. Scheme will be implemented over a 6 year period from 2021-22 to 2026-27.

3. Government extends Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to June 30

The government has extended ECLGS by another three months, and widened its scope to issue additional funding up to 40% of outstanding loans as on Feb 29, 2020 as against 20% earlier. Scheme (ECLGS 3.0), has been extended until June 30, or until Rs 3 trillion is disbursed, due to continuing adverse impact of Covid-19 pandemic on certain services sector.

4. 14 digit Unique ID for all land parcels by March 2022

The Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) scheme has been launched in ten States this year and will be rolled out across the country by March 2022. It will be a 14-digit identification number to every plot of land in the country & subsequently ULPIN land database will be integrated with revenue court records, bank records and Aadhaar.

5. First farm-based solar power plant under PM-KUSUM comes up in Rajasthan

Plant is established under the Prime Minister's Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM) scheme in Jaipur district's Kotputli tehsil with a provision for production of 17 lakh units of electricity every year. The 1 MW farm on 3.5 acres of farmland is first among 623 projects selected by the Rajasthan Renewable Energy Corporation Limited. PM-KUSUM with its 3 components aims to add solar capacity of 30.8 GW by 2022.

6. Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan approves National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021

The policy aims to lower the high cost of treatment for rare diseases, with increased focus on indigenous research & local production of medicines. A provision for financial support up to Rs.20 lakh under the Umbrella Scheme of Rastriya Arogya Nidhi is proposed for treatment of those rare diseases that require a one-time treatment (diseases listed under Group 1 in policy). Benefits to be extended to about 40% of population eligible under PM Jan Arogya Yojana.

7. Govt sanctions more than Rs 25,586 cr to 1.14 Lakh Accounts for Stand-Up India Scheme in 5 years

The Government has sanctioned '22,586 crores to over 1,14,322 beneficiaries under Stand-Up India Scheme in 5 years. The objective is to promote entrepreneurship amongst women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It seeks to give access to loans from bank branches to borrowers to help them set up their own enterprise. This scheme has been extended up to 2025. Stand Up India Scheme was launched on 5th April 2016.

8. PM Modi launches distribution of e-property cards under SVAMITVA scheme

Prime Minister launched SVAMITVA scheme for the entire nation. SVAMITVA, Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas Scheme was launched by PM in April

2020 on a pilot basis in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana, UP, Uttarakhand, MP and in selected villages of Punjab & Rajasthan. It is extended to cover around 6,62,000 villages of the nation.



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Appointments & Resignations

1. Subhash Kumar takes additional charge as ONGC CMD

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)'s Director (Finance) Subhash Kumar assumed additional charge as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD). Kumar took charge upon the superannuation of incumbent CMD, Shashi Shanker on March 31, 2021.

2. Mukhmeet S. Bhatia takes over the charge of Director General of ESIC

Mukhmeet S. Bhatia took over the charge of Director General of Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) under Ministry of Labour & Employment/ Govt. of India at its Headquarters on April 1, 2021 in New Delhi. Bhatia is an IAS Officer of 1990 batch of Jharkhand cadre. Earlier/ he has worked as the Additional Secretary in the Dept. of Economic Affairs.

3. Mallika Srinivasan appointed chairperson of Public Enterprises Selection Board

She is presently the chairman and managing director of TAFE, a '93 billion tractor major incorporated in 1960 in Chennai. Mallika Srinivasan will be the first private sector executive to be appointed to the position which is effectively responsible for transfers and appointments of officials of central public sector enterprises.

4. Former Quality Council of India (QCI) chief Adil Zainulbhai appointed chairman of Capacity Building Commission

Government approved the Capacity Building Commission under National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB), also known as 'Mission Karmayogi', to train civil servants at all levels. Ramaswami Balasubramaniam has been appointed as member (HR) & Praveen Pardeshi as a member (admin). Mission Karmayogi, the biggest bureaucratic reform initiative, was announced in 2020.

5. Lt Gen Manjinder Singh takes over as 47th Chief of Staff of Western Command

The general is an alumnus of Sainik School Kapurthala, National Defence Academy and Indian Military Academy. He was commissioned into 19 Madras in December 1986. He has commanded a battalion in counter-insurgency environment in J&K, an infantry brigade at the Line of Control and an infantry division as part of a Strike Corps.

6. RBI Deputy Governor Kanungo retires.

RBI deputy governor B.P. Kanungo stepped down on 2 April after completing his term. As deputy governor, Kanungo was in charge of the department of currency management, payment and settlement, foreign exchange, among others. He was appointed deputy governor in 2017 for three years. His term was extended by one more year in 2020.

7. Carl Bildt, former PM of Sweden, appointed WHO Special Envoy for the ACT-Accelerator

Carl Bildt has been appointed as the WHO Special Envoy for the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator). He will help lead the collective advocacy for the ACT-Accelerator, mobilizing support and resources so it can deliver against its strategy for 2021. Carl Bildt succeeds Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala & Sir Andrew Witty in this special envoy role.

8. Chintan Vaishnav appointed as Mission Director of Atal Innovation Mission

Noted socio-technologist Dr Chintan Vaishnav has been appointed the mission director of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), the government's flagship initiative under NITI Aayog. So far, AIM has established 72,59 Atal Tinkering Labs in schools across 650 districts, providing over 3.5 million students access to emerging technologies. Vaishnav replaces Ramanathan Ramanan.

9. Justice N V Ramana appointed as 48th Chief Justice of India by President

Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana has been appointed as the next Chief Justice of India by the President in the exercise of the powers conferred by clause (2) of Art 124 of the constitution. He will serve as the 48th Chief Justice of India till August 26, 2022. Before his elevation to the Supreme Court, Justice Ramana was the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court. Ramana succeeds SA Bobde.

10. Tarun Bajaj appointed Revenue Secretary and Ajay Seth appointed as the new DEA Secy

The union government approved the appointment of Tarun Bajaj as a new revenue secretary under the Ministry of Finance. Ajay Seth will be the new Department of Economic Affairs secretary in place of Bajaj. Gyanesh Kumar, additional secretary in the Department of Home, has been appointed as secretary in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

11. Former Gujarat DGP Shabir Hussein appointed new BCCI ACU chief

Former Gujarat DGP Shabir Hussein Shekhadam Khandwawala has taken over from Ajit Singh as the head of the BCCI's Anti-Corruption Unit. He has been a part of the central government's Lokpal Search Committee, which was mandated to appoint the Lokpal.

12. Govt Appoints S Ramann As SIDBI Chairman & Managing Director

The government has appointed S Ramann as Chairman and Managing Director of Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI). The appointment is for a period of three years from the date of his assuming the charge. Ramann, a 1991-batch Indian Audit & Accounts Service officer, is currently the CEO of National E-Governance Services Ltd, India's first Information Utility. SIDBI, Founded: 2 April 1990 Headquarters: Lucknow

13. Britannia appoints former RBI governor Urjit Patel as additional director

Britannia Industries announced that its board of directors has approved the appointment of Dr. Urjit Patel, as an Additional Director of the company in the category of Non-Executive and Independent Director with effect from 31st March, 2021 for a term of 5 years i.e., upto 30th March, 2026. Urjit Patel stepped down from RBI governor position in December 2018.

14. Justice Sanjay Yadav Appointed Acting Chief Justice Of Allahabad High Court

The Central government notified the appointment of Justice Sanjay Yadav as the Acting Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court. The appointment comes in view of the impending retirement of current Chief Justice, Govind Mathur on April 14.

15. Vietnam picks ex-state security official Chinh as new PM

Vietnam's National Assembly confirmed Pham Minh Chinh, as the country's next prime minister. Outgoing Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc was appointed the new President. During his time as prime minister, Mr Phuc led Vietnam as it further integrated to the global economy and sustained the economic growth of 7 per cent up until last year when COVID-19 hit the world. Vietnam, Capital: Hanoi Currency: Vietnamese dong.

16. Former CBDT chairman Sushil Chandra appointed as 24th Chief Election Commissioner

Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra has been appointed as the Chief Election Commissioner with effect from April 13, 2021, a day after incumbent CEC Sunil Arora demits office. Chandra was appointed an election commissioner on February 14, 2019; he would demit office on May 14, 2022.

17. Niger President Bazoum Names Mahamadou as New Prime Minister

Niger President Mohamed Bazoum appointed Ouhoumoudou Mahamadou to head his new cabinet as the country's new prime minister. Mahamadou, 66, previously served as a minister in charge of the finance and mining portfolios. He was the chief of staff to former President Mahamadou Issoufou between 2015 and 2021. Capital of Niger: Niamey.

18. NCAER appoints World Bank's economist Poonam Gupta as Director General

National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) appointed the World Bank's lead economist Poonam Gupta as its next Director-General. Gupta, the first woman Director General of NCAER, will succeed Shekhar Shah who has led NCAER since 2011, and will complete his second five-year term in early May.

19. Siddharth Singh Longjam to replace Navin Agarwal as NADA DG

Siddharth Singh Longjam will take over as the National Anti-Doping Agency's Director General, succeeding Navin Agarwal who listed the creation of Athletes Biological Passport (ABP) for

around 60 elite Indian sportspersons as one of the highlights of his tenure. In 2018, BCCI came under the ambit of NADA.

20. Canon India appoints Manabu Yamazaki as new President & CEO

Canon India Pvt. Ltd., the global leader in imaging technologies, announced the appointment of Manabu Yamazaki as the new President & CEO for Canon India. Manabu Yamazaki takes over the baton from Kazutada Kobayashi, who was at the helm for 9 years leading growth in the India market.

21. Haiti president appoints Claude Joseph as the new prime minister

Haiti's president appointed Claude Joseph, minister of foreign affairs and worship, as the new prime minister following the resignation of Joseph Jouthe. Jouthe assumed the post in early March last year. Haiti's president- Jovenel Moise.

22. RBI approves re-appointment of Murali Natarajan as DCB Bank MD and CEO

Private sector lender, DCB Bank has received the approval from the Reserve Bank of India for the re-appointment of Murali M. Natarajan as the Managing Director & CEO, for a further period of one year from April 29, 2021. Natarajan was appointed as MD and CEO of DCB Bank in May 2009. Prior to joining DCB, Natarajan has worked with foreign banks Standard Chartered & Citibank.

23. Miguel Diaz-Canel becomes 1st non-Castro Cuban leader in 6 decades

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba formally chose Miguel Diaz-Canel to succeed President Raul Castro. Raul Castro appointed Miguel Diaz-Canel vice president in 2012 after he took over for Fidel Castro, who died in 2016. Tomas Estrada Palma was the first President of Cuba. Havana is the capital city of Cuba.

24. Accenture's Rekha Menon takes over as first woman chairperson of Nasscom

Accenture India's chairperson Rekha M Menon has been appointed as chairperson of the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), becoming the first woman to take the top role in the software lobby group's 30-year history. TCS President Krishnan Ramanujam will be the vice-chairperson. She succeeds U B Pravin Rao, chief operating officer of Infosys as Nasscom's chairperson.

25. Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana takes oath as 48th CJI

Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana took oath as the 48th Chief Justice of India. President Ram Nath Kovind administered him the oath of office. He succeeds Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde. Justice Ramana will have a tenure of nearly 16 months as the Chief Justice and is due to retire on 26th August next year.

26. RBI approves appointment of Atanu Chakraborty as part-time chairman of HDFC Bank

RBI has approved the appointment of former Economic Affairs Secretary Atanu Chakraborty as part-time chairman of HDFC Bank for a period of 3yrs w.e.f. May 5, 2021, or the date of his taking charge, whichever is later. Once he is appointed as chairperson, HDFC Bank will be the second private sector lender to have a former bureaucrat at the post, ICICI being the first.

27. PESB selects Amit Banerjee as CMD of BEML

Public Enterprise Selection Board selected Amit Banerjee as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Bharat Earth Movers Limited, (BEML) an Indian Public Sector Undertaking. Currently, he is serving as Director (Rail & Metro), BEML Limited.

28. Centre Appoints Justice Rajesh Bindal As Acting CJ Of Calcutta High Court

The Centre has appointed Justice Rajesh Bindal, senior-most Judge of the Calcutta High Court, as the Acting Chief Justice of that High Court. He will succeed Chief Justice Thottathil B. Radhakrishnan, who is set to retire on 29th April 2021.

29. Expenditure Secretary T V Somanathan designated Finance Secretary

Expenditure Secretary T V Somanathan has been designated as the Finance Secretary. The senior-most officer among all secretaries in the Finance Ministry is designated as the Finance

Secretary. Mr. Somanathan's batchmate Debasish Panda is Secretary, Department of Financial Services.



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Awards

1. Noted Marathi writer Dr Sharankumar Limbale to receive Saraswati Samman 2020

Noted Marathi writer Dr. Sharankumar Limbale will receive Saraswati Samman, 2020 for his book Sanatan. Saraswati Samman, instituted by K K Birla Foundation in 1991, is recognised as the most prestigious and highest literary award in the country. The award carries fifteen lakh rupees, a citation and a plaque.

2. Rajinikanth to be honoured with 51st Dadasaheb Phalke Award

Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shri Prakash Javadekar announced the recipient of the 51st Dadasaheb Phalke Award. The award for 2019 will be conferred to legendary actor Shri Rajinikanth. It will be presented on 3rd May, along with the National Film Awards. The Dadasaheb Phalke award for 2018 - Amitabh Bachchan.

3. Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan receives Kalinga Ratna award for 2021.

The award instituted by Sarala Sahitya Sansad was presented to Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan by VP Venkaiah Naidu during the 600th birth anniversary celebrations of Adikabi Sarala Das and the 40th annual celebrations of Sarala Sahitya Sansad in Cuttack. The Kalinga Ratna award carries a silver statue of Goddess Saraswati and a copper plaque.

4. Professor Suman Chakraborty, IIT Kharagpur faculty, to get 30th GD Birla Award for Scientific Research

Chakraborty has been selected for his outstanding contribution to engineering science & its applications in developing technologies for affordable healthcare. Instituted in 1991, the award recognises eminent Indian scientists below age 50 for their original & outstanding contributions to any branch of science or technology. It carries a cash prize of '5 lakh.

5. Alfred Aho wins the 2020 ACM Turing Award

Alfred V. Aho, Lawrence Gussman Professor Emeritus of Computer Science, has won the 2020 Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) A.M. Turing Award, known informally as the "Nobel Prize of computing." Aho shares the award with his long-time collaborator Jeffrey David Ullman. The Turing Award carries a \$1 million prize, with financial support provided by Google, Inc.

6. Devishankar Awasthi Award 2020 to Ashutosh Bhardwaj, a young Hindi critic

The famous Devishankar Awasthi Award has been awarded to the prolific Hindi prose, journalist, and critic Ashutosh Bhardwaj. This honor has been given to him for his work 'Pitra-Vadh'. He was elected by the selection committee of Ashok Vajpayee, Nandkishore Acharya, and Rajendra Kumar.

7. Ariel's campaign is WARC's most awarded work for media excellence in 2020

Procter & Gamble India's long-running campaign for its detergent model Ariel has made it to the record of most awarded work for media excellence by World Advertising Research Centre (WARC) for 2020. WARC is a web based advertising intelligence service that gives unbiased benchmarks for excellence in creativity, media, and effectiveness. Ariel launched Sons#ShareTheLoad in 2019 to emphasize equality between little kids

8. Guneet Monga to be conferred with the honour of the Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters of France

Acclaimed filmmaker Guneet Monga to be conferred with honour of the Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters (Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres). It is the second highest civilian French honour and has earlier been awarded to big Hollywood names like Meryl Streep, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Bruce Willis. She has helmed critically acclaimed projects including The Lunchbox etc

9. Abu Dhabi Crown Prince honours Indian business tycoon Yusuffali with top civilian award

Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan has honoured Indian-origin businessman Yusuffali MA and 11 other individuals with Abu Dhabi's top civilian award for their noble and charitable contributions to the community. Yusuffali is the CMD of Abu Dhabi-based LuLu Group awards were given at the 10th edition of the Abu Dhabi Awards held at Qasr Al Hosn

10. Union Minister Of Education Presents AICTE Lilavati Awards 2020 On Women Empowerment

Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' presented the AICTE Lilavati Awards 2020 on women empowerment. Based on the theme 'Women Empowerment', AICTE finalized the winners from a total of 456 entries who competed across 6 sub-themes, which include, Women's Health, Self-Defense, Sanitation and Hygiene, Literacy, Women Entrepreneurship, and Legal Awareness. AICTE Chairman Professor Anil Sahasrabudhe

11. Puglya: Best foreign language feature at the Moscow International Film Festival 2021

Marathi film Puglya directed by Vinod Sam Peter has won the best foreign-language feature at the Moscow International Film Festival 2021. Puglya revolves around two 10-year-old boys and how the entry of a pug turns their life turns upside down. Vinod Sam Peter is the script writer and also the producer of the film.

12. Oscar-winning Italian film-maker Roberto Benigni to receive Venice Film Festival's Lifetime Achievement award

Oscar-winning Italian director-actor Roberto Benigni of 'Life is Beautiful' fame has been honored with the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement of the 78th Venice International Film Festival. The decision to honor Benigni, a two-time Oscar winner was made by the board of La Biennale di Venezia. Venice Film Festival runs from September 1-11.

13. Rumana Sinha Sehgal has been awarded the Nelson Mandela World Humanitarian Award 2021

Rumana Sinha Sehgal has been virtually awarded the prestigious 'Nelson Mandela World Humanitarian Award 2021' by the Diplomatic Mission Global Peace for her work in the fields of developing innovative and functional green products by recycling varied materials and creative use of non-biodegradable materials, thus enhancing their useful life. She is also the recipient of the under 50-Business Leader Award 2021.

14. Oscars 2021 Winners: Nomadland wins Best Picture, Anthony Hopkins and Frances McDormand take home Best Actor trophy

Chlo Zhao won Best Director, making her the second woman ever, to win the award. Nomadland also won the Best Picture award, as well as Best Actress for Frances McDormand. Anthony Hopkins, in an upset, won the Best Actor award for The Father. Ann Roth became the oldest woman to win an Oscar. She won the Best Costume Design award for Ma Rainey's Black Bottom. Oscars 2021 paid tribute to Irrfan Khan and Bhanu Athaiya in In Memoriam segment.

15. Krithi Karanth becomes first Indian woman to get 'Wild Innovator Award'

Dr. Krithi K Karanth, Chief Conservation Scientist at Bengaluru-based Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS), has been chosen as the first Indian and Asian woman for the 2021 'WILD Innovator Award'. The Foundation is fueled by the Power of Three ' a symbiotic union between Animalkind, Humankind, and Plantkind because one can't thrive without the other.

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Ranks & Reports

1. World Bank(WB) raises India's FY22 GDP forecast to 10.1% from 5.4% earlier.

However, according to its South Asia Economic Focus Spring update report, WB chose to provide a range for its FY22 prediction of 7.5-12.5% due to 'significant uncertainty at this stage about both epidemiological and policy developments'. In report 'South Asia Vaccinates', WB says India could gain \$356.5 bn upon achieving herd immunity after vaccinating 70% of population. WB also tempered its estimate of India's FY21 GDP contraction to 8.5% from -9.6% earlier.

2. WEF's gender gap index: India slips 28 places, ranks 140 among 156 nations

India has slipped 28 places to rank 140th among 156 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, becoming the third-worst performer in South Asia. India has closed 62.5% of its gender gap till date. In South Asia, only Pakistan and Afghanistan ranked below India. For the 12th time, Iceland is the most gender-equal country in the world. India ranked 112th among 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2020.

3. Labour Bureau Launches Two Of The Five All-India Surveys on Migrant Workers and AQEES.

Labour Bureau has been tasked with five surveys by Govt of India. They are the All-India Survey of Migrant Workers, All-India Survey on Domestic Workers, All-India Survey on Employment generated in Transport Sector, All-India Survey of Employment Generated by Professionals and All-India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey (AQEES). Surveys were designed under expert group chaired by Prof S. P. Mukherjee.

4. India tops in real-time digital transactions in 2020, digital payments will grow to 71.7% of all transactions by 2025: Report.

Report by ACI Worldwide, which provides payment solutions to corporations says cash and cheques, other payment alternatives, will occupy only 28.3% share. India was ahead of China with 25.5 billion real-time payments transactions in 2020, compared to China's 15.7 billion. India, China, South Korea, Thailand & UK rank as top-5 countries generating real-time transactions in 2020.

5. World Trade Organization Revises Upwards Trade Growth Forecast For 2021 To 8 %

WTO revised upwards the growth forecast of global merchandise trade in 2021 to 8% compared to the 7.2% growth forecast in October 2020. Decline in volume of world goods trade for 2020, has been pared to 5.3% compared to a 9.2% fall projected earlier. World GDP at market exchange rates should increase by 5.1% in 2021 & 3.8% in 2022 after contraction by 3.8% in 2020. WTO: Director-General: Ngozi Okonjo Iweala; HQ: Geneva.

6. Forbes World's Billionaires List 2021: Jeff Bezos Tops for Fourth Consecutive Year, Elon Musk Ranks Second

Bernard Arnault, chief executive of luxury goods firm LVMH, Microsoft founder Bill Gates and Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg round out the top five of the world's richest billionaires as per Forbes' 35th annual list. Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani has been ranked Number 10 in the list with Net Worth estimated at \$84.5 billion. India has the third-highest number of billionaires with 140, the US tops with 724.

7. Railways On Electrification Mode: Fossil Fuel Bill Drops By Over Rs 8,000 Crore In Fiscal 2020-21

With the rapid route electrification, Indian Railways has reduced its diesel fuel bill by over Rs 8000 crore in 2020-21, a significant savings for the public transporter. Railways has reduced diesel consumption from 3.06 billion litres in the fiscal 2018-19 to 1.43 billion litres in 2020-21 as more and more diesel locomotives are being replaced with electric ones.

8. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) released State of World Population 2021 report

UNFPA released State of World Population 2021 report titled 'My Body is My Own - Claiming the right to autonomy and self-determination'. This is the 1st time a UN report has focused on bodily autonomy defined as the power & agency to make choices about your body. The data reveals that nearly half the women from 57 developing countries don't have the right to make decisions. United Nations Population Fund Headquarters: New York, U.S.

9. India stands at 49th position in 'Inclusive Internet Index' report 2021

Inclusive Internet Index 2021 released by Economist Intelligence Unit in alliance with Facebook reveals that India is at 49th spot globally when it comes to internet inclusion & gender equality in accessing the world wide web. India is tied with Thailand in 49th place this year. Index score was based on 4 parameters: Availability, Affordability, Relevance and Readiness. The Index was topped by Sweden followed by the U.S. and Spain respectively.

10. National climate vulnerability assessment report: Identifies eight eastern states as highly vulnerable to Climate Change

National climate vulnerability assessment report titled 'Climate Vulnerability Assessment for Adaptation Planning in India Using a Common Framework' was released by the Department of Science and Technology Secretary. It identified Jharkhand, Mizoram, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, and West Bengal as states highly vulnerable to climate change.

11. World Press Freedom index: India retains 142 of 180 spot

India has not slipped further on the World Press Freedom Index 2021 published by the international journalism not-for profit body, Reporters Without Borders (RSF). The latest index released ranks 180 countries, topped, yet again, by Norway followed by Finland and Denmark, while Eritrea is at the bottom. In the South Asian neighbourhood, Nepal is at 106.

12. India ranks 87th in global energy transition index

India has been ranked at the 87th position among 115 countries in the Energy Transition Index (ETI) that tracks nations on the current performance of their energy systems. Sweden is in the first position followed by Norway and Denmark. The report from the World Economic Forum (WEF) has been prepared in collaboration with Accenture also draws on insight from ETI. China (68) & India (87), collectively account for a third of global energy demand.

13. Global military spending rose to nearly \$2 trillion in 2020; India ranks 3rd

Global military expenditure in 2020 is estimated to have been \$1,981 billion, the highest since 1988 according to records maintained by SIPRI. India accounted for a 3.7 percent of the total world military spending in 2020, third highest, after the US and China.

The United States, China, India, Russia and the United Kingdom are the top five biggest spenders in 2020.

14. India ranks 49th in the Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI)

India has been ranked 49th in the Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI), which classifies 104 countries in terms of government capabilities and outcomes. The index focuses on seven pillars: leadership and foresight; robust laws and policies; strong institutions; financial stewardship; attractive marketplace; global influence and reputation; and helping people rise. Finland has topped the CGGI list.

15. Jio Platforms, Byju's in Time's first list of 100 most influential firms

Two Indian firms, Reliance Industries' technology arm Jio Platforms and e-learning startup Byju's have figured in the Time Magazine's first-ever list of 100 most influential companies. It listed Jio Platforms under the Innovators category alongside Zoom, Adidas, TikTok, Ikea, Moderna and Netflix. Byju's was listed alongside Tesla, Huawei, Shopify, & Airbnb in Disruptors category

16. IHS Markit sees India's FY22 GDP growth at 9.6% amid rising Covid cases

IHS Markit suggests that they expect the Indian economy (as measured by GDP) to grow at 9.6 percent in FY22, though the wider restrictions forecast above indicate that there is scope for further reductions in economic growth. Maharashtra's lockdown represents a significant dampener on growth, as the state accounts for 16 percent of the national GDP. IHS Markit Ltd is an American-British information provider based in London.



First, I cleared all my basic concepts through the video courses provided by Oliveboard. After going through them, I started attempting 1 mock test per day from Oliveboard mock test series which helped me in becoming comfortable with the sectional timers as per the real exam. With time, I started getting 95+ percentile in pre mock tests.



Important Days

1. World Autism Awareness Day | 2 April

This day is celebrated in order to take measures to raise awareness about people with Autism Spectrum Disorder throughout the world. The United Nations General Assembly unanimously declared April 2 as World Autism Awareness Day from 2008 after the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities came into force. Theme: Inclusion in the Workplace: Challenges and Opportunities in a Post-Pandemic World.

2. International Children's Book Day | April 2

Since 1967, on or around Hans Christian Andersen's birthday, 2 April, International Children's Book Day (ICBD) is celebrated to inspire a love of reading & to call attention to children's books. Each year a different National Section of International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) has the opportunity to be the international sponsor of ICBD. This year IBBY US is sponsor. IBBY is a non-profit organisation that was founded in Zurich, Switzerland in 1953.

3. International Mine Awareness Day 2021 | April 4

Every year, International Day for Mine Awareness is observed on April 4. This decision was taken by the General Assembly on December 8, 2005. It is observed to make people aware of the harmful effects of the explosive remnants of war which constitutes a serious threat to the safety and health of the people. Theme this year: Perseverance, Partnership, and Progress.

4. 58th edition of National Maritime Day: April 5, 2021

Every year on April 5, the National Maritime Day is celebrated to create awareness in supporting safe and environmentally sound intercontinental commerce and the global economy. National Maritime Day was first celebrated in 1964. In 1959, India became an associate of international Maritime Organisation which is for maritime protection and to prevent pollution from ships. World Maritime Day is celebrated on September 30.

5. International Day of Conscience 2021: April 5

April 5 is celebrated all around the world as International Day of Conscience. Declared by the United Nations, this day is observed in order to self-reflect on our life and try and do the right things all the time. The Federation of World Peace and Love launched a global campaign to declare the International Day of Conscience at the UN in 2019. It was endorsed by 185 nations and was translated into 41 languages.

6. International Day of Sport for Development and Peace: April 6

The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace is celebrated every year on April 6. This day celebrates sports as a means of promoting peace and sustainable development. The day came into existence after the UN General Assembly passed the resolution in 2013.

7. World Health Day: April 7

April 7 of each year marks the celebration of World Health Day. From its inception at the First Health Assembly in 1948 and since taking effect in 1950, the celebration has aimed to create awareness of a specific health theme to highlight a priority area of concern for the World Health Organization. Theme 2021: Building a fairer, healthier world

8. World Parkinson's Day: 11 April

World Parkinson's Day is observed every year on 11th April to create awareness about the disease among the general public. The disease can cause slowness of the movements, stiffness and shakiness of the body. James Parkinson was the first to describe "paralysis agitans", a condition that would later be renamed Parkinson's disease by Jean-Martin Charcot. He was a neurologist, geologist, scientist, and activist.

9. International Day of Human Space Flight | 12 April

12 April 1961 was the date of the first human space flight, carried out by Yuri Gagarin, a Soviet citizen. This historic event opened the way for space exploration for the benefit of all humanity. On 4 October 1957 the first human-made Earth satellite Sputnik I was launched into

outer space, thus opening the way for space exploration. General Assembly in 2011, declared 12 April as International Day of Human Space Flight.

10. World Liver Day | April 19

World liver day is observed on every 19th April, to spread awareness about liver related disease. The liver is the second largest and the most complex organ in the body, with the exception of the brain. It is a key player in your body's digestive system.

11. National Civil Services Day 2021 | April 21

This date is chosen to commemorate the day when the first Home Minister of Independent India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel addressed the probationers of Administrative Services Officers in 1947 at Metcalf House, Delhi, he referred to civil servants as the 'steel frame of India'. The first such function was held in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi 21 April 2006.

12. International Mother Earth Day : April 22

Earth Day is observed on April 22 every year and dedicated to Mother Earth. The theme for Earth Day 2021 is "Restore Our Earth and it "focuses on natural processes and emerging green technologies that can restore the world's ecosystems. Earth Day is observed on April 22 since 1970. In 1990, Earth Day became an "environmental movement.

13. World Book and Copyright Day | 23 April

Each year, UNESCO and the international organizations representing the three major sectors of the book industry - publishers, booksellers, and libraries, select the World Book Capital for a one-year period, effective 23 April each year. UNESCO's General Conference, held in Paris in 1995, designated April 23 as the World Book and Copyright Day. World Book Capital for 2021: Tbilisi, Georgia.

14. National Panchayati Raj Day: 24th April

National Panchayati Raj Day is celebrated on April 24 every year & signifies the decentralization of power to the grassroots by the institutionalization of the Panchayati Raj through the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992, which came into force on April 24, 1993. At present, there are more than 2.6 lakh Panchayats in the countrywide three-tier system. Former PM Dr Manmohan Singh declared the first National Panchayati Raj Day in 2010.

15. World Malaria Day: 25th April

World Malaria Day is observed annually on 25 April, to bring global attention to the efforts being made to bring an end to malaria, and encourage action to reduce suffering and death from the disease. Theme 2021 - "Reaching the Zero Malaria target" India has witnessed 84% reduction in malaria cases in 2020 as compared to 2015.

16. International Delegate's Day: 25 April

International Delegate's Day marks the anniversary of the first day of the San Francisco Conference, also known as the United Nations Conference on International Organization. On 25 April 1945, delegates from fifty countries came together for the first time in San Francisco. In 2019, the UN proclaims 25 April as International Delegate's Day.

17. World Immunization Week 2021 (April 24th-30th)

World Immunization Week - celebrated every year in the last week of April - aims to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease. Immunization saves millions of lives every year and is widely recognized as one of the world's most successful health interventions. World Immunization Week 2021 theme - 'Vaccines bring us closer',

18. Reaching zero: virtual forum on malaria elimination

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare today chaired the 'Reaching Zero' forum on malaria elimination. The country has been able to achieve remarkable success in reducing the malaria burden in terms of cases by 84.5% and deaths by 83.6% which has been well recognized by World Malaria Reports of 2018, 2019, and 2020.

19. World Intellectual Property Day ' April 26, 2021

World Intellectual Property Day 2021 shines a light on the critical role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the economy and how they can use intellectual property (IP) rights to build stronger, more competitive, and resilient businesses. World IP Day 2021 is carrying the theme "IP and SMEs: Taking your ideas to market." World Intellectual Property Organization, Head: Daren Tang.

20. International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day -26 April

An explosion at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1986 spread a radioactive cloud over large parts of the Soviet Union, now the territories of Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Nearly 8.4 million people in the three countries were exposed to the radiation. In 2009 UN launched the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network (ICRIN).

21. World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2021 :28 April

The World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2021 focuses on leveraging the elements of an OSH system as set out in the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006. This celebration is an integral part of the Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health of the ILO. 28 April is also the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers.

22. Ayushman Bharat Diwas 2021 | April 30

Ayushman Bharat Diwas is celebrated by the nation on April 30. The day aims to promote affordable medical facilities in remote areas of the country based on the Socio-Economic Caste Census database. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna or PM-JAY is a key component of Ayushman Bharat Yojna. It was launched on 23rd September, 2018 in Ranchi by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

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Summit & Conferences

1. Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan addresses HOPE Consortium's World Immunisation & Logistics Summit

Dr. Harsh Vardhan participated in a panel discussion on vaccine production and distribution across Asia at the 'World Immunisation and Logistics Summit' and showcased India's vaccine drive. The 2 day virtual conference was hosted by Abu Dhabi brought together over 1,000 attendees from around the region to enhance collaboration to tackle COVID-19.

2. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attends 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting

Foreign ministers of the Bay of Bengal Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) grouping endorsed an ambitious air, land and sea connectivity master plan that is expected to be adopted at a summit later this year. The meeting chaired by Sri Lanka, was held in virtual mode with the participation of all BIMSTEC Member States.

3. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attends 103rd Development Committee Meeting of World Bank-IMF Virtually

Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman participated in the 103rd Meeting of the Development Committee Plenary 2021, via video conferencing. One of the main agenda of the conference was: World Bank Group (WBG) and International Monetary Fund Support for Debt Relief Under the Common Framework and Beyond. GoI has announced Aatma Nirbhar Packages of Rs 27.1 trillion, which amounts to 13% of GDP.

4. PM Modi, Seychelles president jointly e-inaugurate Magistrates' Court Building and other projects

PM Modi said that Seychelles is central to India's vision of 'SAGAR' - 'Security and Growth for All in the Region' while inaugurating a range of Indian projects with President of Seychelles Wavel Ramkalawan at a high-level virtual event marking that India is happy to have contributed towards the construction of the new Magistrates' Court Building in Seychelles. Seychelles was the First African country to receive the Made in India COVID-19 vaccines.

5. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates IAF Commanders' Conference 2021

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the First bi-annual Indian Air Force, IAF Commanders' Conference 2021 at Air Headquarters Vayu Bhawan in New Delhi. The conference of apex level leadership is aimed at addressing the issues of IAF's operational capabilities in the times to come. Air Chief Marshal: Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria.

6. Inaugural Edition of The Hydrogen Economy ' New Delhi Dialogue 2021

The Energy Forum (TEF) and the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FIPI), under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India, organized a Hydrogen Roundtable titled 'Hydrogen Economy- the Indian Dialogue-2021'. This high-level roundtable conference was led by Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel.

7. Gender Samvaad event launched: Ministry of Rural Development

Gender Samvaad event, a joint attempt between DAY-NRLM and the Initiative for IWWAGE to create a common platform was organized by the Ministry of Rural Development. The attempt is to generate greater awareness on gender-related interventions under DAY-NRLM across the country and best practices, with a focus on hearing voices from the states and the field. What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (IWWAGE).

8. Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2021 held

The opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2021 was held in Boao, south China's Hainan Province. The theme of the conference - "A World in Change: Join Hands to Strengthen Global Governance and Advance Belt and Road Cooperation". This year marked the 20th anniversary of the Boao Forum.

9. Fifth Session Of Codex Committee On Spices And Culinary Herbs held

At the present session, the committee considered the quality Standards for dried or dehydrated forms of Ginger, Cloves, Saffron and two culinary herbs, Oregano & Basil at step seven, besides Nutmeg and Chilli peppers & Paprika at step four in the Codex procedure of elaboration of food standards. Mr Guilherme da Costa Jr, Chair of Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rita Teotia, Chairperson, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).



Kumar Saurab

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Science & Technology

1. Facebook and Google to build new cables under the sea called 'Echo' and 'Bifrost' to connect the US to Singapore and Indonesia.

The projects will be done in collaboration with local partners including XL Axiata Tbk PT and Singapore-based Keppel Corp. The Echo subsea cable will be the first to link Singapore directly to the US, with stops at Indonesia and Guam en route to Eureka, California. That fiber link is expected to be operational in 2023. Google is only investing in Echo unlike Facebook. Bifrost is expected to be completed in 2024.

2. IIT Kanpur develops touch-sensitive watch for the visually impaired

Two researchers from IIT Kanpur have developed a touch-sensitive, tactile, haptic watch that can help visually impaired people learn what time it is by touching the face. The watch makes up for two of the disadvantages of watches made for the use of visually challenged people: first, the lack of privacy in watches that audibly announce the time and second, the large sizes. Was developed by prof Siddhartha Panda and Vishwaraj Srivastava of IIT Kanpur.

3. Russia registers world's 1st Covid vaccine Carnivac-Cov for animals

The vaccine for animals, developed by a unit of Rosselkhoznadzor (Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance), was named Carnivac-Cov. The immunity lasts for six months after the vaccination, but the dose's developers are continuing to analyse this. The use of this vaccine, as per Russian scientists, can prevent the development of virus mutations. Rosselkhoznadzor is Russia's agriculture safety watchdog.

4. For the first time, scientists find X-ray emission from Uranus

According to a new study published in the Journal of Geophysical Research, Uranus which is the seventh planet from the sun is reflecting X-rays. The study, which analysed two visuals of the planet, marks the first time that X-ray activity has been discovered on the planet. However, the reason for the reflection of the X-rays has not been clear yet. Uranus was the 1st planet found using a telescope and the only planet that spins sideways

5. DRDO develops Advanced Chaff Technology to safeguard naval ships from missile attack

DRDO developed an Advanced Chaff Technology to safeguard naval ships against enemy missile attack. DRDO developed 3 variants of this critical technology namely Short Range, Medium-Range & Long Range Chaff Rockets. Chaff is a passive expendable electronic countermeasure technology used worldwide to protect naval ships from enemy's radar and Radio Frequency missile seekers. Chairman of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO): G Satheesh Reddy.

6. NASA's Mars Odyssey spacecraft marks 20 years of mapping red planet

Launched 20 years ago, the orbiter, which takes its name from Arthur C. Clarke's classic sci-fi novel "2001: A Space Odyssey", was sent to map the composition of the Martian surface. For two decades, the longest-lived spacecraft at the Red Planet, 2001 Mars Odyssey, has helped locate water ice, assess landing sites orbiter finds the water ice using its gamma-ray spectrometer (GRS) detector

7. DRDO develops supplemental oxygen delivery system for soldiers, COVID-19 patients

Defence Research and Development Organisation has developed a SpO₂-based supplemental oxygen delivery system for soldiers serving in extremely high altitude areas & COVID-19 patients. This automatic system delivers supplemental oxygen based on the SpO₂ (blood oxygen saturation) levels & prevents the person from sinking in to a state of hypoxia, which is fatal in most cases.

8. Mumbai's Haffkine Bio Pharma to manufacture Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, Centre gives nod

The Centre allowed Mumbai-based Haffkine Bio Pharma to manufacture Bharat Biotech's Covaxin. Haffkine Institute, the biomedical company has sought permission from the Centre for


the transfer of technology from Bharat Biotech, which in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research, developed Covaxin. Covaxin (BBV152) contains a whole virion inactivated SARS-CoV-2 vaccine.

9. Finance Minister Inaugurates India's First 3D Printed House At IIT Madras

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated India's first 3D printed house at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras campus. The house has been constructed by Tvasta Manufacturing Solutions, a startup founded by IIT Madras alumni, which is part of the new incubator of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) established at IIT Madras. This 3D printed house is a 600 square feet single-story one.

10. Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture develops "CIBA-Nodavac-R": country's first vaccine for deadly VNN disease

Chennai-based Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA) has developed the country's first vaccine for deadly viral nervous necrosis (VNN) disease, which is currently affecting several species of fish. The disease is a serious threat affecting many marine, brackish water, and freshwater fish, causing up to 100 percent mortality in larval and early juvenile stages. Red-spotted grouper nervous necrosis virus (RGNNV) is the only genotype prevalent in India




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Defence

1. Special forces of India and US carry out military drill 'Vajra Prahar' in Himachal Pradesh

The 11th edition of Indo-US joint special forces exercise Vajra Prahar 2021 was conducted at Special Forces training school located at Bakloh, in Himachal Pradesh. It is aimed at sharing best practices and experiences in areas such as joint mission planning and operational tactics.

2. Indian Army Formally Closes Down Military Farms After 132 Years Of Service

The Indian Army has formally closed down the Military Farms after 132 years of service in a formal closing ceremony on 31 March. The farms were set up with the sole requirement of supplying hygienic cow milk to troops in garrisons across British India. The first military farm was raised on 1 February 1889 at Allahabad.

3. DRDO lab develops lightweight Bullet Proof Jacket for requirements of Army.

DRDO lab Defence Materials and Stores Research and Development Establishment (DMSRDE), Kanpur has developed lightweight Bullet Proof Jacket (BPJ) weighing 9.0 kg, meeting the qualitative requirements of Indian Army. It was tested at Terminal Ballistics Research Lab in Chandigarh. This technology reduces the weight of the medium sized BPJ from 10.4 to 9.0 kg.

4. Indian army to participate in multinational exercise 'Exercise Shantir Ogroshena-2021' in Bangladesh.

Exercise Shantir Ogroshena-2021 (Front Runner of the Peace) will be held at Bangladesh to commemorate the birth centenary of Bangladesh 'Father of the Nation' Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and mark glorious 50 years of liberation. Indian Army contingent comprising of 30 personnel including Officers, JCOs and Jawans of a Battalion from the Dogra Regiment will participate. The theme of the exercise is 'Robust Peace Keeping Operations'.

5. CDS General Bipin Rawat operationalises Joint Logistics Node (JLN) in Mumbai

As part of measures to boost tri-service integration and resource optimisation, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat operationalised the third JLN in Mumbai. Govt sanction letter for establishment of JLN in Mumbai, Guwahati and Port Blair was signed on October 12, 2020. Subsequently, JLN in Guwahati & Tri-Services, ANC, Port Blair were operationalised on Jan 1, 2021.

6. Ashok Leyland Supplies First Lot Of Light Bullet Proof Vehicles (LBPV) To Indian Air Force

Ashok Leyland has delivered the 1st lot of LBPV to Indian Air Force. LBPV is an adopted version of Lockheed Martin's Common Vehicle Next Gen that has been completely indigenized and developed in India. These LBPV offer superior protection & combat capability making them ideal for military applications. It also ensures protection from both Ballistic and Blast threats. It has been developed under Transfer of Technology from Lockheed Martin to Ashok Leyland.

7. Indian and Kyrgyz special forces begin eighth edition of special forces exercise, "Khanjar"

Special forces of India and Kyrgyzstan began a two-week military exercise in Bishkek with a focus on counter-terror drills. The eighth edition of special forces exercise, "Khanjar", was inaugurated at a facility of special forces brigade of the national guards of the Kyrgyz republic. Initiated in 2011, the exercise also focuses on high-altitude warfare. In 2015, India and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement on bolstering defence cooperation.

8. Indian, French Navy bilateral exercise VARUNA-2021 conducted in Arabian Sea

The 19th edition of the Indian and French Navy bilateral exercise 'VARUNA-2021' is to be conducted in the Arabian Sea from 25th to 27th April 2021. The three-day exercise will see high tempo-naval operations at sea, including advanced air defense and anti-submarine exercises. Chief of the Naval Staff: Admiral Karambir Singh

9. DRDO develops single crystal blades for helicopter engines

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed single crystal blades that are used in helicopter engines and it has supplied 60 of them to the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for the company's indigenous helicopter development program. The DRDO will develop total five sets (300 blades) of single crystal blades.

10. HAL's Dhruv Mk III MR registers success in deck operations

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) had recently delivered ALH Dhruv Mk III MR to the Indian Coast Guard as part of its 16 ALH contract. Advanced Light Helicopter Dhruv Mk III MR has successfully demonstrated its deck-operations capabilities that include landing on the deck, folding of blades and storing the helicopter inside the onboard hangar.

11. Python-5 air-to-air missile test-fired successfully from LCA Tejas

India's indigenous Light Combat Aircraft Tejas has added the capability of firing Israeli-origin Python-5 air-to-air missiles (AAM) after successful tests. The same set of tests were also aimed to validate the enhanced capability of the already integrated Israeli-origin Derby beyond visual range AAM on Tejas. A series of test-firing trials that were conducted off the coast of Goa



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Books & Authors

1. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu Releases Book 'Suparipalana' By Retired Civil Servant Dr Shailendra Joshi

The book 'Suparipalana' is the Telugu translation of 'Echo T Calling: Towards People-Centric Governance', written by former Telangana Chief Secretary, Shri S K Joshi. The translator of the book is Shri Annavarapu Brahmaiah and the publisher is Shri Maruthi.

2. Vice President releases the book titled 'Neelimarani' My Mother, My Hero'

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu released a book titled 'Neelimarani: My mother, My hero', at Raj Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The book written by Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology and Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences founder and Kandhamal MP Dr Achyuta Samanta is a biography of his late mother, Neelimarani.

3. Manohar Parrikar: Brilliant Mind, Simple Life by Nitin Gokhale

The book 'Manohar Parrikar: Brilliant Mind, Simple Life' by Nitin Gokhale offers an overview of Parrikar's journey from an IIT student to a social worker and to India's defence minister. It offers overview of his service to the Goan society as CM. Published by Bloomsbury, it was released on 31 March on 'Soft Cover' 'ThePrint's e-venue to launch select non-fiction books.

4. Prachand Praveer's book: Through Rasa: A Tryst with Masterpieces in the Light of Rasa Siddhanta

Prachand Praveer in his book Cinema Through Rasa: A Tryst with Masterpieces in the Light of Rasa Siddhanta, views world cinema through the lens of Rasa Siddhanta or aesthetics and discusses how ancient Indian principles govern cinema as much as they govern stage.

5. J.K. Rowling children's story 'The Christmas Pig' to be released on October 12

Author J.K. Rowling announced that her latest children's book is titled "The Christmas Pig." Rowling said the story is about a boy named Jack and his toy Dur Pig, who goes missing on Christmas Eve. "The Christmas Pig" is Rowling's first children's novel since Harry Potter.

6. Climate activist-author Aakash Ranison launches his e-book 'Climate Change Explained - for one and all'

Aakash Ranison, a Climate Change Activist & Sustainability Influencer launch an eBook 'Climate Change Explained' for one and all'. It focuses on climate change & how it can affect every individual's life. He has collaborated with 'Spiti Ecosphere', a social enterprise that focuses on creating sustainable livelihoods through the conservation & development of economies.

7. Jhumpa Lahiri's new novel 'Whereabouts' , a new level of artistic achievement

Jhumpa Lahiri released the English version of her new novel Whereabouts, which she first wrote and published in Italian, in 2018, as Dove Mi Trovo. The novel is centered on a woman and her observations about an unnamed European city. Lahiri, the author of The Namesake and Unaccustomed Earth, began Whereabouts in 2015.

8. HarperCollins India announces Amitav Ghosh's forthcoming publication The Living Mountain: A Fable for Our Times

The Living Mountain is a new story by Jnanpith winner and internationally renowned author Amitav Ghosh, written during the course of the pandemic. It is a fable for the current times: a cautionary tale of how humans have systematically exploited nature, leading to an environmental collapse.

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Miscellaneous

1. Russian Vaccine Sputnik V gets emergency use authorisation in India

Central drug regulator, DCGA has approved emergency use authorization of the Russian Vaccine, Sputnik V. It has become the 3rd vaccine to get emergency use authorization from the regulator after Covishield & Covaxin. Dr. Reddy's Lab has also inked an agreement with the Russian Direct Investment Fund for supply of the Russian vaccine in India.

2. Amazon rolls out \$250 million Smbhav Venture Fund fund for small and medium businesses

Amazon has sharpened its focus on India's small and medium businesses (SMBs), introducing a \$250 million Smbhav Venture Fund, focusing on digitization of small businesses; agri-tech innovations to raise farmer productivity; and health tech for quality universal healthcare. Amazon India has also pledged to onboard 1 million offline retailers and neighbourhood store by 2025.

3. Ola Electric announces world's largest two-wheeler charging network across 400 cities, 1 lakh points

Ola will invest around \$2 billion in the next five years to build the Hypercharger Network, comprising high-speed 1,00,000 charging points in 400 cities. The 'Hypercharger Network' will offer a comprehensive set of charging options to Ola's EV customers which include high-speed Ola hyperchargers and home-chargers.



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Obituary

1. Former President of Madagascar Didier Ratsiraka, a champion of India-Madagascar ties, passes away

Didier Ratsiraka who was President of Madagascar from 1975 to 1993 and from 1997 to 2002 passed away. He had visited India in 1980 on a bilateral state visit and in 1983 to participate in the NAM Summit. He admired Indira Gandhi and Mahatma Gandhi and had contributed in advancing India-Madagascar ties. Madagascar: Capital:Antananarivo; President:Andry Rajoelina.

2. Isamu Akasaki ,Japanese scientist who won the Nobel for 'revolutionary' LED lamp has passed away

Isamu Akasaki won the 2014 Nobel prize with two other scientists, Hiroshi Amano and Shuji Nakamura. Together they developed the world's first efficient blue light-emitting diode. Providing the missing piece of the puzzle for bright white lamps, their breakthrough also helped develop the colour LED screens used in smartphones and modern tech.

3. Veteran actress Shashikala passes away

More popularly known by her first name, Shashikala Om Prakash Saigal had acted in over 100 movies. She began her career with a small role in the 1945 release Zeenat and went on to appear in popular movies like Bimla, Khubsoorat, Mujhse Shaadi Karogi, Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham, etc., She has been conferred with Padma Shri, Lifetime Achievement Award.

4. India's first environment minister Digvijaysinh Jhala passes away

Digvijaysinh Jhala, the first environment minister of India and the patriarch of the royal family of the erstwhile princely state of Wankaner in present-day Morbi district, died. He served as the first environment minister of the country from 1982-84. He is credited for persuading the Indian Railways to switch over from wooden sleepers to RCC controlling tree felling.

5. Gita Press president Radheshyam Khemka passes away

The president of Gita Press, Radheshyam Khemka, passed away. He is credited for taking the Sanatan literature to the masses. Khemka for 38 years was the editor of the prominent 'Kalyan' magazine printed at the press. He last edited the magazine's April 2021 issue. Gita Press is the world's largest publisher of Hindu religious texts. Gita Press is located in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.

6. India's first female cricket commentator Chandra Naidu passed away

Chandra Naidu was the daughter of the country's first Test captain CK Naidu. Chandra had done her first commentary during a match between national champions Bombay (now Mumbai) and MCC in Indore in 1977. She had also penned a book titled 'CK Nayudu: A Daughter Remembers' on her late father, who was a distinguished cricketer.

7. Journalist and educationist Fatma Zakaria passes away

Fatma began her career in journalism as Auntie Wendy, a children's column in The Illustrated Weekly of India. A trained social worker, Fatma worked extensively in the field of education, for which she was awarded a Padma Shri in 2006.

8. Prince Philip, husband of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, passes away at 99

Britain's Prince Philip, Queen Elizabeth the II's husband has died recently at the age of 99. The Prince married Princess Elizabeth in 1947, five years before she became Queen, and was the longest-serving royal consort in British history. Elizabeth II is Queen of the United Kingdom and 15 other Commonwealth realms.

9. Congress MLA Raosaheb Antapurkar, who had tested positive for Covid-19, passed away

Congress MLA Raosaheb Antapurkar, who had tested positive for Covid-19, passed away at a hospital in Mumbai. He was 55. Antapurkar, the Congress MLA from Degloor in Maharashtra's Nanded district, was initially undergoing treatment at a hospital in his constituency. He represented the Degloor-Biloli assembly constituency of Nanded district.

10. Punjabi actor Satish Kaul dies in Ludhiana due to COVID-19 complications

Veteran actor Satish Kaul, who had 300 Punjabi and Hindi films to his credit and played the role of Lord Indra in the TV show Mahabharat, passed away due to coronavirus-related complications in Ludhiana. He was 74. On television, besides Mahabharat, Kaul was known for 1985 Doordarshan series Vikram Aur Betaal. His popular Bollywood films include Ram Lakhan, Pyaar Toh Hona Hi Tha and Aunty No 1

11. Eminent Historian Yogesh Praveen passes away

Eminent Historian and an expert on Awadh especially Lucknow Yogesh Praveen. Through his books and articles, he enabled the public to know about the rich heritage and culture of Avadh. He was awarded Padma Shri in 2019.

12. Former election commissioner G.V.G.Krishnamurthy passes away

Former election commissioner GVG Krishnamurthy, 86 passed away due to age-related ailments. An Indian Legal Service officer, Krishnamurthy became the election commissioner in October, 1993.

13. Former CBI director Ranjit Sinha passes away at 68

Former Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) director Ranjit Sinha passed away in Delhi. Sinha was a retired officer of the 1974 batch of the Indian Police Service (IPS) and held several senior posts, including that of the CBI director and the director general (DG) of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

14. Famous Tamil film actor Vivek passes away

Famous Tamil film actor and Padma Sri awardee Vivek passed away. He was 60 years old. An incredible comedian, Vivek had entertained people of Tamil Nadu for over three decades through his 200 plus films. A disciple of former President Abdul Kalam, Vivek was involved in afforestation and other social welfare activities.

15. Renowned radiologist and first Director of NIMS, Kakarla Subba Rao passes away

Renowned radiologist, hospital administrator, and the first director of Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), Dr. Kakarla Subba Rao passed away. Dr. Subba Rao was conferred the civilian honor of Padma Shri by the Government of India for his contributions to the field of medicine.

16. Founder of Adobe and developer of PDFs Charles Geschke passes away

Charles "Chuck" Geschke, the co-founder of the major software company Adobe Inc. who helped develop Portable Document Format technology, or PDFs, passed away at age 81.

17. Renowned Bangladeshi actor Sara Begum Kabori passes away

Renowned Bangladeshi actor Sara Begum Kabori passed away. She was honoured with the National Film Award for her role in the film Sareng Bou in 1978. She got the lifetime achievement award in 2013. She was also a freedom fighter and a former member of parliament. Kabori was fondly known as the 'Mishti Meye', the 'Sweet Girl' of Bangladesh cinema for her role in the films.

18. India's first international woman hockey referee Anupama Puchimanda passes away

She started her career as an international hockey umpire in 2004 and was the first woman referee from India to officiate in international hockey matches. She was selected by the International Hockey Federation as one of the youngest umpires among ten men and women in the world.

19. Veteran Hindi Writer Narendra Kohli Passes Away

Veteran Hindi writer Narendra Kohli passed away. Shri Kohli arrived on the national scene with his writings about the characters of Ramayana and Mahabharat. His eight-volume writing about Mahabharat, Mahasamar, is considered a masterpiece.

20. Former Assam Chief Minister and seven-time MLA, Dr Bhumidhar Barman, passes away

Former Assam Chief Minister and seven-time MLA, Dr. Bhumidhar Barman, passed away. He was 90. Dr Barman held the post of Chief Minister between April 1996 and May 1996 following the death of former CM Hiteswar Saikia, and later in 2010, when former CM late Tarun Gogoi was on leave on medical grounds.

21. Former RBI governor M Narasimham passes away

Former Reserve Bank of India Governor Maidavolu Narasimham, famously known as the father of Indian banking reforms, passed away at the age of 94. Narasimham served as Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) 13th governor from May 2, 1977 to November 30, 1977. He was awarded Padma Vibhushan award in 2000.

22. Olympian Ahmed Hussain passes away

Football Olympian Ahmed Hussain Lala passed away, aged 89. Ahmed represented India in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Ahmed was also a well-known defender of the famed Hyderabad City Police team in the 1950s under the tutelage of one of India's greatest coaches ever, late S.A. Raheem.

23. Poet & lyricist Zaheer Qureshi passes away

Poet and lyricist Zaheer Qureshi died. He was 71. He was the vice-president of the Janwadi Lekhak Sangh of Madhya Pradesh & had developed his own personal idiom in song-ghazal writing, which was well received.

24. Renowned botanist & former BSI director Dr. Sudhanshu Kumar Jain passes away

In 1995 he laid the foundation for the 'Institute of Ethnobiology', which started functioning initially in NBRI, Lucknow. Dr. Jain was the first Asian to receive the World Economist Award. One of his books on medicinal plants, used as evidence in US courts, helped India win a popular case of patent of 'haldi' (turmeric).

25. Supreme Court judge MM Shantanagoudar passes away at 62

Supreme Court judge Justice Mohan M Shantanagoudar passed away. Justice Shantanagoudar was elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court on February 17, 2017.

26. Former Pune University VC, UGC chairman Dr Arun Nigavekar passes away

Former chairperson of the University Grants Commission and former vice-chancellor of the University of Pune (then), a well-known physicist and educator Arun Nigavekar died. He was 79. Born in 1942, Nigavekar was the founder-director of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC),

27. Hindustani classical vocalist Pandit Rajan Mishra dies

Renowned Hindustani classical vocalist Padam Bhushan Pt Rajan Mishra died. Mishra, one of the foremost exponents of khayal gayaki along with his brother Sajan Mishra. They began by singing in the temples of Varanasi, with their first performance in Varanasi's famous Sankat Mochan temple.

28. Former MD of Maruti Suzuki Jagdish Khattar dies

Former Managing Director of Maruti Suzuki and founder of Carnation Auto India, an automotive sales and service company, passed away. He was 78-years old. He joined Maruti in 1993 as director of marketing and went on to become its MD in 1999, first as a government nominee and then in May 2002 as the Suzuki Motor Corporation nominee.

29. Renowned qawwali singer Farid Sabri of 'Sabri Brothers' fame passes away

Renowned qawwali singer Farid Sabri of the Sabri Brothers duo passed away in Jaipur. He was 58. Sabri Brothers are known for the evergreen numbers like Der Na Ho Jaye Kahin Der Na Ho Jaye and Ek Mulakat Zaruri Hai Sanam to name a few.

30. Padma Shri Dadudan Gadhvi passes away

Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the demise of famous Gujarati poet, Padma Shri Dadudan Gadhvi. Mr. Modi said, Kavi Dad Babu's contribution in the field of folk literature will always be remembered.

31. Eminent Odia Writer Padma Shri Manoj Das Passes Away

Eminent Odia writer Padma Shri Manoj Das passed away at the age of 87. Prabhanjana, Godhulira Bagha, Kanaka-Upatyakara Kahani, Amruta phala, and Sesha Tantrikara Sandhanare are some of his noted Odia work.

32. National Award-winning film editor Waman Bhonsle passes away aged 87

National-award winning editor Waman Bhonsle passed away. Bhonsle won the best editing award at the 25th National Film award for *Inkaar*. Amol Palekar-directed *Kairee* was Bhonsle's last film as an editor.

33. Veteran Indian Nuclear Scientist Krishnamurthy Santhanam passes away

Indian nuclear scientist Krishnamurthy Santhanam, who played noteworthy role in 1998 nuclear tests at Pokhran, has passed away. Santhanam was the field director of Defence Research and Development Organization during the tests of Pokhran-II. He was awarded with the Padma Bhushan, the third-highest civilian award, in 1999.

34. Astronaut Michael Collins, who piloted Apollo 11, dies at 90

Michael Collins, who piloted the Apollo 11 spacecraft and was a part of the three-man moon-landing crew, died. He was 90. Collins spent the eight-day mission piloting the command module.



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Person in news

1. Wing Commander Shruti Chauhan to represent India at Mrs Galaxy

Indian Air Force Wing Commander Chauhan was the second runner-up at the Mrs India Inc World Beauty Pageant 2021 held in January this year. Now, she will be representing India at the Mrs Galaxy competition, scheduled to be held in Chicago in August. She was recently conferred with the Maharashtra Women Achiever's Award and the Iconic Women Award by SDP International.

3. Nethra Kumanan creates history by becoming first Indian woman sailor to qualify for Olympics

India's Nethra Kumanan has virtually qualified for Tokyo Olympics in the laser radial class of the Asian Olympic qualification championships. Chennai-based sailor Nethra Kumanan is the first Indian woman to win a World Cup medal in the Hempel World Series in Miami, USA.

4. Lieutenant Colonel Bharat Pannu of the Indian Army breaks two Guinness World Records for fastest solo cycling

The first record was created when Pannu cycled from Leh to Manali (472 km distance) on October 10, 2020, in just 35 hours and 25 minutes and second when he cycled the 'Golden Quadrilateral' route in 14 days, 23 hours and 52 minutes.

5. Sonu Sood Appointed Brand Ambassador for Punjab's Anti-COVID Vaccination Programme

Actor Sonu Sood has been made the brand ambassador for Punjab's anti-coronavirus vaccination programme. During the coronavirus-induced lockdown last year, the actor had helped migrants reach their home states. Sood catapulted to the national spotlight for feeding thousands of underprivileged people amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Srihari Nataraj sweeps backstroke titles in national record time at Uzbekistan Open swimming

Indian backstroker Srihari Nataraj swept the backstroke events at the Uzbekistan Open Swimming Championships in Tashkent.

The 20-year-old Srihari pocketed the 50m crown 25.11 seconds, another national mark. He bettered his own record of 25.50 seconds set at the World Junior Swimming meet in 2019.

7. Former US Ambassador to India Richard Verma appointed as Mastercard's Head of Global Public Policy

Former US Ambassador to India Richard Verma has been appointed as General Counsel and Head of Global Public Policy of Mastercard. The first and only Indian American to serve in this position so far, Verma joined Mastercard in October 2020. Verma, 52, served as US Ambassador to India from 2014 to 2017.

8. Maharashtra's Priyanka Mohite becomes first Indian woman to scale Mt Annapurna, world's 10th highest peak

Priyanka Mohite from Satara in western Maharashtra has scaled Mt Annapurna, the 10th highest mountain peak in the world, becoming the first Indian woman climber to achieve the feat. Mount Annapurna is a massif in the Himalayas located in Nepal that includes one peak over 8,000 metres and is considered to be one of the toughest mountains to climb.

9. Tamil Nadu's Arjun Kalyan becomes 68th Indian Grandmaster

Tamil Nadu teenager Arjun Kalyan became India's 68th Chess Grandmaster when he crossed the 2500 ELO mark after beating Dragan Kosic in the fifth round of GM Round Robin 'Rujna Zore-3' in Serbia. Viswanathan Anand became the country's first Grandmaster, in 1988. The World Chess Federation, known as FIDE headquarters : Lausanne (Switzerland).

10. Government nominates economic affairs secretary Ajay Seth to RBI central board

The central government has nominated economic affairs secretary Ajay Seth in the Ministry of Finance as a director on the Central Board of Reserve Bank of India. Seth will replace the earlier nominee of government Tarun Bajaj who has been appointed as the revenue secretary.

11. Amit Panghal wins bronze at Governor's Cup

India's Amit Panghal (52kg) won the bronze medal at the Governor's Cup in St Petersburg, Russia, after going down to world champion and familiar foe Shakhobidin Zoirov in the semifinals. The 23-year-old has been a consistent performer for the past three years, claiming gold medals at the Asian Games and the Asian Championships.

12. ASICS onboards Ravindra Jadeja as its brand ambassador

Japanese sportswear brand, ASICS, has appointed Ravindra Jadeja, the all-rounder of the Indian cricket team as its brand ambassador. ASICS and Ravindra will work together to inspire young athletes to achieve a lifestyle centered around 'Sound Mind in a Sound Body.' The brand aims to connect with technologically and momentum-driven consumers. Rajat Khurana, Managing Director, ASICS India.

13. 2021 Oscars: Tyler Perry Accepts The Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award

Tyler Perry took home the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award at the Oscars. The honor is given out periodically to an "individual in the motion picture industry whose humanitarian efforts have brought credit to the industry." Viola Davis, who collaborated with Perry on the 2009 film *Madea Goes to Jail*, presented the award.

14. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw becomes first Indian woman to join Board of Trustees of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw has been appointed to the Board of Trustees of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK), a world leader in cancer treatment and research, based in New York, US. Mazumdar-Shaw is the first woman of Indian nationality to be appointed for this role. She is among the 52 members on the board and will serve for a term of three years.

15. Vaishali Hiwase From Wardha Becomes First Woman To Be Appointed Officer Commanding In BRO

In a first, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has appointed a woman officer to command a Road Construction Company (RCC) tasked to provide connectivity in a high-altitude area along the India-China border. Vaishali is from Wardha, Maharashtra, and has completed a successful demanding tenure in Kargil.

Insurance

1. Life Insurance Corporation ties up with Paytm to handle digital payments

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has appointed homegrown payments player Paytm to facilitate its digital payments. The new agreement requires an easy payment process, a broader range of payment options, and more players (wallets, banks, etc) in payment channels.

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India & World

1. 2000 Bangladeshi students to get Muktiyoddha Scholarships

Govt of India announced scholarships to 2000 descendants of the Liberation Warfighters of Bangladesh under its new Muktiyoddha Scholarship scheme. The new scheme was aimed to benefit 10,000 students from Bangladesh over a period of 5 years. It carries an amount of 20,000 Taka for students of Higher Secondary and 50,000 Taka to Under Graduate students. Muktiyoddha scholarship scheme was started in 2006 for the descendants of Muktiyoddhas.

2. India To Produce 850 Million Doses Of Sputnik V Covid-19 Vaccine Annually: RDIF

The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) has said more than 850 million doses of the Sputnik V vaccine are going to be produced annually in India. RDIF has agreements with India's Gland Pharma, Hetero Biopharma, Panacea Biotec, Stelis Biopharma, and Virchow Biotech for production. India has become the 60th country to approve Sputnik V, said RDIF CEO, Kirill Dmitriev. The Russian vaccine has an efficacy of 91.6 percent.

3. India's 40th Scientific Expedition Team To Antarctica Returns To Cape Town

The 40th Scientific Expedition to Antarctica (40-ISEA) hosted by the Ministry of Earth Sciences successfully returned to Cape Town after completing a journey of about 12,000 nautical miles in 94 days, including stopovers. This achievement concludes four successful decades of India's scientific endeavour in the continent of peace and cooperation. Bharati and Maitri are India's permanent research base stations in Antarctica.

4. First Italian mega food park & food processing project launched in India

Italy launched its first-ever mega food park project in India involving food processing facilities. This pilot project named "The Mega Food Park" was launched today virtually, with the signing of a Letter of Intent between the ICE Office in Mumbai and Fanidhar Mega Food Park, in Gujarat.

5. India and Germany sign agreement on 'Cities combating plastic entering the marine environment'

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH India signed an agreement on Technical Cooperation titled 'Cities Combating Plastic Entering the Marine Environment'. This project is envisaged under the contours of the Joint Declaration of Intent regarding cooperation signed in 2019.

6. World Bank's IFC to make debt investment of \$150 mn in Bajaj Finance

World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) will make a debt investment of \$150 million (about Rs 1,132 crore) in non-bank lender Bajaj Finance Limited. The five-year loan is essentially to support micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) loans. The Bajaj Group holds 56.12% stake in Bajaj Finance through Bajaj Finserv Ltd.

7. Cabinet approves pact between CCI, Brazil's Administrative Council for Economic Defense (CADE)

The Union Cabinet approved the signing of a pact between fair trade regulator CCI and the Administrative Council for Economic Defense of Brazil. As per the Competition Act, 2002, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) can enter into any memorandum or arrangement with any agency of any foreign country for discharging its duties or performing its functions under the Act.

8. Comptroller and Auditor General GC Murmu selected as external auditor for Hague-based OPCW

India's Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has been chosen as the external auditor by Hague-based Conference of State Parties of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), for a three-year term starting 2021. India was also selected as the member of the executive council of the OPCW representing Asia group for another two-year term.

9. Defence ministry to airlift 23 oxygen generation plants from Germany amid acute shortage


The defence ministry has decided to airlift 23 mobile oxygen generation plants from Germany as several states reeled under an acute shortage of medical oxygen. In a separate move, the defence ministry has decided to give extension to 238 short service commissioned doctors in the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) till December 31 to tide over the current situation. Each plant will have a capacity to produce 40 ltrs of oxygen/minute and 2,400 ltrs/hr.

10. BRO's project DANTAK completes 60 years in Bhutan

Project DANTAK is commemorating its Diamond Jubilee in Bhutan. Indian Ambassador to Bhutan Smt Ruchira Kamboj laid a floral wreath at the DANTAK Memorial in Simtokha. DANTAK completed the road connecting Samdrup Jongkhar to Trashigang in 1968. In the same year, Thimphu was connected to Phuentsholing by DANTAK.

11. Mission Vayu: Amazon partners ACT Grants, Temasek to bring in 10,000 oxygen concentrators, BiPAP machines into India

Amazon India has joined hands with ACT Grants, Temasek Foundation, Pune Platform for Covid-19 Response (PPCR), and other partners to urgently airlift over 8,000 oxygen concentrators and 500 BiPAP machines from Singapore. This medical equipment will be donated to hospitals and public institutions.




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Environment

1. New sub-species of six-line blue butterfly discovered from south Western Ghats

Discovery of the species *Nacaduba sinhala ramaswamii* Sadasivan in the Agasthyamalais in the Western Ghats a decade ago has now found place in the Journal of Threatened Taxa. It is the first time that a butterfly species was discovered by an all-Indian research team from the Western Ghats. Their distribution ranges from India, Sri Lanka, whole of southeast Asia, Australia & Samoa

2. NITI Aayog launches India Energy Dashboards Version 2.0 focused on data

With an aim to provide single-window access to the energy data for the country, government think tank Niti Aayog launched India Energy Dashboards (IED) Version 2.0. The India Energy Dashboards (IED) is an endeavour to provide single-window access to the energy data for the country. The first version of the IED was launched by NITI Aayog in 2017. The IED provides time-series data from FY 2005-06 until FY 2019-20.

3. NGT forms National Task Force (NTF) to combat air pollution

Noting that about 1.5mn people in India die annually due to air pollution, the National Green Tribunal has formed an 8-member NTF to monitor remedial steps to improve the status of air quality. NTF may also monitor enforcement of laid down air quality standards beyond Non-Attainment Cities' in other identified air polluted areas where air quality is poor and above.

4. Coal India signs first 100 MW solar power purchase agreement

In its maiden venture into solar power, state-owned miner Coal India Ltd (CIL) announced it had signed a first-of-its-kind power purchase agreement for the sale of 100 Megawatt (MW) solar power with Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam (GUVNL). The tenure of the agreement period is for 25 years.

5. PepsiCo Announces 2030 Goal to Scale Regenerative Farming Practices Across 3 Million Hectares

PepsiCo, Inc. announced a new, impact-driven Positive Agriculture ambition, anchored by a 2030 goal to spread regenerative farming practices across 3 million hectares, approximately equal to its entire agricultural footprint. The company estimates the effort will eliminate at least 3 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by the end of the decade.

6. Saudi Arabia to join 'Net Zero Producers Forum' on climate change

Saudi Arabia will join the United States, Canada, Norway, and Qatar in forming 'Net Zero Producers Forum' for oil and gas producers to discuss how they can support the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change. It will be part of the new platform, which will discuss ways to achieve net-zero carbon emission targets to limit global warming.



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Apps & Portals

1. CBIC notifies ICEGATE as common portal for registration, bills of entry.

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has specified the portal as the one for facilitating registration, filing of bills of entry, shipping bills, other documents & forms prescribed under Customs Act or any other law, besides duty payments & data exchange with other systems within or outside India. CBIC has also amended the bill of entry forms for the same.

2. DPIIT revamps IEM portal to enhance ease of doing business

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has revamped its Industrial Entrepreneurs Memorandum (IEM) portal offering single IEM for one company that would capture the details of all its locations and sectors. This has been done with a view to enhancing ease of doing business and transparency. DPIIT operates the G2B Portal for this purpose.

3. Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched 'MyNEP2020' platform of NCTE Web Portal

The platform seeks to invite suggestions/inputs/membership from the stakeholders for preparing draft for development of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) and National Mission for Mentoring Program membership (NMM). The 'MyNEP2020' platform will be operational from 1st April 2021 to 15th May 2021.

4. Dr. Harsh Vardhan launches Tribal Health Collaborative 'Anamaya'

Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare along with Arjun Munda launched 'Anamaya', A multi-stakeholder initiative supported by Piramal Foundation and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). 'Anamaya' will converge efforts of various Government agencies and organizations to enhance the health and nutrition status of the tribal communities of India. Shri Arjun Munda, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs.

5. Mobile app called MANAS launched to promote mental wellbeing

Principal Scientific Advisor K VijayRaghavan launched a mobile app to promote mental wellbeing across age groups. The app, MANAS, which stands for Mental Health and Normalcy Augmentation System, is a comprehensive, scalable, and national digital wellbeing platform. The initial version of MANAS focuses on promoting positive mental health in the age group of 15-35.

Acquisitions & Mergers

1. Wipro to acquire Australian cybersecurity provider Ampion for \$117 million

Wipro has signed an agreement to acquire Ampion, an Australia-based provider of cybersecurity, DevOps and quality engineering services, for a cash consideration of \$117 million. Ampion is headquartered in Melbourne and was formed through the merger of IT services providers 'Revolution IT' and 'Shelde'.

2. Byju's acquires Indian tutor Aakash for nearly \$1 billion

Byju's acquired Aakash Educational Services, a 33-year-old chain of physical coaching centres, as the Indian online learning giant looks to further consolidate its leadership position in the world's second-largest internet market and accelerate its offline growth. Byju's, which is currently valued at \$13 billion, paid close to \$1 billion for the acquisition. Co-founder and CEO of Byju's: Byju Raveendran.

3. Microsoft makes its second biggest acquisition, buys AI speech tech company Nuance for \$19.7 billion

Microsoft has made its second-biggest acquisition after LinkedIn. The tech giant has bought AI speech tech firm Nuance for \$19.7 billion. The move will help Microsoft's prowess in voice recognition and will give it a boost in the health care market. Nuance is known for its Dragon software which helps to transcribe speech using deep learning. In 2016, Microsoft had purchased LinkedIn for \$26 billion.

Agri-Business

1. Madhukranti portal and Honey Corners of NAFED launched

Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launched Madhukranti portal and Honey Corners of National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation, NAFED in New Delhi. Madhukranti portal is an initiative of National Bee Board under National Beekeeping and Honey Mission. An MoU between National Bee Board and Indian Bank was signed for this project.

External Affairs

1. India gives '2.2 cr to UN Women for gender equality: TS Tirumurti

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador TS Tirumurti mentioned that India has contributed nearly '2.2 crore (\$300,000) to United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women also known as UN Women for 2021 reaffirming the country's support for gender equality and women empowerment. UN Women: Head: Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; HQ: New York

Legal

1. SC's First AI-driven Research Portal 'SUPACE' Launched By CJI Bobde

The Artificial Intelligence Committee, Supreme Court of India launched the Artificial Intelligence portal SUPACE (Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Courts Efficiency) through Video Conferencing. A pet project of Chief Justice of India S A Bobde, SUPACE is a tool that collects relevant facts and laws and makes them available to a judge. Harilal Jekisundas Kania was the first Chief Justice of India.

2. NITI Aayog Launches Online Dispute Resolution Handbook That Helps To Resolve Disputes Outside Of Courts

NITI Aayog launched a new first-of-its-kind, Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) handbook in India. This new handbook was launched in association with Agami and Omidyar Network India and with the support of ICICI Bank, Ashoka Innovators for the Public, Trilegal, Dalberg, Dvara, NIPFP. Justice DY Chandrachud, Supreme Court of India, launched the handbook. ODR can help resolve disputes efficiently and affordably.

Committees

1. Ministry of Labour & Employment set up Expert Committees for suggesting standards under the OSH&WC Code, 2020

Expert committees for Factories and Dock Works will be chaired by Dr RK Elangovan, Building & Other Construction Works will be headed by PLN Murthy and Fire Safety committee by DK Shami. Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH&WC) Code, 2020 has been enacted after amalgamating 13 different labour legislations to simplify the laws relating to OSH & WC.

2. RBI sets up RRA 2.0 to streamline regulations and reduce compliance

Reserve Bank of India has decided to set up a new Regulations Review Authority (RRA 2.0) for a period of one year from the date of its establishment. The RRA 2.0 will focus on streamlining regulatory instructions, reduce compliance burden of the regulated entities by simplifying procedures and reduce reporting requirements, wherever possible. M. Rajeshwar Rao, Deputy Governor has been appointed as the Regulations Review Authority.

3. RBI sets up committee to review ARC regulations

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) constituted a committee that would examine the role of asset reconstruction companies (ARCs) in stressed debt resolution and review their business model. Headed by former RBI executive director Sudarshan Sen, the committee will submit its report within three months from the date of its first meeting.

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