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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

MuhyiddinYassin sworn in as Malaysia’s new Prime Minister:
• In Malaysia, newly appointed Prime Minister MuhyiddinYasin took the oath of office. The swearing-in ceremony was held at the national palace in Kuala Lumpur.
• MuhyiddinYasin heads a coalition dominated by the country’s ethnic Malay Muslim majority.
• Malaysia has plunged into turmoil as Mahathir Mohamad’s alliance collapsed after a bid to force out leader-in-waiting Anwar Ibrahim.

China takes over Presidency of UN Security Council:
• China recently took over the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) from Belgium for March 2020. The UNSC Presidency changes every month on a rotational basis among its members. The rotation is decided as per the English alphabetical order. In January 2020, Vietnam held the Presidency of UNSC and in February 2020, the Presidency was held by Belgium.

Saudi Arabia grants permanent premium residency permit to foreigners:
• As Saudi Arabia started the issuance of Permanent Premium Residency Permit to Foreigners, Indian investor Yosuffali M A, Chairman of the Lulu group became one of the first to be given the permanent residency permit by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
• The Premium Residency, informally known as Saudi Green Card, is a residence permit in Saudi Arabia that grants expatriates the right to live, work and own business and property in the Kingdom without need for a sponsor.
• The introduction of the Premium Residency comes as a part of Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 reform plan, which was announced by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to boost the Saudi economy.

About Saudi Arabia:
• Capital: Riyadh
• Currency: Saudi riyal
• King: Salman
• Crown prince: Mohammad bin Salman

World Bank announces 12 billion USD aid to fight virus:
• The World Bank announced 12 billion USD to assist countries that are grappling with economic impacts of virus. The World Bank is to provide financial aid for the countries to act upon the needs and develop a fast response towards the spread of the virus.
• The bank released a statement announcing an emergency fast track package that includes low-cost loans, grants, and technical assistance.
• This includes emergency financing, policy advice, and technical assistance, building on the World Bank Group’s existing instruments and expertise to help countries respond to the crisis.

Luxembourg becomes first country to make all public transport free:
• In an attempt to reduce traffic jams, Luxembourg has become the first country in the world to make all public transport free from February 29. This is the first time that the decision to offer
free public transport has covered an entire country, the transport ministry stated.
• The decision has been observed in Luxembourg so as to bring down the congestion on streets. As a result of this decision, every person will be able to save around 100 euros ($110) per year.

US-Israel Joint military Exercise Juniper Cobra 20 Cancels over virus:
• The Israel Defense Forces and United States military launched the 10-day long joint missile defense drill Exercise Juniper Cobra 20 (JC20) on March 3, 2020.
• However, the remaining part of Juniper Cobra 20 has been scraped over the. The exercise was scheduled to be held between March 3-13, 2020.
• Exercise Juniper Cobra 20 (JC20) is the tenth edition of the biennial exercise series conducted in Israel every two years since 2001 between the two country.

US Supreme Court allows controversial 'Remain in Mexico' asylum policy to stay:
• The Supreme Court of the United States directed on March 11, 2020 that the controversial "Remain in Mexico" asylum policy can continue to stay in effect till a proper legal resolution is reached.
• The order is a victory for the Trump administration, which has been pushing for the controversial policy to continue. The administration had warned that there would be a rush to the border if the policy was blocked by the courts.
• The "Remain in Mexico" asylum policy mandates the non-Mexican asylum seekers to return to Mexico as they await hearings in the United States.

Ashraf Ghani Takes Oath as President of Afghanistan for Second Term:
• Afghanistan’s incumbent President Ashraf Ghani took oath of the post for a second term on 9 March 2020.
• He was elected for the first term on 21 September 2014.
• Capital of Afghanistan- Kabul, Currency- Afghan afghani

GoI brought masks, hand sanitizers under Essential Commodities Act
• Government of India brings masks and hand sanitizers under the Essential Commodities Act.
• Under the act, 2 ply & 3 ply surgical masks, N95 masks, and hand sanitizer has been declared as Essential Commodities up to 30 June 2020 by amending the Schedule of the Essential Commodities (EC) Act, 1955.
• The moves come as a measure of (Virus) and concern of the logistics for management.
Cabinet approves to release additional instalment of Dearness Allowance and Dearness Relief
• The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved to release an additional instalment of Dearness Allowance (DA) to Central Government employees and Dearness Relief (DR) to pensioners w.e.f. 01 January 2020.
• The Modi Government has approved 4 percent increase in DA/DR over the existing rate of 17 percent of the Basic Pay/Pension, to compensate for price rise.
• The new rate will become 21 percent of Basic Pay/Pension. The increase is based on the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission.
Cabinet approved construction of 780 Km of green highways in four states
- Union Cabinet approved a proposal for the construction of 780 kilometer of green highways on 13 March 2020. It was announced by the Union Minister Prakash Javadekar.
- The project aims to rehabilitate and upgrade various National Highways in four states, namely Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.
- A total sum of Rs.7,660 crore has been allotted for the purpose.

Microsoft launches website to track
- Microsoft has launched a web portal to track the spread of worldwide. The web portal has been launched by Microsoft’s Bing team. The portal aims to track the spread of novel in the world. The website is accessible at "bing.com/"
- A user can click on the country on an interactive map to see the specific number of cases of novel infections in the country.
- The web portal displays the information by aggregating data from sources like the World Health Organization (WHO), the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

Top tech giants to jointly fight against misinformation
- The top tech giants of the world will jointly fight against the fake news and misinformation related to on their platforms. The top giants which have announced a fight against the fake news includes Facebook, Google, LinkedIn, Microsoft, Reddit, Twitter and YouTube.
- These companies are working closely to have a check on the fake news and misinformation related to.

Philippines becomes 1st country to suspend all financial markets
- The Philippines has become the first country of the world to suspend all financial markets. The financial shutdown was confirmed from the statements from the Philippine Stock Exchange and the Bankers Association of the Philippines.
- The Philippine Stock Exchange was closed on 17th of March indefinitely, while currency and bond trading were suspended. The decision to suspend the financial markets was taken in response to the. Philippines authorities cited risks to the safety of traders as the key reason of shutdown.

World Bank Group Increases Response Fund to $14 Billion from $12 Billion
- The World Bank Group has announced an additional funding of $2 billion to help with the, bringing its commitment to $14 billion.
- The $2 billion in additional funds will come from International Finance Corporation (IFC), from its earlier contribution of $6 billion.
- The $14 billion funding announced will be made available from three branches of the World Bank Group:
  - $2.7 billion – International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
  - $3.3 billion – International Development Association (IDA)
• $8 billion - The International Finance Corporation (IFC)

Iraq’s President nominates Adnan Zurfi as Prime Minister
• Iraq’s President Barham Salih named Adnan Zurfi, former governor of the holy Shia city of Najaf, the new prime minister of the country. It is a second attempt to find the head of government in recent months.
• He will replace outgoing Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi. Mahdi resigned from his post in December after huge protests against his government.

$100 Billion relief package signed by Donald Trump
• To ensure sick leave to Americans workers who fall ill from the new virus, President of the United States, Donald Trump has signed a $100-billion emergency aid package.
• The $100 Billion relief package aims to strengthen the protective measures against the caused by.

Whatsapp chatbot to respond to queries
• The Whatsapp Chatbot number is 9013151515. The information was shared by NPPA - National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority.
• The Information Hub has been launched by WhatsApp in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

25 million jobs on stake due to virus: UN agency
• According to the ILO, United Nations agency, the is threatening about 25 million jobs worldwide. If governments do not take any effective steps fast and do not make the right policy for this, unemployment will increase more.
• The International Labor Organization (ILO) has warned that there may be an economic crisis worldwide, which will make people’s jobs difficult.
• The ILO proposes that people working in certain sectors should also get financial assistance.
• However, the ILO also said that if countries take effective steps, as it did during the 2008-09 recession, unemployment could be reduced.

Priyanka Chopra works jointly with WHO to spread awareness over
• Actor Priyanka Chopra works jointly with the World Health Organisation (WHO) to spread awareness over . Priyanka urged followers to rely on authentic sources of information about and arranged an Instagram live with top personnel of the World Health Organization (WHO) to raise awareness about the
• The actor documented her videos on Instagram stories where she expressed the importance of only relying on authentic information about the highly contagious disease.

India-Belgium extradition agreement
• The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the signing of Extradition Treaty between India and Belgium.
• The new treaty between India and Belgium will replace the pre-independence treaty signed.
between Britain and Belgium in the year 1901, which was also applicable to India before independence.

• According to the treaty, each party consents to the extradition of a person from the other party who is accused of an extradition offence in the border area of his or her country.

**US & UAE troops launch biennial exercise “Native Fury”**

• US Marines and UAE Emirati forces conducted the biennial exercise, named Native Fury at Abu Dhabi. The biennial exercise, called Native Fury, shows the close ties between American forces and the United Arab Emirates, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula home to Abu Dhabi.

• The forces seize a sprawling model Middle Eastern city, a drill conducted amid tensions with Iran and despite the new .

• It also comes after the U.S. killed Iran’s most prominent general in a drone strike in January, and Tehran retaliated with a ballistic missile attack on American forces in Iraq.

WHO applauds India’s efforts to combat against

• The World Health Organization (WHO) recently applauded the effort made by India to contain the spread of in the nation.

• The Executive Director of WHO, Michael J. Rayman said recognised that there is a tremendous potential in India to deal with . Earlier, India has been succesful in eradicating Smallpox and Polio s.

**Saudi king to chair G20 video summit on March 26**

• Saudi Arabia’s King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud will chair an emergency virtual summit of G20 leaders on March 26, 2020. The meeting is titled ‘G20 Extraordinary Virtual Leaders’ Summit on ‘.

• Saudi Arabia currently holds the G20 presidency and hence is chairing the meet.

• India is a member nation of the G20 group. The other members include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, France, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK and the US.

**Microsoft & US CDC tie-up to create AI bot ‘Clara’**

• The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has introduced an AI bot called ‘Clara’ to help people assess potential symptoms of.

• The CDC has partnered up with CDC Foundation and Microsoft Azure’s Healthcare Bot service to create Clara, the “self-checker” the bot is currently only available in the US on the CDC website.

**UN launches US$2 billion Global Humanitarian Response Plan to fight**

• United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has launched a US$2.012 billion coordinated Global Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) to fight in some of the world’s most vulnerable countries.

• The Global HRP has been launched for a period of nine months (April–December 2020)

• The response plan will be coordinated by UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian
Affairs, and will bring together requirements from World Health Organization and other UN humanitarian agencies.
• To kick-start the response plan, $60 million has been released from the UN’s Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

China recommends Bear Bile as a cure for
• China has recommended the use of Bear bile as a possible cure for virus. The Chinese government has put out a list of medicines that will be used to treat.
  • The list includes both China’s traditional medicines and western medicines. One of these medicines, ‘Tan Re Qing’ is identified to be the best cure.
  • The ‘Tan Re Quig’ traditional medicine carries bear bile. Bear bile has been used in Chinese medicine for more than 1300 years. The liver secretes bile juice and it is stored in the gall bladder.
  • According to China, the ursodeoxycholic acid present in the bear bile can possibly cure. It is also called Ursodiol. The acid is generally used for treating liver diseases and dissolving gall bladder stones.

G20 Trade & Investment Ministerial Meet: India urges for Global Framework on
• India recently urged the G20 member countries to come up with a G-20 global framework for ensuring affordable access to treatment and medicines amid crisis.
  • The framework will also allow easier movement of doctors and health professionals across borders. The announcement was made during G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial meeting that was held virtually on March 31, 2020.

WHO’s Regional Director for the Western Pacific, Dr Takeshi Kasai has urged the governments to stay engaged in their efforts to combat, calling it a long-term battle.
• WHO says there is no one-size-fits-all approach but there are common practices that can help fight the and reiterated that countries need to still prepare for large-scale community transmission.

NATIONAL NEWS

World Productivity Congress 2020 to be held in Bengaluru in May:
• The 19th edition of the World Productivity Congress (WPC) is scheduled to be held in Bengaluru from May 6 to May 8, 2020.
  • World Productivity Congress is the world’s largest convention for productivity development that shape future productivity growth.
  • The theme of 19th World Productivity Congress is “Industry 4.0 – Innovation and Productivity”.

World Health Organisation has warned that while the west, especially Western European nations and North America appear to be the new epicentres of the crisis, the is far from over in Asia and the Pacific.
• WHO’s Regional Director for the Western Pacific, Dr Takeshi Kasai has urged the governments to stay engaged in their efforts to combat, calling it a long-term battle.
Maharashtra government’s “Smart gram yojana” to be named after ex-minister R RPatil:
• The Maharashtra government’s “smart gram yojana” will be named after former Deputy Chief Minister the late R RPatil.
• Since November 2016, the ‘smart gram yojana’ (smart village) is being implemented in the state where awards are given to gram panchayats at taluka and district level for their performance on certain parameters.

Haryana CM unveils Rs 1,42,343-crore budget for 2020-21:
• Haryana Chief Minister ManoharLalKhattar, who also holds the finance portfolio, announced a Rs 1,42,343-crore budget in the state assembly.
• The debt is set to increase to Rs 1.98 lakh crore in 2020-21 as against Rs 1.76 lakh crore in the previous fiscal. The expenditure will increase to Rs 1,42,343 crore, a rise by 7.7 per cent.

Central Consumer Protection Authority to be established in 2020 April:
• Union Minister of Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan announced that the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) will be set up by the first week of April 2020.
• The CCPA will be established under the Consumer Protection Act 2019.
• The authority will address issues related to consumer rights, unfair trade practices, misleading advertisements. CCPA will be empowered to impose penalties for selling spurious and adulterated products.

Maharashtra to become single-use plastic-free by 1 May:
• Maharashtra State government is set to become single-use plastic-free by 1 May 2020.
• The announcement was made by the State environment minister Aaditya Thackeray.

President presented awards to 21 winners on National Science day:
• President Ram NathKovind conferred national awards to 21 winners for science communication and popularization including women excellence awards for meritorious women scientists on the occasion of National Science Day.
• The awards included Augmenting Writing Skills for Articulating Research (AWSAR) Awards, National Science and Technology Communication Awards, SERB Women Excellence Awards, and National Award for Young Woman Showing Excellence through Application of Technology for Societal Benefits.
• On the occasion, President announced three key initiatives for Gender Advancement and Equality in Academic and Research Institutions.
  1) VigyanJyoti:
   • VigyanJyoti is an initiative that will create a level-playing field for the meritorious girls in high school to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in their higher education.
  2) GATI:
   • The Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI) initiative will develop a comprehensive Charter and a framework for assessing the Gender Equality in STEM.
3) Online portal for S&T resources for women:
- An online portal for science and technology resources for women will provide e-resources related to all women-specific government schemes, scholarships, fellowships, career counselling with details of subject area experts from various disciplines in science and technology.

Punjab bans online food orders without hygiene rating:
- The Punjab government has decided to ban online food supply from all hotels, dhabas, and eateries etc which do not follow the hygiene rating rules under the Food Standards and Safety Act, Punjab.
- The government has also issued instructions to online food supply companies (OFSAs) not to take food from shops that do not follow government rules.
- The order states that Uber, Swiggy, Zomato, Panda any many other food business operators in Punjab deliver food online. This is a new way of delivering food through an IT-based platform, which provides food at home.

Yogmahotsav begins in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand:
- Antarrashtriayogmahotsav has been inaugurated in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.
- Yoga teachers and practitioners from eleven countries are taking part in this week-long event.
- The 'yogmahotsav' is held in Rishikesh every year from March 1 to March 7.

3-day KrishiVigyanMela organised in New Delhi:
- 3-day KrishiVigyanMela has been organised in New Delhi from March 1-3, 2020 by ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute.
- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the event and called for retention of talent in agriculture.
- The event will showcase the latest crop seed varieties, technology and products developed by both government and private companies.

Government Launches “Fuel Humsafar” Mobile App For Doorstep Diesel Delivery:
- Labour Minister SantoshGangwar has launched a mobile application named ‘Fuel Humsafar’ for delivery of diesel at doorsteps of Housing societies, hotels and hospitals in the national capital region.
- The app will be used for the fuel delivery services to housing societies, hotels, hospitals, malls, construction sites, industries, banquet stalls and other bulk buyers of diesel in various NCR cities, including Gurugram, Ghaziabad, Noida, Faridabad, Hapur, Kundli, Manesar, and Bahadurgarh.
- Humsafar has 12 bowser tankers in varying capacity from 4 kilolitres to 6 kilolitres and an experienced team of 35 people.

Shri Amit Shah inaugurates the campus of NSG Regional Hub at Kolkata:
- Modi government has given the country a long awaited and Well-Defined Proactive Security
Policy that is distinct from its Foreign Policy: ShriAmit Shah Under PM Modi’s leadership, all expectations of NSG from the Central Government would be fulfilled in the next 5 years: Home Minister Determination of Jawans in securing the Nation would be reciprocated in letter and spirit by Modi government through securing their family's future: ShriAmit Shah The NSG commando has become synonymous with a 'Sense of Security' for the Citizens of India: Home Minister.

Govt allows airlines to provide in-flight Wi-Fi services, Vistara to be first in line:
• The central government permitted airlines operating in India to provide in-flight Wi-Fi services to passengers, according to official notification.
• The Pilot-in-Command may permit the access of Internet services by passengers on board an aircraft in flight, through Wi-Fi on board, when laptop, smartphone, tablet, smartwatch, e-reader or a point of sale device is used in flight mode or airplane mode, the notification stated.

Power Min flags concerns over divesting govt stake below 51 per cent in NTPC, PowerGrid:
• The Power Ministry has raised concerns over the proposed strategic divestment of government equity in NTPC, PFC and Power Grid, which may bring down its stake to below 51 per cent.
• Earlier, under disinvestment plan, it was proposed to divest government equity below 51 per cent of its stake in certain public sector undertakings, including NTPC, PowerGrid and Power Finance Corporation (PFC).
• Thereafter certain foreign bond holder in these PSU had raised concerns about that. The power entities are supposed to compensate bondholders after reduction of the government stake to below 51 per cent. Moreover, the PSUs have raised concerns about this proposal saying that it would not go down well with investors particularly foreign lenders.
• An official stated that the power ministry has forwarded these PSUs concerns over reducing government stake below 51 per cent to the Finance Ministry. Presently, the government owns 54.14 per cent in NTPC, 54.96 per cent in PowerGrid and 55.99 per cent in PFC.

About ministry of power:
• Preceding Ministry: Ministry of Energy Sources
• Founded: 2 July 1992
• Headquarters: Shram Shakti Bhavan, Rafi Marg, New Delhi
• Minister responsible: Raj Kumar Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge)

Incredible India Website Launched In Arabic, Chinese And Spanish To Boost Tourism From These Countries:
• The multilingual version of “Incredible India” website and mobile app has been launched by the Minister of State (IC) for Tourism & Culture, ShriPrahlad Singh Patel in New Delhi. The new version of the website and mobile app of “Incredible India” has been launched in three new languages i.e. Chinese, Arabic and Spanish. The new version of the website and mobile app of “Incredible India” aims to attract tourists from Chinese, Arabic and Spanish speaking regions. Inclusion of three languages aims to showcase the tourism products of India on a global
platform. It also seeks to increase tourism awareness, attractions and opportunities by facilitating tourists with personalised and contextual digital experiences.

- The multilingual website also features the 360 degree-experience-based walk-throughs and stories and experiences of the tourists in various aspects such as Food & Cuisine, Heritage, Nature and Wildlife, Luxury, Spiritual, Adventure, Art, Shopping and many more.
- The “Incredible India” website was earlier hosted in only two languages i.e. English & Hindi.

Week long “Ekam Fest” begins to promote Craftsmanship of Divyang Artisans:
- “EKAM Fest” has been organised in New Delhi to promote Craftsmanship & Products of Divyang Artisans and Entrepreneurs. National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation (NHFDC) has organised the exhibition-cum-Fair under the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry.
- The NHFDC foundation is working to develop a brand and platform for marketing of products made by Divyang Artisans and Entrepreneurs. The name of the brand has been chosen as “EKAM”. EKAM signifies Entrepreneurship, Knowledge, Awareness, Marketing.
- EKAM Fest organised by NHFDC is an initiative to promote entrepreneurship along with knowledge among Divyangjan community. It also aims to generate awareness among society about potentialities of PwDs as well as providing them major marketing opportunities.
- The fest will feature the participation of the Divyang Entrepreneur and Artisans from all over the country. The fest will also feature the products from Jammu & Kashmir and North East, ranging from handloom, handicraft, Embroidery work and dry fruits.

National Chambal Sanctuary gets Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) tag:
- The Central Government recently awarded the National Chambal Sanctuary with the eco-sensitive zone tag. The National Chambal Sanctuary is located at the intersection of three Indian States - Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. The sanctuary is famous for inhabiting Ganga dolphins and endangered crocodiles.

Janaushadhi Week 2020 celebrated across India: 50,000 Suvidha Sanitary Napkins distributed:
- India is observing the Janaushadhi week from 1st to 7th March 2020.
- The week is being observed through the events organised by the owners of over 6200 PradhanMantriBhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras to raise awareness about health and hygiene. One of the events was focussed on the theme ‘Suvidha Se Sammaan’.

Government launches LLP settlement Scheme 2020:
- The Central Government recently launched the LLP Settlement Scheme 2020 for the one-time extension for filing the required documents with the Registrar.
- The scheme will come into force on March 16, 2020 and will be implemented till June 13, 2020.
- Under the scheme, the defaulting LLPs will be allowed to fill Form 3, Form 4, Form 8 and Form 11.
President confers 61st Lalit Kala Akademi Awards:
• President Ram Nath Kovind on March 4, 2020 conferred the 61st annual Lalit Kala Akademi Awards at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.
• A total of 15 artists were bestowed with the awards including Anoop Kumar Manzukhi Gopi, Satwinder Kaur, Yashpal Singh, Yashwant Singh and others.
• The works of these artists will be displayed at the National Exhibition of Art at the Lalit Kala Akademi galleries till March 22, 2020.

Government to replace all level crossings on Highways by bridges & underpasses:
• The Central Government has decided to replace all level crossings on the National Highways by bridges or underpasses under the Setu Bharatam Scheme by December 2020.
• The move is expected to enable smooth traffic management on the national highways besides drastically reducing the chances of road accidents.

Indian Army’s International Seminar “Pragyan Conclave 2020” begins:
• The Indian Army’s International Seminar “Pragyan Conclave 2020” has begin at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi. The seminar has been organised by Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS).
• The Pragyan Conclave 2020 seminar united the national and international experts to discuss the complex topic of ‘Changing Characteristics of Land Warfare and its Impact on the Military’.
• It also provided a platform for discussions on emerging ideas, perspectives and narratives that define the ‘New Age Warfare’.

Google to launch its second cloud infrastructure in Delhi by 2021:
• Google has planned to open its second cloud region in India in Delhi.
• The Delhi cloud region is expected to be launched in 2021, and will have three zones to protect against service disruptions.
• It will be the Google’s second cloud region in India. The first region was launched in Mumbai in 2017.

Sensex, Nifty tumble after declared as:
• Indian stocks entered the bear market on March 11, 2020 following the declaration of as by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Both BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty fell by 7 percent.
• The worst affected was the aviation sector as the stocks of major industry players Spicejet and InterGlobe fell by 19 percent following the suspension of travel visas by the central government till April 15, 2020.

Biennial Civil Aviation Business Exhibition ‘Wings India 2020’ Begins in Hyderabad:
• The four-day civil aviation business exhibition and air show titled ‘Wings India 2020’ kick-started on 12 March 2020 at Begumpet airport, Hyderabad. It will continue till March 15.
• However, the programme will be formally inaugurated on 13 March 2020 by the Minister for Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri.
• The theme of the biennial event is ‘flying for all’.
• The event has been organized by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) along with Ministry of Civil Aviation and Airports Authority of India (AAI).

Maharashtra Assembly approves caste validity certificate bill:
• The Maharashtra State Assembly recently approved a bill exempting gram panchayat members of the state from submitting caste validity certificates while filing the nominations.
• The contesting candidates will now be allowed to submit the caste validity certificate within one year of winning the elections. The caste validity certificate is proof of an individual’s caste.

Infosys, Qualcomm tie-up to provide Smart City Solutions in India:
• Infosys and Qualcomm have come together to provide smart city solutions in India.
• In this regard, both the companies signed an agreement wherein facilities like Smart Venues, Smart Stadiums and Smart Event Management will be offered to Indian Smart Cities.

Leh to host International Yoga Day 2020; PM Modi to lead main event:
• Ladakh’s capital Leh will host the main national event of the International Yoga Day 2020. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be attending the event on June 21, 2020.
• Over 15000 people are expected to attend the event and perform Yoga in such a high altitude location.

Govt sets up development council for pulp, paper and allied industries:
• Central Government has formed a 25-member development council for pulp, paper and allied industries with an objective to increase the growth of this sector.
• A S Mehta is the chairman of the council. He is the President of J K Paper Ltd.

“Therapeutics Accelerator” fund launched:
• A new fund named as “Therapeutics Accelerator” has been launched by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome and Mastercard. The $125 Million fund has been launched to accelerate technologies to fight against the disease.
• “Therapeutics Accelerator” fund has been designed to identify, assess, develop and scale treatments to the disease.

Govt to launch Mahua-based alcoholic drink:
• Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) and National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) recently signed a memorandum for manufacturing of Mahua Nutribeverage.
• Mahua Nutribeverage will have high nutritional values with low alcohol (about 5 percent). It will be developed by Delhi-IIT and TRIFED. According to the reports, it will be available within next few months in various flavours.
TRIFED and NRDC will manufacture mahua-based alcoholic beverage ‘MahuaNutribeverage’ in the market within next months. According to the media reports, this beverage will be available in six fruit-based flavours. It will be available at price of Rs. 700 for a 750 ml. It is for the first time when Tribal Affairs Ministry is going to manufacture alcoholic beverages.

Odisha Government to Launch Separate dept for SHGs “Mission Shakti” dedicated to women:
- The government of Odisha under Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has announced that the state will launch an exclusive department for Self Help Group (SHGs) called “Mission Shakti” which will be dedicated to all women of the state.
- This will make Odisha, first state of the country to have a separate department dedicated to SHGs.

New Delhi to host an exhibition titled “JallianwalaBagh”:
- An exhibition titled “JallianwalaBagh” is scheduled to be held in New Delhi. “JallianwalaBagh” exhibition will be inaugurated by Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel on the occasion of 130th Foundation Day of National Archives of India (NAI).

National Conference on Women in Police and CAPFs held in New Delhi:
- Union Minister for Women and Child Development SmritiZubinIrani inaugurated the “National Conference on Women in Police and CAPFs (Central Armed Police Forces)” in New Delhi.
- The Conference was organized by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR & D). SmritiIrani also released a hand-out- ‘BPR & D Mirror- Gender Bender’ and also the book titled “To Greater Heights”.

GoI constitutes committee to decide modalities of Kisan Rail:
- The Union Government of India has constituted a committee to decide modalities of Kisan Rail. This committee has been formed under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare along with representatives of the Indian Railways.
- “Kisan Rail” is planned to be set up through the public-private-partnership (PPP) mode and will facilitate a cold supply chain to transport the perishable goods.
- Initiative of “Kisan Rail” was proposed by Union Finance Minister NirmalaSitharaman during her budget speech of 2020-21 to set up a seamless National Cold Supply Chain for perishables like fish, milk and meat.

‘COVA Punjab’ mobile app launched by Punjab Govt.:
- Chief Secretary of Punjab, Karan Avtar Singh has launched a mobile application, COVA Punjab. COVA stands for Alert.
- This app has been developed by the Department of Government Reforms and Public Grievances in consultation with the Health and Family Welfare Department to spread awareness by sharing various travel and preventive care advisories.
- The app would inform people to check out for symptoms as provided by the government from
time to time and follow the advisory given thereafter.

**Government Reconstitutes National Platform for Risk Reduction (NPDRR):**

- The government has reconstituted the National Platform for Risk Reduction (NPDRR).
- The Union Home Minister Amit Shah is the chairperson of this NPDRR, which is a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral decision making body on management.

2nd anniversary of PoshanAbhiyaan ‘PoshanPakhwada’ being celebrated:

- The second anniversary of the PoshanAbhiyaan PoshanPakhwada is being celebrated on 8th
- The focus area of the two-week-long PoshanPakhwada 2020 will be – Men for Nutrition – increasing male engagement in PoshanAbhiyaan – to improve Nutritional Indicators.

**Paytm& Hyderabad Metro tie up for QR-based tickets:**

- Hyderabad Metro Rail Ltd in partnership with Paytm has launched a QR-code-based metro ticketing system at Rasoolpura metro station Hyderabad, Telangana.
- The new service will enable commuters to travel seamlessly and avoid queues to buy tokens at the metro stations. They can now simply purchase a QR ticket on their Paytm app, which can be displayed at the Automatic Fare Collection (AFC) gates to proceed for the journey.

**Third all-Women Post Office opens in New Delhi:**

- Department of Posts, Delhi Circle has opened the third all-Women Post Office in the national capital.
- The post office was inaugurated under New Delhi South West Division to commemorate the International Women’s Day celebrations.

**India’s 1st digital parcel locker service launched in West Bengal**

- The Department of Posts, Kolkata (West Bengal circle), has launched free digital parcel locker service in 2 post offices Nabadiganta IT post office of Salt Lake City & post office in New Town’s Action Area.
- Under this service, customers will be able to collect their parcel from the post office according to their convenience.
- This facility is quite popular in European countries but is starting for the first time in India. This service has been done for such people of working-class, who do not have to receive any parcel at home. Such people can take their parcel and letters addressed to them from the kiosks at 24×7.

**Central Government declares as ‘notified’**

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to treat as a “notified”.
- This will enable the states to spend a larger chunk of funds from the State Response Fund (SDRF) to fight the virus.
- The step has been taken for the purpose of providing assistance under the State Response Fund (SDRF) and has announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs 4 lakhs to families of those who die of virus.
• Earlier this week, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared Asia and Europe as its epicentre.

UP govt launches three schemes for skill development in the state
Uttar Pradesh government has launched three ambitious schemes for skill development and employment generation for youths in the state. The three schemes are Kaushal Satrang, Yuva Hub and apprenticeship scheme in Lucknow. UP government also announced to depute “Arogya Mitras” at all primary health centres to inform people about govt health schemes.
Kaushal Satrang Scheme
• Kaushal Satrang scheme is a skill development scheme with 7 components to help provide job opportunities to the youth. Under this scheme, each district will organize Mega job fair.
Yuva Hub’ Scheme
Yuva Hub’ scheme was allocated Rs 1,200 crore in the state budget and it aims at providing employment to thousands of skilled youth by assisting in project concept and financial help for one year of operation. It will also facilitate setting up of 30,000 startups in the state. IIM (Indian Institutes of Management) Lucknow is the knowledge partner of this scheme.
CM apprenticeship scheme
CM apprenticeship scheme will provide a stipend of Rs 2500 to the youth of the state.
Centre invokes ‘ Act 1897’ and ‘Management Act’ to prevent spread of virus; Karnataka becomes first state to invoke provisions of 1897 Act
• Following the 2019–20, the Government of India has made it mandatory for all states and UTs to invoke provisions of Section 2 of the Diseases Act, 1897.
• The Centre has also announced that the powers held by the home ministry under the Management Act shall be “delegated” to the health ministry so as to prepare India against the spread of the disease.
• The law is meant for prevention of the spread of dangerous diseases by providing special powers that are required for the implementation of containment measures to control the spread of the disease.

First-ever Indore - Kishangarh flight commenced under UDAN
• The Ministry of Civil Aviation flagged off first-ever flight between Indore to Kishangarh. This flight will connect Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan thrice in a week. This flight has been started under UDAN scheme.
• Now, 268 routes have been dedicated under UDAN scheme by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Thousands of people will be benefitted as it will cover a distance of 550 kilometer.

Karnataka is the first state to invoke provisions of Diseases Act, 1897
• Karnataka has become the first state in the country to notify ‘Karnataka Diseases, Regulations, 2020’ under the Diseases Act, 1897, Karnataka.
• The regulation will be in effect for a period of one year starting from March 11, 2020 to prevent the spread of the novel virus.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Pledges $10 Million towards Emergency Fund for SAARC
Nations
- The Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi has led an initiative to create an Emergency Fund for SAARC nations, amid rising cases of the disease in the region.
- PM Modi has also pledged US$ 10 million to start the fund.
- PM said that the fund could be based on voluntary contributions from all the SAARC members.
- The fund can be used by any of the 8 member states to meet the cost of immediate actions.
- SAARC nations include: India, Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Maldives, and Bhutan.

Companies (Amendment) Bill 2020 tabled in Lok Sabha
- The Companies (Amendment) Bill 2020 was on March 17, 2020 tabled in the Lok Sabha. The new amendment bill decriminalises major offences mentioned in the Companies Act, 2013.
- The Bill aims to boost ease of doing business in India by proposing 72 amendments in the existing Act. It proposes monetary penalties for violations committed by startups.

World’s First Flying Car Will Be Manufactured In Gujarat, India
- The world’s first commercial flying car named ‘PAL-V Liberty’ will be developed in Gujarat, India.
- Dutch company PAL-V (Personal Air and Land Vehicle) will develop this car.
- PAL-V has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Gujarat’s Industries Principal Secretary MK Das to set up a manufacturing facility in Gujarat.

Microsoft, NASSCOM launches Innovate for Accessible India campaign
- Microsoft India and NASSCOM Foundation have launched the Innovate for Accessible India campaign to empower people with disabilities.
- The campaign aims at empowering people with disabilities with the technology and tools required for better integration into society and access to equal opportunities.
- The campaign is in partnership with Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Department of Science and Technology, and National Research and Education Network.

Ranjan Gogoi takes oath as Member of Rajya Sabha
- Ranjan Gogoi has served as the 46th Chief Justice of India. During his 13-month long tenure as the Chief Justice of India, various landmark decisions were delivered by the Supreme Court including the Ayodhya case, on the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the entry of women into Kerala’s Sabarimala temple and the Rafale jet deal along with Assam’s National Register of Citizens (NRC).

PM Modi appeals for ‘Janta Curfew’ on 22nd March
Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appeals “Janta Curfew” on Sunday (22nd March) within the wake of 19. It’ll be self-imposed and self-regulated and can be effective from 7 within the morning till 9 within the evening. The Prime Minister was addressing the state last evening in
Important facts of Janta Curfew:
- PM Modi urged countrymen to thank people like doctors, medical personnel and cleaning staff for his or her service on Sunday at 5 PM.
- PM Modi requested all people to exit of the house within the coming few weeks as long as extremely necessary and work from home the maximum amount as possible.
- Pm Modi urged senior citizens above the age of 65 years to remain reception within the coming days.
- The Prime Minister also appealed to the businessmen to require care of th economic needs of their employees by not deducting their salary if they're unable to return to figure.
- The government of India has decided to constitute a Task Force under the Chairmanship of the minister of finance which can interact with all the stakeholders.
- PM Modi acknowledged that for a developing country like India with an enormous population, won’t be easy to affect.

MP CM Kamal Nath resigns before Floor Test
- Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Kamal Nath submitted his resignation on March 20, 2020, ahead of the floor test due to the reduced majority in 230-member MP legislative assembly.
- The numbers favoured the Bhartiya Janata Party. In a press conference, Kamal Nath accused the BJP of toppling his government in the State since its formation in December 2018.

Goa govt launches chatbot named Cobot to create awareness on virus.
- Government of Goa has launched a Chatbot named Cobot to create awareness among people about virus.
- Cobot will act as a one-stop source of information for citizens of Goa on and its various aspects.
- The Chatbot has been developed in association with Portea Medical and Verloop.

Government Approves Setting Up of National Technical Textile Mission for 4 Years
- The government has approved the proposal for creation of National Technical Textiles Mission for a period of 4 years from 2020-21 to 2023-24.
- The total outlay of the mission has been estimated at Rs.1480 crores.
- The focus of the Mission for holistic development of entire technical textile sector on pan-India basis in various flagship missions and programmes of the country.

Railway Ministry to Electrify all 28,810 km Broad Gauge (BG) Routes by December 2023
- Piyush Goyal-led Ministry of Railways has planned to electrify all the remaining 28,810 km of Broad Gauge (BG) Routes of Indian Railways by December 2023.
- The proposed electrification of BG Routes will be done in the following manner:
  - 2019-20 – 6,000 km of broad gauge route has been planned to be electrified in 2020-21 – 6,000 km, in 2021-22 – 6,000 km, in 2022-23 – 6,500 km and in 2023-24 (upto Dec-23) – 4,310 km.
  - Apart from this, the Railway Ministry has also planned to source around 1000 megawatt (MW) of solar power as part of its solar mission and around 200 MWt of wind power based on the techno-commercial assessment.
Government Forms Economic Response Task Force Led By FM Nirmala Sitharaman
• Keeping in mind the economic challenges arising out of the , Prime Minister Narendra Modi has decided to constitute Economic Response Task Force.
• The task force will be led by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, to deal with the situation arising out of novel .
• It will ensure that all steps are taken to reduce the economic difficulties and execute them effectively.

IRDAI Constitutes Panel Under Pravin Kutumbe to Review Guidelines on Corporate Governance Systems of Insurers
• The insurance regulator, Insurance Regulation and Development Authority (IRDAI), has set up a 16-member committee to find ways to improve its current guidelines on corporate governance systems of insurers, in a bid to further strengthen the guidelines.
• The committee will be Chaired by Shri Pravin Kutumbe, member-finance and investment at IRDAI.
• It will also consists of six other members from the insurance regulator, members from the Reserve Bank of India and the Securities and Exchange Board of India along with other industry participants.

Govt Forms 21-member high level committee of medical experts under V K Paul for prevention & control of
• The Government of India has constituted a high level technical committee of Public Health Experts to provide guidance about the prevention and control activities for in the country.
• The 21 member committee will be headed by NITI Aayog member Dr V K Paul.
• Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan and Director General Indian Council of Medical Research are the Co-Chair.

Satyarup Siddhanta becomes first Indian to complete volcanic Seven Summit
• India’s mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta has recently climbed the highest volcano in seven continents and recorded his name in the 'Limca Book of Records'.
• He holds the record for becoming the first Indian to climb the highest volcano in all the 7 continents of the world. Earlier, in January 2019, he achieved the record of climbing the highest peak of the seven continents of the world.
• He already has registered his name in Guinness Book of World Records, India Book of Records, Asia Book of Records, British Book of Records and Champion Book of Records.

Delhi Government presents Rs. 65,000 crore Budget 2020-21 in State Assembly
• Delhi’s Finance Minister Manish Sisodia on March 23, 2020, presented Rs. 65,000 crore Delhi Budget 2020-21 in the state assembly. Before presenting the state budget, Minister Sisodia placed the Economic Survey 2019-20 in the House.
• The budget lays special emphasis on education. During the session, all the MLAs sat one meter
IOC Becomes First Company to Begin Supply of BS-VI fuel Across Country

• Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the biggest oil firm of India, has successfully rolled out the supply of the BS-VI grade fuel, with all its 28,000 petrol pumps dispensing ultra-low sulphur fuel across the country.
• With this, the company is first in the Country to completely switch to world’s cleanest petrol and diesel, two weeks before the April 1 deadline.
• The government had set April 1, 2020 as the deadline for starting supply of ultra-low sulphur BS-VI (equivalent to Euro-VI grade emission compliant fuels) petrol and diesel.
• BS-VI has a sulphur content of just 10 ppm and emission standards are as good as CNG.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan appointed as Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh for 4th time

• BJP politician Shivraj Singh Chouhan has been appointed as the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh on March 23, 2020. He has been appointed for the fourth time.
• This comes after the Madhya Pradesh chief minister (ex) Kamal Nath resigned from his post on March 20, 2020, as his government fell short of the majority mark.
• The trigger of the downfall of Congress in Madhya Pradesh was Jyotiraditya M. Scindia leaving the Congress on 11 March, taking with him 22 MLAs.

India to be in for 21 days from 25 March 2020

• Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced the complete of the entire nation, as part of government’s stringent efforts to tackle disease.
• The entire country will be under from 25 March 2020. This will be in place for 21 days. This is the second time in a week when he addressed the country on the fast-spreading disease with flu-like symptoms that has infected more than 3.5 lakh people and killed over 16,000.

1st 'Made in India' 19 Test Kit gets CDSCO approval

• “Mylab PathoDetect Qualitative PCR kit” has become the first ‘Made in India’ 19 Test Kit to get the CDSCO approval.
• Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has given the commercial approval to the diagnostic test kit made by Mylab Discovery Solutions Pvt Ltd which is also known as the Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test.

India’s first dedicated hospital comes up in Mumbai by Reliance

• Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has set up India’s first dedicated hospital in Mumbai. A dedicated 100 bedded centre has been established at Seven Hills Hospital, Mumbai for patients who test positive for .
• Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital has done this in collaboration with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).
• This first-of-its-kind-in-India centre is fully funded by Reliance Foundation and includes a negative pressure room that helps in preventing cross-contamination and helps control
infection.

**IOC becomes 1st company to begin supply of BS-VI fuel across India**
- India’s biggest oil firm, Indian Oil Corporation Limited has started supplying BS-VI fuel across India. With this, Indian Oil Corporation Limited has become 1st company to begin supply of BS-VI fuel across its 28,000 petrol pumps.
- The Government of India has set 01st April 2020 as the deadline to start the supply of BS-VI emission compliant fuels. Therefore, from 01st April 2020, India will become the part of select league of nations which are using cleanest petrol and diesel across the country to cut vehicular emissions.

**Cabinet approved the continuation of RoSCTL scheme from 1 April**
- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved for continuation of Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) scheme from 1 April 2020.
- Until then, the scheme will be merged with the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP). It is expected to make the textile sector competitive by rebating all taxes and levies that are currently not being rebated under any other mechanism.

**Delhi Government Announces Rs 100-cr “Branding Delhi” scheme to make Delhi tourism brand**
- The Delhi government has announced a new scheme titled “Branding Delhi”, to introduce the national capital as a tourism brand to domestic and foreign tourists and create news jobs in the sector.
- The Rs 100-crore scheme will re-brand Delhi tourism and the city will be introduced as a tourism brand in the country and abroad to domestic and foreign tourists.

**Deadline for GST returns extended to 30 June**
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has extended the last date for filing GST returns for March, April, and May to 30 June.
- The previous date for filing of GST returns was March 31, 2020.
- The deadline for composition returns on GST has been also been extended to 30 June 2020.

**Finance Minister announces relief package under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana**
- The Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced the relief package under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. The new relief package under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana has been launched for the poor to help them fight the battle against .

**Key beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana:**
- The scheme will benefit the poors by providing an ex-gratia of Rs 500 per month to 20.40 crores PMJDY women account-holders. The amount would be given for the next three months.
- The scheme will benefit the 8 crore poor families by providing them Gas cylinders free of cost for the next three months.
- The scheme will benefit 8.7 crore farmers. It will ensure the payment of the first instalment of Rs 2,000 which was due in 2020-21, in April 2020 itself under the PM KISAN Yojana.
- The scheme will benefit the low wage-earners earning below Rs 15,000 per month in
Government of India has proposed to pay 24% of their monthly wages into their PF accounts for the next three months.

- The scheme will benefit 3 crore aged widows and people in Divyang category by giving them Rs 1,000 to overcome the difficulties during the next three months.
- The scheme will benefit the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) workers as their wages would be increased by Rs 20 with effect from 1 April, 2020. This will provide an additional benefit of Rs 2,000 annually to a worker.
- The scheme will benefit women who are organised through 63 lakhs Self Help Groups (SHGs) by increasing the collateral free lending from Rs 10 lakhs to Rs 20 lakhs.

Tamil Nadu's Nagapattinam District Bifurcated to Form Mayiladuthurai as 38th District

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy has announced the formation of a new district Mayiladuthurai by bifurcating the existing district of Nagapattinam.
- With this, the total number of districts in the state has increased to 38
- Till date, Tamil Nadu had 37 districts, of which five new districts were formed in 2019.

IMF launches Tracker of Govt. Policies in Response to

- The International Monetary Fund has launched a “Tracker of Policies Governments are Taking in Response to ”.
- The policy tracker outlines the key economic responses taken by the government of various countries in order to contain the . The policy tracker has the updated data till March 24, 2020.
- The policy tracker covers the responses on the basis of three pillars, namely: Fiscal Monetary And Macro-Financial Exchange Rate And Balance Of Payments

Odisha government launches “Mo Jeeban” programme

- Odisha’s Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched Mo Jeeban programme in Odisha. The “Mo Jeeban” programme was launched for the containment of.
- Through Mo Jeeban programme, the chief minister of Odisha urged the people of the state to take a pledge to stay indoors

High-level committee approves Rs. 5,751 crore worth fund for 8 states

- A high-level committee, chaired by Home Minister Amit Shah has approved funds worth Rs 5,751 crore to eight states for calamity damage relief.
- The additional centre assistance has been approved under the National Response Fund.
- They will be given to eight states that were affected by drought, floods, landslides and cyclones in 2019.
- The states include Kerala, Bihar, Nagaland, Odisha, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Karnataka.

India’s largest hospital to be set up in Odisha
India’s largest hospital is all set to come up in Odisha, to treat patients tested positive for the novel exclusively.

- The 1,000 beds hospital will be completely functional in the next 15 days.
- With this, Odisha will be the first state in the country to set up such a large-scale hospital exclusively to treat patients.
- For this, a tripartite agreement has been signed between the state government of Odisha, medical colleges as well as corporates that will help put all the 1,000 beds required to treat infected patients.

**Jana SFB rolls out UPI QR-based loan instalment payment facility**

- Jana Small Finance Bank has rolled out a Unified Payments Interface (UPI) QR-based loan installment payment facility along with National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) for its customers.
- Initially the UPI QR-based loan installment payment facility will be only available to over 40 lakh customers of the Jana Small Finance Bank.

**CII sets up “CII Rehabilitation and Relief Fund”**

- The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has set up a CII Rehabilitation and Relief Fund (CRR) for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) to tackle .
- The CII Rehabilitation and Relief Fund (CRR) will assist small enterprises or MSME in rehabilitation. The setting up of Relief Fund is expected to curtail the impact of on the MSME sector.

**DST sets up task force for mapping of technologies**

- Department of Science and Technology (DST) has set up a Task Force for mapping of technologies from Research and Development labs, academic institutions, start-ups and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. The Department of Science & Technology plays a pivotal role in the promotion of science & technology in the country.
- It aims to fund nearly market-ready solutions in the area of diagnostics, testing, health care delivery solutions, equipment supplies.

**Goa becomes the 1st state to launch assessment tool for**

- Goa becomes the first Indian state to launch a self-assessment tool for . The self-assessment tool called Test Yourself Goa. This tool helps people identify if they are infected by the virus without visiting a doctor or hospital.
- The Goa government has partnered with Innovaccer, a US-based healthcare data analytics company that developed the self-assessment platform.
- The tool will then assist the person to take further steps by providing information on self-quarantine, helpline numbers to reach out to the concerned authorities. The tool is accessible in English, Konkani & Hindi and will also work on Smartphones.

Indian army Chief starts ‘Operation Namaste’ to combat
• Army Chief Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane has launched ‘Operation Namaste’ to extend assistance to the govt in containing the spread of and insulate the force from the disease. Under the operation, the army will help the Government of India fight against the deadly disease.
• Indian Army has established 8 quarantine so far. Army has also issued guidelines for army men to keep themselves safe as it is difficult to maintain social distancing due to operational and tactical.

India’s Cleanest City Indore Becomes First in the Country to Opt for Drones to Sanitise City amid Scare
• Indore, the cleanest city of India in Madhya Pradesh, has deployed drones to sanitize city areas against the disease.
• This makes Indore as the first city in the country to attempt to fight off the virus scare this way.
• The initiative is a first-of-its kind attempt by which crowded areas are sanitised with the help of drones sprinkling chemicals.

Government Sets up special emergency fund ‘PM CARES Fund’ to Fight Against
• The Government of India has set up a public charitable trust under the name of ‘Prime Minister’s Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund’ (PM CARES Fund) on 28 March 2020.
• The primary objective of this dedicated national fund is to deal with any kind of emergency or distress situation, like posed by the disease.
• Prime Minister is the Chairman of this trust while Defence Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister are its other members.
• The fund has been set up to enable micro-donations, allowing a large number of people to be able to contribute with smallest of denominations.
• Donations to this fund will be exempted from income tax under section 80(G) of the IT Act.
• Citizens and organisations can go to the website pmindia.gov.in and donate to PM CARES Fund.
• The country’s largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI) will be hold the account of the PM Cares Fund.

Government of India launches risk-tracking app “Kavach”
• Government of India has launched a risk-tracking app in India and is named “Kavach”.
• The app has been developed by the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
• The app uses a person’s location to assess whether they are in the high-risk geographical zone or not. It will track the data of the users every one hour to alert them of whether they have crossed paths with any person who has tested positive for the infection.

Abbott Labs launches 5-minute test
• Abbott Laboratories, United States is unveiling a test which will tell if someone is infected within 5 minutes. This test is so small and portable it is often utilized in almost any health-care setting.
The test starts with taking a swab from the nose or the rear of the throat, then mixing it with a chemical solution that breaks open the virus and releases its RNA.

The mixture is inserted into an ID Now system, a small box weighing slightly below 7 pounds that has the technology to spot and amplify select sequences of the genome and ignore contamination from other viruses.

MCA introduces “Companies Fresh Start Scheme 2020”

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has introduced the “Companies Fresh Start Scheme, 2020”. The new scheme has been introduced to provide relief to law abiding companies and the Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) amid . MCA has also revised “LLP Settlement Scheme, 2020”.
- The Fresh Start scheme and revised LLP Settlement Scheme stimulates compliance and lessen the compliance burden during the unprecedented public health situation triggered by .

UP CM Yogi Adityanath Constitutes ‘Team-11’ to Fight Spread

- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has set up “Team-11”, which comprises of 11 inter-departmental committees to fight the spread, by tackling multiple issues ranging from ensuring medicare to victims to the supply of essentials and tackle long marches of jobless workers back home.
- Each of the 11 committees will be headed by a senior bureaucrat of the state while the ‘Team 11’ will be headed by the Chief Minister himself.

Jharkhand launches Pragyaam App for delivery of Essential Goods during

- Jharkhand State Government recently launched Pragyaam mobile app for the delivery of Essential goods during . The app will offer e-passes to those people who are involved in providing essential services.
- The e-passes will be issued by the District Transport Officers of Jharkhand.

DRDO develops casualty evacuation bags

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has designed a casualty evacuation bag to transport or isolate persons infected with .
- The bag is water and air-proof and treated to deal with biological agents. DRDO will be procuring an initial lot of 500 such bags. DRDO’s Defence Bioengineering and Electromedical Laboratory (DEBEL), which carries out research in aero-medical engineering and life support equipment and Nuclear Chemical and Biological (NBC) protection systems, has developed this bag.

Government constitutes 11 groups to boost healthcare amid

- The Central Government recently constituted 11 empowered groups for integrated response to in India. Of these 11 groups, one will be chaired by NITI Aayog CEO, one by NITI Aayog member and 9 will be chaired by Secretary-level officers.
These groups have been set up under the Management Act.

**DRDO to set up ‘multi-patient ventilators’ for serious patients**
- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) will soon develop the ‘multi-patient ventilators’ for critical patients. These ventilators will provide life support system to several patients at a same time through single unit.
- The development of these ventilators is already under process to meet the potential demand in case goes out of control.

**Govt approves Insurance Scheme for Health Workers Fighting**
- Government has approved Insurance Scheme for Health Workers Fighting as announced under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package. The following conditions exists:
  - The scheme will provide an insurance cover of Rs. 50 lakh for ninety days (90) to a total of around 22.12 lakh public healthcare providers. It will also include accidental loss of life on account of contracting.
  - The insurance provided under this scheme would be over and above any other insurance cover being availed of by the beneficiary.

**SPORTS**

**Rafael Nadal Clinches 2020 Mexican Open:**
- The 2020 Mexican Open professional tennis tournament was held between 24 and 29 February 2020.
- The World Number 2 Rafael Nadal won the ATP Mexico Open 2020, defeating unseeded Taylor Fritz in straight sets, 6-3, 6-2, in the final.

**Winners List:**
- **Men’s Single** – Rafael Nadal (Spain) defeated Taylor Fritz (USA)
- **Women’s Single** – Heather Watson (UK) defeated Leylah Annie Fernandez (Canada)
- **Men’s Double** – Łukasz Kubot / Marcelo Melo defeated Juan Sebastián Cabal / Robert Farah
- **Women’s Double** – Desirae Krawczyk / Giuliana Olmos defeated Kateryna Bondarenko / Sharon Fichman.

**1st Khelo India University Games Concludes In Odisha At KIIT:**
- The Khelo India University Games concluded in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Punjab University, Chandigarh took home the champions trophy winning 46 medals including 17 gold, 19 silver, and 10 bronze. Savitribai Phule Pune University claimed the second position and Punjabi University, Patiala declared as the second runners up.
- A total of 113 universities took part in the games. India’s fastest woman Dutee Chand representing Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology clinched the gold medal with a timing of 23.66 seconds in the 200m final.

**Important:**
- Utkal Divas or Odisha Day falls every year on 01st April.
- CM of Odisha: Naveen Patnaik; Governor of Odisha: Ganeshi Lal.
Indian Paddler Sharath Kamal Clinches 2020 Oman Open Table Tennis Tournament
• Ace Indian table tennis player Achanta Sharath Kamal has won the 2020 ITTF Challenge Series Plus Oman Open in Muscat on 15 March 2020.
• The 37-year-old Tamil Nadu veteran beat top-seeded Marcos Freitas of Portugal 4-2 in the final.
• The last time when Sharath bagged a title at ITTF event was in 2010 when he won Egypt Open.

Greece hands over Olympic flame to Tokyo 2020
• The Olympic Flame was handed over to Tokyo 2020 organizers after the Greece leg of torch relay suspended due to the virus.
• Due to the virus, the Greek leg of the torch relay was suspended a day after the Flame was lit at a ritual ceremony held on March 12 at ancient Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic Games 25 centuries ago, in western Greece.
• The ceremony, which happened at Athens’ iconic Panathenaic stadium, didn’t include the planned cultural ceremonies from Greece or Japan.

Tokyo Olympics 2020 postponed until 2021
• As per the information shared by an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member Dick Pound, the Tokyo Olympics 2020 might be postponed until 2021.
• The Tokyo Olympics was scheduled to take placed in the mid of 2020. However, due to the virus, the games are likely to be rescheduled.

International Table Tennis Federation suspends events till June 30, freezes world rankings
• The International Table Tennis Federation has suspended all of its planned events till June 30, 2020 in the wake of the rapid spread of across the globe.
• The federation has also frozen the world rankings list due to the current uncertainty caused by the virus.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DRDO launches new explosive detection device RaIDer-X:
• The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) recently launched RaIDer-X, the explosive detection device.
• The device was launched in collaboration with the IISC Bangalore. The RaIDer-X can detect explosives in their pure form as well as in the form of contaminated objects.

India’s first sky eye in geostationary orbit GISAT-1:
• India will launch its first state of the art earth observation satellite Geo Imaging Satellite (GISAT-1) to be placed in geostationary orbit on March 5, stated the Indian Space Agency.
• The satellite will provide real-time image of large area of region of interest at frequent
intervals. The GISAT-1 will also enable quick monitoring of natural s, episodic events and any short term events.

- According to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the GISAT-1 will also provide spectral signatures for agriculture, forestry, mineralogy, warning, cloud properties, snow, glaciers and oceanography.
- The satellite will have payload imaging sensors of six band multi-spectral visible and near infra-red with 42 metres resolution; 158 bands hyper-spectral visible and near infra-red with 318 metres resolution and 256 bands hyper-spectral short wave infra-red with 191 metres resolution. Weighing 2,268 kg, the GISAT-1 will be carried by the three-stage geosynchronous satellite launch vehicle (GSLV-F10).
- The rocket is expected to lift off at 5.43 p.m. on March 5 from the second launch pad at India's rocket port at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
- About 18 minutes into the flight the GSLV rocket will first place GISAT-1 in a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO). From GTO, the satellite will be taken up further firing its onboard motors to geostationary orbit.
- A satellite in geostationary orbit (about 36,000 km above earth) has an orbital period equal to earth’s rotational period. A four-metre diameter Ogive shaped payload fairing (heat shield) is being flown for the first time in this GSLV flight. This is the fourteenth flight of the GSLV

**About ISRO:**

- Headquarters: Bengaluru
- Founder: Vikram Sarabhai
- Founded: 15 August 1969
- Parent organisation: Department of Space
- Director: Kailasavadivoo Sivan

**Bi-luminescent security ink to curb fake printing of currency notes:**

- A team of Indian scientists recently developed a Bi-luminescent security ink to help curb the printing of fake currency notes, passports and even packing of fake medicines.
- The ink has been developed by scientists of National Physical Laboratory (NPL), CSIR and the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research.

**Chandrayaan-3 to be launched in the first half of 2021: Jitendra Singh:**

- Chandrayaan-3’s tentative launch schedule is expected to be in the first half of 2021. This was revealed by Union Minister Jitendra Singh in a written response to a question in LokSabha. This means that there could be a slight delay in the launch of the third moon mission.
- The Minister said that the Chandrayaan–III mission has been configured based on the lessons learnt from Chandrayaan – II. The revised configuration is expected to take care of the robustness in design and capacity enhancement for mission flexibility.
- Chandrayaan-II lander – Vikram had hard-landed on the lunar surface in September 2019. The Indian Space Research Organisation had then taken a resolve to launch the project again.

**NavIC messaging system designed by ISRO**
• Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Pratap Chandra Sarangi recently shared that the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has developed the NavIC messaging system to put out warning messages to Indian fishermen about cyclones, tsunamis and high waves.
• The ISRO has also developed NavIC receiver.

IHBT scientists develop a new sanitizer
• A team of scientists from the Institute of Himalayan Bio-resource Technology (IHBT) in collaboration with the CSIR has developed a new hand-sanitizer to protect people from virus.
• The use of hand-sanitizers is one of the preventive measures against the virus. IHBT is located in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh.
• IIT Bombay develops mobile app ‘CORONTINE’
• A team at IIT Bombay has developed a mobile app named ‘CORONTINE’. The ‘CORONTINE’ app aims to help the authorities in tracking the asymptomatic carriers and prevent the spread of the disease.

SpaceX wins NASA award for planned lunar space station
• A new space capsule from SpaceX has been picked up by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to ferry cargo and supplies to the agency’s planned lunar space station.
• Hence, with a $7 billion NASA contract, SpaceX will use its biggest rocket, Falcon Heavy to send spacecraft named as “Dragon XL” to the Lunar Gateway.
• This is an outpost that NASA is planning to build and that will orbit the moon sometime within the next decade.

OBITUARY

Former India hockey player and Olympic medallist Balbir Singh Kullar passes away at 77:
• Former India hockey player and a two-time Olympic medallist, Balbir Singh Kullar has passed away.
• He was 77. Kullar was a member of the Indian team that won the Asian Games gold in 1966 (Bangkok) and also won the Olympic Bronze in 1968 (Mexico).

Former India hockey player Balbir Singh Kullar passes away
• Former India hockey player Balbir Singh Kullar passed away. He was a part of the 1968 Olympics bronze-winning team. He was born at Sansarpur village of Jalandhar district in Punjab. He made his India debut in 1963 in Lyon, France.
• He was also a member of the Indian team that won the Asian Games gold in 1966 at Bangkok and the Olympic Bronze in 1968 in Mexico. He also served as an Indian national team selector

Former UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar passes away:
• Peruvian two-term UN secretary-general, Javier Perez de Cuellar died on March 04, 2020 at the age of 100. He played a key role in a historic ceasefire between Iran and Iraq in 1988.
• He took over the role of UN secretary-general in January 1982 and had served the post for term terms till 1991. He had also served as Peru’s Ambassador to France.
Former Union Minister Hans Raj Bhardwaj Passes Away:
• Former Union Law Minister and Congress veteran Hans Raj Bhardwaj died after a cardiac arrest. Hans Raj Bhardwaj was 83. Hans Raj Bhardwaj was born in Garhi Sampla village in Rohtak district of Haryana.
  • He was a Rajya Sabha member for five terms from April 1982 to June 2009.
  • Legendary Indian Footballer PK Banerjee Passes Away at 83. India’s Football legend Pradip Kumar Banerjee has passed away after battling prolonged illness. He was 83.
  • He won the gold medal at the Jakarta Asian Games in 1992. Banerjee has scored 65 international goals in 84 appearances for the national team.
  • He was the recipients of some of the most prestigious awards including Arjuna Award in 1961, Padma Shri in 1990 and FIFA Order of Merit in 2004.

Former Real Madrid President Lorenzo Sanz Passes Away at 76 after Contracting
• The former Real Madrid President Lorenzo Sanz has passed away after being tested positive for the novel . He was 76.
  • Sanz was in charge of the Spanish football club from 1995 to 2000, in which they won two Champions League titles and one La Liga crown among other trophies.
  • “Asterix and Obelix” co-creator Albert Uderzo passes away
  • The co-creator of the “Asterix and Obelix” comics, Albert Uderzo passed away. Albert Uderzo produced Asterix in 1959 along with the fellow Frenchman and writer Rene Goscinny. “Asterix and Obelix” entertained its audience over the past 60 years.

Samajwadi Party founding member Beni Prasad passes away
• Former Union Minister and founding member of the Samajwadi party, Beni Prasad Verma passed away on March 27, 2020. He was 79.
  • The Samajwadi Party tweeted condoling the death of the senior party leader saying that the demise of the leader is an irreparable loss.

Air Vice-Marshal Chandan Singh Rathore passed away
• Air Vice Marshall Chandan Singh Rathore passed away at his Jodhpur residence on March 29, 2020. He had served in the Indian Air Force at the time of the 1962 Indo-China war and the 1971 India-Pakistan war.
  • The Air Vice Marshall had planned and executed helicopter operations during India’s 1971 war with Pakistan for the liberation of Bangladesh.
  • He had flown 8 missions into the enemy territory during the war to supervise the progress of lifting two companies of troops in the Sylhet area by the Indian Air Force.
  • He will be awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, the second-highest military award, posthumously for his acts of bravery in the presence of the enemy.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS
Rajeev Suri to step down as Nokia CEO:
Nokia President and CEO Rajiv Suri will step down from his current position on August 31, 2020. However, Suri will continue to serve as an advisor to the Nokia board until 1 January 2021. Pekka Lundmark will take over his position in the place of Suri.

Dayapatra Nevatia appointed as Mindtree COO:
- IT services firm Mindtree has appointed Dayapatra Nevatia as its Chief Operating Officer. In this new role, Nevatia will support the company into its next phase of growth, a statement from the company stated.
- Nevatia holds decades of industry experience and joins Mindtree from Accenture, where he was the MD and Director of Delivery for Advanced Technology Centers in India.
- He led the delivery for the entire portfolio spanning across system integration, digital, application outsourcing, infrastructure, and security services across industry groups, stated the release. He holds a bachelor’s degree in electronics engineering and a master’s degree in management studies.

About Mindtree:
- CEO: Debasis Chatterjee
- Founded: 18 August 1999
- Headquarters: Warren, Michigan, United States

Sudhanshu Pandey takes charge as new CMD of MMTC Ltd:
- Additional Secretary at the Department of Commerce Sudhanshu Pandey has assumed additional charge as Chairman and Managing Director of MMTC Ltd.
- His predecessor Ved Prakash.
- Pandey currently discharges functions as the Chief Negotiator of India.

About MMTC:
- MMTC earlier known as Metals and Minerals Trading Corporation, is the single largest trader for product lines like minerals, metals and precious metals.
- Headquarters - New Delhi

Amrish Rau appointed as CEO of Pine Labs:
- Amrish Rau has been appointed as CEO of Pine Labs, a leading merchant commerce platform company.
- Rau founded the start up Citrus Pay, which was sold off to Pay U, replaces Vicky Bindra who after a two-year stint as CEO is moving back to San Francisco, the company stated in a statement.

Daren Tang of Singapore elected as Director General of WIPO:
- The Coordination Committee of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has nominated Mr. Daren Tang from Singapore for the post of Director General.
- The WIPO General Assembly will meet in an extraordinary session on May 7-8, 2020, to confirm the Coordination Committee’s nomination.
- The term of the current Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry will end on September 30, 2020.

WIPO Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland.
Bill Gates resigns from Microsoft’s board
• Microsoft founder Bill Gates stepping down from Microsoft’s board of directors.
• He wants to dedicate more time to his philanthropic priorities including global health, development, education, and his increasing engagement in tackling climate change.
• He also stepped down from the board of Warren Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway Inc, where he had served since 2004.

GoI nominated Debasish Panda as director on RBI central board
• The Central Government has nominated Debasish Panda as a Director on the Central Board of Reserve Bank of India. He is a Secretary, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, New Delhi.
• The nomination of Debasish Panda is effective from March 11, 2020, and until further orders. There are two government nominated Directors on the board of RBI. The other one is Atanu Chakraborty.

Arundhati Bhattacharya appointed Salesforce India CEO
• Former SBI chairperson Arundhati Bhattacharya will be the CEO of Salesforce India. Arundhati Bhattacharya will take over as Chairman and CEO of Salesforce India in April 2020.
• Salesforce India is among the top companies of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software worldwide. Arundhati Bhattacharya is also currently working as an independent director at Wipro.

Noel Quinn Appointed as the permanent chief executive of HSBC
• HSBC Holdings Plc has appointed Noel Quinn as the permanent CEO of the bank on 17 March 2020.
• Quinn had been serving as interim CEO since August 2019, after the unexpected resignation of John Flint from the post.
• Mr Quinn had been working with the bank for over 30 years, after joining the lender in 1987.

Former SBI Head Arundhati Bhattacharya Resigns from CRISIL Board
• Arundhati Bhattacharya, the ex-chairman of State Bank of India, has submitted her resignation as an Independent Director of the Crisil Ltd (a global analytical company providing ratings, research, and risk and policy advisory services).
• The reason for her resignation is to accept the role as a full time Chairperson and CEO for the India operations of Salesforce, USA, the global giant in customer-relationship management (CRM) service.
• Currently, she is also the chairman of SWIFT India, part of a global payments network.

Sameer Aggarwal appointed as CEO of Walmart India
• Sameer Aggarwal has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Walmart India. He will take over as CEO from Krish Iyer with effect from 1st April 2020.
• After assuming the charge as CEO of Walmart India, he will focus on building more digital, and omni-channel services at the retailer.

**IMPORTANT DAYS**

**1 March: Zero Discrimination Day:**
- The Zero Discrimination Day is held every year on 1 March to celebrate the right of everyone to live a full and productive life and live it with dignity.
- The Day was launched by UNAIDS in 2014

**3rd March: World Hearing Day:**
- World Hearing Day is observed globally on 3rd of March every year to raise awareness on how to prevent deafness and hearing loss and promote ear and hearing care across the world. The theme of 2020 World Hearing Day is “Hearing for life. Don’t let hearing loss limit you”. It highlights that timely and effective intervention will ensure that people with hearing loss can achieve their full potential.

**3rd March: World Wildlife Day:**
- This day is celebrated globally on 3rd March, which focuses on marine species and to highlight the problems, critical issues of marine wildlife to our everyday life.
- World Wildlife Day will be celebrated in 2020 under the theme “Sustaining all life on Earth”, encompassing all wild animal and plant species as key components of the world’s biodiversity.

**4th March: National Safety Day:**
- National Safety Day is celebrated in India on 4th March by the National Safety Council of India.
- This day is celebrated to make people get safe from several issues like financial loss, health problems and also any other problems that people are facing in their life.
- The Campaign now entering its 49th year, has grown into a major national campaign widely celebrated by industry, trade unions, govt.

**Japanese company Hakuhodo acquires AdGlobal360:**
- Indian MarTech Company, AdGlobal360 has been acquired by Japanese company HakuhodoInc for an undisclosed sum. Adglobal360 is India’s fastest growing MarTech Company headquartered in Gurugram, Haryana. The MarTech Company facilitates its customers with end to end digital solutions.
- HakuhodoInc is Japan’s second largest advertising company which was founded in 1895. It is an integrated advertising and communication agency which has international presence in 17 countries and regions.

**International Women’s Day:**
- This day is observed globally every year on 8 March to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women.
• It is a focal point in the movement for women's rights.
• The theme for IWD 2020 is each for Equal, recognising all of the actions we can take as individuals to challenge stereotypes, fight prejudice and celebrate women's the year 2020 is an important one for gender equality.

**International Pi Day**
• International Pi (π) day is observed on 14 March.
• The day was chosen as 3, 1, and 4, which are the first three significant digits of π.
• Pi is one of the most well-known mathematical constants. It is the ratio of a circle’s circumference to its diameter. It is represented by the lower-case Greek letter π.

**International Day of Mathematics**
• Every year, March 14 is celebrated as the International Day of Mathematics (IDM).
• The theme for 2020 IDM is “Mathematics is Everywhere”.
• The day was initiated by the International Mathematical Union (IMU) to celebrate the beauty and importance of mathematics and its essential role in everyone's life.

**World Consumer Rights Day**
• World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated globally on March 15 every year. It is a day marked to raise global awareness about consumer rights and needs.
• Celebrating World Consumer Rights Day is a chance to demand that the rights of all consumers are respected and protected, and to protest against market abuses and social injustices which undermine those rights.
• Consumer rights broadly mean that each consumer has the right to have information about the quality, potency, quantity, purity, price and standard of goods or services.

**National Vaccination Day**
• In India, the National Vaccination Day (also known as National Immunisation Day (IMD)) is observed on 16 March every year, to raise the awareness for the eradication of polio from the planet.
• The day was first observed on 16 March, 1995 when the first dose of an oral vaccine against polio was given in India.

**Ordnance Factories’ Day in India**
• Every year, 18 March is celebrated as the Ordnance Factory Day in India. OFB is the world's largest government-operated production organisation, and the oldest organisation run by the Government of India.
• It has a total workforce of about 80,000.

**International Day of Happiness observed globally on 20 March**
• International Day of Happiness is celebrated globally on 20th March every year. The 2020
International Day of Happiness campaign theme is ‘Happiness For All, Together’.
- International Day of Happiness campaign theme is a call on all 7.8 billion members of the global human family, and all 206 nations and territories of planet earth, to unite in solidarity, and steadfast resolve, in fighting back against the 19 virus.

India ranks second in probes on foreign bribery, enforcement drags globally; Top- Brazil
- India has been ranked at the second place in terms of the number of investigations concerning alleged bribery of domestic officials by foreign firms as per the 10th Annual Global Enforcement Report of TRACE International.
- Brazil has topped the report. China is on third.

International Day of Forests
- The day is being celebrated to raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests. On this day, countries are encouraged to undertake local, national and international efforts to organize activities involving forests and trees.
- These activities includes tree planting campaigns. Every year, a theme is decided by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The theme for International Day of Forests 2020: Forests and Biodiversity.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed globally on 21 March every year. The day is celebrated annually on 21 March as on this day in 1960, the police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid “pass laws”.
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2020 is focused on the midterm review of the International Decade for People of African Descent.

World Down Syndrome Day
- World Down Syndrome Day is observed every year on 21 March. In December 2011, the General Assembly declared 21 March as World Down Syndrome Day to raise public awareness of Down syndrome.
- Down syndrome occurs in an individual when he/she has an extra partial (or whole) copy of chromosome 21. The theme of World Down Syndrome Day 2020 is “We Decide”.

World Poetry Day
- World Poetry Day is observed globally on 21 March every year. World Poetry Day is being observed annually to support linguistic diversity through poetic expression and to offer endangered languages the opportunity to be heard within their communities.
- It also aims to encourage a return to the oral tradition of poetry recitals, to encourage the teaching of poetry as well as to restore a dialogue between poetry and the other arts such as theatre, dance, music and painting.
World Water Day
- World Water Day observed globally on 22nd March every year. World Water Day, held on 22 March every year since 1993, focuses on the importance of freshwater. World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water. This year, World Water Day 2020 theme: “Water and Climate Change”.
- It is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis. A core focus of World Water Day is to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.

Shaheed Diwas 2020 observed in India to commemorate Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru
- India observed the Shaheed Diwas 2020 (Martyr’s Day) on March 23, 2020 to commemorate the sacrifices made by freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru during the Indian Freedom Struggle.
- On March 23, 1931, all these three freedom fighters were hanged till death for their involvement in the case 'Lahore Conspiracy'.

World Meteorological Day
- The World Meteorological Day is celebrated every year on 23 March to commemorate the date of the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization in 23 March 1950.
- The day also highlights the contribution that the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services make to the safety and well-being of society.
- The theme for 2020 World Meteorological Day is ‘Climate and Water’.

World Tuberculosis Day
- World Tuberculosis (TB) Day is observed globally on 24th March every year. This day is to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB, and to step up efforts to end the global TB.
- The theme of World TB Day 2020: ‘It’s time’.

International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims
- International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims is observed annually on 24th March every year.
- This day is observed on 24th March every year to pay tribute to “Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero” as he was murdered on 24 March 1980. He was actively engaged in criticizing violations of the human rights of the most vulnerable individuals in El Salvador.

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

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• The United Nations’ (UN) observes the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade on 25 March every year.
• The day aims to honour and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system and also raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.
• 2020 Theme: “Confronting Slavery’s Legacy of Racism Together”

World Theatre Day
• The World Theatre Day is celebrated all over the world on the 27th of March since 1962 to promote the art form “theatre” across the world.
• The day was initiated in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute (ITI).
• Every year the Executive Council of ITI choses an outstanding theatre personality to write the message for World Theatre Day.
• The author of the Message of World Theatre Day 2020 is: Shahid NADEEM (Playwright), Pakistan.

SUMMITS AND MOU’S
19th edition of World Productivity Congress 2020 to be held in Bengaluru:
• The 19th edition of World Productivity Congress (WPC) will be held from May 6 to May 8, 2020, in Bengaluru, Karnataka. World Productivity Congress is the world’s largest convention for productivity development that shape future productivity growth.
• The theme of 19th World Productivity Congress is “Industry 4.0: Innovation and Productivity”. The theme represents the Fourth Industrial Revolution that amalgamates the capabilities of humans and machines. India is hosting the conference after a gap of 45 years. Before this, the country hosted the WPC in the year 1974.
• World Confederation of Productivity Science (WCPS) Headquarters: Montreal, Canada.
• World Confederation of Productivity Science established in 1969.

Centre, Himachal Pradesh, World Bank sign $80 million loan agreement to boost agricultural productivity:
• The union government, state government of Himachal Pradesh and the World Bank signed an $80 million loan agreement on March 11, 2020 to boost agricultural productivity and improve water management practices in select gram panchayats.
• The integrated project will be implemented in 428-gram panchayats in 10 districts of Himachal Pradesh. The project is expected to benefit over 400,000 small farmers and pastoral communities.

Defence Ministry signs Rs 880 crore agreement for light machine guns with Israel
• Union Defence Ministry recently signed Rs 880 crore capital acquisition contract with the Israel Weapons Industries (IWI) for over 16000 light machine guns.
• As per the contract, the Israeli firm will provide Negev 7.62x51 mm light machine guns to the Armed Forces of India. Several countries are already using these guns.
APEDA signs MoU with SFAC for development of agriculture sector
• Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) has signed an Memorandum of Understanding.
• The MoU aims for the development of agriculture and allied sectors as well as its exports for bringing better value to the stakeholders.
• The two organizations are also working towards linking of Farmer Producer organizations, farmers’ cooperatives to the export value chain.

Cabinet approves MoUs between India & Germany in railway sector
• The Union Cabinet recently approved a Memorandum of Agreement (MoU) between India and Germany for cooperation in the Railway Sector. The agreement was signed earlier in February 2020 between both the sides.
• From Indian side, the agreement was signed by the Ministry of Railways and from Germany side, DB Engineering and Consulting GMBH was the signatory.

NTPC concludes acquisition of govt’s stake in THDC, NEEPCO at Rs 11,500 cr
• National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) concluded the acquisition of Centre’s entire stake in two hydropower generating firms, Tehri Hydro Power Complex (THDC) India and North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO), at Rs 11,500 crore.
• Under the deal, NTPC acquired the latter’s 74.496 % equity stake in THDC India Ltd (THDCIL) for Rs 7,500 crore & its 100% equity in North-Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPC) for Rs 4,000 crore respectively.

Mega merger of 10 state-run banks into four lenders will come into force from April 1
• The Reserve Bank of India has announced that the schemes for the merger of ten state-run banks into four banks will take effect from 1 April 2020.
• The banking regulator has also announced that the branches of merging banks will operate as the branch of the banks in which these have been amalgamated, from the beginning of next fiscal year 2020-21.
• After the merger, the total number of PSBs will be reduced to 12 from 27 PSBs, including 7 large PSBs and 5 small PSBs.
• Also, the anchor bank Punjab National Bank will become the country’s second largest bank with asset size of Rs 17.94 lakh crore, after SBI (over Rs 52 lakh crore).
• The amalgamation is the part of RBI’s consolidation plan to create bigger size stronger banks in the public sector.
• The following amalgamation will take place:
  1. Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India will merge with Punjab National Bank (PNB) branches
  2. Syndicate Bank will merge with Canara Bank
  3. Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank will merge into Union Bank of India
  4. Allahabad Bank will merge into Indian Bank.
Tata Power JV starts Shuakhevi HPP in Georgia

• Adjaristsqali Georgia LLC, a Joint Venture between Tata Power, Norway's Clean Energy Invest (CEI), and International Financial Corporation (IFC) has announced the start of commercial operation of the 178 MW Shuakhevi Hydro Power Project (Shuakhevi HPP) located in southwest Georgia.
• The project will generate around 450 GWh of clean energy to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by more than 200,000 tonnes a year.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Captain Amarinder Singh honoured with 'ideal' CM award:
• The BhartiyaChhatraSansad (BCS) conferred ‘AdarshMukhyaMantriPuraskar’ (Ideal Chief Minister Award) upon Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh for his “path breaking initiatives to ensure good governance and holistic development in the state”.
• The award was presented to CaptAmarinder Singh by former President Pranab Mukherjee in Delhi at VigyanBhawan during the valedictory function of 10th edition of four-day national conclave of BCS.

PM Modi will be treated with highest honour during Bangladesh visit:
• Foreign Minister of Bangladesh A.K. Abdul Momen has stated that Prime Minister NarendraModi will be treated with the highest honour during his forthcoming visit to Bangladesh to attend the Mujib Centenary Celebrations.
• The Bangladesh govt has invited Prime Minister Modi as the premier of India, which was its closest ally during the liberation war.

Tiger Woods to be inducted in World Golf Hall of Fame:
• Tiger Woods will be inducted in the World Golf Hall of Fame. According to the announcement made by the PGA tour, he will be part of Class 2021.
• Only those players get this honor who have secured at least 15 wins on approved PGA tours. However, there is an age restriction for induction. Earlier, it was 50 but recently it has been reduced to 45 years.

NupurKulshrestha becomes 1st woman DIG of Indian Coast Guard:
• NupurKulshrestha becomes the first woman to be promoted as Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Indian Coast Guard. She joined Indian Coast Guard in 1999.
• The Indian Coast Guard is a multi-mission organization, conducting round-the-year real-life operations at sea.
• The Indian Coast Guard was formally established on 18 August 1978 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978 of the Parliament of India as an independent Armed force of India.

India Gets Observer Status in Indian Ocean Commission:
• India has been admitted to the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) as an observer state on 6th March, 2020.
• This makes India, the fifth nation to receive Observer status in IOC.
• The other four observers are China, Malta, European Union and International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF).
• The COI is composed of five African Indian Ocean nations namely- Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion (an overseas region of France), and Seychelles.

Sunil Chhetri selected for FIFA campaign against
• The campaign titled ‘Pass the message to kick out virus’ has been launched to combat the virus. The awareness campaign will be led by the 28 players, who will be involved in the video campaign to be published in 13 languages, include some of the best-known players like Argentine superstar Lionel Messi and World Cup winners like Philip Lahm, Iker Casillas and Carles Puyol.
• The ‘Pass the message to kick out virus’ campaign promotes five key steps for people to follow to protect their health in line with WHO guidance, focused on handwashing, coughing etiquette, not touching your face, physical distance and staying home if feeling unwell.

RANKING
Indian chess Grand Master Humpy ranked World No.2:
• Women’s World Rapid Chess Champion and Indian chess Grand Master (GM) Koneru Humpy jumped to second spot leaving behind World Women’s Chess Champion JuWenjun in global chess body FIDE’s March month’s overall ranking. Humpy won the prestigious Cairns Cup last month.
• Meanwhile Indian female chess players are keeping the nation’s flag flying high with GM HarikaDronavalli maintaining her ninth rank and in the girl’s section R. Vaishali moving up to ninth place from 10th rank in February.

MukeshAmbani losses as Asia’s richest person to Jack Ma:
• RIL Chairman MukeshAmbani lost to Ali Baba’s founder Jack Ma as the richest person of Asia.
• Jack Ma is Asia’s richest man with a total worth of USD 44.5 billion; while Ambani comes to the second position with a net worth of USD 41.8 billion.

BRAC tops 500 Global NGOs List for 5th Straight Year:
• The Bangladesh based international development organization, BRAC, has topped the list of top 500 Global Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) for the 5th consecutive year.
• The list of the top 500 global NGOs of year 2020 was released by Geneva-based organization NGO Adviser.
• The rankings of the top 500 global NGOs is released every year by NGO Adviser based on various aspects such as the impact, innovation, governance and sustainability of the NGO.

Times of India Sports Awards 2019 announced:
• The 4th edition of TOISA (Times of India Sports Awards) awards honoured the best Indian in
2019 sports in New Delhi, India. The event was powered by BHIM-UPI (Bharat Interface for Money- Unified Payments Interface).

• Rohit Sharma was named as the Cricketer of the year and PV Sindhu was named as the Sportsperson of the year as she won gold at the World Championships in Basel, Switzerland.

Australia wins Women’s T20 World Cup title:

• Defending champions Australia wins Women’s T20 World Cup 2020. Australia bowled India out for 99 runs to clinch the final by 85 runs for a record-extending fifth Women’s T20 World Cup title at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), Australia.

• Beth Mooney has been adjudged Player of the Tournament & Alyssa Healy has been adjudged the Player of the Match.

• The ICC Women’s T20 World Cup 2020 was the seventh edition of the ICC Women’s T20 World Cup tournament.

Tamil Nadu tops in PoshanAbhiyan’s participants list:

• The Central Government is implementing the flagship programme PoshanAbhiyan for improving the nutritional status of Indian citizens. This programme helps children, adolescents, pregnant women, and lactating mothers by leveraging technology.

• The importance of being given to the programme is evident from the fact that as many as 14 Central Departments and all the State Governments are being involved in the programme. Tamil Nadu tops the list of the states in terms of the number of participants in the programme. The Integrated Child Development Scheme has been in force for long in the southern state that has got rejuvenated with the Centre’s PoshanAbhiyaan mission. The programme is revitalizing India by reaching out to the children and mothers across the nation.

India’s 1st Living Culinary Arts Museum enters Limca Book of Records

• Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration (WGSNAO) of Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE) entered the Limca Book of Records (LBR) for establishing “India’s First Living Culinary Arts Museum” at WGSNAO, Manipal, Karnataka.

• The museum was opened in the year April 2018, spread approximately over 25,000 square feet & the structure of the museum is shaped in the form of a giant pot.

Island of Niue declared world’s first ‘Dark Sky nation’

• The island of Niue has become the world’s first whole country recognised as a ‘Dark Sky Place.

• The International Dark-Sky Association’s (IDA) has approved the island’s application for the protection of its sky, land and sea.

India ranked 12th globally in ‘Women On Board 2020’ study

• India has been ranked 12th in the world as per study titled ‘Women On Board 2020’. The list was topped by Norway with 40.72% women on board.
A study on 'Women On Board 2020' has been done jointly by global recruitment tendering platforms MyHiringClub and Sarkari-Naukri.

**India becomes third largest electricity producer in the world**
- India has become the third-largest electricity producer in the world, as its power generation has increased to 34% by 2017 compared to seven years ago.
- Now, the country produces more energy than Japan and Russia seven years ago, compared to India, which were installing 27% and 8.77% more power generation capacity respectively.
- According to a report by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), a trust set up by the Ministry of Commerce, electricity generation stood at 1,003.525 billion units from April 2017 to January 2018.

**UN releases World Happiness Report 2020**
- The United Nations (UN) has released the eighth edition of the annual World Happiness Report on 20 March 2020 to rank 156 countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be.
- India has been ranked at 144 position among 156 nations with a score of 3.573 points on a scale of 10.
- Finland has been named as the happiest country in the world for the third year in a row while Afghanistan is the lowest ranking country.
- The World Happiness Report is an annual survey by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations.
- The Report takes into account six factors to rank a country which includes: levels of GDP, life expectancy, generosity, social support, freedom and corruption income.

**India ranked 120 in the 2020 Index of Economic Freedom**
- India has been ranked at 120 position in the 2020 Index of Economic Freedom published by Heritage Foundation Index. The index has been topped by Singapore.
- Hong Kong is on second in the ranking followed by New Zealand on the third. North Korea is at the last position at 180th place. Though there are 6 countries that are not ranked.
- The Index was first published in 1995 and Hong Kong has topped the charts ever since. This is the first time that Hong Kong has been replaced from the 1st position.

**BANKING AND ECONOMY**

**ONGC, HPCL buy 34.56% of bankers’ stake in Petronet MHB for Rs 371 cr:**
- State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) and its subsidiary Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) have bought out lenders in Petronet MHB Ltd, the firm that owns a petroleum product pipeline in Mangalore, for about Rs 371 crore.
- A consortium of eight public sector banks held 34.56 per cent stake in Petronet MHB Ltd, where ONGC and HPCL held 32.72 per cent apiece.
- The two firms paid Rs 185.38 crore each for acquiring 17.28 per cent more share in Petronet MHB Ltd.
Fitch cuts India’s FY20 GDP forecast to 4.9% and for FY21 to 5.4%:
• Fitch Solutions has cut its forecast for India’s GDP growth rate for FY20 to 4.9% from previous 5.1%.
• For FY21, Fitch Solution has predicted India’s GDP growth at 5.4%.

OECD cuts India’s GDP growth projection for 2020 to 5.1% on woes:
• Global agency OECD lowered India’s GDP growth forecast to 1 per cent, from its earlier projection of 6.2 per cent, for 2020 on concerns over the impact of deadly on the domestic as well as the global economy.
• The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) stated the adverse impact on confidence, financial markets, travel sector and disruption to supply chains contributes to the downward revisions in all the G20 economies in 2020, particularly ones strongly interconnected to China.
• India is a member of G20, a grouping of developed and developing economies.
• According to the latest OECD Interim Economic Outlook Forecasts, India’s real GDP growth is expected at 1 per cent during the fiscal year starting April 1, 2020, and improve to 5.6 per cent in the following year. The latest projection for 2020-21 is 1.1 percentage point lower than the November 2019 forecast.

About OECD:
• The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade.
• Headquarters: Paris, France
• Founded: 30 September 1961
• Secretary-General: José ÁngelGurría

Supreme Court lifts ban on RBI for dealing in Cryptocurrency:
• The Supreme Court has lifted the ban on the Reserve Bank of India for trading in cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin.
• The ruling came on a plea filed by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IMAI), asking for the removal of RBI ban.
• The RBI had restricted the banks from facilitating the use of virtual currencies in 2018.

NABARD infuses Rs 1.46 lakh cr in rural banking system during current fiscal:
• National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has infused 46 lakh crore rupees in the rural banking system during the current fiscal.
• NABARD has stated that 66,397 crore rupees have been given in short-term credit and 6,704 crore rupees in long-term credit to rural cooperative banks.

EPFO lowers interest rate on PF deposits to 8.5 percent for 2019-20:
• Retirement fund body, Employees’ Provident Fund Organization, (EPFO) has lowered the
interest rate on provident fund deposits to 8.5 percent for the current financial year 2019-20. Earlier it was 8.65 percent.
• This announcement was made by Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar in New Delhi on 5 March 2020

**India has 3rd highest trade-related illicit financial flow globally:**
• India has the third highest trade-related illicit financial flow among 135 countries with 5 billion dollars (about Rs 6.08 lakh crore) or 3.05 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) escaping the government’s tax net, according to US-based think tank Global Financial Integrity (GFI).
• The GFI classifies as illicit flow funds that are illegally earned, transferred or utilised across an international border. The primary sources of illicit flows include grand corruption, commercial tax evasion and transnational crime.

**Allahabad Bank to be merged with Indian Bank:**
• The 10 state-run banks of the country will be converted into 4 banks from April 1 onwards. Allahabad Bank will be merged with the Indian Bank. The business of the new institute will be Rs 10 lakh crore in the coming two to three years after the merger of the two banks.
• As of December 31, 2019, Indian Bank has a turnover of Rs 4.5 lakh crore and has 2,887 branches across the country. Apart from this, the Allahabad Bank is worth Rs 3.94 lakh crore and has 3,175 branches.
• Chennai’s Indian Bank and Kolkata’s Allahabad Bank will emerge as the 7th largest bank in the banking sector of the country.

**UBS predicts India’s GDP for FY20 at 4.8% and FY21 at 5.1%**
• Swiss brokerage firm UBS has reduced the GDP rate prediction for India for FY20 and FY21.
• For FY20, UBS predicts India’s GDP growth at 4.8% and for FY21, the GDP growth rate for India is predicted at 5.1%.
• The reason for cut in GDP rates are- weak credit impulse domestically and .
• The Census India 2021 has been decided to be conducted in two phases.
• The second phase is Population Enumeration, which will be conducted from 9 February to 28 February 2021 throughout the country simultaneously.
• Indian census is the largest single source of a range of statistical data on different characteristics of the people of the country. The reliable and time-tested exercise has resulted in the comprehensive collection of data that is related to the people of India every 10 years.

**SBI Gets approval to invest Rs 7,250 crore in Crisis Hit Yes Bank**
• India’s largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has received the approval to buy Rs 7,250 crore worth of shares in crisis-hit Yes Bank.
• SBI’s executive committee of central board (ECCB) held a meeting on March 11 and approved
to purchase 725 crore shares in Yes Bank at a price of Rs 10 per share subject to all regulatory approvals
- Also, the bank’s shareholding in Yes Bank will remain within 49 percent of the paid up capital of the private sector lender.

**Lava launches World’s first ‘no internet’ payment service in India**
- Smartphone manufacturer Lava, has launched a payment app named Lava Pay which doesn’t require an active internet connection for fund transfer.
- Lava claims it to be the world’s first ‘no internet’ payment service. The app will help boost Digital India initiative of the Government as well as bringing financial inclusivity for a large population of the country.

**Govt appoints new board of directors for Yes Bank**
- The government of India has notified the reconstruction scheme for Yes Bank which has been placed under moratorium by Reserve Bank of India. The moratorium will be lifted on March 18.
- Under the scheme, Prashant Kumar has been appointed as MD and CEO of Yes Bank. He is a former chief financial officer at State Bank of India. Sunil Mehta has been appointed as the non-executive chairman of Yes Bank. He is the former non-executive chairman of state-owned Punjab National Bank.
- Mahesh Krishnamurthy and Atul Bheda will be the non-executive directors.
- Under the reconstruction scheme, SBI, will hold up to 49 per cent in Yes Bank. SBI has approved an investment of Rs 7,250 crore (725 crore shares at Rs 10 each). Apart from this, 4 private banks will also chip in money in Yes Bank. These are- HDFC- Rs 1,000 Crore; ICICI Bank- Rs 1,000 Crore; Axis Bank- Rs 600 Crore; Kotak Mahindra Bank- Rs 500 Crore.

**RBI reduces Limits on exposure to group of borrowers for UCB to 25%**
- The Reserve Bank of India has reduced the prudential exposure limits for Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs) for group of connected borrowers/parties from 40% to 25%.
- Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs) were permitted to have exposures up to 15 per cent and 40 per cent of their capital funds to a single borrower and a group of borrowers, respectively.

**EPFO cuts interest rate to 8.5 percent**
- The Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) reduced the interest rate on the Employees Provident Fund to 8.5 percent for 2019-20. The EPFO’s Central Board of Trustees (CBT) has taken this decision for its six crore users.
- CBT is the apex decision-making body associated with EPFO. The interest rate on the provident fund for the financial year 2018 was 8.65 percent.
- Flipkart Joins Hand with Aegon to sell digital life insurance policies
- E-commerce major Flipkart has partnered with Aegon Life Insurance to sell paperless life insurance policies on its platform.
- The product aims to make life insurance available to customers at the click of a button in a convenient and transparent manner, without the requirement of medical tests or paperwork.
• All the existing Flipkart customers, aged between 18 and 65 years, can buy an instant digital policy with a sum assured of up to 10 lakh from March 2020.

**Moody predicts India’s GDP growth at 5.3% for 2020, 5.8% in 2021**
• Moody’s Investors Service has predicted India’s GDP growth rate for Calendar Year 2020 at 5.3% and for Calendar Year 2021 at 5.8%.
• Moody has downgraded the GDP estimates for 2020 on account of the .

**ADB announces USD 6.5 bn package for developing countries**
• The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on March 18, 2020, announced a USD 6.5 billion package for its developing member countries to tackle the .
• A preliminary package has been announced for immediate assistance to developing member countries because of the s. The Asian Development Bank is headquartered in Manila.

**S&P Slashes India’s GDP growth at 5.2% for 2020**
• Global credit rating agency Standard and Poor’s (S&P) has lowered India’s GDP forecasts for the calendar year 2020 to 5.2 percent from the earlier 5.7 percent, as a result of the .
• S&P said that the timing of a recovery depends on progress in containing spread.

**DBS Bank & Bharti AXA teams up for plans covering**
• DBS Bank India has teamed-up with Bharti AXA to launch a complimentary insurance plan which will cover all medical conditions, including .
• The insurance plan will also include up to 10 days of hospitalisation along with a cover of Rs 5,000 per day for a 30-day period. The health insurance products will be accessible to all the customers of DBS through digibank app. It will also offer Emergency Global Medical Assist Program which provides 24x7 access to medical support.

**RBI to infuse Rs 30,000 crore to boost liquidity**
• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will infuse liquidity of Rs 30,000 crore to maintain financial stability in the Indian economy.
• RBI has took this decision to boost liquidity in order to ensure that all markets segments function normally with adequate liquidity and turnover, as certain financial market segments are facing stress due to .

**SBI launches 19 Emergency Credit Line (CECL) facility**
• State Bank of India has launched an emergency loan facility for its existing loan customers whose business has been hit due to 2019 (19).
• The loan facility has been named 19 Emergency Credit Line (CECL). It has been launched to meet the temporary liquidity mismatch arising out of .
• The interest rate under this facility will be 7.25% per annum.
• Which accounts are eligible: All standard accounts as on March 16, 2020 and till the date of sanction are eligible.
RBI to conduct variable rate Repo auctions for Rs 1,00,000 crores
• The Reserve Bank of India has decided to conduct the variable rate Repo auctions as a preventive measure to bridge over any frictional liquidity requirements caused by.
• As per the circular, the Reserve Bank of India will conduct fine-tuning variable rate Repo auctions for Rs 1,00,000 crores in two tranches.
• The central bank has also decided to allow standalone Primary Dealers to participate in fine-tuning variable rate Repo auctions along with other eligible participants.

RBI to purchase bonds in advance to boost economy
• The Reserve Bank has decided to buy bonds worth more than thirty thousand crores amid crisis.
• The Reserve Bank said that 15-15 thousand crore rupees will be imposed in two instalments on 24 March and 30 March.
• The Reserve Bank of India will increase the cash flow to maintain financial stability because of infection. Due to the virus, the economy worldwide is going through a phase of lethargy.

UBS predicts India’s FY21 real GDP growth rate at 4%
• UBS Securities has cut India’s growth forecast for FY21 to 4% from the previous 5.1%. The decrease is due to the.
• UBS predicts India to grow at 4.8% in FY20.

S&P predicts Indias GDP growth forecast for FY21 at 5.2%; FY22- 6.9%; FY23 and FY24 at 7%
• S&P Global Ratings has revised its GDP Growth rate projection for India for FY21 from 6.5% earlier to 5.2%. This is due to the.
• The GDP projection for the following financial years as per S&P is as follows:
  • 2021-22 (FY22)- 6.9%
  • 2022-23 (FY23)- 7%
  • 2023-24 (FY24)- 7%.

SBI Commits 0.25% of FY21 annual profit to help fight
• India’s biggest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has announced to provide 0.25 percent of its annual profit for 2020-21 to fight the in India.
• This is in line with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs’ notification on 23 March 2020, for spending CSR funds by companies to deal with the as corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity under the companies law.

IMF says might cause a global recession
• The International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that the will cause a global recession in 2020.
• The recession could be worse than the global financial crisis of 2008-2009.
• It is also expected that the world economic output should recover in 2021.
• The information was passed by the IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.

Karur Vysya Bank Launches Pre-paid Card ‘Enkasu’ in Karur District
• In line with the digital initiative of the Government of India, Karur Vysya Bank has launched a pre-paid card named ‘Enkasu’ in Karur, to reduce the usage of cash in the district.
• The bank has launched the Enkasu card under its Quit Cash Movement, to do away with the need for cash and it will be beneficial to both merchants and customers alike.
• Enkasu works on Near Field Communication Technology in a semi closed loop.

NABARD Extends Financial Support of Rs 42,313 cr in FY’20 for rural infrastructure
• The apex agriculture financial institution, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has provided a financial support up to Rs 42,313 crore towards building rural infrastructure in the current fiscal year 2019-20.
• Till date, NABARD has disbursed Rs 20,869 Crore during the current year in addition to providing Rs 5,686 Crore for rural connectivity.
• In the last five years, NABARD has disbursed Rs 1.98 lakh crore towards rural development.
• India’s GDP growth slashed to 2.5 percent in 2020.
• Moody’s Investors Service on March 27, 2020 reduced India’s GDP growth in 2020 to 2.5 percent from the earlier estimate of 5.3 percent.
• Moody’s said that the will cause unprecedented shock to the global economy including the Indian economy.
• It said in its Global Macro Outlook 2020-21 that India will see a sharp fall in incomes at an estimated 2.5 percent growth rate.

RBI’s 7th Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement for 2019-20
• In view of the, the Reserve Bank of India’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to advance the Bi-monthly Monetary Policy meet which was scheduled to be held on 31st March 2020 and the announcement was meant to be made on 3rd April.
• The meeting was advanced to 24th, 26th and 27th March 2020. During the seventh Bi-monthly Monetary Policy meet, the MPC analysed the current & evolving macroeconomic and financial conditions and has decided to take a accommodative stance and hence reduced the policy repo rate to revive growth as well as to mitigate the impact of .

Sidbi to provide loans up to Rs 50 lakh to MSEs manufacturing medical supplies to fight
• Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) will provide loans up to Rs 50 lakh to micro and small enterprises (MSEs) that are manufacturing medical supplies for fighting the novel ().
• The Sidbi Assistance to Facilitate Emergency (SAFE) will offer loans to MSEs at a fixed interest rate of 5%and with a maximum loan repayment tenure of five years.
• The loans offered are collateral-free and will be sanctioned within 48 hours of applying and submission of documents.
CRISIL cuts India’s GDP growth forecast for FY2021 to 3.5%
- CRISIL has slashed the gross domestic product (GDP) growth forecast for FY2021 (2020-21) to 3.5% from 5.2% expected earlier.
- The cut is due to the .

ICRA predicts India’s GDP growth for FY21 at 2%
- Rating agency ICRA has predicted the GDP Growth rate for India in 2020-21 (FY21) at 2% due to the impact.
- For FY20, ICRA had predicted the GDP growth rate for India at 5%.

India’s GDP growth estimated at 4.5% for FY’20; 2.6% for FY’21: SBI report
- According to the SBI Ecowrap report released by the State Bank of India (SBI), the GDP growth rate of India for the financial year 2020-21 is likely to fall to 2.6 percent due to the ongoing 21-day .
- The GDP growth estimate for the current fiscal, i.e. 2019-20 is estimated at 4.5 percent.
- IMF declares that World is now in “Recession”
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has announced that the world has clearly entered a recession due to the . It has emphasized that the current recession is even worse than that of 2009.
- The statements about the world economy were made after the meeting of governing body of the IMF, the International Monetary and Financial Committee.

SBI raises $100 million via green bonds
- State Bank of India has raised USD 100 million green bonds, the first such bond by any state-owned bank in this fiscal.
- The bonds were priced at 3M Libor + 80 basis points. This is the third set of green bond issue by SBI, aggregating USD 700 million.
- The proceeds will be used to fund the non-convention energy sector. These bonds will be issued through SBI’s London branch and shall be listed on Singapore Exchange (SGX).

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Naveen Patnaik released book “The Adventures of the Daredevil Democrat”:
- This book is released on the occasion of the 104th birth anniversary of former Odisha CM Late BijuPatnaik in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The book deals about the life and works of legendary leader and Naveen Patnaik’s father BijuPatnaik.
- The book aims to inspire and encourage young minds to serve the motherland. The comic book, prepared by Kalinga Foundation Trust

An Extraordinary Life: A biography of Manohar Parrikar’ to be Released in April 2020
A book on the life and times of bureaucrat-turned-politician and former Chief Minister of Goa, Manohar Parrikar, is set to hit stands in April 2020.

The book titled "An Extraordinary Life: A biography of Manohar Parrikar" has been written by veteran journalists Sadguru Patil and Mayabhushan Nagvenkar.

It is being published by publishing house Penguin Random House India.

**Book titled 'Messiah Modi: A Tale of Great Expectations' Penned by Tavleen Singh**

- Tavleen Singh, one of India’s most influential columnists and political reporter and writer has come out with her new work titled "Messiah Modi: A Tale of Great Expectations".
- The book tells about her early support for Modi the candidate, followed by a helpless disenchantment with Modi the PM and the cabinet he headed.

**A book title ‘Legacy Of Learning’ released**

- Award-winning businesswoman Savita Chhabra has launched her first novel titled ‘Legacy of Learning’. Savita Chhabra is the chairperson at Hygienic Research Institute Private Limited (HRIPL).

**Senior Journalist Chander Suta Dogra Pens Book ‘Missing in Action: The Prisoners Who Never Came Back’**

- Chander Suta Dogra, a senior Indian journalist has come up with her meticulously-researched new book titled Missing in Action: The Prisoners Who Never Came Back.
- The book is a story of India’s soldiers who went missing during the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars.
- They are called “the missing 54” Indian soldiers, who have been forgotten in the fog of past wars with Pakistan.
- With the help of the book, the author tries to answer the key question: what happened to these men?
- Chander Suta Dogra is a journalist and author and has worked for various publications, including Outlook, Indian Express, Hindu and Hindustan Times.

**Book titled “The Death of Jesus” by Nobel laureate J M Coetzee released**

- The book titled “The Death of Jesus” authored by Nobel laureate J M Coetzee has been released. It is the third book of the series.