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**MONTHLY  
CURRENT  
AFFAIRS**

**COMPILATION**

**MARCH 2020**

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1 March 2020

## 1. Geography

### 11th National Krishi Vigyan Kendra Conference 2020 being held in New Delhi

- The Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Narendra Tomar inaugurated the 11th National Krishi Vigyan Kendra Conference 2020 being organized by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in New Delhi.
- The focus of the conference is on 'Empowering Youth for Technology Led Farming'.
- The conference is supposed to showcase technology-led farming and youth entrepreneurship via agriculture.

## 2. Miscellaneous

### World Rare Disease Day celebrated on 29th February

- World Rare Disease Day is celebrated on the last day of February.
- This year's theme: 'Reframe Rare for Rare Disease Day'
- Its objective is to create awareness about the impacts of rare diseases.
- Some of the rare diseases include Thalassaemia, Haemophilia, Sickle Cell Anaemia and primary immune deficiency according to WHO.

## 3. Persons In News

### Abhishek Singh appointed India's next Ambassador to Venezuela

- Abhishek Singh (2003-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer) has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.
- He will succeed Rajiv Kumar Nepal, who passed away recently.

#### Key Takeaways:

Capital of Venezuela: Caracas.

Currency of Venezuela: Petro Bolivar Soberano.

President of Venezuela: Juan Gerardo Guaido Marquez.

## 4. Persons In News

### Jadav Payeng awarded Swami Vivekananda Karmayogi Award 2020

- Forest Man of India Jadav Payeng will be awarded Swami Vivekananda Karmayogi Award 2020 in New Delhi.
- He has been awarded the 6th Karmayogi Award for his consistent efforts in creating a real man-made forest through massive reforestation.
- The award is composed of a trophy, a recitation and a reward of Rs 1 lakh.

## 5. Persons In News

### World's oldest man Chitetsu Watanabe passes away

- The world's oldest man, Chitetsu Watanabe of Japan, has passed away at 112.
- He was born on March 5th, 1907. He received his Guinness World Record certification on February 12, 2020.

- With the death of Chitetsu Watanabe, Britain's oldest man, Bob Weighton, who is 111, has now become the oldest person in the world.

**2 March 2020**

## **6. Persons In News**

### **Michael Miebach appointed as new CEO of Mastercard**

- Michael Miebach has been appointed as the new CEO (Chief executive officer) of Mastercard.
- He will replace Ajay Banga who held the position for 10 years.
- Mr. Miebach was the Chief Product Officer of Mastercard before this.

## **7. Persons In News**

### **Former India hockey player and Olympic bronze medallist Balbir Singh Kullar passes away**

- Balbir Singh Kullar was a part of the 1968 Olympics bronze-winning team
- He was also a member of the Indian team that won the Asian Games gold in 1966 (Bangkok) and the Olympic bronze in 1968 (Mexico).
- Balbir was also part of the gold medal winning Indian team in 1966 Bangkok Asian Games.

## **8. Economy**

### **HDFC Bank launches co-branded credit card with IndiGo**

- HDFC Bank (the largest credit card issuer of India with over 14 million active cards) collaborated with country's largest airline IndiGo to launch a co-branded credit card.
- Powered by the Mastercard, the card will effectively work like a loyalty programme for the carrier.
- Labelled Ka-ching, the card will offer complimentary air tickets, lounge access, 5 per cent cashback on Indigo bookings.

## **9. International Affairs**

### **U.S, Taliban sign peace deal**

- The United States and Taliban signed peace agreement aimed at ending 18 years of conflict in Afghanistan, America's longest-running war
- As per agreement, American troops will leave Afghanistan in 14 months
- The withdrawal will depend on the Taliban meeting certain counter-terrorism conditions, compliance that will be assessed by the United States.

## **10. Environment**

### **India needs a protocol on introduction of wild animals, says Lacones scientist**

- The Supreme Court recently gave approval to National Tiger Conservation Authority to reintroduce African Cheetah
- Lacones scientists are saying success of this project will be challenging, and India needs its own guidelines for introduction of wild animals, in addition to IUCN template guidelines
- The Lacones is building up National Genetic Wildlife Bank which now has the germplasm of 23 species, including red panda, pygmy hog, asiatic lion and gharials.

- It is one of the few frozen zoos in the world where a repository of germplasm is stored in cryogenic conditions for possible future use.

## **Quick Facts:**

Lacones stands for Laboratory for Conservation of Endangered Species

**3 March 2020**

## **11. Defence & Security**

### **NSG Regional Hub Campus at Kolkata inaugurated by Amit Shah**

- Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the National Security Guard (NSG) Regional Hub campus at Kolkata, West Bengal.
- The campus seeks to provide adequate facilities to the NSG jawans. NSG is also referred to as "The Black cats", and combats terrorist activities with a view to protecting states against internal disturbances.
- It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

## **12. Persons In News**

### **Pekka Lundmark appointed as the CEO of Nokia**

- The current Nokia Chief Executive Mr. Rajeev Suri will leave his current position on 31st August 2020 and continue to serve as an advisor to the Nokia board until 1st January 2021.
- Nokia faces intense competition from Sweden's Ericsson and China's Huawei in the race to deliver 5G telecoms networks to operators around the world.

## **13. Miscellaneous**

### **Chilli festival begins at Kasrawad in Khargone district of MP**

- The two-day unique Chilli Festival is a big business opportunity for traders, investors and exporters.
- It will also help in fulfilling the Central Government's goal of doubling the income of farmers.
- Nimar and Malwa regions are the highest chilli producing regions of the state.

## **14. Miscellaneous**

### **World Productivity Congress to be held in Bangalore**

- The 19th World Productivity Congress will be held in Bengaluru from 6-8th May 2020.
- The conference aims at catalyzing government approaches in enhancing productivity.
- The Congress is held under the theme 'Industry 4.0-Innovation and Productivity'.
- The World Productivity Congress has been conducted by the World Confederation of Productivity Science since 1969.

## **223. Science & Technology**

### **ADB sanctions 4 million USD to members countries to contain Corona Virus**

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) is giving USD 4 million (Rs. 29 crores) to help developing countries in Asia and Pacific to fight the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

- The funds will be available for all ADB developing member countries in updating and implementing their pandemic response plans.
- The work will be conducted in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO).

**Quick Facts:**

ADB HQ: Manila, Philippines

**4 March 2020**

## 15. Polity & Governance

### Rules and format for filing complaints with Lokpal issued

- Department of Personnel and Training has provided the rules and prescribed format for filing complaints with the anti-corruption ombudsman
- Section 59 of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, lays down the rules called the Lokpal (Complaint) Rules, 2020
- The Lokpal bench will decide the complaint in the first instance at the admission stage.

**Quick Facts:**

Lokpal started functioning in March last year

## 16. Science & Technology

### ISRO to launch GISAT-I

- GISAT-1 or Geo Imaging Satellite-1 is India's first earth imaging satellite in a geostationary orbit.
- Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F10) will launch GISAT-1 on March 5th from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- The GSLV flight will have a four-metre diameter ogive-shaped payload fairing being flown for the first time.

**Quick Facts:**

A payload fairing is a nose cone used by a spacecraft for protection against dynamic pressure and aerodynamic heating during launch.

**Key Takeaways:**

A satellite in geostationary orbit (about 36,000 km above earth) has an orbital period equal to earth's rotational period.

## 17. Polity & Governance

### Census 2020

- The decennial census exercise will be conducted in two phases — House Listing and Housing Census from April to September 2020 and Population Enumeration from February 9 to February 28, 2021.
- Centre has proposed that the next phase of NPR will be conducted along with the first phase of Census between April to September 2020.
- According to Citizenship Rules 2003, NPR is the first step towards compilation of the NRC. It is a database containing a list of all usual residents of the country. A usual resident for the purposes

of NPR is a person who has resided in a place for six months or more, and intends to reside there for another six months or more.

## **Quick Facts:**

The Registrar General India shall act as the “National Registration Authority”

## **18. Environment**

### **World Wildlife Day observed globally on 3rd March**

- On 20 December 2013, at its 68th session, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), in its resolution decided to proclaim 3 March, the day of the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973, as World Wildlife Day,
- This day is celebrated to raise awareness of the world's wild fauna and flora.
- The 2020 theme is “Sustaining all life on earth”

## **19. International Affairs**

### **Luxembourg becomes first country to make public transport free**

- Luxembourg has abolished fares for trains, trams and buses
- This has been done to tackle road congestion and pollution, as well as supporting low earners.
- More than half of Luxembourg's greenhouse gas emissions come from transport.

## **20. Environment**

### **Air pollution 'pandemic' shortens lives globally by 3 years: Study**

- Air pollution is causing 8.8 million premature deaths annually, according to the study.
- This scale is far greater than wars and other forms of violence, parasitic and vector-borne diseases such as malaria, AIDS and smoking.
- Air pollution was found to have a greater effect on shortening lives in older people, with the exception of deaths in children aged under five in low income countries, such as Africa and South Asia.

**4 March 2020**

## **21. Science & Technology**

### **Govt permits airlines to provide in-flight Wi-Fi services**

- The Pilot-in-Command may permit the access of Internet services by passengers on board
- In-flight wifi would allow access to voice, video and data services after the flight attains an altitude of 3000m
- Two operating systems exist for aeroplane wifi— ground-based and satellite
- Ground-based wifi collects signals from nearest tower on the ground. However, this doesn't work over large water bodies
- Satellite wifi uses network of orbiting satellites to allow a connection

## **22. Economy**

### **The Supreme Court allows dealing in cryptocurrency**

- SC has quashed an earlier ban imposed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on trading in virtual currencies such as Bitcoin.
- Cryptocurrencies are digital currencies in which encryption techniques are used to regulate the generation of units of currency and verify the transfer of funds, operating independently of a central bank.
- Bitcoin is the largest and most popular among cryptocurrencies

**Quick Facts:**

In 2017, Japan accepted Bitcoin as legal currency.

## 23. Geography

### Centre working on exclusive body for river-linking projects

- National Interlinking of Rivers Authority will oversee projects, generate funds
- The proposed body is expected to take up both inter-State and intra-State projects
- It will also make arrangements for generating up funds, internally and externally.

**Quick Facts:**

As of now, six ILR (Inter Linkage of Rivers) projects — the Ken-Betwa, Damanganga- Pinjal, Par-Tapi-Narmada, Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga, Mahanadi-Godavari and Godavari-Cauvery (Grand Anicut) — have been under examination.

## 24. Economy

### Govt permits NRIs to own up to 100% stake in Air India

- The government has permitted NRIs to control up to 100 per cent stake in disinvestment-bound Air India.
- Foreign investments in the national carrier including that of foreign airlines shall not exceed 49 per cent, either directly or indirectly
- Substantial ownership and effective control of Air India shall continue to be vested in Indian nationals
- National carrier will have no residual government ownership and will be completely privately owned.

**Quick Facts:**

Decisions related to Air India' s disinvestment norms have been taken by Union Cabinet

## 25. Persons In News

### Ajay Bhushan Pandey appointed as the new Finance Secretary

- Revenue secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey has been appointed as the new Finance Secretary of India replacing Rajiv Kumar.
- The decision was taken by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.
- Ajay Bhushan, IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre (1984 batch), had earlier worked as chief executive officer of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), the organization behind the Aadhaar.

5 March 2020

## 26. Polity & Governance

### Tribal affairs ministry constitutes committee on CFR guidelines under FRA

- The Ministry has brought back the Model Guidelines for Conservation, Management and sustainable use of Community Forest Resources (CFR Guideline)
- The CFR right empowers Gram Sabhas to conserve and manage their forest.
- One of the committees will look into the recognition and vesting process of habitat rights of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)
- The second committee will submit a report on the seasonal resource access to nomadic and pastoralist communities.

#### Quick Facts:

The CFR guidelines come under the Forest Resources Act, 2006

## 27. Government Schemes

### Janaushadhi Week in India from 1st to 7th March

- During the week, blood pressure and sugar level checkup, free doctor consultation and medicine distribution are being hosted at various Jan Aushadhi Kendras.
- Various activities like health checkup Camp, Jan Aushadhi Paricharcha, Jan Aushadhi ka sath are being undertaken.

#### Quick Facts:

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana is the initiative by Department of Pharmaceuticals, GoI which endeavours to provide quality medicines at an affordable price.

## 28. Sports

### Sunil Joshi appointed as the New Chairman of BCCI's Selection Committee

- Former India spinner Sunil Joshi has been selected as the chairman of the national selection panel by the BCCI's Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC)
- With this appointment, he shall be replacing MSK Prasad.
- Former fast bowler Harvinder Singh has also replaced Gagan Khoda in the panel as a committee member.

## 29. Person in News

### Indian-American Seema Verma joins US Coronavirus Task Force

- The coronavirus task force is constituted to combat the deadly disease that has claimed six lives in the country and infected over 90 others.
- The task force is led by Secretary, Health and Human Services Alex Azar.

#### Quick Facts:

The official name of the disease caused by coronavirus is COVID-19

## 30. National Affairs

### Bombay and Delhi IITs among world's top 50 tech institutions

- Five IITs — including Kharagpur, Madras and Kanpur — have made it into the top 100 list in that category of the QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) World University Ranking by Subject for 2020.



- Engineering and technology was the only major subject group where Indian institutions were able to crack the elite top 100 tier.
- In the natural sciences category, IIT-Bombay, IISc, Bangalore and IIT-Madras made it to the top 200.
- Jawaharlal Nehru University remained the country's top institution in the arts and humanities category.

#### **Quick Facts:**

QS ranking, Academic Ranking of World Universities and Times Higher Education World University Rankings are the three most popular university rankings in the world

**6 March 2020**

### **31. Economy**

#### **Mineral Law Amendment Bill passed in Lok Sabha**

- The bill aims to amend Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015.
- The bill opens up the coal sector completely for commercial mining.
- It also intends to remove end use restrictions to participate in coal mine auction

#### **Quick Facts:**

The output of coal industry has been declining recently due to flooding of mines and labour unrest

### **32. National Affairs**

#### **Jan Aushadi Diwas**

- Jan Aushadi Diwas is to be celebrated on March 7th 2020. -The day is being celebrated to commemorate the achievements of Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadi Pariyojana.
- Spread across 700 districts, these Jan Aushadi Kendras are the biggest retail pharma chain in the world
- They provide self-employment as well as awareness about generic medicines

### **33. Economy**

#### **Yes Bank Crisis**

- RBI has taken actions for Yes Bank which is currently unable to raise funds that will help against loan losses.
- It has selected SBI to inject capital into Yes Bank
- RBI has recommended the government of India to impose a month-long moratorium on SBI
- RBI has imposed withdrawal restrictions of Rs 50,000 to the customers under the Banking Regulations Act 1949, Section 35A

### **34. India & The World**

#### **India-European Union to collaborate on Integrated Local Energy Systems**

- The collaboration will be based on Mission Innovation, a global initiative of 24 countries.
- It aims at accelerating clean affordable energy to create commercial opportunities.
- Projects will be funded by Department of Science and Technology (DST)

- - India and Sweden will also work on building smart grids.

### **Quick Facts:**

Smart Grids are electricity networks that allow devices to provide communication flow between consumers and suppliers, protect distribution network, allow to manage demand, save energy and reduce costs.

## **35. Science & Technology**

### **International Conference on Nano-Science and Nano Technology held in Kolkata**

- The conference was organised by Department of Science of Technology operating under Ministry of Science and Technology.
- It highlighted the current need of India in the field of Nano-Science.
- It includes 5Ms namely Material, Mechanical, Manufacturing, Manpower and Machines.

**7 March 2020**

## **36. Economy**

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**8 March 2020**

## **41. National Affairs**

### **Fourth Global Ayurveda Festival to be organised in Kochi**

- The five day event will be held from May 16th to May 21st.
- The theme of the event is Ayurveda Medical Tourism: Actualizing India's credibility.
- It will be the largest Ayurvedic event ever to be held anywhere across the world

## **42. Economy**

### **Prashant Kumar takes charge as Yes Bank administrator**

- RBI has superceded Yes Bank's board
- This step is in line with notifications issued by Department of Financial Services and the RBI.
- Prashant Kumar has been appointed as the Administrator by the RBI under Section 36ACA(2) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949

### **Quick Facts:**

Prashant Kumar is the ex-DMD and CFO of State Bank of India

## **43. National Affairs**

### **Bimal Julka sworn in as Chief Information Commissioner**

- The oath of office was administered by the President of India, Ram Nath Kovind
- With this appointment, the number of Information Commissioners has fallen to 5 as against a sanctioned strength of 11 Commissioners.

### **Quick Facts:**

The Central Information Commission is a statutory body set up under the Right to Information Act in 2005

## 44. India & The World

### Annual festival of St Antony's Shrine in Katchatheevu Island

- St Antony is worshiped as the patron saint of seafarers.
- The mass and car procession in connection with the festival are conducted by priests from both India and Sri Lanka.
- Citizens of India are not required to possess an Indian passport or Sri Lankan visa for visiting Kachchatheevu

## 45. Economy

### Women Labour-force has declined greatly in India: United Nations Global Compact Study

- Female labour participation has decreased from 34% in 2006 to 24.8% in 2020
- India is the only country out of 153 where the economic gender gap is greater than the political gap.
- If women labour participation equalled that of men, the GDP of the country would be boosted by 27%.

#### Quick Facts:

The United Nations Global Compact is a non-binding United Nations pact to encourage businesses worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies and to report on their implementation.

9 March 2020

## 46. Miscellaneous

### March 8: International Women's Day celebrated

- The first International Women's Day was marked first in 1909.
- The theme for 2020 is An Equal World is an Enabled World
- PM launched the She Inspires Us campaign to make inspiring stories of inspirational women more visible

## 47. Sports

### First-ever Khelo India Winter Games begin at Gulmarg in J&K

- The five-day event was inaugurated by Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijiju
- Sports in the event will include snow skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, ski mountaineering and snow baseball
- The government also plans to establish a Sports Training Academy at Gulmarg at the level of International Standards for the promotion of sports tourism

#### Quick Facts:

Gulmarg is situated in the Pir Panjal range in Baramulla district

## 48. Economy

### 'Conference on Empowering Women Entrepreneurs 2020' being organised in New Delhi

- The event will be held from March 7 to 9

- It has been organised by the MSME Ministry in collaboration with FLO (FICCI Ladies Organization), CII and India SME Forum
- Two portals for women entrepreneurs are: 'MSME SAMBANDH' for relevant information about procurements made by CPSEs and 'Udyam Sakhi' for female entrepreneurs.
- Women entrepreneurs are being given 25 per cent subsidy in urban areas and 35 per cent subsidy in rural areas.

#### **Quick Facts:**

There are around 80 lakh women entrepreneurs in MSME sector of the country

## **49. Environment**

### **Mission Bhagiratha monitoring cell opened**

- Mission Bhagiratha is a safe drinking water project launched for the state of Telangana.
- It aims to provide drinking water to every village and city household
- The cell constituted will record complaints about water shortage in summers and redress them without any delays.

#### **Quick Facts:**

The mission is not named after river Bhagirathi (which is in Uttarakhand) but after a mythological character. The water under this mission will be provided by Krishna and Godavari

## **50. India and the World**

### **India joins Indian Ocean Commission as the fifth Observer**

- The other four observers in the grouping are Malta, China, European Union and OIF (International Organization of La Francophonie).
- This will help India in expanding its plans in the Western Indian Ocean which strategically connects the South Eastern Coast of Africa
- It will also support its SAGAR (Security and Growth for all in the Region) policy

#### **Quick Facts:**

The Indian Ocean Commission was created in 1982 at Port Louis, Mauritius. It comprises of 5 African Indian Ocean Nations namely Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion, and Seychelles.

**10 March 2020**

## **51. Miscellaneous**

### **UNDP releases Gender Social Norms Index**

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released the Gender Social Norms Index.
- The index measures the social beliefs that obstruct gender equality
- The report consists of data collected from more than 75 countries covering 80% of world population.

## **52. National Affairs**

### **Sanitary Napkin Disposal Bags to be made mandatory from 2021**

- Union Environment Minister Prakash Javedekar announced that sanitary napkin disposal bags are to be made mandatory.
- The Municipal Solid Waste (Management and Handling) rules, 2000 makes it mandatory to dispose these wastes after segregation

- However, manual segregation puts garbage collectors at risk of infection
- Hence, sanitary napkin manufacturers have to supply a biodegradable bag along with every napkin from January 2021

#### **Quick Facts:**

According to Bio-Medical Waste (Management and Handling) rules, 1998, items that are contaminated with bodily fluids should be incinerated to destroy

### **53. Polity & Governance**

#### **Delimitation Commission set up for Arunachal, Manipur, Assam, J&K, Manipur**

- The commission was formed under former Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai.
- The Delimitation for the state of Jammu and Kashmir is to be carried out according to Jammu and Kashmir reorganization act.
- For other parts of the country, delimitation is to be done based on the census 2031.
- The commission was formed under Section 3 of Delimitation Act, 2002.
- Till now, only 4 such delimitation commissions have been constituted under the act in the years 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002.

#### **Quick Facts:**

Delimitation is the process of fixing boundaries of constituency.

### **54. International Affairs**

#### **Oil prices drop by 20% due to failed OPEC deal**

- Saudi Arabia and its major allies tried to reduce oil production to counter the future drop in oil demand
- This drop in prices is predicted due to coronavirus spread
- However, the deal failed when Russia refused to make the deal

#### **Quick Facts:**

OPEC was founded in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1960 by its five founder members- Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. OPEC currently has 14 members.

### **55. Government Schemes**

#### **TIFAC launches Vigyan Jyoti**

- TIFAC, operating under Ministry of Science and Technology, launched Vigyan Jyoti on Women's Day 2020
- Vigyan Jyoti will encourage women to take science as their career
- Under the scheme, selected qualified women from more than 500 women are to be provided with opportunities to attend science camps at leading institutions like NITs, IITs, etc.

#### **Quick Facts:**

TIFAC was formed as a registered body in 1988 under DST (Department of Science and Technology).

**11 March 2020**

### **56. Defence & Security**

#### **CISF Raising Day celebrated**

- Every year, the Central Industrial Security Force Raising Day is celebrated on March 10
- The CISF works under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It was established in 1969 under the CISF Act, 1968
- The CISF officials guard industrial units and infrastructure projects all over the country.

**Quick Facts:**

Although it was established in 1969, CISF was made an armed force in 1983.

## 57. Science & Technology

### India Uses Anti-HIV drugs against COVID-19

- India has used Lopinavir and Ritonavir combination to treat COVID-19 for the first time
- The combination of Lopinavir and Ritonavir drugs is a second-line drug.

**Quick Facts:**

The first-line drugs are given to patients during the initial stages of a treatment. The second line drugs are prescribed when the former stop working. However, their side-effects are higher.

## 58. Miscellaneous

### India is the second largest importer of arms: Stockholm International Report

- The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) recently released its report on "Trends in International arms transfers 2019"
- According to the report, India is the second largest arms importer in the world.
- Russia was the largest supplier to the Indian market between 2015-19.

**Quick Facts:**

Top 5 arms importers in the world include Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China.

## 59. Environment

### Gujarat has the highest number of Solar Rooftop Installations

- Gujarat government's scheme called "Surya Gujarat" increased the use of solar energy at the domestic level
- The scheme aimed to cover more than 8 lakh domestic consumers by 2022.
- Maharashtra came second in the list of states with highest solar rooftop installations

**Quick Facts:**

India has set a target of reaching 100 GW solar power capacity by 2022. Our current capacity is 34 GW.

## 60. Economy

### Moody's cuts G20 growth outlook to 2.1%

- The prediction is 0.3% lower than previously expected growth
- The major reasons for the same include weak demand, coronavirus outbreak and volatility in oil prices

**Quick Facts:**

G20 includes advanced economies like US, Japan, Germany and UK and emerging economies like China, India, Brazil, Mexico and Russia

12 March 2020

## 61. Miscellaneous

### PM Modi to lead International Yoga Day 2020 in Leh

- The main national event for the International Day of Yoga will be held at Leh
- International day of yoga is held on 21st May every year
- Such a large congregation, of 15-20 thousand people, for Yoga will be taking place in a high altitude location like Leh for the first time

#### Quick Facts:

Leh, the capital of Ladakh, is a cold desert city

## 62. National Affairs

### Punjab government launches coronavirus app

- Punjab government has launched 'Cova Punjab' mobile application
- Objective of the app is to sensitise people about coronavirus
- It also suggests the nearest hospital and nodal officer of district in case a person feels they are showing symptoms of coronavirus infection

## 63. Defence & Security

### Govt sets up panel to prepare SFIO investigation manual

- The government has set up a 12-member high-level panel to prepare an investigation manual for probe agency SFIO.
- The panel would be chaired by Corporate Affairs Secretary, Injeti Srinivas.
- The committee shall devise an all encompassing manual for carrying out effective investigations in tune with provisions of relevant Acts.

#### Quick Facts:

SFIO investigates white collar crimes

## 64. National Affairs

### Centre approves construction of Delhi-Baghpur highway

- This highway would reduce travel time between Delhi-Dehradun by 2.5 hours
- The approval has been given to NHAI to complete the project in two phases
- The timeline for the project is five years

## 65. Persons In News

### Nupur Kulshrestha becomes Indian Coast Guard's first woman DIG

- Nupur Kulshrestha has become the first woman to be promoted as DIG of Indian Coast Guard.
- She joined the Indian Coast Guard in 1999
- The post of DIG in the Indian Coast Guard is equivalent to Brigadier in Army, Commodore in Navy and Air Commodore in Air Force

#### Quick Facts:

The full form of DIG is Deputy Inspector-General

## 66. Science & Tech

### COVID-19 officially declared a pandemic



- COVID-19 has been officially declared a pandemic by WHO
- The viral disease has entered 114 countries and killed more than 4000 people
- This is the first pandemic caused by a coronavirus

#### **Quick Facts:**

A pandemic is an epidemic occurring on a scale which crosses international boundaries and affects a large number of people. A condition needs to be infectious in order to be called a pandemic.

**13 March 2020**

## **67. Economy**

### **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill passed by the Parliament**

- The amendment aims to protect the successful bidders of insolvent companies from the risk of criminal proceedings.
- The criminal proceedings may be expected from previous promoters of the company.
- The amendments were earlier introduced as ordinances

#### **Quick Facts:**

Article 123 gives powers to the President of India to promulgate ordinances in India.

## **68. National Affairs**

### **Epidemic Disease Act Invoked in India**

- The Gol has invoked Section 2 of the Epidemic Disease Act, 1897.
- The persons disobeying regulations made under the act are punishable under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code.
- The State and Central Governments are empowered to make changes to ordinary laws if there is a necessity or insufficiency of the existing laws to deal with the situation.

## **69. Environment**

### **World Bank and Indian Govt. sign Agreement on Climate Resilient Rain-Fed Agriculture**

- The agreement involves a loan agreement of 80 million USD to increase agricultural productivity and improve water management practices in Himachal Pradesh.
- The Project will also provide funds to install water monitoring stations.
- More than 400,000 smallholder farmers, pastoral communities and women are to be benefitted.

#### **Quick Facts:**

Himachal Pradesh has been selected because its orchards, forests and grasslands are getting affected due to water shortage, decreasing rainfall and global warming.

## **70. Sports**

### **Pankaj Advani wins 34th National Snooker title**

- Pankaj Advani clinched the National 6-Red Snooker Championship
- It is overall the 34th national title for Advani.

## **71. Person in News**

### **SS Deswal gets additional charge of BSF DG**

- Surjit Singh Deswal took over the additional charge of Director General (DG) of Border Security Force (BSF).
- He is currently also the Director-General of Indo-Tibet Border Police.
- SS Deswal is a 1984-batch Indian Police Service officer from Haryana cadre

#### **Quick Facts:**

Border Security Force is the border police organisation of India and is one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces.

**14 March 2020**

## **72. Science and Tech**

### **India develops cost-effective Solar Receiver Tube Technology**

- ARCI-International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials operating under DST (Department of Science and Technology) has developed the technology
- The solar receiver tubes absorb solar energy and convert the heat to the required application.
- They are better suited to Indian weather as they provide high resistance to corrosion
- The technology is a wet chemical process that is used to coat stainless steel tubes

#### **Quick Facts:**

The development will help India decrease its import of high end Concentrating Solar Panel receivers for CST (concentrating solar technologies).

## **73. Miscellaneous**

### **India ranks second in Animal Protection Index**

- Global Animal Protection Index 2020 is released by World Animal Protection
- It is an international animal welfare charity
- India was ranked along with Spain, Mexico, France and New Zealand as the best performing countries
- The Index assesses the animal protection legislation of 50 countries and ranks them from A to G categories

## **74. National Affairs**

### **Mumbai Central Station renamed to Nana Shankarseth**

- Maharashtra Cabinet approved the proposal to rename Mumbai Central Station to Nana Shankarseth
- As per the process, Central Railways will have the final say in the name change, while final authorization will be done by the Railway minister.
- In case of name change of cities, town or villages, suggestions are sent by the State Government to the Home Ministry which then has the final say.

#### **Quick Facts:**

Jagannath Shankarseth launched Indian Railway Association along with Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy. He was instrumental in the launch of railways in India.

## **75. Science and tech**

## **CSIR develops Bi-Luminescent Security Ink**

- Council of Scientific and Industrial Research along with National Physical Laboratory recently discovered a bi-luminescent security ink.
- The ink shall be used to identify counterfeit currency notes as well as in passports
- The ink is white in colour under normal white light. It turns red under UV light, and green when the UV is switched off.
- The emission of red colour is due to fluorescence and the emission of green colour is due to phosphorescence effect.

### **Quick Facts:**

Fluorescence is the emission of light by a substance that has absorbed electromagnetic radiation.

Phosphorescence is the delayed re-emission of absorbed energy and lasts longer than fluorescence

## **76. Government Schemes**

### **Committee formed for the implementation of Kisan Rail Scheme.**

- The Kisan Rail is being launched to set up a national cold supply chain in the country.
- The Centre is planning to transport fish, milk and meat under the scheme.
- The new committee will explore the options of creating a cold supply chain for perishable goods.

### **Quick Facts:**

The scheme is to be implemented under Public-Private Partnership.

**15 March 2020**

## **77. Government Schemes**

### **Parliament passes Direct Tax Vivad Se Viswas Bill, 2020**

- The bill aims to reduce the number of litigations that are associated with direct tax payments.
- Under the bill, if tax payment is made after March 31, 2020, the tax payer has to pay 110% of the disputed tax.
- If the tax is paid before the date, the tax payer has to pay full amount of the disputed tax with no penalty.

### **Quick Facts:**

English version of the bill is “No Dispute, But Only Trust”

## **78. Economy**

### **RBI revises Exposure Limits for Urban Cooperative Banks**

- Earlier the RBI permitted 15% of its capital funds to single borrowers and 40% of its funds to a group of borrowers.
- The group of borrower fund limit has now been revised to 25% of its funds.
- Apart from Exposure Limit, the central bank also increased the Priority Sector Lending to 75%

### **Quick Facts:**

The Exposure Limit is the maximum credit a bank avails to its borrower.

## **79. Government Schemes**

### **“Bhoomi Rashi Portal” makes land acquisition efficient: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**

- The portal is a single point platform for land acquisition to accelerate infrastructure development projects
- It was designed by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in 2018
- It has decreased processing time of land acquisition from months to 2 weeks.

## 80. Economy

### MEIS scheme to be replaced with RoDTEP Scheme

- The RoDTEP is a scheme for exporters to reimburse their taxes and duties.
- This scheme is designed to incentivize exporters and increase exports.
- MEIS is being replaced as exports are expected to fall due to Corona Virus outbreak.

#### Quick Facts:

The MEIS scheme offered export incentives of 2-5%. It was introduced under the Foreign Trade Policy of India (FTP 2015-20)

## 81. Miscellaneous

### India's first culinary arts museum at WGSMA enters Limca Book of Records

- The museum has been founded by celebrity chef Vikas Khanna.
- WGSMA is the Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Management (WGSMA) of Manipal Academy of Higher Education.
- The museum showcases historical as well as contemporary utensils like bowls from Harappa, vessels from Udupi, Kashmir Konkan and Chettinad regions.

#### Quick Facts:

Limca Book of Records (LBR) is a catalogue of achievements made by Indians in diverse fields of human endeavour.

**16 March 2020**

## 82. India and the World

### India proposes COVID-19 Emergency Funds at SAARC

- On March 15, 2020, SAARC leaders participated in a video conference to frame a strategy in order to fight Corona Virus.
- India proposed creation of a COVID-19 Emergency Fund
- India will also set up a disease surveillance portal in order to trace the virus carriers.
- Afghanistan suggested creation of a common platform for tele-medicine suggestions.

#### Quick Facts:

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of states in South Asia. It was founded in 1985, and is headquartered in Kathmandu, Nepal.

## 83. National Affairs

### India declares COVID-19 a 'Notified Disaster'

- This declaration will enable SDRF funds to be temporarily used for supply of food, medical care and water for patients in quarantine camps.

- SDRF funds are State Disaster Response Funds which were constituted by Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- So far, SDRF funds could only be disbursed for disasters like cyclones, pest attack and cold waves. Critical medical situations are not covered.

**Quick Facts:**

Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal agency that oversees the utilization of the funds. The aggregate size of SDRF for each state is recommended by Finance Commission.

## 84. Government Schemes

### Ganga Amantran Abhiyan organized by National Mission for Clean Ganga

- The Ganga Amantran Abhiyan is an open-water rafting and kayaking expedition in Ganga river.
- The expedition is conducted between Devprayag and Ganga Sagar.
- The aim of the Abhiyan is to increase public awareness about environmental, economic and cultural values in India

**Quick Facts:**

Devprayag is the meeting place of rivers Alakananda and Bhagirathi and place of origin of Ganga. Ganga Sagar is a part of Sunderbans.

## 85. National Affairs

### Gol brings hand sanitizers and masks under Essential Commodities Act

- According to the act, an essential commodity is a commodity that is specified under the Schedule of the act.
- When the products are listed as essential products, their prices and supply dynamics can be intervened by the government.
- The act also prevents stocking of essential commodities.
- Only Central government can add or remove commodities to the list, but State governments can conduct raids to ensure compliance.

**Quick Facts:**

Some of the items included so far have been pulses, cereals, drugs, fertilizers, petroleum, etc.

## 86. International Affairs

### WHO shifts epicenter from China to Europe

- World Health Organization has recently shifted the epicenter of Corona Virus from China to Europe.
- This has been done because rate of infection is decreasing and in control in China, while it is increasing exponentially in Europe.
- The number of deaths in Europe is also more than any other part of the world.

**Quick Facts:**

World Health Organization is a UN agency established in 1948, and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

17 January 2020

## 87. Art and Culture

### Odisha's Chaitra Jatra Festival cancelled due to COVID19

- The Chaitra Jatra festival is celebrated on tuesdays of Chaitra month.
- The festival is celebrated at Tara Tarini hill shrine.
- The shrine is located in the Tara Tarini hill on the banks of Rushikulya river.

**Quick Facts:**

The Rushikulya river originates from Daringabadi hills located in Eastern Ghats.

## 88. Environment

### **WHO: Groundwater in India contaminated with Uranium**

- World Health Organization has said that the groundwater in localized areas of India have been contaminated with Uranium.
- The prevalence of Uranium is above 30 micro-grams per litre.
- The Bureau of Indian Standards has set the maximum permissible limit of Uranium in drinking water as 0.03 mg per litre.
- Intake of large amount of Uranium can cause kidney problems.

**Quick Facts:**

Uranium is rare but is naturally spread in the Indian environment in soil and rocks.

## 89. Science and Tech

### **Methanotrophic Bacteria culture performed first time in India**

- The Agharkar Research Institute of Pune has isolated 45 strains of methanotrophic bacteria.
- These bacteria are capable of reducing methane emissions in rice fields.
- Use of these bacteria in agriculture would reduce emission of methane, a greenhouse gas which traps 84 times as much heat as trapped by carbon-dioxide.

**Quick Facts:**

Methanotrophic bacteria oxidize methane through anaerobic metabolism.

## 90. Economy

### **UNCTAD: India among 15 countries economically affected due to Corona Virus**

- The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development recently released a report on the effect of COVID-19 on global economy.
- In the report, India was ranked 10th.
- The most affected regions will be the European Union, followed by US, Japan, South Korea and Vietnam.
- In India, the chemical sector will be affected the most, followed by textiles, automotive sector, electrical machinery, leather products and metal products.

**Quick Facts:**

UNCTAD was established in 1964 and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

## 91. National Affairs

### **Jammu Kashmir statehood to be restored soon**

- The declaration has been made by the Union Home Minister.
- Statehood will relax curfews and restore the internet.
- Industrial policy has also been announced for the rapid industrial development of the region.

18 March 2020

## 92. Economy

### Ambiguities to be removed in Modified New Pricing Scheme-III

- The Modified NPS scheme-III was launched in 2014 to boost Make in India campaign.
- The Modified NPS aimed to achieve self-sufficiency in urea production.
- The Scheme included incentives to the domestic urea manufacturers, encouragement of investment in urea production sector and reduced urea imports
- However, the scheme could not be implemented due to its ambiguous language.

## 93. Polity & Governance

### Madhya Pradesh State Government to undergo floor test

- Supreme Court has issued notice to the Madhya Pradesh State Government to conduct a floor test
- This is because the resignation of 17 Congress MLAs has questioned the majority in the house.
- The Chief Minister will move vote of confidence. He would have to resign unless he gains majority support.

#### Quick Facts:

The Floor test is conducted in order to prove majority of a government.

## 94. Person in News

### Veteran journalist Patil Puttappa passes away

- Veteran journalist and Rajya Sabha member Patil Puttappa passed away
- At the time of independence Puttappa was an activist demanding unification of areas of Kannadigas.
- His Kannada language books include Kavi Lekhakaru, Neevu Nagabeku, etc
- He has received several awards including Nadoja award, Wooday award and Nrupatunga award.

#### Quick Facts:

He was the founder and editor of the weekly magazine "Prapancha".

## 95. National Affairs

### Supreme Court rejects Nirbhaya Case Curative Petitions

- The mercy petition and review petition were also rejected by the Supreme Court
- A curative petition, under Article 142 of constitution, is filed after the review petition against final conviction is dismissed.
- Review petitions are filed under Article 137 of the Constitution that enables Supreme Court to review its own judgement.
- Mercy petition to the President is the last constitutional resort a convict can take when s/he is sentenced by the court of law. The petition is treated on mercy, not legality.

#### Quick Facts:

If conditions are met, a person would first file a review petition, then a curative petition and lastly a mercy petition.

## 96. Person in News

## **Former CJI Ranjan Gogoi nominated to Rajya Sabha**

- President of India Ramnath Kovind has nominated the former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi to Rajya Sabha.
- As per Article 80(3), the President has powers to nominate persons with special knowledge to the council of states.

### **Quick Facts:**

Special knowledge includes knowledge in science, art, literature and social service

**19 February 2020**

## **97. Economy**

### **Forex Swap and LTRO suggested by RBI governor**

- Forex Swap and LTRO have been suggested to increase liquidity in India  
Forex Swap:
- RBI will lend companies US dollars, in return of equivalent rupees from them, during a six-month dollar buy-sell dollar swap window.
- The companies will return the borrowed amount after a certain period of time.
- LTRO- Long Term Repo Operations:
- LTRO is tool with which RBI offers loans to banks in the country for a period of one to three years at the prevailing repo rate.

### **Quick Facts:**

Conditions where demand increases, or remains same, and supply decreases are called liquidity crisis

## **98. Science & Technology**

### **Starch-Based Hemostat developed at Institute of Nano Science**

- Hemostats are surgical tools that are used to control bleeding.
- The starch-based 'hemostat' has been developed to stop rapid blood loss.
- The hemostat stops rapid bleeding by physically absorbing excess fluid and concentrating natural clotting factors.

### **Quick Facts:**

Institute of Nano Science was developed under the National Mission of Nano Science and Technology or NANO mission.

## **99. Science & Technology**

### **NAVIC Messaging System for Fisheries Department**

- NAVIC is an Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS).
- The system is used to broadcast emergency warning messages in cases such as tsunami, cyclone, high waves.
- The device also offers potential fishing zone advisories.

### **Quick Facts:**

NAVIC, Navigation in Indian Constellation, has been developed by ISRO.

## **100. National Affairs**

### **Gram Panchayats get more funds under 15th finance commission**



- This step has been taken as part of second phase of Swachh Bharat Mission
- The two major focus areas of phase 2 are Open Defecation Free Plus and solid and liquid waste management.
- The main focus will be on gram panchayats, which will receive an increased funding of 5 lakhs

#### **Quick Facts:**

Second phase of Swachh Bharat Mission is to be implemented between 2020-21 and 2024-25

#### **101. Person in News**

##### **100th birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**

- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is called the father of Bangladesh.
- He was the first president of Bangladesh.
- Bangabandhu wrote two volumes of his autobiography.

**20 March 2020**

#### **102. Miscellaneous**

##### **India: Third largest producer of electricity**

- According to International Energy Agency, India is the third largest producer of electricity in the world.
- However, it ranks 106th in terms of per capital consumption of electricity.
- This is because though India has surplus power, the country lacks adequate infrastructure to supply quality supply to consumers.

#### **Quick facts:**

As of May 2019, 72% of India's electricity was generated from coal-based power plants.

#### **103. India and the World**

##### **India and Israel sign Rs 880 crore Defence Deal**

- Indian Armed Forces operating under Ministry of Defence signed an agreement with the Israel Weapons Industry.
- As part of this, India is to procure LMGs (Light Machine Guns) for Rs 880 crores.
- India is buying gas-operated LMGs called Negev.

#### **Quick facts:**

LMG were first used in Second World War

#### **104. Government Schemes**

##### **Gov allocates Rs 1,480 crores to National Technical Textiles Mission**

- The technical textiles are a non-aesthetic product whose primary purpose is functional.
- They are used in 12 applications including Geotech, Indutech, Military textiles, packing, agro, buildings, medtech, autotech, smartech, sportech.

- The Government has planned to use technical textiles in highways and ports to create robust infrastructure.

**Quick facts:**

The mission is to be implemented by the Ministry of Textiles.

## 105. National Affairs

### People's Curfew, Economic Response Task Force to fight Corona Virus

- PM Modi introduces "Hum Swasth, toh Jag Swasth" mantra to fight COVID-19.
- Citizens have been asked to maintain People's Curfew, not to leave their homes between 7 AM and 9 PM.
- GoI is to set up an Economic Response Task Force under the leadership of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman.

## 106. Art and Culture

### Konark Sun Temple to be included in 'Iconic Sites' List

- Budget speech 2019-20 had announced allocations to develop infrastructure at 17 famous tourist places across the country to develop these monuments as iconic sites.
- Statue of Unity in Gujarat and the Sun temple in Odisha will be included to the original list.

21 March 2020

## 107. Environment

### World Sparrow Day observed on 20th March

- Every year March 20 is observed as World Sparrow Day to raise awareness about the bird.
- The need for this day was felt due to the tremendous decrease in its population.
- Increased use of pesticides, changing house patterns, missing gardens and radiations from mobile/TV towers are leading causes of its population decline.

**Quick facts:**

The first World Sparrow Day was celebrated in 2010.

## 108. National Affairs

### Indian Railways to electrify all broad gauge routes

- Indian Railways has committed to electrifying all broad gauge routes by December 2023
- Railway Ministry has planned to source around 1000 MW of solar power and around 200 MW of wind power for this.
- Railway Ministry has also planned to install land based solar power plants across the country, over unutilized railway land.

## 109. Sports

### Indian umpires Janani Narayanan and Vrinda Rathi named in ICC panel

- The announcement was made after the launch of 100% Cricket campaign.
- This 12-month campaign aims to build on the momentum of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020.
- It aims to create more excitement around the women's game ahead of the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2021 in New Zealand.

## 110. Miscellaneous

### SIDBI Swavalamban Express to start on June 5

- Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) will start the Swavalamban Express on June 5, 2020.
- The train will travel to 11 enterprising cities in 15 days, covering 7000 kilometers.
- Participating budding/aspiring entrepreneurs and start-ups will receive over 20 workshops from experts onboard the train to boost their entrepreneurial skills.

#### Quick facts:

SIDBI is a development financial institution in India, headquartered at Lucknow

## 111. Economy

### N K Singh Committee set up for a new Fiscal Consolidation Road Map

- The committee was constituted by Finance Commission to build a fiscal consolidation road map for the centre and the states.
- The N K Singh committee will recommend definition of deficit and debt.
- It will also define contingent liabilities of the public sector undertakings.

#### Quick facts:

Fiscal Consolidation is the policy adopted by the Government to reduce deficits, mainly its administrative costs.

23 March 2020

## 112. Economy

### Visa Virtual Debit Cards by Paytm

- Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) announced issuing of Visa debit cards to its customers.
- This will enable customers to transact at all merchants accepting payments through cards
- An optional physical card will support contactless payment through chip-inserted cards

#### Quick facts:

Paytm is the largest issuer of RuPay Debit Cards and has the fastest growing bank account base

## 113. Economy

### **RBI announces fresh purchase of Rs 30,000 crore govt securities**

- RBI announced additional purchase of government securities worth Rs 30,000 crore
- This will be done via OMO (Open Market Operations)
- The move will help boost liquidity in the country and enhance investor confidence in the financial markets

#### **Quick facts:**

OMOs are the market operations conducted by RBI through sale/purchase of G-Secs to/ from the market with an objective to adjust the rupee liquidity conditions in the market.

## 114. International Affairs

### **World Happiness Report Released**

- World Happiness Report was released by Sustainable Development Solutions Network for United Nations.
- Finland has been ranked as the world's happiest nation.
- India has ranked 144, dropping four points compared to previous year's rank of 140.

#### **Quick facts:**

The report measures how happy citizens of 156 countries perceive themselves to be.

## 115. Persons in News

### **Indian Mountaineer enters 'Limca Book of Records' for conquering highest volcanoes**

- The Indian mountaineer is Satyarup Siddhanta.
- He has set the record of becoming the first Indian to climb the highest volcanoes in the world of all 7 continents.
- The highest volcanoes are Mt Kilimanjaro-Africa, Mt Elbrus-Europe, Mt Pico de Orizaba-North America, Mt Giluwe-Australia, Mt Sidley-Antarctica, Mt Ojos del Salado-South America and Mt Damavand-Asia

#### **Quick facts:**

Limca Book of Records consists of achievements made by Indians inside India and also in other countries.

## 116. Economy

### **Modified Electronics Manufacturing Scheme 2.0 approved by the Union Cabinet**

- The scheme aims at improving the growth of Electronics System Design and Manufacturing sector.
- It will support setting up of Electronics Manufacturing Clusters.
- The scheme will help in boosting availability of ready infrastructure to attract investment in electronics sector.

24 March 2020

## 117. Economy

### Lok Sabha passes Finance Bill 2020

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman introduced Finance Bill, 2020 in the Lok Sabha
- Union Budget 2020-21 will come into effect after passing of the bill
- Finance bill 2020 has abolished Dividend Distribution Tax.

#### Quick facts:

Limca Book of Records consists of achievements made by Indians inside India and also in other countries.

## 118. Science and Technology

### Oldest fossil of modern bird discovered

- Experts have discovered a fossil of the world's oldest known modern bird, dubbed the Wonderchicken.
- The fossils were found in rocks dating around 66.8- 66.7 million years ago
- The date reveals that the bird was active shortly before the asteroid strike that wiped out dinosaurs.

#### Quick facts:

Modern birds have evolved from meat-eating theropod dinosaurs

## 119. National Affairs

### High level committee for prevention & control of COVID-19

- The government has constituted a high level technical committee of Public Health Experts for COVID-19
- 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.

## 120. India and the World

### SAARC Disaster Management Centre launches COVID-19 website

- SAARC Disaster Management Centre has launched website for information related to COVID- 19
- The website shows regularly updated number of coronavirus cases in the member states.

#### Quick facts:

Member states of SAARC are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

## 121. Miscellaneous

### Book Launched By Former Vice-President

- Former Vice-President Hamid Ansari has launched the book 'My Encounters in Parliament'
- The book is written by former Rajya Sabha member, social activist and economist Bhalchandra Mungekar

25 March 2020

## 122. Persons in News

### Two mathematicians win Abel prize

- Israeli Hillel Furstenberg and Russian-American Gregory Margulis won the Abel Prize.
- Their award is for pioneering the use of methods from probability and dynamics in group theory, number theory and combinatorics.
- Both mathematicians used techniques of Ergodic theory in their work.
- Ergodic theory studies systems that evolve in time, and explore almost all their possible configurations.

#### Quick facts:

Members of Abel Committee, which selects laureates, are appointed by the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters.

## 123. Environment

### UK confirmed as first co-chair of India-led climate change initiative

- UK will be first co-chair of the Governing Council of Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).
- The coalition is a voluntary international grouping, linking governments, UN agencies, banks, private sector groups, and academia.
- The Governing Council is the highest policy-making body of the CDRI.
- It is co-chaired by India and a representative of another national government nominated by rotation every two years.

#### Quick facts:

Aim of CDRI is to develop the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks.

## 124. Government Schemes

### Production Incentive Scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing

- Union Cabinet has approved financial assistance to the Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters Scheme
- Aim of the scheme is to boost domestic manufacturing.
- It will also attract large investments in mobile phone manufacturing and specified electronic components.

## 125. Science & Technology

### Three More Super Computers to be installed under National Super Computing Mission

- The National Super Computer Mission was launched by the Govt in 2015.
- The mission is jointly operated by Ministry of Electronics and IT, C-DAC, Ministry of Science and Technology and IISc, Bengaluru.
- Under this mission the super computers that have been installed are: "Param Shivay" in IIT Bhuvaneshwar, Param Brahma in IISER, Pune and Param Shakti in IIT-Kharagpur.

#### Quick facts:

India today has 5 Super Computers e.g. super Computer (Pratyush) at Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology etc.

## 126. History, Art & Culture

### India celebrated "Shaheed Diwas" on 23 March

- India celebrated "Shaheed Diwas" annually on 23 March to pay tribute to martyrs Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru.
- On 23 March 1931, three Indian freedom fighters were hanged by the British rulers in Lahore jail.
- The three brave freedom fighters were sentenced to death in the Lahore conspiracy case.

27 March 2020

## 127. Persons in News

### Ruchika Tomar Wins PEN/Hemingway Award

- Ruchika Tomar has won the PEN/Hemingway Award for her debut novel "A Prayer for Travelers"
- As part of the award, she will receive \$25,000 and a month-long residency at the Ucross Foundation writers retreat in Wyoming.

#### Quick facts:

The PEN/Hemingway Award is awarded annually to a full-length novel or book of short stories by an unpublished American author

## 128. International Affairs

### **Saudi Arabia proposes to convene “extraordinary virtual G20 Leaders’ Summit”**

- Saudi Arabia, which is in chair, has proposed to convene the virtual summit
- The aim of the summit is to advance a coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its human and economic implications

#### **Quick facts:**

G20 is a major forum for international cooperation on financial and economic issues.

## 129. Persons in News

### **Walmart India elevates Sameer Aggarwal as CEO**

- Walmart Inc. has promoted Sameer Aggarwal as Chief Executive Officer of Best Price in India
- He will be taking over the CEO position from Krish Iyer.

#### **Quick facts:**

G20 is a major forum for international cooperation on financial and economic issues.

## 130. Economy

### **“Invest India Business Immunity Platform” launched by Invest India**

- Invest India is India’s national Investment Promotion & Facilitation Agency
- It has launched the platform to assist businesses and investors in getting real-time updates on India’s active response to COVID-19

#### **Quick facts:**

Deepak Bagla is the MD & CEO of Invest India

## 131. Miscellaneous

### **IMF launches Tracker of Govt. Policies in response to COVID-19**

- The tracker outlines the key economic responses taken by the various governments to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Responses will be tracked on the basis of three pillars: Fiscal; Monetary And Macro-Financial; Exchange Rate And Balance Of Payments.

#### **Quick facts:**

Kristalina Georgieva is the Managing Director of IMF.

28 March 2020

## 132. Economy

### **RBI reduces key policy rates due to COVID-19 crisis**



- In wake of COVID-19 crisis, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to:
- Reduce the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 75 basis points
- Reduce the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 4.65 per cent from 5.40 per cent
- Reduce the reverse repo rate by 90 basis points to 4.0 per cent.

**Quick facts:**

The current RBI Governor is Shaktikanta Das. The RBI headquarter is in Mumbai.

### 133. Art and Culture

#### World Theatre Day celebrated on 27th March

- World Theatre Day has been celebrated globally by ITI Centres, theatre professionals, etc. since 1962
- It is a celebration of the value and importance of the theatre art form, including its importance in economic growth.

### 134. Persons in News

#### Veteran artist Satish Gujral passes away at 94

- Satish Gujral was an acclaimed artist, architect, sculptor and writer
- He was the brother of the late Prime Minister IK Gujral
- He was awarded India's second-highest civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan, in 1999.

**Quick facts:**

Bharat Ratna is India's highest civilian award.

### 135. Economy

#### Moody's slashes India GDP growth in 2020 to 2.5 %

- Moody's slashed India GDP growth in 2020 to 2.5 % from an earlier prediction of 5.3%
- The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major cause of this decrease.
- Moody's also expects real GDP in the global economy to contract by 0.5 per cent in 2020, followed by a pickup to 3.2 per cent in 2021.

**Quick facts:**

Moody's, S&P and Fitch Ratings are important global financial rating agencies.

### 136. Economy

#### FM announces relief package under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana

- The new relief package has been launched for the poor suffering against Corona Virus pandemic.
- The measures will benefit PMJDY women account-holders, low wage-earners, aged widows, people in Divyang category, farmers and women in SHGs.
- The scheme will provide gas cylinders free of cost for the next three months.
- The scheme will also increase the wages under MNREGA.

**Quick facts:**

Anurag Singh Thakur is the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

**30 March 2020**

## **137. International Affairs**

### **Global Humanitarian Response Plan to fight COVID-19**

- A \$2 billion coordinated global humanitarian response plan to fight COVID-19 has been launched by United Nations
- The plan will be implemented in 51 countries across South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia

#### **Quick Facts:**

António Guterres is the current United Nations Secretary-General

## **138. Science and Technology**

### **Goa becomes the 1st state to launch assessment tool for COVID-19**

- Goa has launched a self-assessment tool called Test Yourself Goa.
- This tool will enable people to self-diagnose high possibility of having COVID-19.
- The tool has been developed in partnership with Innovaccer, a US-based healthcare data analytics company.

## **139. Defence & Security**

### **Indian army Chief starts 'Operation Namaste' to combat COVID-1**

- Under "Operation Namaste", the Army has issued series of directives to all its bases to insulate the force from the coronavirus.
- The purpose of the operation is also to extend all possible assistance to the government in containing the pandemic.

#### **Quick Facts:**

General Manoj Mukund Naravane is the 28th Chief of Army Staff

## **140. Economy**

### **NTPC concludes acquisition of govt's stake in THDC & NEEPCO**

- National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) concluded the acquisition of Centre's entire stake in two hydropower generating firms.
- The firms are Tehri Hydro Power Complex (THDC) India and North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO)

#### **Quick Facts:**

Headquarters of NTPC is in New Delhi

## **141. Person in News**

### **Sunil Chhetri selected for FIFA campaign against COVID-19**

- The 'Pass the message to kick out coronavirus' campaign promotes five key steps for people to follow to protect their health
- The campaign is being organised by FIFA along with World Health Organisation
- Sunil Chhetri has been picked by FIFA along with 28 past and present stars for the video campaign

**Quick Facts:**

Sunil Chhetri captains both the Indian Super League side from Bengaluru and the Indian national football team.

**31 March 2020**

## **142. International Affairs**

### **Asian Development Bank to invest 100 million USD in India's NIIF**

- Asian Development Bank will be investing 100 million USD in National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)
- This funding aims to boost Indian economy.
- The main purpose of NIIF is to aid greenfield and brownfield projects in the country

**Quick Facts:**

NIIF funds can only be invested in areas such as transportation, energy, water, housing, waste management.

## **143. Government Schemes**

### **Insurance Scheme for healthcare providers fighting COVID-19**

- Govt has approved an insurance scheme for healthcare providers fighting COVID-19.
- This scheme was announced under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package.
- It will provide an insurance cover of Rs 50 lakhs for 90 days of service to a total of 22.12 lakh public healthcare providers.
- The term 'healthcare providers' for this scheme will include doctors, sanitation staff, paramedics, Asha workers and nurses.

## **144. National Affairs**

### **PMO constitutes a high-level panel to restore normalcy after lockdown**

- The high-level committee will suggest measures to improve health-care and boost economy.
- P K Mishra, principal secretary of the Prime Minister, will be chairman of the committee.
- The committee will have separate task forces/panels.
- The Economy and Welfare panel will work under the Economic Affairs Secretary
- The Healthcare team will work under leadership of Niti Aayog member V K Paul.

## **145. Economy**

### **Mega Consolidation Plan approved by RBI**

- This is a merger plan of 10 state-run banks into 4 larger banks from April 1, 2020.
- As per Section 7 of the RBI act, the Finance Minister initiated the amalgamation plan in public interest and RBI approved it



- The 4 larger banks will be Punjab National Bank, Canara Bank, Indian Bank, Union Bank of India

**Quick Facts:**

Shaktikanta Das is the governor of RBI

**Key Takeaways:**

Amalgamation will take place as follows:

- 1) United Bank of India and Oriental Bank of Commerce are to be merged with Punjab National Bank
- 2) Syndicate Bank is to be amalgamated with Canara Bank
- 3) Allahabad Bank is to be amalgamated with Indian Bank
- 4) Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank are to be amalgamated with Union Bank of India

**146. Science and Technology**

**FDA approves Convalescent Plasma Treatment for critically ill COVID-19 patients**

- In this process, convalescent plasma will be collected from patients who have recovered from COVID-19 and injected into critically ill patients.
- This process will inject antibodies into patients and help them gain immunity against coronavirus.

**Quick Facts:**

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is a federal agency of the US Department of Health and Human Services, and is headquartered in Maryland, USA.