

TNPSC THERVUPETTAGAM

CURRENT AFFAIRS - MARCH 2020

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TNPSC BITS

- ❖ The Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) - has made it mandatory for sweet shops to display the details of the 'date of manufacturing' and 'best before' date of the products even on nonpackaged or loose sweet items from June 1.
- ❖ Book on late chief minister J Jayalalitha titled "The life and times of Puratchi Thalaivi Dr. J. Jayalalitha" written by Amar Prasad Reddy was released recently.
- ❖ Germany's highest court scraps the ban on professional assisted suicide. Professional assisted suicide was banned by their 2015 law.
 - Professional assisted suicide is the suicide undertaken with the aid of another person usually a physician or other healthcare provider.
- ❖ The election commission of India appointed K.Srinivasan as the Election officer of Tamil Nadu for the upcoming Rajya Sabha election.
- ❖ FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry), has organized a 'India-New Zealand Business Forum 2020 in New Delhi.
- ❖ Prime Minister has laid the foundation stone of the 296 km Bundelkhand Expressway in Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ Indian Railways has launched its first 'Restaurant on Wheels' in Asansol railway station, West Bengal.
- ❖ The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) announced that the Indian shotgun team has withdrawn from tournament in the Shooting World Cup in Nicosia, due to coronavirus outbreak.
- ❖ Geneva International Motor Show (Gims), which was scheduled to be organized between March 5 to 15, is now cancelled in an attempt to restrict the fast-spreading coronavirus.
- ❖ Muhyiddin Yassin becomes the prime minister of Malaysia.
- ❖ Dutee Chand (Odisha) wins 2nd gold at Khelo India University Games.
- ❖ The Kerala High Court ruled that strikes, rallies and gheraos that affect regular classes should not be held on the campuses of schools and colleges.
- ❖ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) lowered its India's GDP growth forecast to 5.1 per cent from the earlier projection of 6.2 per cent for 2020 on concerns of impact of deadly coronavirus on the domestic as well as the global economy.
- ❖ The World Health Organization raised its global risk assessment for the new coronavirus to "very high" from "high" as some countries struggle to contain the pathogen.
- ❖ The Foundation stone for a new government medical college was laid in Virudhunagar and Ramanathapuram on March 1st.

- ❖ The Madras High Court had said that a female government employee who gives birth to two or more babies in her first delivery would not be entitled to maternity benefits such as paid leaves during her second delivery.
- ❖ UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet is moving to file an intervention application in the Supreme Court against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).
- ❖ The World Day of the fight against sexual exploitation is observed every year on March 4th since 2009.
- ❖ The Foundation stone was laid for Krishnagiri medical college and hospital on March 4th.
- ❖ BCCI Appoints Former India spinner Sunil Joshi as New Chief Selector of Indian Men's Cricket Team.
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh government has decided to go with the 2010 questionnaire for the National Population Register (NPR).
- ❖ Bimal Julka is appointed as the next Chief Information Commissioner of India.
- ❖ All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Hospital, Madurai will be inaugurated in the month of September in the year 2022.
- ❖ The Lok Sabha passed Mineral Laws (Amendment) bill, 2020. The bill aims to amend Mines and Minerals act 1957 and also Coal Mines Act, 2015.
- ❖ An International Conference and Exhibition on Smart Energy and Water for Smarter Cities India is being organised in New Delhi from March 3-7, 2020.
 - New Delhi based Smart Grid Forum (ISGF) is organizing the India Smart Utility Week 2020 (ISUW).
- ❖ The Pune based National Institute of Virology has shared two sequences of novel corona virus with Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID).
 - The GISAID promotes international sharing of influenza virus sequences.
- ❖ An old brick wall was discovered in the sixth phase of excavations in the Sivagangai district near Tirupuvanam.
- ❖ All-woman crew operated the Coimbatore-Bengaluru UDAY Express on International Women's Day.
- ❖ Global industrial technology company Rolls-Royce has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) for joint research programmes.
 - Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited is a British luxury automobile maker.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Food Safety and Drug Administration recently asked the administrators of temples to obtain BHOG (Blissful Hygiene Offering to God) certificate from FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India).
- ❖ Afghan President Ashraf Ghani is elected as the President of Afghanistan for the second time.

- ❖ The scheduled India - U.S. Military Cooperation Group (MCG) dialogue, has been cancelled in view of coronavirus outbreak.
- ❖ For the first time a combination of two drugs, which is widely used for controlling HIV infection, was administered on an elderly Italian couple undergoing treatment at a Jaipur hospital for Covid-19.
 - The medicine was the combination of lopinavir and ritonavir drugs.
- ❖ Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani is no longer the richest man in Asia, owing to the recent freefall in oil prices.
 - According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, Chinese billionaire Jack Ma, the founder of e-commerce major Alibaba Group has toppled Ambani to get the top spot in Asia.
- ❖ Three 'Ammam wedding halls' are to be opened in Chennai. The three areas include Korattur, Velachery and Ayapakkam.
- ❖ Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) recently advised insurance companies to ensure that the affected patients be expeditiously handled and to design products covering the treatment cost for coronavirus.
- ❖ The Maharashtra Cabinet approved the proposal to rename Mumbai Central Station to Nana Shankarseth.
 - It is the Central Railways operating under Ministry of Railways that has the final say in the name change.
- ❖ The cases of avian influenza (bird flu) are being reported from various parts of Kerala.
 - It is a viral infection that can infect not only birds, but also humans and other animals.
- ❖ The Department of Science and Technology (DST) sanctioned the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi, Himachal Pradesh to set up a Technology Innovation Hub (TIH) at the institute.
 - It will be under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS).
- ❖ Bansi Lal Bhat has been appointed as the officiating Chairperson of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal for a period of 3 months.
- ❖ Greece First female president Katerina Sakellariopoulou took her office at Athens.
- ❖ The Delhi assembly led by the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) passed a resolution against the National Population Register (NPR) and the National Register of Citizens.
- ❖ The Telangana Legislative Assembly become the seventh State Legislature that opposed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Population Register (NPR), and National Register of Citizens (NRC).
- ❖ The United States Reserve Bank announced that the key interest rates are to be slashed to the range of 0% to 0.25%.
 - This is being done in response to growing impact of Corona Virus.

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palani swami laid the foundation stone for a new government medical college in Dindigul district on March 14th.
- ❖ In the sixth phase excavation of Keezhadi (Sivagangai district), 2500 years old large sized pot was unearthed.
- ❖ The Central government has decided that the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi may, at his own discretion, appoint law officers to represent the Delhi Police and the NCR government before constitutional courts.
 - The order was passed by the Union Home Ministry.
- ❖ Under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, the States may take, or require or empower any person to take some measures and by public notice prescribe such temporary regulations to be observed by the public for infectious disease management.
- ❖ The Bihar government has declared COVID-19 as an epidemic and issued the Bihar Epidemic Diseases COVID-19 Regulations 2020 by invoking the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897.
- ❖ The Hindu has brought out a compilation on the life and thoughts of Swami Vivekananda titled 'The Monk Who Took India to the World'.
- ❖ A book on Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was published by The Hindu Group of Publications (launched at Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai).
 - It has been titled, Who Am I, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, 1879-1950.'
- ❖ Bihar Day (Bihar Diwas) is observed every year on March 22, marking the formation of the state of Bihar.
 - It was on this day when the British carved out the state from Bengal in 1912.
- ❖ The Delhi government announced that it will implement the health insurance scheme Ayushman Bharat Yojana in the state.
- ❖ India and France, For the first time, have conducted joint patrols from the Reunion Island.
 - Reunion is an overseas department and region of the French Republic and an island in the Indian Ocean.
- ❖ Anosmia, the loss of sense of smell, and Ageusia, an accompanying diminished sense of taste, have emerged as peculiar tell-tale signs of COVID-19 and possible markers of infection.
- ❖ The National Book Trust functioning under Ministry of Human Resources and Development launched the initiative "Stay Home India with Books".
- ❖ The Election Commission recently allowed the use of Election ink for stamping "home quarantined" on infected or symptomatic patients.
 - The ink is also called indelible ink, election ink, phosphoric ink, electoral ink.
- ❖ The "Mo Jeeban Programme" was launched by the Odisha Government to contain the spread of COVID-19.

TAMIL NADU

New offshore patrol vessel launched

- ❖ This project comes under the Center government's 'Make in India' initiative.
- ❖ The shipyard has delivered the six OPVs which have been commissioned to the Indian Coast Guard fleet.
- ❖ These vessels are [ICGS Vikram](#), [ICGS Vijaya](#), [ICGS Veera](#), [ICGS Varaha](#) and ICGS Varad and ICGS Vajra (37).

Varad

- ❖ L&T-built Offshore Patrol Vessel ICGS Varad has been commissioned into the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) On February 28, 2020.
- ❖ It was commissioned into the ICG by Minister of State for Shipping Mansukh Mandaviya at L&T Kattupalli shipyard, near Chennai.
- ❖ ICGS Varad set a record in Indian shipbuilding industry by becoming the first major defense ship to clear all sea acceptance trials in a single sea sortie
- ❖ The endurance of the vessel is 5,000 nautical miles, with a maximum speed of 26 Knots.

Yard 45006 Vajra

- ❖ On February 27, 2020 6th offshore patrol vessel (OPV) "Yard 45006 Vajra" was launched in the presence of Union Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.
- ❖ It aims to enhance coastal security and would be used for day and night patrolling.
- ❖ This 6th vessel in the series of 7 OPV is designed & developed by Larsen & Toubro.
- ❖ Objective of this project is to,
 - Strengthen the efforts of Indian Coast Guard to secure over 7500 km vast coastline, over 20 Lakh sq Kms of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and
 - Safeguard more than 1 lakh merchant ships transiting per year through Indian waters for global trade.



6th Phase of Keezhadi Excavation

- ❖ The sixth phase of Keezhadi excavations was started on February 19th, 2020.
- ❖ A small section of limestone wall was unearthed during this excavation near Thirupuvanam in Sivagangai district.
- ❖ The previous five phases of excavations undertaken at Keezhadi unearthed nearly 13,000 artefacts.
- ❖ Artefacts found during the fourth phase had revealed that the Sangam Era was much older than previously thought, dating back to 6th century BC.

Tamil Nadu Health System Reform Programme

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister launched the Tamil Nadu Health System Reform Programme on March 3rd, 2020.
- ❖ Of the total cost, about ₹2,000 crore is the World Bank share and ₹857 was pumped in by the State government.
- ❖ The programme aims at upgrading the quality of healthcare, bringing down non communicable diseases, filling equity gaps in reproductive and child health services.

All Women Bench

- ❖ The Chief Justice of Madras High Court Amreshwar Pratap Sahi has made oncoming International Women's Day this year a memorable by constituting its first-ever all-women Full Bench.
- ❖ Bench consists of 3 judges namely Justices Pushpa Sathyanarayana, Anita Sumanth and P.T. Asha.
- ❖ About a year ago, the Madras High Court had the distinction of having had the highest number of 11 women judges.

War Medal

- ❖ The Medal used by the war heroes about 500 years ago has been found in Kulithalai in Karur district.



Buddhist tower near Sankarankoil

- ❖ The 100-foot-tall World Peace Buddhist Tower built in Veeriruppu village near Sankarankoil (Tenkasi district) was opened on March 4.
- ❖ This Buddhist Tower built in Veeriruppu near the Western Ghats is the first Buddhist tower built in South India.
- ❖ Buddhist monks from various countries participated on this occasion.



Export of Organic Mangoes

- ❖ For the first time around 4 thousand metric tonnes of organic mangoes to be exported from Krishnagiri soon.
- ❖ The mangoes produced by these groups are to be exported after a quality inspection, under the label 'Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana' (PKVY) with the bar code in it.

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana

- ❖ The PKVY launched in 2015, is an extended component of Soil Health Management (SHM).
- ❖ PKVY aims at supporting and promoting organic farming, in turn resulting in improvement of soil health.

Eco-restoration of waterbodies

- ❖ World Bank is planning to give fund of ₹5,000 crore for improving water supply and resilience during disasters.
- ❖ Chennai Corporation is likely to get funding for eco-restoration of 25 waterbodies in various parts of the city.
- ❖ The eco-restoration work is expected to improve groundwater level and promote resilience during disasters.
- ❖ World Bank is also expected to fund projects of the Tamilnadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB)
 - to build alternative houses for slum residents and
 - to provide funding assistance for Metro water proposal to give 24X7 water supply to all houses.

Nammakal Medical college

- ❖ Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami laid the foundation stone for a medical college at Namakkal on March 5th.
- ❖ A total of 85 per cent seats are to be allotted to students from Tamil Nadu, while the remaining goes under All-India quota as per rule.

Eight food processing projects - sanctioned

- ❖ The Union government's Inter-Ministerial Approval Committee has sanctioned eight food processing projects for Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The projects are approved under the Agro Processing Cluster Scheme of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana (PMKSY) of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.
- ❖ Objective of PMKSY is to supplement agriculture, modernize processing and decrease Agri-Waste.

Sarabanga lift irrigation project

- ❖ The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu laid the foundation stone Sarabanga lift irrigation project on March 4th.
- ❖ The project aims to divert surplus floodwater from Mettur Dam to the Sarabanga River in Salem, through lift irrigation technique.
- ❖ Over 100 tanks in Edappadi, Sankagiri, Mettur, and Omalur will benefit from this move.
- ❖ This would in turn improve groundwater level in that area.

New projects inaugurated in TamilNadu

- ❖ Mr. Palaniswami laid the foundation stone for restoring the infrastructure of the Kattalai High Level Canal in the Cauvery basin.
- ❖ The Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for a law college to be built at Theni.
- ❖ He also flagged off 41 vehicles, including motorcycles, vans and buses for police personnel.

Katchatheevu Festival

- ❖ The annual festival of St Antony's Shrine in Katchatheevu Island, Sri Lanka began.
- ❖ It is notable that the citizens of India are not required to possess an Indian passport or Sri Lankan visa for visiting Kachchatheevu, according to an agreement between the two governments.

- ❖ St Antony is worshiped as the patron saint of sea farers.
- ❖ The shrine is the only structure on the island and was built in the early years of the last century.
- ❖ It is an uninhabited island administered by Sri Lanka and was a disputed territory claimed by India until 1976.
- ❖ In 1974 India recognized Sri Lankan ownership of the island on a conditional agreement.

Food Museum at Thanjavur

- ❖ For the first time in the country, the Food Museum is to be established in Thanjavur by the Food Corporation of India.

The Food Corporation of India

- ❖ It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India.
- ❖ It was set up in 1965 with its Initial headquarters at Chennai. Later the headquarters was moved to New Delhi.

Co-generation Plant at Perambalur

- ❖ Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami commissioned power generation by co-generation plant (18 MW) at Perambalur sugar mill at Eraiyur in Perambalur district.
- ❖ He also launched a mobile app — ITPA (Training and Placement App) for supervising training being given to students of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).
- ❖ A co-generation plant is used to provide simultaneous generation of both electricity and useful heat.
- ❖ This helps to increase the efficiency of energy conversion.

Nagapatnam Government Medical College

- ❖ Chief minister of Tamil Nadu laid the foundation stone for the Nagapatnam Government Medical College in Orathur near Nagapatnam.
- ❖ During the Inauguration speech, Chief minister stated that government was considering the demand for the creation of a new district with Mayiladuthurai as its headquarters, by bifurcating Nagapatnam district.

Hero Stone found in Javadi Hills.

- ❖ Hero Stone that belong to Chola Period was found in Javadi Hills.
- ❖ Also Figures of Dogs carved in the Hero stones were found here.

- ❖ The Javadi Hills are an extension of the Eastern Ghats spread across parts of Vellore and Tiruvannamalai districts.



Kannagi Nagar Art District

- ❖ The Chennai Corporation inaugurated the Kannagi Nagar Art District recently.
- ❖ Chennai is the first city in Tamil Nadu to get an Art District.
- ❖ The Kannagi Nagar Art District aims to promote art and culture for social transformation and civic improvement.
- ❖ Chennai Corporation has supported artists who participated in the initiative with assistance of Chennai Smart City Limited and St+art India.
- ❖ Lodhi Art District in Delhi is the India's first art district, with fifty murals.



Wind energy power generation

- ❖ Tamil Nadu electricity generation and distribution corporation is planning to increase the wind energy power generation.
- ❖ The current wind power capacity of Tamil Nadu is 8,507 MW.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu's share of India's wind power capacity is 23%.
- ❖ The Union Ministry of Power and Energy aims to create non-conventional energy sources with a capacity of 1 lakh 75 thousand MW by 2022 and 4 lakh 50 thousand MW by 2030.

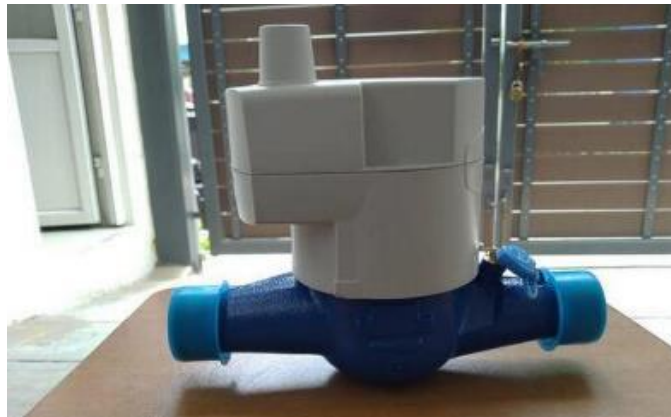
- ❖ As part of this, Tamil Nadu is projected to reach 22,000 MW by 2022.

Vice Chairman of State Planning Commission appointed

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government appointed senior AIADMK leader and former Finance Minister C. Ponnaiyan as Vice Chairman of State Planning Commission.
- ❖ The Chief Minister is the chairman of the State Planning Commission.
- ❖ The State Planning Commission (SPC) was constituted in Tamil Nadu on 25th May 1971.

Digital water meters

- ❖ Chennai Metro water has accelerated the process to fit digital water meters with automated meter reading (AMR) in commercial buildings to ensure the judicious use of water among consumers in the city.
- ❖ The project is being taken up with funding under the Smart City Mission.
- ❖ This is to encourage consumers to pay according to their use and track water consumption.



50 Years of Tamizh State song

- ❖ A poem written by the late Prof. P. Sundaram Pillai, Professor of History in the Travancore University, and a noted Tamil scholar, has been adopted as the prayer song for Tamil Nadu Government functions.
- ❖ It is a two-stanza verse beginning with “Neerarum kadaludutha...” from Prof. Sundaram Pillai’s play, “Manonmaniam”.
- ❖ Only the first six-line stanza is to be used for the purpose of the State prayer song.
- ❖ An announcement about the prayer song was made by the Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi on March 10, 1970.

Tracking MTC buses

- ❖ Now, MTC buses can be tracked on phone with the help of 'Chalo' app.
- ❖ The app provides details on nearest bus stops and next five Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) buses scheduled to arrive at any selected stop.
- ❖ This works in both offline and online modes.
- ❖ Currently the app is a beta version (or test-run) of the soon-to-be-launched government's Locate My Bus App (LAMB).

Name boards in Tamil

- ❖ The Labour Welfare Commissioner has said that all shops and businesses in Tamil Nadu should have a name board in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Though the name boards can also be in English and other languages, it must be ensured that the name in Tamil gets priority in order of writing and size of fonts.

Testing Labs

- ❖ With the addition of the Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratory at Tiruvarur, Tamil Nadu now has three testing facilities for SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind COVID-19.
- ❖ The King Institute of Preventive Medicine, Guindy was the first one.
- ❖ The facility at Government Medical College, Theni, is the second.

Memorial hall for Irattai Malai Srinivasan

- ❖ The foundation stone for the construction of the memorial hall for Irattai Malai Srinivasan was launched in Achhirupaakkam next to Madhurandhagam.
- ❖ Irattai Malai Srinivasan was a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi.
- ❖ He is one of the pioneers of the scheduled caste movement in India.

Wildlife Safari at Vandalur Zoo

- ❖ Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami announced in the State Legislative Assembly that a safari world would be set up in Arignar Anna Zoological Park at Vandalur.
- ❖ The CM also announced that a mini zoo would be set up at Sirumalai forest in Dindigul district.
- ❖ He also announced that the Kurumbapatti Zoological Park in Salem district would be upgraded into a medium zoo with additional animals.

Decrease in deaths due to road accidents

- ❖ There has been a 10% reduction in the number of deaths caused due to accidents in the country since the passage of the amended Motor Vehicles Act.
- ❖ The Transport Minister said Tamil Nadu has made significant progress in reducing the number of deaths in road accidents by 24% in last five months.
- ❖ This is the maximum anywhere in the country.
- ❖ The new Motor Vehicles Act has enhanced the penalties for driving errors.
- ❖ The Transport Minister also informed that the Motor Vehicles Act is in the Concurrent list and States are empowered to compound the offences and implement the provisions of the Act as per their requirements.

Thooya Thamizh Patralar Award

- ❖ Directorate of Classical Etymology Agara Mudhali Scheme has announced this award to encourage people who use pure Tamil words for communication.
- ❖ C. Manikandan, a graduate from Coimbatore, R. Haridas from Puducherry and D. Arokiya Oliver Raj, a college student from Trichy were selected for this scheme.

Amendment in PSTM act

- ❖ According to the Bill, only the candidates who have studied in Tamil medium from primary school onwards will be accorded preference in direct recruitment under the 'Persons Studied in Tamil Medium' (PSTM) quota.
- ❖ The Bill seeks to amend the Tamil Nadu Appointment on preferential basis in the Services under the State of PSTM Act, 2010.
- ❖ In 2010, the Tamil Nadu Government has announced 20% reservation in government posts for Tamil medium candidates.
- ❖ The amendment is being brought in as the government had come across instances where candidates who had obtained only the final prescribed educational qualification in Tamil medium were applying under the PSTM quota for direct recruitment.
- ❖ For instance, for a post for which the prescribed qualification is graduation, the candidate would have obtained a degree in Tamil medium through distance education, despite having studied in English medium in school and college.

Goat research centre

- ❖ Minister of Department of Animal Husbandry of Tamilnadu K. Radhakrishnan announced that a goat research centre will be set up in the newly created Tenkasi district.
- ❖ He also announced that a new Veterinary Medical Science University Training and Research Centre will be set up in the Tuticorin district.

Veterinary college at Theni

- ❖ A new veterinary college will be opened in Theni district.
- ❖ Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami made this announcement in the State Assembly.
- ❖ He also said the veterinary hospital at Nagercoil would be upgraded to a super speciality veterinary hospital.

Amma mini marts

- ❖ The government will open 189 more Amma Mini Cooperative Supermarkets in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami made this announcement in the State Assembly.
- ❖ Over 300 non-controlled products are being sold at 5% lesser than MRP in the existing Amma Mini Cooperative Supermarkets.
- ❖ These supermarkets are aimed at providing quality products to consumers at a reasonable price and to control the price of commodities in the open market.

Corona Testing center in Tamilnadu

- ❖ Recently Corona Testing centres have been established at the following hospitals
 - Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital
 - Chennai Stanley Hospital
 - Salem Government Hospital
 - Rajaji Madurai General Hospital

38th District of Tamilnadu

- ❖ Mayiladuthurai is to become Tamil Nadu's 38th district.
- ❖ The existing district of Nagapattinam will be bifurcated and Mayiladuthurai will become the headquarters of the new district.
- ❖ Mayiladuthurai is formerly known as Mayavaram or Mayuram.



NATIONAL

National importance status

- ❖ The Union Cabinet Approved Entrepreneurship & Management (NIFTEM) Bill, 2019, to grant national importance status to two food technology institutes.
- ❖ National Institutes of Food Technology (NIFTEM) at Kundli, Haryana and Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu will be conferred the special status.
- ❖ This move will help them collaborate with overseas food institutes and improve the standard of education.

Cabinet approves National Technical Textiles Mission

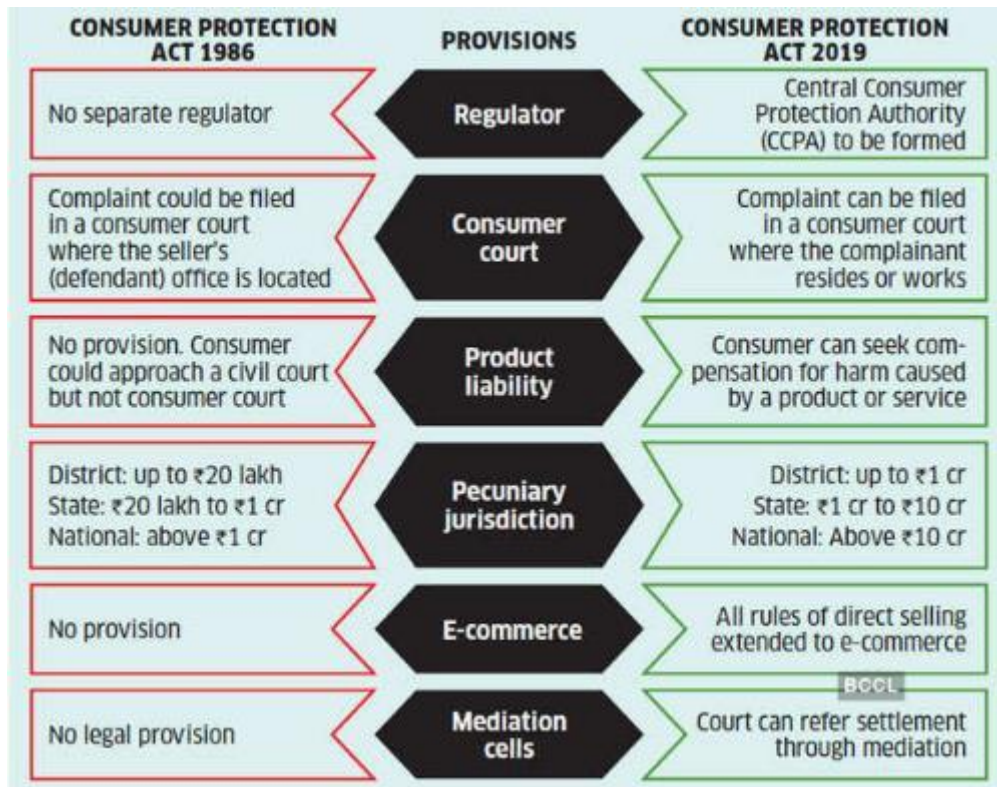
- ❖ The Union government has approved setting up of a with a view to position the country as a global leader in technical textiles.
- ❖ The Mission will have a four-year implementation period from financial year 2020-21 to 2023-24.
- ❖ The Mission will aim at average growth rate of 15-20% per annum taking the level of domestic market size to \$40-50 billion by the year 2024.

24th Eastern Zonal Council

- ❖ 24th meeting of the Eastern Zonal Council chaired by Union Home minister Amit Shah was held at Bhubaneswar.
- ❖ The Meeting focused on the,
 - speedy investigation into cases of sexual offences and rape against women and children, and
 - prevention of cattle smuggling through the Indo-Bangladesh border.
- ❖ The Eastern Zonal Council states include Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand.

Central Consumer Protection Authority

- ❖ Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution announced that Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) will be established by the first week of April.
- ❖ The authority is being constituted under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- ❖ The Act replaced the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, and seeks to widen its scope in addressing consumer concerns.
- ❖ The new Act recognizes offences such as providing false information regarding the quality or quantity of a good or service, and misleading advertisement.
- ❖ It also specifies action to be taken if goods and services are found “dangerous, hazardous or unsafe”.



Assistive Aids and Devices to senior citizens - PM Narendra Modi

- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi distributed Assistive Aids and Devices to senior citizens and differently-abled at a camp in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj.
- ❖ The PM distributed assistive aids and devices to senior citizens under the Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana and to people with disabilities under ADIP scheme for purchasing/fitting of aids/appliances.
- ❖ The moto is to assist with these aids and devices to the daily living and socio-economic development of the Divyangjan and the senior citizens.

Exercise Indra Dhanush - 5th edition

- ❖ The Indian Air Force and Royal Air Force (RAF) of the UK jointly commenced the 5th edition of Exercise Indra Dhanush at Air Force Station, Hindan, UP.
- ❖ The exercise is tasked to enhance mutual operational understanding between the two air forces via close interaction.
- ❖ The focus of this edition of the exercise is 'Base Defence and Force Protection'.
- ❖ The first edition of this exercise was held in 2006.

Delimitation in NE States

- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind gave his nod for resuming delimitation exercise in the North-eastern States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland by rescinding/cancelling the February 8, 2008 order.
- ❖ A Delimitation Commission was set up under the Delimitation Act, 2002 to readjust the division of each state and union territory into territorial constituencies for the purpose of Lok Sabha and state assembly elections on the basis of census figures of 2001.
- ❖ Delimitation Commissions in India have been constituted four times in the past
 - In 1952 under the Delimitation Commission Act, 1952,
 - In 1963 under Delimitation Commission Act, 1962,
 - In 1973 under Delimitation Act, 1972 and
 - In 2002 under Delimitation Act, 2002.

Farmer Producer Organizations

- ❖ PM Modi launched 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisations in Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ It aims at providing small farmers a platform to collectively tackle their challenges.
- ❖ This move helps farmers to turn into businessmen.

11th National Krishi Vigyan Kendra Conference

- ❖ The Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the 11th National Krishi Vigyan Kendra Conference 2020 in New Delhi.
- ❖ The first Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) was established in 1974 at Puducherry under the administrative control of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore on a pilot basis.
- ❖ At present there are more than 700 KVKs across the country.

Renewable Energy Management Centres (REMCs)

- ❖ Power Minister R K Singh launched 11 REMCs to the nation for renewable energy integration.
- ❖ He also inaugurated the Northern Region Renewable Energy Management Centre (NR-REMC) in this occasion.
- ❖ The REMCs are equipped with artificial intelligence based renewable energy forecasting and scheduling tools and provide greater visualization and enhanced situational awareness to the grid operators.

RaIDer-X

- ❖ Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and IISC Bangalore recently unveiled a new explosive detection device named RaIDer-X.
- ❖ RaIDer-X was recently showcased during the National Workshop on Explosive Detection (NWED)- 2020 on March 01st.
- ❖ It can detect explosives from a specific range and inform the operator.

DRDO

- ❖ DRDO is the R&D wing of the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
- ❖ It equips the Indian armed forces with modern technology to achieve self-sufficiency in state-of-the-art defence technologies and defence systems.
- ❖ It was established in the year 1958.



Unemployment rate

- ❖ India's unemployment rate rose to 7.78% in February and this is the highest since October 2019.
- ❖ This data is released by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE).
- ❖ This may rise further if the economy continues to suffer because of supply chain disruptions arising from the coronavirus contagion.

WiFi on flights services

- ❖ The Central government has given its nod to introduce in-flight WiFi services soon.
- ❖ This service will be given to passengers on the flight after the permit by the Pilot-in-Command.
- ❖ The passengers onboard can avail in-flight WiFi services for their devices that are on airplane mode or flight mode.
- ❖ This can only be availed once the flight has taken off and all the doors are closed.
- ❖ The usage of internet service in-flight shall be certified by the Director-General.

India and Armenia defense deal

- ❖ India has overtaken Russia and Poland to win a \$40 million defence deal to supply four indigenously-built weapon locating radars to Armenia in Europe.
- ❖ The deal is being seen as a major achievement for 'Make in India' programme in the defence sector.
- ❖ As per the agreement, India will supply four SWATHI weapon locating radars to Armenia.
- ❖ This will provide fast, automatic and accurate location of enemy weapons like mortars, shells and rockets in its 50-km range.
- ❖ SWATHI is developed by DRDO's Electronics and Radar Development Establishment (LRDE).



World Heritage Sites

- ❖ The Central government has nominated the following two sites for inclusion in the World Heritage Site list for the current year.
 - 'Dholavira: A Harappan City' and
 - 'Monuments and Forts of Deccan Sultanate'
- ❖ The Dholavira is an archaeological site located in Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat.
- ❖ It consists of remains of ancient Indus Valley civilization.
- ❖ Monuments and Forts of Deccan Sultanate include,
 - Bidar fort – has the second largest dome in the world that was constructed before the modern age,
 - Bijapur Monuments,
 - Golconda Fort – famous for water management and
 - Gulbarga Fort – Initial capital of the Bahmani Sultanate.

Suposhit Maa Abhiyan

- ❖ The Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla launched a national campaign from Kota, Rajasthan on March 1, 2020.
- ❖ It aims to create malnutrition free India.
- ❖ “Suposhit Maa Abhiyan” will support adolescent girls and pregnant women in the country.
- ❖ The main objective of this campaign is to keep pregnant women and the new born healthy.
- ❖ In the first phase of the campaign, 1000 kits of 17 kg balanced diet each were provided to 1000 pregnant women.

Kaushal Bharath

- ❖ The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) developed an enterprise resource planning platform called ‘Kaushal Bharath’.
- ❖ This enables states to capture data on projects under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) and for the information to be collated in one system.

DDU-GKY

- ❖ The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) announced the DDU-GKY on Antyodaya Diwas - 25th September 2014.
- ❖ DDU-GKY is a part of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM).
- ❖ Objectives of DDU-GKY are
 - Adding diversity to the incomes of rural poor families and
 - Cater to the career aspirations of rural youth.

Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan Yojana

- ❖ Under performance of National Pension Scheme for Traders, Shopkeepers and Self-Employed Persons is marked because just over 34,000 people have signed up so far in this scheme.
- ❖ The Labour Ministry’s vision document in 2019 had set a target of 25 lakh enrolments for the scheme in 2019-2020.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan Yojana is a voluntary and contribution based central sector scheme.
- ❖ The government launched the scheme, entailing monthly minimum assured pension of ₹3,000 for the entry age group of 18-40 years after attaining the age of 60 years.

River linking projects

- ❖ The Central government is working on the establishment of an exclusive body to implement projects for linking rivers.
- ❖ It is to be called as the National Interlinking of Rivers Authority (NIRA).
- ❖ 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.

QS World Ranking

- ❖ Five institutions from India have been ranked among the top 100 this year according to subject-wise QS World Ranking.
- ❖ IIT-Bombay's mineral & mining engineering and Delhi University's Development Studies are the top-ranked programmes from India.

Institution	Rank
IIT Kanpur	96
IIT Madras	88
IIT Kharagpur	86
IIT Delhi	47
IIT Bombay	44

Janaushadhi week

- ❖ Janaushadhi week is being celebrated across the country from 1st of this month through Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras.
- ❖ Jan Aushadhi Kendra owners are organising different types of activities for making awareness about health and hygiene.
- ❖ On the fourth day of the week, an event for empowering the women of the country with the theme of 'Suvidha Se Sammaan' was held.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana is a noble initiative of the Government.
- ❖ It is now making an impact on masses in its endeavour to provide quality medicines at an affordable price.

MoUs to implement Agro Export Policy

- ❖ Agricultural and Processed Food Export Development Authority (APEDA) has been signing MoUs with a number of organisations for implementation of the Agro Export Policy.

- ❖ The Agriculture Export Policy was framed with a focus on agriculture export-oriented production, export promotion, better price realization to farmer and synchronization within policies and programmes of Government of India.
- ❖ It focuses on “Farmer’s Centric Approach” for improved income through value addition at source itself to help minimize losses across the value chain.

Cryptocurrencies

- ❖ In April 2018, the RBI had issued a circular barring banking and financial services from dealing in transactions involving virtual currency or Cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin.
- ❖ The Supreme Court now frees trade in Cryptocurrencies as RBI circular is violating the law by interfering into the trade of the country.
- ❖ Cryptocurrency is a digital currency for which encryption techniques are used to regulate its use and generate its release.
- ❖ It is not regulated or controlled by any bank, government or centralized financial authorities.



Security Ink

- ❖ The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) - National Physical Laboratory has developed a bi-luminescent security ink which glows in red and green colours when illuminated.
- ❖ The ink developed could help to stop counterfeit rupee notes.



- ❖ The formulation can be used to check the authenticity of passports, government documents, identity cards, etc.

Cabinet approves merger of PSBs

- ❖ The Union cabinet approved the consolidation of 10 public sector banks (PSBs) into four entities.
- ❖ This move aims to have fewer but stronger lenders in India.
- ❖ At present, India has 18 state-owned banks compared with 27 in 2017.
- ❖ After the merger, the number will further come down to 12.

Mac binding process

- ❖ After restoring the use of social media in Jammu and Kashmir, the internet can be now accessed only through Mac binding process.
- ❖ MAC (Media Access Control) binding is a process where a user's system MAC address and IP (Internet protocol) address are binded to allow internet access.
- ❖ Through this process, a request from a particular machine which has its MAC address and IP address binded will be accepted.
- ❖ It means that one can only open websites that have been allowed by the administration using a system which has its MAC and IP address binded, rests will be dropped.

International Conference on Nano Science and Technology

- ❖ ICONSAT (International Conference on Nano Science and Technology) is the series of biennial international conference held in India under the aegis of Nano Mission, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.
- ❖ The Nano Mission, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, has approved ICONSAT-2020 to be conducted by the S. N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences, Kolkata.
- ❖ The conference is held from 5-7 March at Kolkata.
- ❖ The conference aims to keep pace with the latest development in the emerging areas of Nano Science and Technology.

Integrated Local Energy Systems

- ❖ India-European Union Flagship program on Integrated Local Energy Systems was announced at India Smart Utility Week 2020.
- ❖ This partnership between Indian and European Union will help in Clean Energy and Climate.

- ❖ This will enhance cooperation in energy research and innovation, mainly in renewable energy and its integration in the energy system.
- ❖ The collaboration can make energy supply cleaner, more efficient and affordable to all.

India-Sweden Collaboration

- ❖ Sweden and India have announced the India-Sweden Collaborative Industrial Research & Development Programme at India Smart Utilities Week.
- ❖ The joint Programme, will bring together world class expertise of Sweden and India to address challenges in the area of Smart Grids.

Census 2021

- ❖ The Home Ministry announced that the exercise of Census 2021 and National Population Register update will begin from April 1.
- ❖ The New Delhi Municipal Corporation area will be the first to conduct the update, and the first person to be registered will be the President of India.

Jammu Airport comes under CISF

- ❖ The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) took over the security of the Jammu Airport.
- ❖ With this there are 63 airports under CISF at present.
- ❖ CISF was set up in 1969 and it was made an armed force in 1983.

Goa's Khola Chilli Gets GI Tag

- ❖ The famous Khola Chilli or Kholchi Mirchi that's being grown on the hills of Khola village of Goa has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.



- ❖ GI tags are issued by the Geographical Indications Registry of India.
- ❖ Khola Chilli is the first agriculture produce of the state to get the GI tag.
- ❖ A Geographical Indication is a form of Intellectual Property Rights which is used for indicating and preserving the originality of the product of the particular territory.

Agreement for e-marketing of products

- ❖ Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs signed a MoU with Amazon.
- ❖ The agreement is signed for e-marketing of products made by Self Help Groups (SHGs) across the country in the urban areas.
- ❖ The collaboration aims,
 - to provide access to wider customer base for products made by SHGs and
 - to strengthen the mission of creating sustainable livelihoods in urban areas.

About DAY-NULM

- ❖ It is a Flagship programme of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to reduce poverty and vulnerability of the urban poor households.
- ❖ It efforts to make an appreciable improvement in their livelihoods on a sustainable basis, through building strong grassroots level institutions of the poor.

Boeing-777 VVIP Planes to be upgraded

- ❖ India has signed a deal with the US to buy new anti-missile protection system for VVIP Boeing 777 planes that will be used to ferry the Prime minister and the President of India.
- ❖ India currently uses four Air India Boeing 747s as VVIP planes to ferry the Prime minister and the President of India.

Nari Shakthi Puraskar

- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind gave away the Nari Shakti Puraskar to 15 women in Rashtrapati Bhawan on the occasion of International Women's Day (March 8).
- ❖ The National Award is given annually to individuals, groups, institutions in recognition of their exceptional work towards the cause of women empowerment, especially for vulnerable and marginalized women.
- ❖ The award was instituted in the year 1999 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- ❖ It is given in six institutional categories and two individual categories.

2020 Awards

- ❖ 103-year-old athlete Mann Kaur.
- ❖ Indian Air Force's first women fighter pilots Mohana Singh, Bhawana Kanth and Avani Chaturvedi.

- ❖ Farmers Padala Bhudevi and Bina Devi.
- ❖ Artisan Arifa Jaan.
- ❖ Environmentalist Chami Murmu.



- ❖ Entrepreneur Nilza Wangmo.
- ❖ Automotive research professional Rashmi Urdhwardeshe.
- ❖ Lady Mason Kalavati Devi.
- ❖ Twin Mountaineers Tashi and Nungshi Malik.
- ❖ Classical vocalist Kaushiki Chakroborty.
- ❖ 98-year-old Karthyayini Amma who topped the literacy exam in 2018.



Six Categories

- ❖ Devi Ahilya Bai Holkar Award for Best Private Sector organization/ Public sector undertaking in promoting the well-being and welfare of women

- ❖ Kannagi Devi Award for Best State which has appreciably improved Child Sex Ratio (CSR)
- ❖ Mata Jijabai Award for Best Urban Local body for providing services and facilities to women
- ❖ Rani Gaidinliu Zeliang Award for Best Civil Society organization (CSO)
- ❖ Rani Lakshmi Bai Award for Best Institution for Research & Development in the field of women empowerment
- ❖ Rani Rudramma Devi Awards for two District Panchayats and two [Gram Panchayats](#)

Self Help Groups (SHGs)

- ❖ On March 8, 2020, Minister of Rural Development Narendra Singh Tomar announced that more than 17 lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs) are to be developed by 2022.
- ❖ Currently, there are more than 60 lakh self-help groups in the country mobilizing 6 crore women.

About

- ❖ The concept of Self-Help Groups was introduced in 1992 under the guidelines of RBI and NABARD.
- ❖ The “Kudumbashree” project in Kerala is the largest and most successful SHG project in the country that was launched in Kerala.
- ❖ It is a SHG of the State Government.
- ❖ It was launched in 1998.

BJP and JVM

- ❖ The Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Babulal Marandi has merged his Jharkhand Vikas Morcha with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).
- ❖ The Election Commission of India (ECI) has given its approval for the same and seized party's name and symbol as well.
- ❖ In 2000, Babulal Marandi became the first Jharkhand chief minister.

Net metering connections approved

- ❖ Southern Railway has received approval for net metering connections for its 4 MW rooftop solar projects across 22 locations, including railway stations across the State.
- ❖ The projects were to be set up at Chengalpattu, Katpadi, Arakkonam, Tambaram, Chennai Egmore, Jolarpettai, Tiruchi, Villupuram, Madurai, Virudhunagar and Coimbatore railway stations, among other locations like Moore Market Complex and Basin Bridge Junction.

Women Empowerment in India

- ❖ India ranked 12th in women member presence on companies' board globally
- ❖ It was a recent study on 'Women On Board 2020' by global recruitment tendering platform MyHiringClub.com and Sarkari-Naukri.info.
- ❖ The study revealed that among these 628 listed companies, 55 per cent have women directors, which is 14 per cent higher than last year.
- ❖ The average board life of male directors in India is three years, more than their women counterpart.
- ❖ Around 54 per cent of employees in Asia and 39 per cent in India are women, but only a fraction of that number makes it to middle and senior management level
- ❖ Norway continues to top the list.

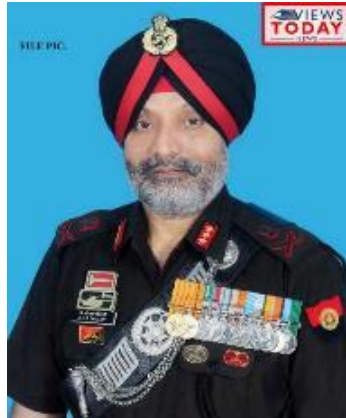
Delimitation of Constituencies

- ❖ The government has constituted a Delimitation Commission, to be headed by former Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai.
- ❖ It will redraw Lok Sabha and assembly constituencies of the Union Territory Jammu and Kashmir and the North eastern states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland.
- ❖ Delimitation literally means the process of fixing limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies in a state that has a legislative body.
- ❖ For Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland it will delimit in accordance with the provisions of the Delimitation Act, 2002.
- ❖ The commissions' orders are enforced as per the date specified by the President of India.
- ❖ Copies of these orders are laid before the Lok Sabha or the concerned Legislative Assembly.
- ❖ No modifications are permitted.
- ❖ According to the Delimitation Commission Act, 2002, the Delimitation Commission appointed by the Centre has to have three members:
 - A serving or retired judge of the Supreme Court as the chairperson,
 - The Chief Election Commissioner or Election Commissioner nominated by the CEC
 - The State Election Commissioner as ex-officio members.

Kanwal Jeet Singh Dhillon

- ❖ Former Commander of Srinagar-based 15 Corps Lt-Gen Kanwal Jeet Singh Dhillon has been appointed as Director General, Defence Intelligence Agency, and Deputy Chief of Integrating Defence Staff (Intelligence) under the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in the Department of Military Affairs.

- ❖ The Defence Intelligence Agency is an organisation responsible for providing and coordinating military intelligence for the Indian armed forces.
- ❖ It was created in March 2002 and is administered within the Ministry of Defence.



Helpline for women scientists, students, researchers

- ❖ Union Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan launched a helpline number for women students, researchers, entrepreneurs and scientists
- ❖ This enables them to get their queries related to the ministry's programmes answered.
- ❖ They will also get information about qualifications or other requirements to avail benefits of schemes under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST).

Women Transforming India (WTI) Awards

- ❖ NITI Aayog organized the Fourth Edition of the Women Transforming India (WTI) Awards recently.
- ❖ The WTI Awards 2019 received over 2,300 applications of which the Top 30 were shortlisted



- ❖ WTI Awards are NITI Aayog's initiative to highlight the commendable and ground-breaking endeavours of India's women leaders and changemakers.
- ❖ Since 2018, the Awards have been hosted under the aegis of NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform with a special focus on entrepreneurship.

Sanitary napkin disposal bags

- ❖ The Government has decided to make sanitary napkin disposal bags mandatory from January 2021.
- ❖ The announcement was made by Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar.
- ❖ He also stated that it will be mandatory for the sanitary napkin makers to supply a biodegradable bag with each napkin from January 2021.

HAL to set up logistics bases in four countries

- ❖ State-run Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) is looking at setting up logistics bases in four countries as part of initiatives to woo the countries to buy India's light combat aircraft Tejas and military helicopters.
- ❖ The four countries include Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.
- ❖ The Tejas has been developed by Aeronautical Development Agency and the HAL.
- ❖ The lifespan of the jet would be a minimum of 30 years just like any other frontline combat aircraft.
- ❖ Chairman and Managing Director of HAL R Madhavan also added that HAL is now seriously focusing on boosting exports in sync with the government's priority to sell key platforms like Tejas, attack helicopter Rudra and advanced light helicopter Dhruv.



Women scientists receive international exposure

- ❖ The Indo-U.S. Fellowship for Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (WISTEMM)” program of Department of Science and Technology (DST) in association with Indo-U.S. Science & Technology Forum (IUSSTF) have provided international exposure to several women scientists.
- ❖ Around 20 women scientists have visited 20 leading institutions across the United States of America for furthering their research work and to get trained in the state of art technologies related to their research.
- ❖ WISTEMM aims to provide opportunities to Indian Women Scientists, Engineers and Technologists,
 - To undertake international collaborative research in premier institutions in U.S.A and
 - To enhance their research capacities and capabilities.

Congress members suspended

- ❖ The Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla suspended seven Congress members of Parliament (MPs) from the Lower House for gross misconduct.
- ❖ The decision was to suspend Gaurav Gogoi, T.N. Prathapan, Dean Kuriakose, R. Unnithan, Manicka Tagore, Benny Behanan, and Gurjeet Singh Aujla for the rest of the budget session.
- ❖ The Lok Sabha passed a motion as they had snatched papers from the Speaker’s table with disregard for House rules.

7 women who 'handled' PM Modi's social media

- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi's social media handle was taken over by seven women achievers to tell their astounding stories to the world.
- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi handed over his accounts on various platforms to seven woman achievers from different fields to share their life journeys and messages on the International Women's Day.
- ❖ The women chosen to use Modi's accounts are tabulated below,

Name	Service
Sneha Mohandoss	works to eradicate hunger
Malvika Iyer - who survived a gruesome bomb blast that blew off her hands	a motivational speaker, disability activist and model
Arifa Jaan	who promotes traditional crafts of Kashmir
Kalpana Ramesh	a water conservator

Vijaya Pawar	who promotes handicrafts from the Banjara community of rural Maharashtra
Kalavati Devi	who collects money to build toilets
Veena Devi	growing mushrooms under her bed due to lack of space.

Startup India

- ❖ According to the Start-up India portal, 29,681 start-ups have been registered with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) so far.
- ❖ This is three times higher than the startups registered till March 2018 (8,939).
- ❖ This data is shared by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- ❖ The Indian startup ecosystem is currently the third-largest globally after the US and China.

DPIIT

- ❖ The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade was established in 1995.
- ❖ It has been reconstituted in the year 2000 with the merger of the Department of Industrial Development.
- ❖ Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade is responsible for formulation and implementation of promotional and developmental measures for growth of the industrial sector, keeping in view the national priorities and socio-economic objectives.

2021 Census questions

- ❖ Centre has issued a gazette notification regarding a list of 31 questions which will be asked by enumerators for collecting information through housing census schedule in connection with 2021 Census.
- ❖ The questions are given below.

1. Building Number
2. Census House Number
3. Predominant material of floor, wall and roof of the census house
4. Ascertain use of census house
5. Condition of the census house
6. Household number
7. Total number of persons normally residing in the household
8. Name of the head of the household
9. Sex of the head of the household
10. Whether the head of the household belongs to SC/ST/Other
11. Ownership status of the census house
12. Number of dwelling rooms exclusively in possession of the household
13. Number of married couple(s) living in the household
14. Main source of drinking water
15. Availability of drinking water source
16. Main source of lighting
17. Access to latrine
18. Type of latrine
19. Wastewater outlet
20. Availability of bathing facility
21. Availability of kitchen and LPG/PWG connection
22. Main fuel used for cooking
23. Radio/Transistor
24. Television
25. Access to Internet
26. Laptop/Computer
27. Telephone/Mobile phone/smartphone
28. Bicycle/scooter/motorcycle/moped
29. car/Jeep/Van
30. Main cereal consumed in the household
31. Mobile number

High court verdict on Lieutenant Governor's power

- ❖ The Madras High Court set aside its own order restraining the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry Kiran Bedi from interfering in the day-to-day affairs of the elected government of the union territory.
- ❖ The Bench asked the lieutenant governor to work in unison with the elected government.
- ❖ The bench allowed appeals moved by the Union government and the governor.

Top private institution in India

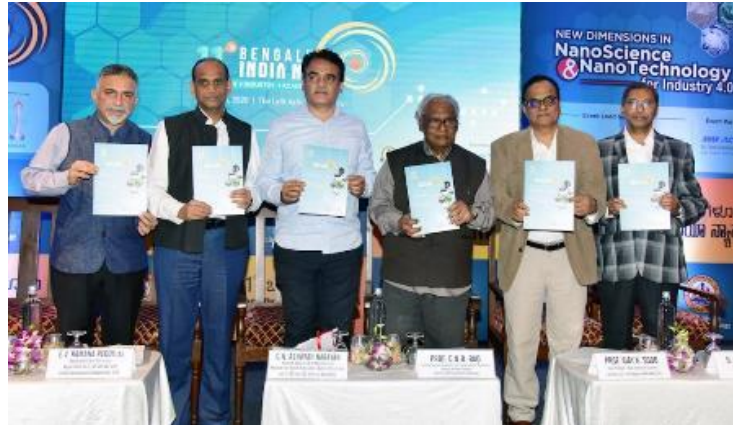
- ❖ Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) is number one private institution in India for Engineering and Technology as per the QS subject ranking, 2020.
- ❖ The university was ranked among the top 450 universities in the world by the QS World University Rankings.
- ❖ QS World University Rankings is an annual publication of university rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Limited, United Kingdom.
- ❖ VIT has been recognised as an Institution of Eminence by Government of India.
- ❖ It has also been ranked as number one private university for innovation by Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA), Government of India.

Pragyan Conclave 2020

- ❖ The Indian Army International Seminar named 'PRAGYAN CONCLAVE 2020' was organized by Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS).
- ❖ The Seminar commenced in New Delhi.
- ❖ The event creates a platform for national and international military experts to discuss on the subject of 'Changing Characteristics of Land Warfare and its Impact on the Military'.

INDIA Nano 2020

- ❖ INDIA Nano conference and exhibition was held in Bengaluru
- ❖ It showcased technologies and products developed by academia and companies in nanotechnology.
- ❖ It is organized by the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of Karnataka and Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR).
- ❖ JNCASR is an autonomous institution of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.



Right to Property

- ❖ The Supreme Court has reiterated that forcible dispossession of a person of his private property without due process of law is a violation of human rights.
- ❖ In a recent judgment, the court stressed that right to property is both a human right and a constitutional right — the latter under Article 300A of the Constitution.

Rise in Coal imports

- ❖ India's thermal coal imports rose 12.6% to nearly 200 million tonnes in 2019.
- ❖ Imports of thermal coal is mainly used for power generation.
- ❖ Indonesia is accounted for nearly 60% of India's thermal coal imports
- ❖ However, imports of coking coal which is used mainly in the manufacturing of steel fell marginally.
- ❖ India is the second largest producer of the coal in the World while China is the first.
- ❖ China and India are also two of the world's biggest importers.
- ❖ The world's two largest coal consuming countries are also the world's two most populous nations: China and India.
- ❖ Other top producers of coal, such as Australia, the US and Indonesia, have excess capacity to export after satisfying their domestic demands.

Revoking the suspension

- ❖ The Lok Sabha has passed a resolution revoking the suspension of seven Congress members with immediate effect.
- ❖ The suspension was to remain in place for the rest of the Budget Session which ends on April 3.
- ❖ The resolution was moved by Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal and passed by a voice vote in the Lok Sabha.

Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897

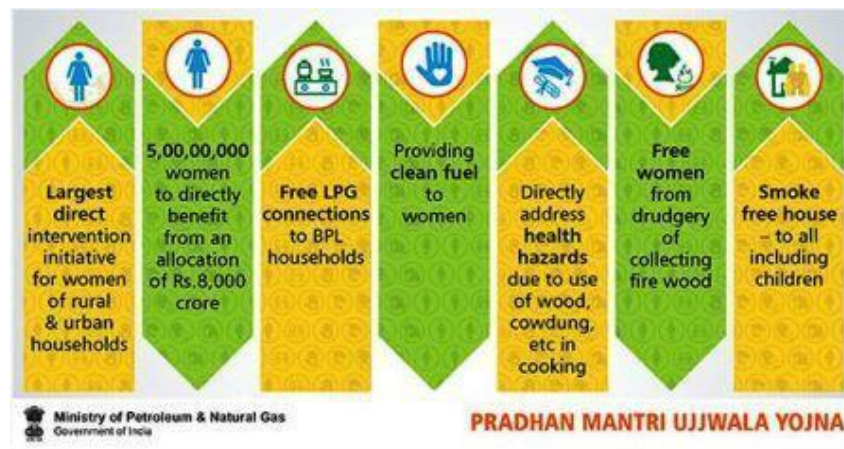
- ❖ The Centre has asked states and Union Territories to invoke the provisions of Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, so that Health Ministry advisories are enforceable.
- ❖ It is routinely enforced across the country for dealing with outbreaks of diseases such as swine flu, dengue, and cholera.

PM Ujjwala Yojana

- ❖ The government in September, 2019 met the target of eight crore LPG connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.
- ❖ But, only three States have become kerosene free. These include- Haryana, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ Union Territories that have become kerosene-free are the Union Territories of Delhi, Chandigarh, Daman & Diu, Dadar & Nagar Haveli, Andaman & Nicobar Island and Puducherry.

About

- ❖ It was launched in May 2016.
- ❖ It aims to provide LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) connections to women from below poverty line households.



NPR

- ❖ No document would have to be submitted for the NPR or National Population Register.
- ❖ No one would be declared "D" (doubtful) if they failed to produce such papers.
- ❖ This was issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Parliament.
- ❖ The process of collecting information for NPR will start in April 2020 and will be completed by September.
- ❖ NPR will be conducted across India, except Assam as the state has already gone through the National Register of Citizens.

- ❖ The data for National Population Register was collected in 2010 along with the house listing phase of Census of India 2011.

About

- ❖ The NPR is a register of the usual residents of the country.
- ❖ It contains information collected at the local (village/sub-town), subdistrict, district, state and national level under provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
- ❖ A usual resident is defined, for the purposes of the NPR, as a person who has resided in a local area for the past six months or more, or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next six months.
- ❖ The law compulsorily seeks to register every citizen of India and issue a national identity card.
- ❖ The process of updating NPR will be carried out under the aegis of the Registrar General and ex-Officio Census Commissioner, India Under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

NPR and Census

- ❖ While the process of NPR and Census will begin simultaneously, the two databases are not same.
- ❖ The decennial census is the largest single source of a variety of statistical information on different characteristics of the people of India.
- ❖ While NPR only contains demographic information, more details are required for census like information on demography, economic activity, literacy and education, and housing and household amenities besides others.
- ❖ The census is the basis for reviewing the country's progress in the past decade, monitoring the ongoing schemes of the government and plan for the future.

WION's global summit

- ❖ The third edition of WION's (World Is One News) global summit was held in Dubai.
- ❖ Theme: "Navigating and negotiating global imperatives".
- ❖ WION is India's first international news channel dedicated to putting forth India's perspective on impactful global issues.
- ❖ The WION Global Summit is a platform for global leaders to engage in dialogue on a common global agenda.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) Amendment bill 2020

- ❖ The amendment aims to protect the successful bidders of insolvent companies from risk of criminal proceedings.

- ❖ The criminal proceedings may be expected from previous promoters of the company.
- ❖ It seeks to remove bottlenecks and streamline the corporate insolvency resolution process.
- ❖ It aims to provide protection to new owners of a loan defaulter company against prosecution for misdeeds of previous owners.

About

- ❖ The IBC, which came into force in 2016, has already been amended thrice.

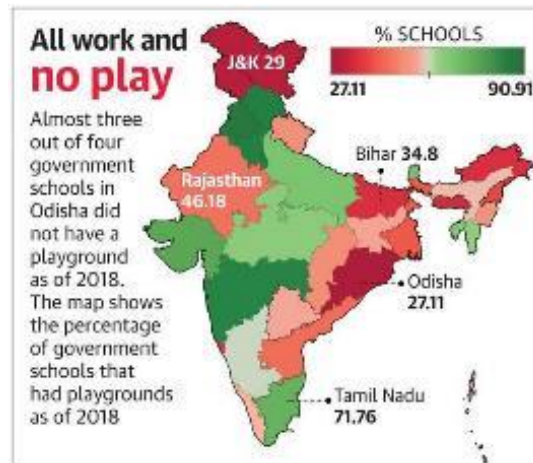
Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX-2020)

- ❖ National level Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX-2020) was conducted by the Indian Coast Guard in Goa.
- ❖ This is for the first time the 03 pillars of national SAR mechanism i.e. Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Ministry of Defence, took part in SAREX-20.
- ❖ It had the theme of Harmonization of Maritime and Aeronautical Search and Rescue code named 'HAMSAR'.
- ❖ SAREX exercise is being conducted biennially by Indian Coast Guard under the aegis of National Maritime Search and Rescue Board (NMSARB).



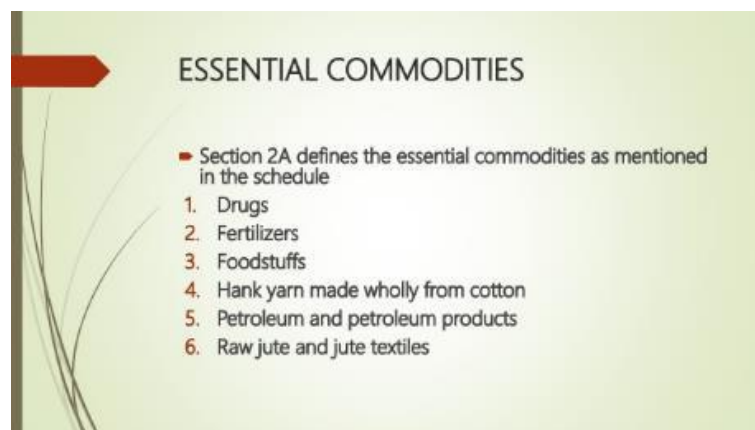
Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) 2017-18 survey

- ❖ Over 40% government schools don't have power and playgrounds.
- ❖ Only 56% of schools have electricity, with the lowest rates in Manipur and Madhya Pradesh, where less than 20% have access to power.
- ❖ Less than 57% of schools have playgrounds, including less than 30% of schools in Odisha and Jammu and Kashmir.



Masks & hand sanitizers under Essential Commodities Act

- ❖ The government amended Essential Commodities (EC) Act, 1955 to declare 2 ply & 3 ply surgical masks, N95 masks & hand sanitizers as Essential Commodities up to 30th June, 2020.
- ❖ It aims to ensure that these products are available in the market at the right price given the outbreak of coronavirus & also has a measure to manage it.
- ❖ In 1955, the Central government enacted this act to regulate the production, supply & delivery of bulk products & make them available to consumers at reasonable prices.



Crime Multi Agency Centre

- ❖ Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai has launched the Crime Multi Agency Centre (Cri-MAC).
- ❖ It is established for sharing of information on heinous crime and other issues related to inter-state coordination.
- ❖ He launched the Centre at a function organised on the occasion of 35th Inception Day of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

- ❖ He also launched the National Cybercrime Training Centre (NCTC) for professional quality e-Learning services on cyber-crime investigation to police officers, judges, prosecutors and other stakeholders.
- ❖ National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) celebrated its 35th Inception Day, on March 12, 2020.
- ❖ It is headquartered in New Delhi and is part of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India.
- ❖ It is an Indian government agency responsible for collecting and analysing crime data as defined by the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special and Local Laws (SLL).

Bhoomi Rashi portal

- ❖ The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) announced that the 'Bhoomi Rashi' portal has significantly increased the process of land acquisition for National Highways project.
- ❖ The portal has made the process error-free & more transparent with the notifications at every stage being processed in real-time.
- ❖ The MoRTH has launched the portal Bhoomi Rashi on April 1, 2018.

Wings India 2020

- ❖ A 4-day biennial event WINGS INDIA 2020, an International Exhibition & Conference on Civil Aviation sector held at Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad.
- ❖ This is organized by Ministry of Civil Aviation & Airports Authority of India (AAI) & Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) under the theme of "Flying For All".

Corona virus strain isolated in India

- ❖ India is the fifth country in the world besides - Japan, Thailand, U.S. and China - to have successfully isolated the COVID -19 virus strain.
- ❖ This helps in the development of drugs, vaccines and rapid diagnostic kits in the country.
- ❖ Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Balram Bhargava said that the strain that we have in India is 99.99% similar to the Wuhan strain.

India proposes COVID-19 Emergency Funds

- ❖ SAARC leaders participated in a video conference to frame a strategy in order to fight Corona Virus.
- ❖ PM Modi attended the video conference on behalf of India.

- ❖ India proposed creation of Covid-19 Emergency Fund.
- ❖ Also, India is to set up disease surveillance portal in order to trace the virus carriers in better.
- ❖ India is fighting Corona Virus with the strategy, “Prepare, don’t panic”.

Notified Disaster

- ❖ India has declared COVID-19 as “notified Disaster”.
- ❖ With this, the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) are to be temporarily used for supply of food, medical care and water for patients in quarantine camps.
- ❖ Under Disaster Management Act, 2005, the SDRF funds shall be used only for cyclone, earthquake, drought, landslide, hailstorm, cloudburst, avalanche, frost, pest attack and cold waves.
- ❖ Critical Medical conditions or pandemic situations were not under the notified disaster lists.
- ❖ Therefore, the Central Government has included COVID-19 outbreak under notified Disaster.
- ❖ This will now enable the state government to utilize the funds for treating Corona Virus.
- ❖ The SDRF funds which were constituted by Disaster Management Act, 2005 was recommended by 13th Finance Commission.

ICMR develops testing strategy

- ❖ The Indian Council of Medical Research developed COVID-19 testing strategy for people infected with the virus.
- ❖ The three main testing centres of Corona Virus are AIIMS at Delhi, National Institute of Virology at Pune and National Centre for Disease control at Delhi.
- ❖ Apart from these major centres, Government of India has also built 50 new exclusive centres that are to test for the virus.

Ganga Amantran Abhiyan

- ❖ The National Mission for Clean Ganga organized “Ganga Amantran Abhiyan” (GAA).
- ❖ The GAA is an open-water rafting and kayaking expedition in Ganga river.
- ❖ The expedition is conducted between Devprayag and Ganga Sagar.
- ❖ Devprayag is the place where two rivers Alakananda and Bhagirathi meet to form the Ganges.
- ❖ Ganga Sagar is a part of Sunderbans.

Ground Water contamination

- ❖ The Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria announced in the parliament that ground water is contaminated with Uranium at 30 micro-grams per litre in the country.
- ❖ The states such as Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Odisha, Rajasthan, Punjab, Telangana, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Jammu Kashmir have occurrence of Uranium in ground water.
- ❖ The Bureau of Indian Standards has set the maximum permissible limit of Uranium in drinking water as 0.03 mg per litre.

Vivad Se Viswas Bill

- ❖ Parliament passed the Direct Tax Vivad Se Viswas Bill, 2020.
- ❖ The bill aims to reduce the number of litigations that are associated with direct tax payments.
- ❖ The Direct Tax Vivad Se Viswas concept was introduced by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman during the Union Budget 2020-21.
- ❖ The bill says that if the tax payment is made after March 31, 2020, the tax payer has to pay 110% of the disputed tax.
- ❖ And if the tax is paid before the date, the tax payer has to pay full amount of the disputed tax and there will be no penalty applied.
- ❖ English version of the bill is “No Dispute, But Only Trust”.

All-women's medical college

- ❖ The Medical Council of India has recently granted permission to Symbiosis International (Deemed) University, Pune to establish an all-women's medical college.
- ❖ The Symbiosis Medical College for Women will also offer medical education for free to five students.

Ranjan Gogoi nominated to Rajya Sabha

- ❖ The former Chief Justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi has been nominated to Rajya Sabha by the President Ram Nath Kovind.
- ❖ The maximum strength of Rajya Sabha is 250 members out of which 12 are nominated by the President of India on the account of Art, Literature, Science and Social Service.
- ❖ Gogoi was the 46th Chief Justice in India.

Central Sanskrit University Bill 2019

- ❖ The Parliament passed the Central Sanskrit University Bill 2019.
- ❖ It will provide Central University status to three universities in India.
- ❖ Rajya Sabha passed the Central Sanskrit University Bill 2019 by voice vote on March 16, 2020.
- ❖ The three universities are
 - Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati,
 - Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi and
 - Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, New Delhi.

Curative petitions

- ❖ The Supreme Court of India rejected the curative petitions filed over Nirbhaya case.
- ❖ A curative petition is filed after the plea conviction against final conviction is dismissed.
- ❖ The Curative petitions are filed under Article 142 of the constitution.
- ❖ It shall be filed after the review petition is dismissed by the apex court.
- ❖ The concept of Curative petition is supported by the Article 137 of Constitution of India.
- ❖ The Article enables Supreme Court to review its own judgements made under Article 145.
- ❖ The Review petitions are filed under Article 137 of the Constitution that enables Supreme Court to review its own judgement.
- ❖ Under Supreme Court rules, 1966, these petitions should be filed within 30 days of judgement.

Priority to NCC certificate holders

- ❖ The Central Government has decided to give bonus marks to the NCC certificate holders in the direct recruitment examinations of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)
- ❖ The decision was taken to increase the participation of India's youth in NCC (National Cadet Corps).

National Cadet Corps

- ❖ It is a tri-service organization comprising young cadets of the Army, Naval and Air wings.
- ❖ The organisation's motto is 'Unity and Discipline'.
- ❖ The cadet group was established under the National Cadet Corps Act of 1948.

Second Phase of Swachh Bharat Mission

- ❖ The Government approved the implementation of second phase of Swachh Bharat Mission in February 2020.
- ❖ The Mission is to focus two crore projects during its second phase.
- ❖ It includes Open Defecation Free Plus (ODF Plus) and solid and liquid waste management.
- ❖ During this phase, the primary focus is to be provided on gram panchayats.
- ❖ These Gram Panchayats will get more funds under 15th finance commission.
- ❖ Every Gram Panchayat under Swachh Bharat Mission receives Rs 7 to 20 lakhs.
- ❖ Now these funds are to be increased by 5 lakhs for managing solid and liquid waste.
- ❖ These additional funds are to be allocated through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme.
- ❖ This way, the MGNREGA work force are to be diverted towards Swachh Bharat Mission.
- ❖ The second phase of Swachh Bharat Mission is to be implemented between 2020-21 and 2024-25.

ODF+, ODF++ and Water Plus

- ❖ The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Urban Development recently tabled its report on the performance of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) in Lok Sabha.
- ❖ Despite the fact that work on three protocols under the next phase of Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban-2) — ODF+, ODF++ and Water Plus — is to be completed by 2024, the ground situation was not matching with the assigned timeline.
- ❖ Out of 4,320 cities declared ODF, as low as 1,276 cities have been certified as ODF+.
- ❖ The number of ODF++ cities — 411 — means that less than 10 per cent cities are certified as ODF++ so far.
- ❖ ODF+ and ODF++ were launched in August 2018 to further scale up and sustain the work undertaken by the cities after achieving the ODF status under Phase I of the Swachh Bharat Mission — Urban (SBM-Urban).
- ❖ Cities that had been certified ODF at least once, on the basis of the ODF protocols, are eligible to declare themselves as SBM-ODF+ & SBM-ODF++.
- ❖ While ODF+ focuses on toilets with water, maintenance and hygiene, ODF++ focuses on toilets with sludge and septage management.
- ❖ Announced in August 2019, Water Plus aims to sustain toilets by treating and reuse of water.

- ❖ It contributes to the government's focus on water conservation and reuse under the Jal Shakti Abhiyan and is in alignment with United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goal No 6 on clean water and sanitation.
- ❖ Under Phase 1 of the Swachh Bharat Mission (U), 99 per cent of the cities became ODF, the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs had claimed in December 2019.

Disqualification petition

- ❖ For the first time in its history, the Supreme Court removed the Manipur Minister Thounaojam Shyamkumar Singh from the state cabinet.
- ❖ The apex court has also been restrained him from entering the Legislative assembly.

Background

- ❖ Mr Shyamkumar won the 2017 assembly elections on Congress Ticket and switched over to BJP to become the minister of Town Planning, forest and Environment.
- ❖ The Disqualification petitions against the minister by other MLAs was pending before the speaker of the Manipur Assembly since 2017.
- ❖ When the issue was appealed to SC, the apex court has invoked Article 142 and has removed the minister from the cabinet.
- ❖ According to the Article 212, the courts in India including Supreme Court cannot interfere in the proceedings of the Legislature of state.
- ❖ The Supreme Court under the article 142 can pass an order doing "complete justice" to matter pending before it.

State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)

- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs decided to treat COVID-19 as a notified disaster for the purpose of providing assistance under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).
- ❖ Constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 by respective states, it is the primary fund available with state governments for responses to notified disasters.
- ❖ The fund was constituted based on the recommendation of 13th Finance Commission.
- ❖ Under the Disaster Management Act, the States/UTs can draw funds from the State Disaster Response Fund, in addition to the funds from the state government.
- ❖ By law, the State Disaster Response Funds can be used only for notified Disasters under Disaster Management Act, 2005.

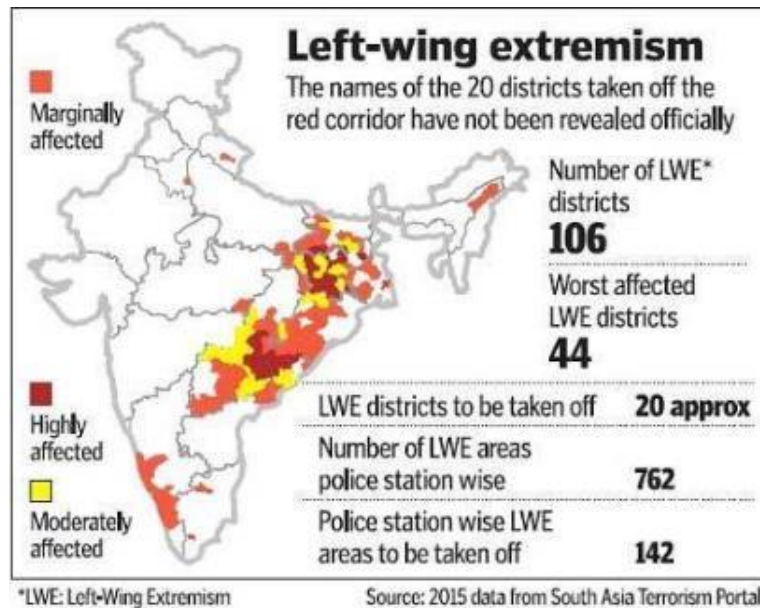
- ❖ The Central government contributes 75 per cent towards the SDRF allocation for general category states and UTs, and over 90 per cent for special category states/UTs, which includes north eastern states, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand).
- ❖ SDRF is located in the 'Public Account' under 'Reserve Fund'.
- ❖ But direct expenditures are not made from Public Account.
- ❖ The share of Government of India to the SDRF is treated as a 'grant in aid'.
- ❖ Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal ministry for overseeing the operation of the SDRF and monitors compliance with prescribed processes.
- ❖ Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) audit the SDRF every year.
- ❖ The disasters covered under the SDRF include cyclones, droughts, tsunamis, hailstorms, landslides, avalanches and pest attacks among others.
- ❖ 31 disaster categories are organised into five major sub-groups, which are: water and climate related disasters, geological related disasters, chemical, industrial and nuclear related disasters and biological related disasters, which includes biological disasters and epidemics.

Current scenario

- ❖ Odisha became the first state in the country to allocated funds to fight against Corona Virus.
- ❖ The Odisha State government has allocated Rs 200 crores to fight against the deadly disease.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Government allocated Rs 60 crores.

Decline in Left Wing Extremism

- ❖ The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs said about the decline in Left Wing Extremism in the last five years.
- ❖ This has been possible mainly due to the implementation of "National Policy and Action Plan-2015".
- ❖ In 2019, number of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) has reduced by 38% as compared to 2014.
- ❖ The control of these organizations and the counter measures are governed by the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) act of India, 1967.
- ❖ The Naxalite and Maoists organizations in the regions were declared as terrorists' group under the act.
- ❖ The Red Corridor includes the southern, central and eastern parts of India.
- ❖ It includes Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, and West Bengal and eastern Uttar Pradesh states.



Indira Gandhi Matritva Poshan Yojana

- ❖ The scheme was recently announced by the Rajasthan Government on pilot basis in 4 districts.
- ❖ The scheme will be implemented in Udaipur, Pratapgarh, Banswara and Dungarpur, where nutrition indicators among children and anaemia levels among mothers are worse than the average for the State.
- ❖ It is a maternity benefit scheme.
- ❖ Under the scheme ₹6,000 will be offered for the birth of the second child.
- ❖ The State scheme will complement the Central government's Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) which offers ₹5,000 for the birth of the first child.

About PMMVY

- ❖ The scheme is a conditional cash transfer scheme for pregnant and lactating women.
- ❖ It provides a partial wage compensation to women for wage-loss during childbirth and childcare and to provide conditions for safe delivery and good nutrition and feeding practices.

Atal Beema Vyakti Kalyan Yojana

- ❖ The Government of India announced that it will provide unemployment benefits to the section of unorganized workers under Atal Beema Vyakti Kalyan Yojana.
- ❖ These workers include persons who have lost their jobs due to the impact of the Corona Virus Pandemic.

- ❖ The workers who become unemployed due to the impact of corona virus will receive cash for 3 months.

About the Scheme

- ❖ The scheme provides unemployment insurance to those workers enrolled in ESI scheme.
- ❖ ESI is Employee State Insurance State.
- ❖ Under the scheme, the workers receive cash of 25% of their salary that they were receiving in the last 2 months.
- ❖ The scheme is operation since 2018.
- ❖ It provides compensation to those who become unemployed for three months.

India - Third largest producer of Electricity

- ❖ The Ministry of Power quoted International Energy Agency ranking in the Parliament.
- ❖ According to the ranking, India is the third largest producer of electricity in the world.
- ❖ Also, it is ranked 106th in terms of per capital consumption.
- ❖ India has now become power surplus from power deficit.
- ❖ Therefore, it is currently focusing on supply of quality power to consumers.
- ❖ India's power production is dominated by coal.
- ❖ As of May 2019, 72% of India's electricity was generated from coal-based power plants.
- ❖ However, several energy institutes predict that dependence of India on coal is to reduce.
- ❖ India is slowly shifting towards other sources of energy, especially solar energy.
- ❖ India has set a target of achieving 175 GW of renewable energy in 2022.
- ❖ Of this, 100 GW is to be solar power.

Ayush Health and Wellness Centre under Ayushman Bharat Mission

- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved Ayush Health and Wellness Centre under Ayushman Bharat Mission.
- ❖ The centres will help to achieve Universal Health Coverage.
- ❖ The centres will also help in reducing out of pocket expenditure as it will operate on "self-care" model.
- ❖ It also aims to integrate with SDG 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages) as that advised by NITI Aayog.
- ❖ The scheme is being implemented by the National Health Authority operating under Ministry of Health and Farmer Welfare.

Medical Device Park Scheme

- ❖ The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Modi approved the Medical Device Park Scheme.
- ❖ The scheme aims to boost the domestic manufacturing of medical devices in the country.
- ❖ It includes setting up of medical device parks in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ Every park is to receive Rs.100 crores.
- ❖ The parks will help to reduce imports and also increase standard of medical testing.
- ❖ Also, the scheme will help to reduce cost of production.
- ❖ India is the fourth largest market for medical devices in Asia.
- ❖ However, the domestic medical devices industry in India is very small.
- ❖ India's domestic medical devices stand at 2% of the global industry.

National Aquifer Mapping Programme

- ❖ The Jal Shakti Ministry informed that the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) is implementing the mapping programme.
- ❖ The CGWB was established in 1970.
- ❖ It is a statutory body constituted under the Environment (Protection) act, 1986.

Defence Procurement Procedure 2020

- ❖ The Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh launched the draft of new Defence Procurement Procedure.
- ❖ The new procedure aims to increase the indigenous manufacturing.
- ❖ The Defence Procurement Procedure is the process that is followed to simplify procurement of defence equipment.
- ❖ The new procedure aims to increase Indigenous Content ratio.
- ❖ The ratio is the percentage of content of the defence equipment built in India.
- ❖ The procedure has introduced "Buy Global" category.
- ❖ Under this category, only minimum necessary is to be bought from abroad.
- ❖ Leasing has also been introduced as a new category for acquisition in addition to existing 'Buy' & 'Make' categories.
- ❖ This is to substitute huge initial capital outlays with periodical rental payments.

Swavalamban Express

- ❖ The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) said that it will launch Swavalamban Express Train on June 5 this year for budding entrepreneurs.
- ❖ The Swavalamban Express will travel to 11 cities covering 7,000 km in 15 days. This is a part of its umbrella mission Swavalamban.
- ❖ Under this mission, youths will board the train with an idea and they shall get down with effective business plan after a series of experimental learning.

Tech For Tribals program

- ❖ TRIFED Launches transformational “Tech For Tribals” program in partnership with Institutes of National Importance (INIs) to develop Tribal entrepreneurship.
- ❖ It aims to transform 5 crore Tribal Entrepreneurs.
- ❖ It is supported by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises MSME.
- ❖ It also aims at capacity building and imparting entrepreneurship skills to tribal forest produce gatherers enrolled under the Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY).
- ❖ It will ensure higher success rate of the Tribal Entrepreneurs by enabling and empowering them to run their business with marketable products with quality certifications.

VanDhan Scheme

- ❖ The Van Dhan Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED.
- ❖ It seeks to improve tribal incomes through value addition of tribal products.
- ❖ Locally the Kendras are proposed under this scheme.
- ❖ They are to be managed by a Managing Committee (an SHG) consisting of representatives of Van Dhan SHGs.

India's First Covid 19 dedicated Hospital

- ❖ The Reliance Group of Companies in collaboration with Brihan mumbai Municipal corporation has set up a COVID-19 Centre at the Seven Hills Hospital in Mumbai.



- ❖ The centre is completely supported by Reliance Foundation.
- ❖ It has all required infrastructure including a negative pressure room.
- ❖ The Negative Room Pressure technology is used to isolate patients.

Lock down in India

- ❖ With COVID-19 spreading in India, the Government of India announced complete Lockdown for 21 days starting from March 25th.
- ❖ Government of India has allocated Rs 15,000 crores to fight against Corona Virus.
- ❖ The Fund is to be used to increase health infrastructure in the country.
- ❖ It had invoked the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- ❖ The COVID-19 was listed as “notified Disaster”.
- ❖ The Union Home Ministry has listed the commercial establishments that will continue to operate during the lock down.
- ❖ It includes power generation units, petrol pumps, cold storage units, private security agencies, food & medical equipment and pharmaceuticals.
- ❖ It has ruled curfew in some areas, Section-144 in some other areas and lock down in many other areas.
- ❖ The action is called Lock Down when there are restrictions on assembly.
- ❖ However, essential services are available in these situations.
- ❖ The Lock Down shall be enforced by a collector or the chief medical officer.
- ❖ Under the Section 144, when the assembly of people are prohibited according to Indian Penal Code.
- ❖ Under Section 144, more than 5 people are not allowed to assemble.
- ❖ The action is called Curfew when Section 144 is imposed along with the shutdown of essential services.
- ❖ The Curfew powers lies with Collector and Police Commissioner.

Short Service Commission

- ❖ The Supreme Court has upheld the right of serving Short Service Commission (SSC) women officers of the Navy to be granted permanent commission (PC) on a par with their male counterparts.

What benefit?

- ❖ A Permanent Commission means a career in the army until one retires.
- ❖ If one gets selected through Permanent Commission, one has the option to serve the country up to the full age of retirement.

- ❖ A women naval SSC officer retires in 10 years, whereas one with a permanent commission is entitled to serve for four more years, making it a total of 14 years.

Ayushman Bharat and COVID 19

- ❖ The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has included Ayushman Bharat or the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana in the Medical Insurance to fight against Corona Virus.
- ❖ The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has also involved National Health Authority as well to fight against Corona Virus.
- ❖ The National Health Authority is the implementing agency of Ayushman Bharat.

Reservation in Karnataka

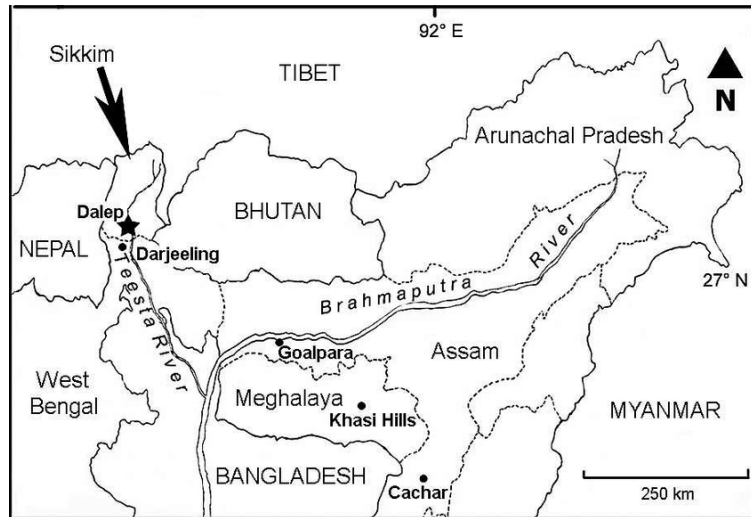
- ❖ The Supreme Court has rejected the pleas seeking exclusion of creamy layer or better-off individuals among Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) communities at the entry-level when it comes to the reservation in promotions.
- ❖ The applications were filed in the BK Pavitra case.
- ❖ The Act enacted by the Karnataka government provides, among other things, for consequential seniority to persons belonging to SC and ST categories promoted under the reservation policy of Karnataka.
- ❖ Consequential seniority enables reserved category candidates to retain their seniority for subsequent promotions.
- ❖ The Act was a valid exercise of power by the government under Article 16 (4A) which empowers the state to provide reservations to SC/STs in matters of promotion.
- ❖ The 'means-test and creamy layer' first finds expression in the Supreme Court's landmark judgment in Indra Sawhney versus Union of India, delivered by a nine-judge Bench on November 16, 1992.
- ❖ 'Creamy layer' are "some members of a backward class who are highly advanced socially as well as economically and educationally.

Committee of for prevention & control of COVID - 19

- ❖ The Union government has constituted a high level technical committee of Public Health Experts for COVID-19 to guide the prevention and control activities in the country.
- ❖ The 21-member committee will be headed by NITI Aayog member Dr V K Paul.
- ❖ The Union Health Secretary and Director General Indian Council of Medical Research are the Co-Chair.

Teesta River Bridge

- ❖ The Borders Road Organization (BRO) opened a 360 feet long bridge across Teesta river.
- ❖ The bridge was constructed by BRO under Project Swastik.
- ❖ Teesta river flows through the states of West Bengal and Sikkim.
- ❖ It flows into Bay of Bengal after traversing through Bangladesh.
- ❖ It is a tributary of the Jamuna river (Brahmaputra).



Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana

- ❖ The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman launched Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana.
- ❖ The scheme is an economic help package for people in the country to fight against COVID-19 and its effects.
- ❖ Around 1.7 lakh crore has been allocated under the package.
- ❖ Under the scheme, around 80 crore people are to get 5 kg of free rice and wheat for the next three months.
- ❖ This is additional to the already allotted 5 kg of subsidized rice and wheat.

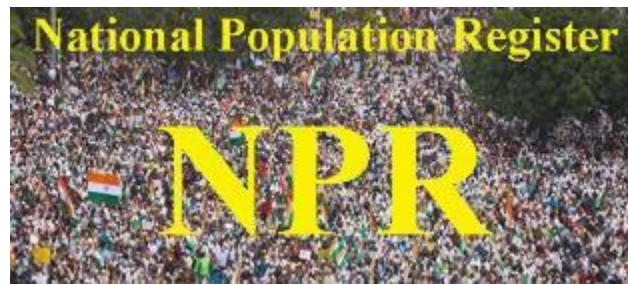
- ❖ Along with this, they will also get 1 kg of free pulses per household.
- ❖ The scheme will provide insurance cover for doctors, sanitation workers, nurses, paramedics and other staffs working on the front line in the fight against the virus.
- ❖ The scheme is to perform a direct benefit transfer of Rs 1000 to old age, Divyangs and pensioners.
- ❖ It has also proposed to offer free cylinders under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Scheme.
- ❖ The economic package has increased daily wages of MNREGA from Rs 182 to Rs 202.
- ❖ It is to be noted that Government has now included sanitation workers under MNREGA scheme.
- ❖ Also, they are to get Rs 2000 extra perks for a period of three months.
- ❖ Under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana scheme, women account holders will receive Rs 500 per month for the next three months.

Census 2021

- ❖ Both Census and NPR updation has been postponed due to Covid issue.
- ❖ The Union Ministry of Home Affairs had planned to conduct Census 2021 in two phases.
- ❖ The first phase was scheduled between April-September 2020 and the second phase was scheduled in February 2021.
- ❖ The National Population Register (NPR) updation was scheduled to be conducted along with Census 2021.
- ❖ It is to be conducted by the office of Registrar General of India operating under Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ❖ Assam was the only state that was to be kept out of the NPR process.
- ❖ Updation of the register for the state of Assam was done under the National Register of Citizens.

NPR

- ❖ The data for NPR was first collected in 2010 along with Census 2011.
- ❖ The NPR collects biometric and demographic data.
- ❖ The Biometric data is to be updated through Aadhar details.
- ❖ This is the first time NPR is collecting biometric data.
- ❖ Earlier in 2010, only demographic details were collected.
- ❖ Later in 2015, the data was updated with Aadhaar, ration card numbers and mobile numbers.



Operation Namaste

- ❖ On March 27, 2020, the Indian Army launched “Operation Namaste” to contain the spread of Corona Virus in the country.
- ❖ Under the operation, the army will help the Government of India fight against the deadly disease.



Force Majeure

- ❖ Indian Railways has decided that the period from 22.03.2020 to 14.04.2020 shall be treated under “Force Majeure”.
- ❖ During this period no demurrage, wharfage, stacking, stabling, detention and ground usage charge shall be leviable.

Fight Corona IDEathon

- ❖ It is a 2-day online event.
- ❖ The initiative was jointly organised by Ministry of Human Resources Development's Innovation Cell, AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education), MEITY Startup Hub (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology), Innovatio Curis and other institutions of global and national prominence.
- ❖ It was organized to search for accessible and affordable technological solutions that can contain the rapid spread of infection, ease the mounting pressure and ensure a quick return to normalcy.



Lockdown Measures

- ❖ The Union Agriculture Minister announced that agriculture and farming related activities have been exempted from Lock Down.
- ❖ It was issued under the second addendum issued by the Home Ministry towards the lock down.
- ❖ The move has been brought in to facilitate unhindered activities related to farming and agriculture.
- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs introduced new rules under the State Disaster Response Fund.
- ❖ Under the rules, the funds are to be used to facilitate availability of temporary accommodation and food for the migrant workers.
- ❖ Around 80% of India's work force is employed in informal sector and one-third are working as casual labours.

LPG in India

- ❖ Saudi Arabia has assured India on uninterrupted LPG supply amidst growing threat of COVID-19.
- ❖ India is the second largest importer of LPG in the world.
- ❖ It fulfils half of its requirements from the middle east countries such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait.
- ❖ In the year 2018-19, the usage of LPG in the country increased by 6.9% as compared to the previous year.
- ❖ The imports increased by 15.9% as compared to the earlier year.
- ❖ In 2018-19, India consumed 24.9 million tonnes of LPG.
- ❖ The consumption has increased greatly after the introduction of Ujjwala Programme.

High-level panel to restore normalcy

- ❖ The Prime Minister Office constituted a high-level panel to restore normalcy after 21 days of normalcy.
- ❖ The high-level committee is to suggest measures to improve health-care, reduce miseries and put the economy back on track.
- ❖ The committee is to work under the chairmanship of P K Mishra, principal secretary of the Prime Minister.
- ❖ Another working group has been constituted under the leadership of Niti Aayog member V K Paul.
- ❖ The team is to suggest measures to keep the supply of medical equipment, medicines continuous and also ensure hospital availability.

National Executive Committee

- ❖ The Disaster Management Act, 2005 enjoins the Central Government to Constitute a National Executive Committee (NEC) to assist the National Disaster Management Authority.
- ❖ It is responsible for the preparation of the National Disaster Management Plan for the whole country and to ensure that it is “reviewed and updated annually”.
- ❖ The Home secretary is serving as the Chairperson of this committee.

INTERNATIONAL

Mission Purvodaya

- ❖ The Union Minister of Steel announced at a workshop organized by Confederation of Indian Industries that Government of India is to make Odisha the steel hub of India.
- ❖ This is to be achieved by the Government with the help of Japan.
- ❖ The Mission Purvodaya was launched in January 2020.
- ❖ It aims to develop Eastern India as an integrated steel hub.
- ❖ This will also help achieve the target of National Steel Policy, which is producing 300 MT of steel by 2030.

US postponed ASEAN

- ❖ The United States has decided to postpone a meeting with leaders of Southeast Asian countries it had planned to host on March 14.
- ❖ President Donald Trump had invited leaders of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to meet in Las Vegas.

- ❖ The decision comes due to the growing fears that the coronavirus will spread in the United States.

Scotland to end 'period poverty'

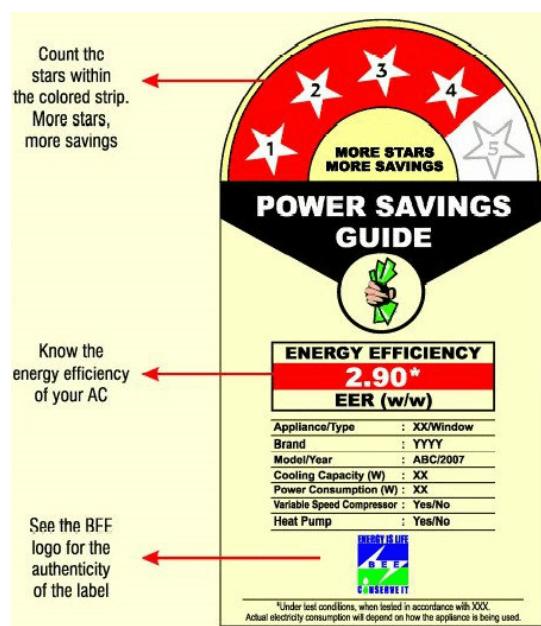
- ❖ Scotland may become the first country in the world to end 'period poverty' by passing the Period Products Bill.
- ❖ This Bill aims to make sanitary products free for women of all age groups in the country.
- ❖ To note - free menstrual products are already available to students in high schools, colleges and universities in Scotland.

BEE launches star rating programme

- ❖ Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), launched star rating programme for Deep Freezer and Light Commercial Air Conditioners (LCAC) during the recent event.
- ❖ The Star Labelling Programme has been formulated by as part of its mandate, under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
- ❖ The Star Rating gives energy efficiency of an appliance. Higher the star rating lower is the energy consumed.
- ❖ Also Urja Dakshata Information Tool (UDIT), a first ever initiative taken by BEE with World Resources Institute (WRI) was launched during this event.

Urja Dakshata information tool

- ❖ UDIT is a user-friendly platform that explains the energy efficiency landscape of India across industry, appliances, building, transport, municipal and agriculture sectors.



- ❖ UDIT will also showcase the capacity building and new initiatives taken up by the Government across the sectors.

Peace agreement

- ❖ US and Taliban have signed a historic agreement- “Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan”- in Doha, Qatar.
- ❖ The agreement could pave the way to end America’s longest-fought war.
- ❖ Highlights of the agreement:
 - Military troops withdrawal: It lays out a 14-month timetable for the withdrawal of all military forces of the United States, its allies, and Coalition partners.
 - Release of prisoners: The agreement also calls for the release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners and 1,000 “prisoners of the other side” on the first day of intra-Afghan negotiations.

Free public transport

- ❖ Luxembourg became the world's first country to offer entirely free public transport.
- ❖ This is an attempt made to help less-well-off workers and reduce road traffic.

OPEC to cut oil production

- ❖ The world’s largest oil production nations of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) have planned to cut oil production.
- ❖ The major member of OPEC, Saudi Arabia has planned to cut production by 1.5 million barrel a day from April 2020.
- ❖ The cuts are being made to avoid oil prices from collapsing.



- ❖ OPEC has taken this decision predicting decline in demand of oil due to Corona Virus and its impact all over the world.
- ❖ OPEC was founded in Baghdad, Iraq with 5 member countries.
- ❖ Currently, the Organization has a total of 14 Member Countries.

Indian Ocean Commission

- ❖ India joined the 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).
- ❖ The Indian Ocean Commission was created in 1982 at Port Louis, Mauritius.
- ❖ It comprises of 5 African Indian Ocean Nations namely Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros, Reunion (France) and Seychelles.



United Nations Global Compact Study

- ❖ The United Nations Global Compact conducted a study recently.
- ❖ It found that female labour participation has decreased from 34% in 2006 to 24.8% in 2020.
- ❖ The study also says that out of the 153 countries surveyed, India is the only country where economic gender gap is greater than political gap.
- ❖ Globally 38.7% of employed women are working in forestry, agriculture and fisheries.
- ❖ However, only 13.85 of them are landholders.

Gender Social Norms Index

- ❖ The first Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), published by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), analysed data from 75 countries, collectively home to more than 80% of the global population.
- ❖ According to the index, about half of the world's men and women feel that men make better political leaders.
- ❖ And over 40% feel that men make better business executives and that men have more right to a job when jobs are scarce.

Trends in International arms transfers 2019

- ❖ According to new data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the largest exporters of arms during the past five years were the United States, Russia, France, Germany and China.
- ❖ According to the report, India is the second largest arms importer in the world.
- ❖ The report says that Russia is the largest supplier to the Indian market between 2015-19.
- ❖ The new data shows that the flow of arms to the Middle East has increased, with Saudi Arabia clearly being the world's largest importer.
- ❖ SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- ❖ It is established in 1966 at Sweden.
- ❖ SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.

OPEC+ supply cut agreement with Russia

- ❖ A three-year pact between OPEC and Russia ended in acrimony recently after Moscow refused to support deeper oil cuts to cope with the outbreak of the coronavirus.
- ❖ OPEC responded by removing all limits on its own production.
- ❖ OPEC+ refers to the alliance of crude producers, who have been undertaking corrections in supply in the oil markets since 2017.



- ❖ OPEC plus countries include Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan and Sudan.
- ❖ Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, plans to raise its crude oil production significantly above 10 million barrels per day (bpd) in April, after this collapse.

Vladimir Putin to Become Russia's Eternal Leader

- ❖ In Russia, President Vladimir Putin has endorsed a plan that would allow him to remain in power until 2036.
- ❖ The legislation was approved by the lower house of Russia's parliament, the Duma, but must still be approved by Russia's Constitutional Court and a public referendum to be held in April.
- ❖ Putin had already proposed constitutional changes that would allow him to remain in power beyond 2024.



A New era for girls: Report

- ❖ "A New era for girls: Taking stock on 25 years of progress" is a report recently unveiled by UNICEF, Plan International and United Nations Women.
- ❖ The report reveals that though the rate of drop-outs for girls in schools has decreased from 20% to 13.5% from 2008 to 2018, a greater empowerment has not taken place.
- ❖ It also states that many girls still face an unequal violent environment and one in every 20 girls in the age group of 15-20 has experienced rape, both within and outside marriage.
- ❖ The report mentions a term called "learning crisis"; this means, even when girls are in school, many do not receive a quality education.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

- ❖ The ICC gives go-ahead to probe Afghanistan's alleged war crimes.
- ❖ It came just days after the signing of a "historic peace deal" between Washington and the Taliban.

- ❖ The International Criminal Court (ICC), located in The Hague, is the court of last resort for prosecution of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.
- ❖ It is the first permanent, treaty based, international criminal court established to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.
- ❖ Its founding treaty, the Rome Statute, entered into force on July 1, 2002.



International Military Council on Climate and Security (IMCCS)

- ❖ It is a group of senior military leaders, security experts, and security institutions across the globe dedicated to anticipating, analyzing, and addressing the security risks of a changing climate.
- ❖ The launch of the IMCCS was announced at The Hague, Netherlands, in 2019 as a response to a growing demand from military professionals for sharing information and best practices on addressing the security and military dimensions of climate change.
- ❖ The IMCCS is administered by the Centre for Climate and Security.
- ❖ World Climate and Security report is published recently by IMCCS.

Iran and International Monetary Fund.

- ❖ For the first time since 1962, Iran is seeking the help of International Monetary Fund.
- ❖ Since Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran stopped getting help from IMF.
- ❖ After US had withdrawn from JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), it had imposed sanctions on Iran.

Global Animal Protection Index 2020

- ❖ The Global Animal Protection Index 2020 was released by World Animal Protection, an international animal welfare charity.
- ❖ India was ranked second in the index.
- ❖ India was ranked along with Spain, Mexico, France and New Zealand.
- ❖ The Animal Protection Index ranks countries from A to G.
- ❖ According to the index, the countries that performed weakly included Iran, Morocco, Algeria and Belarus.



International Health Regulations (IHR)

- ❖ International Health Regulations (IHR) were agreed upon by the global community to improve the detection and reporting of potential public health emergencies worldwide.
- ❖ Under IHR, once a WHO member identifies a potential event, it must assess the public health risks and notify WHO.
- ❖ Since IHR came into being, WHO has declared four public health emergency of international concern (PHEICs) namely, H1N1 influenza (2009), Polio (2014), Ebola (2014) and Zika virus (2016).
- ❖ Covid-19 is the fifth time a PHEIC is declared by the WHO.

Visas for foreign nationals

- ❖ The Indian government has suspended visas for foreign nationals from all across the globe owing to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak.
- ❖ India is the first among more than 120 countries affected by this outbreak to take such a drastic step.

National Emergency in the USA

- ❖ The President of United States of America Donald Trump has declared national emergency over the spread of corona virus.
- ❖ This kind of emergency in the country is rare.
- ❖ Earlier, the same kind of emergency was declared by President Bill Clinton over widespread of West Nile.

WHO shifts epicenter from China to Europe

- ❖ The World Health Organization recently shifted the epicenter of Corona Virus from China to Europe.
- ❖ This is mainly because while rate of infections is being controlled in China, it is increasing exponentially in European Nations.
- ❖ Also, the number of deaths due to the virus in Europe is more than any part of the world.

UNCTAD report

- ❖ The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) recently released a report on the effect of COVID-19 on global economy.
- ❖ According to the report India was ranked 10th.
- ❖ The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established in 1964 with headquarters at Geneva.

UK's Strategy to contain Corona Virus.

- ❖ The United Kingdom Government under the PM Boris Johnson has adopted "Herd Immunity" strategy to contain Corona Virus.

Herd immunity

- ❖ Herd immunity is achieved through vaccinations and also by gaining immunity.
- ❖ When a considerably bigger population is vaccinated, those that are not vaccinated also gain immunity.
- ❖ Even in epidemics, over the period of time, when the majority of population gain immunity against the disease, the level of its transmitting reduces.
- ❖ This is the strategy being adopted as "Herd Immunity" in United Kingdom.

Iraq's new Prime Minister

- ❖ Iraqi President [Barham Salih](#) appointed veteran politician Adnan al-Zurfi as prime minister.
- ❖ Al-Zurfi has 30 days to form his cabinet which he must then put to a vote of confidence in Iraq's Parliament.



United Nations Statistical Commission

- ❖ Sierra Leone assumed its seat in the UNSC for the first time ever.
- ❖ Sierra Leone's Statistician General, Osman Sankoh has been unanimously elected as the Rapporteur, responsible for the reports of the United Nations Statistics Commission's Sessions for a 4-year term (2020-2023).
- ❖ Thirty-six major changes to the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were approved and adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), at its 51st session that concluded on March 6, 2020, in New York.
- ❖ The revised global framework will have 231 indicators, approximately the same number as in the original framework.
- ❖ These changes are based on the '2020 comprehensive review' conducted by the UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs).

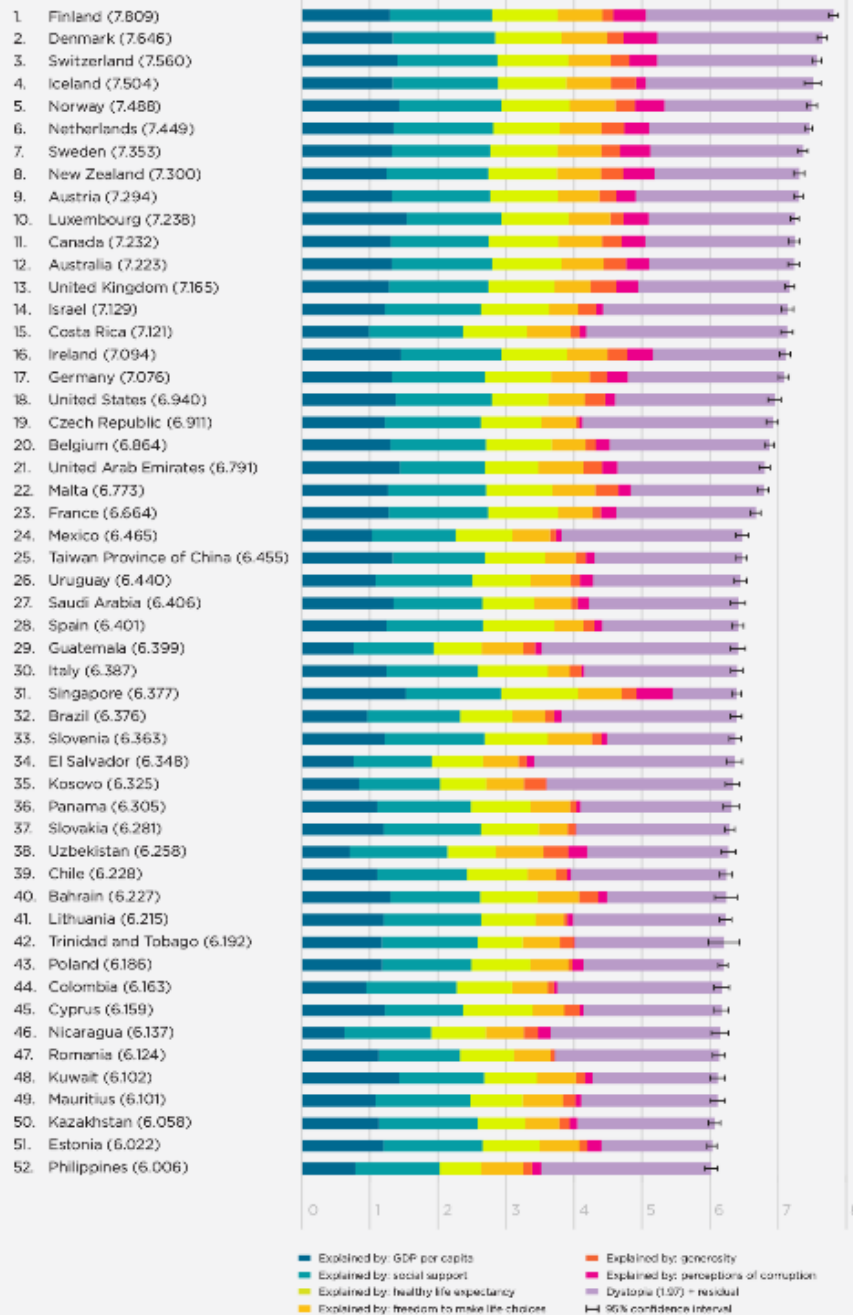
Key changes

- ❖ Eight additional indicators were added across six SDG goals — 2, 3, 4, 10, 13 and 16.
- ❖ Six indicators across six SDG goals — 1, 4, 8, 11, 13 and 17 — have been deleted.

Finland – World's happiest Country

- ❖ Finland's residents enjoy a high quality of life, security and public services, with rates of inequality and poverty among the lowest of all OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries.
- ❖ Experts at the United Nations declared Finland to be the world's happiest nation for the third year running.
- ❖ Researchers for the World Happiness Report asked people in 156 countries to evaluate their own levels of happiness.
- ❖ Measures such as GDP, social support, personal freedom and levels of corruption were taken into account to give each nation a happiness score.
- ❖ The report is released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations by the UN General Assembly.
- ❖ India ranked 144 among 156 countries.
- ❖ OECD is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries
- ❖ It was founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade.

Figure 2.1: Ranking of Happiness 2017-2019 (Part 1)



Technology to detect Corona

- ❖ The International Atomic Energy Agency plans to help developing countries carry out tests to detect the new coronavirus by utilizing nuclear-derived technology.
- ❖ Scientists from various countries will undergo the first training course in detection technologies in a few weeks' time.

- ❖ The participants will learn to handle Real-Time Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction, or RT-PCR, tests.
- ❖ The diagnostic method uses a nuclear-derived technique to accurately detect and identify the coronavirus within hours.
- ❖ The IAEA is the international centre for cooperation in the nuclear field.
- ❖ The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.

Country-by-Country Report

- ❖ The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has developed an Action Plan called “Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Action Plan 13”.
- ❖ This is to ensure that a multinational enterprise would report its profit correctly where it is earned.
- ❖ The Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Action 13 report provides a template for multinational enterprises (MNEs) to report annually and for each tax jurisdiction.
- ❖ This report is called the Country-by-Country (CbC) Report.
- ❖ CBC contains,
 - Aggregated country-by-country information relating to the global allocation of income, the taxes paid, and certain other indicators of a multi-national company.
 - A list of all the constituent entities of the multi-national company operating in a particular jurisdiction and the nature of the main business activity of each constituent entity.

CDRI – India and UK

- ❖ The United Kingdom is to co-chair India led CDRI (Global Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure).
- ❖ The CDRI was established by PM Modi at the G20 meet held in 2017.
- ❖ It will aim in building strong climate resilient infrastructures that will reshape construction in core sectors such as energy, transportation, telecommunication and water.
- ❖ India is a world leader in adopting preventive measures to avoid human deaths due to disasters.
- ❖ India’s “Zero Casualty Approach” has gained several praises all over the world including United Nations.

G7 summit 2020

- ❖ The US President Donald Trump has cancelled an in-person G7 Summit and is to conduct the summit through video conferencing.
- ❖ The G7 organization is made up of the largest economies of the world namely France, Canada, US, UK, Italy, Japan and Germany.
- ❖ The G7 Groupings believe that though China is the second largest economy in the world, it relatively has low level of wealth per head population.
- ❖ This means that China is not an advanced economy according to the G7 members.

World Cities Summit

- ❖ The World Cities Summit was recently postponed due to the threat of Corona Virus.
- ❖ The summit that is to be held in Singapore has been postponed to June 20, 2021.
- ❖ The Summit is an international conference that brings together policy makers to identify innovative solutions to cities that are facing challenges.
- ❖ This year the summit was to be held under the theme - Liveable and Sustainable Cities: Adapting to a Disrupted World

Note

- ❖ The World Cities Summit is biennial.
- ❖ It acts as a common platform for industry experts and government leaders to address sustainable city challenges.

Four Mega Trials

- ❖ The World Health Organization recently launched a mega trial of four most promising corona virus treatments.
- ❖ It includes
 - Remdesivir, an anti-viral compound
 - Chloroquine and Hydroxychloroquine, the Malarial medications
 - Combination of Lopinavir and Ritonavir, HIV drugs
 - Interferon-beta along with the combination of Lopinavir and Ritonavir
- ❖ The drug Remdesivir was found to treat E-Bola viral infections during the E-bola outbreak in Congo.
- ❖ The drug has been proved that it inhibits other Corona Virus Stains called SARS and MERS.

Safe Hands Challenge

- ❖ It is a campaign launched by the World Health Organization in the wake of 2019-20 coronavirus pandemic.
- ❖ The campaign urges everyone to wash their hands regularly for 40 seconds to keep themselves safe and prevent the transmission of disease.



COVID - 19 Solidarity Response Fund

- ❖ The United Nations Foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation have created the solidarity fund
- ❖ It is to support WHO and partners in a massive effort to help countries prevent, detect, and manage the novel coronavirus – particularly those where the needs are the greatest.

Kurzarbeit scheme at Germany

- ❖ Kurzarbeit is a German term for “short-work”.
- ❖ The policy provides for a short-time work allowance, called kurzarbeitgeld.
- ❖ It partially compensates for lost earnings during uncertain economic situations.
- ❖ Payment under Kurzarbeit is calculated on the basis of net loss of earnings.

Hypersonic Missiles

- ❖ The United States successfully tested nuclear capable hypersonic missiles.
- ❖ Recently, Russia tested a hypersonic weapon in December 2019 and China has already showcased its DF-17 hypersonic glide vehicle.
- ❖ The glide vehicle flew at five times more than the speed of sound.



G20 Virtual Summit

- ❖ The G20 video summit was chaired by the Saudi king Salman.
- ❖ As a member of G20, India was represented by PM Modi.
- ❖ At the summit, the leaders pledged to infuse 5 trillion USD into the global economy.
- ❖ The summit was first of its kind with the leaders attending through video conferencing.
- ❖ The G20 Summit was to be held under the leadership of Saudi Arabia in November 21-22, 2020.
- ❖ Saudi has chosen the theme of “Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century for all”.
- ❖ For 2020 summit, Spain, Jordan, Singapore and Switzerland are the invited countries.

About

- ❖ The G20 summit is an annual meeting of leaders from the countries with the largest and fast-growing economies.
- ❖ Its members account for 85% of the world’s GDP, and two-thirds of its population.
- ❖ The G20 Summit is formally known as the “Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy”.
- ❖ The group has no permanent staff of its own, so every year in December, a G20 country from a rotating region takes on the presidency.
- ❖ After the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997-1998, the G7 finance ministers agreed to establish the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in 1999.

IMF Policy Tracker

- ❖ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently launched the “IMF Policy Tracker”.

- ❖ The platform will provide all the key economic responses launched by Governments all over the world to fight against Corona Virus.



Global Humanitarian Response Plan

- ❖ The United Nations launched Global Humanitarian Response Plan to fight against COVID-19.
- ❖ The organization has allocated 2 billion USD to implement the plan.
- ❖ The plan has been launched in 51 countries of Africa, South America, Middle East and also Asia.
- ❖ The plan is to be implemented by the United Nations in direct collaboration with international NGOs.
- ❖ Under the plan, the organization is to deliver essential medical supplies and laboratory equipment to test the virus.

USA's economic package

- ❖ The US Senate has unanimously approved a \$2.2 trillion economic package to contain the damage caused to the country's economy due to the novel coronavirus outbreak.
- ❖ The package is the largest of its kind in modern American history.
- ❖ It is far bigger than the \$800 billion assistance provided in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis.

National Security Mission

- ❖ The United States' Space Force launched a hyper-secure satellite for its military communications.
- ❖ With the launch of the satellite the United States has begun its first National Security Mission.
- ❖ The Lock Heed Martin AEHF (Advanced Extremely High Frequency) satellite was launched from Florida.

- ❖ The US Space force is the sixth service of the country.
- ❖ The first five major services of Defence includes Army, Air Force, Navy, Naval Corps and Coast.

Trace, Test, Treat

- ❖ The South Korean Model has a vigorous regime of “trace, test, treat”.
- ❖ It has shown remarkable results in controlling the spread of the novel coronavirus.
- ❖ It was done without putting a nationwide lockdown in place.

Global Coal Power Production

- ❖ According to a survey in 2019, the global coal power plant development declined for the fourth consecutive year.
- ❖ The survey was conducted by the Global Energy Monitor, Sierra Club, Greenpeace international and the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

Defence Production Act



- ❖ US President Donald Trump invoked the Defence Production Act recently.
- ❖ The Act has been invoked in order to direct General Motors, a Multinational Corporation to manufacture ventilators needed to fight COVID-19.
- ❖ The Act was enacted in 1950 in response to Korean War.

ECONOMY

100% FDI in insurance intermediaries

- ❖ The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) amended the Consolidated [Foreign Direct Investment](#) Policy 2017.
- ❖ It aims to allow 100 per cent [FDI](#) in insurance intermediaries through the automatic route.
- ❖ This includes insurance brokers, reinsurance brokers, insurance consultants, corporate agents, third-party administrators, surveyors and loss assessors.
- ❖ Previously FDI up to 49 percent was allowed in insurance intermediaries through the automatic route.

100% FDI on civil aviation

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has given approval to permit foreign investment up to 100% by NRIs in case of Air India.
- ❖ Previously 100% FDI is permitted under automatic route for NRIs in Scheduled Air Transport Service/Domestic Scheduled Passenger Airline.

Chennai ranks 2nd in Digital transaction

- ❖ According to the recent survey Bangalore ranks first in currency transactions through digital medium (Paytm, Gpay, etc.) followed by Chennai in second place.
- ❖ In the state-wise ranking, the first three ranks go to Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu respectively.
- ❖ This survey on the digital exchange of goods and services in India was conducted by the World Line Money Transfer Company.

Interest rate on Employee provident fund reduced

- ❖ Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) lowered the interest rate on deposits to 8.50 per cent for the current financial year (FY20).
- ❖ Previously it was 8.65 per cent in 2018-19.
- ❖ The move means that salaried employees would earn lower returns for the financial year ending March 31, 2020.

EPFO

- ❖ EPFO assists the Central Board in administering a compulsory contributory Provident Fund Scheme, a Pension Scheme and an Insurance Scheme for the workforce engaged in the organized sector in India.
- ❖ EPFO comes under the administrative control of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India.

SAVINGS INSTRUMENTS

Rate of interest (in %)

EPF	8.5*
PPF	7.9
5-year time deposit	7.7
National Savings Certificate	7.9
General Provident Fund	7.9
Savings deposit	4

*yet to be notified;
proposed for 2019-20
Source: EPFO, Finance Ministry

YES BANK CRISIS

- ❖ On March 5, 2020, the Reserve Bank of India imposed a month-long moratorium on YES bank.
- ❖ The Reserve Bank has imposed withdrawal restrictions of Rs 50,000.
- ❖ RBI has selected SBI (The State Bank of India) to inject capital into Yes Bank
- ❖ Moratorium has been imposed on the bank by Government of India under recommendation of RBI.
- ❖ Rana Kapoor is the founder and CEO of Yes Bank.

National Conference on Economics of Competition Law

- ❖ The Competition Commission of India (CCI) organised the 5th National Conference on Economics of Competition Law at New Delhi.
- ❖ The conference highlighted the importance of market studies for facilitating an evidence-based approach to antitrust policy.

Mega Consolidation of Public Sector Banks

- ❖ The Union Cabinet chaired had approved mega consolidation of 10 Public Sector Banks.
- ❖ The mega merger is to come into effect from April 1, 2020.
- ❖ It includes amalgamation of United Bank of India and Oriental Bank of India into Punjab National Bank.
- ❖ It will make the proposed entity as the second largest public sector bank.
- ❖ Also, amalgamation of Syndicate Bank into Canara Bank.

- ❖ The Cabinet also approved amalgamation of Corporation Bank and Andhra Bank into Union Bank of India.
- ❖ It also approved amalgamation of Allahabad Bank into Indian Bank.



No minimum balance for SBI savings bank accounts

- ❖ The State Bank of India (SBI) announced that it has waived off the requirement of holding average monthly balance for savings accounts.
- ❖ Currently SBI savings bank account customers need to maintain an average monthly balance of Rs 3,000, Rs 2,000 and Rs 1,000 in Metro, Semi Urban and Rural areas, respectively.
- ❖ The bank has also rationalised interest rate on savings accounts to a flat 3 per cent per annum for all savings bank account holders.
- ❖ Previously, savings accounts with a balance of less than Rs 1 lakh earn 3.25 percent a year, while those with more than Rs 1 lakh earn 3 percent.

Kisan Rail Scheme

- ❖ The Government of India recently formed a committee in order to make suggestions on Kisan Rail Scheme.
- ❖ The scheme was introduced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Union Budget 2020-21.
- ❖ The Kisan Rail is being launched to set up national cold supply chain in the country.
- ❖ The perishable goods under the scheme are to be transported through freight trains with refrigerated coaches.

The Mineral Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020

- ❖ The Bill amends the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) and the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 (CMSP Act).
- ❖ The MMDR Act regulates the overall mining sector in India.
- ❖ This will speed up the process of implementation of projects, ease of doing business, simplification of procedure and benefit all the parties in areas where minerals are located.

- ❖ In August 2019, the government announced 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) under the automatic route in coal mining for open sale, besides creating associated infrastructure, such as washeries.
- ❖ This opens up the sector to players outside steel and power as well as removes end-use restrictions.
- ❖ It will create an efficient energy market and bring in more competition as well as reduce coal imports.
- ❖ India imported 235 million tonnes (mt) of coal last year, of which 135 mt valued at Rs 171,000 crore could have been met from domestic reserves.
- ❖ It might also put an end to Coal India Ltd's monopoly in the sector.

Under the Bill

- ❖ Currently, separate licenses are provided for prospecting and mining of coal and lignite, called prospecting license, and mining lease, respectively.
- ❖ The bill adds new type of license that is allocation of coal/lignite blocks for composite prospecting licence cum mining lease.
- ❖ Companies will be allowed to carry on coal mining operation for own consumption, sale or for any other purposes, as may be specified by the central government.
- ❖ The Bill clarifies that the companies need not possess any prior coal mining experience in India in order to participate in the auction of coal and lignite blocks.
- ❖ The Bill provides that the various approvals, licenses, and clearances given to the previous lessee will be extended to the successful bidder for a period of two years.
- ❖ During this period, the new lessee will be allowed to continue mining operations.
- ❖ Under the MMDR Act, mining leases for specified minerals (minerals other than coal, lignite, and atomic minerals) are auctioned on the expiry of the lease period.
- ❖ The Bill provides that state governments can take advance action for auction of a mining lease before its expiry.

RoDTEP (Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Product) scheme.

- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved to withdraw the MEIS (Merchandise Export from India) Scheme in phases.
- ❖ It is later to be replaced with RoDTEP (Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Product) scheme.
- ❖ The MEIS is being replaced as the exports are to fall further due to Corona Virus outbreak.
- ❖ The RoDTEP is compliant with WTO (World Trade Organization) norms.
- ❖ The RoDTEP is a scheme for exporters to reimburse their taxes and duties.
- ❖ The MEIS scheme offers export incentives between 2% and 5%.

- ❖ It was introduced under the Foreign Trade Policy of India (FTP 2015-20).
- ❖ The aim of MEIS scheme is to make Indian products competitive at the Global market.

Exposure limits of Urban Cooperative Banks revised

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India revised exposure limits of Urban Cooperative Banks (UCB).
- ❖ Earlier the RBI permitted 15% of its capital funds to single borrowers and 40% of its funds to group of borrowers.
- ❖ It has now revised the group of borrower fund limit to 25% of its funds.
- ❖ The Exposure Limit is the maximum credit a bank avails to its borrower.
- ❖ The RBI also revised the priority sector lending (PSL) target for UCBs from 40% to 75%.
- ❖ The priority sectors include agriculture, micro and small enterprises, low income groups, poor people for housing, education loans, loans for weaker sections.

39th GST Council

- ❖ The GST Council recently concluded its 39th meeting at Delhi and took major decisions about GST rates to be applied for various commodities.

Major Decisions

- ❖ GST on mobile phones and certain parts to be increased to 18% from 12%.
- ❖ GST on MRO (maintenance repair overhaul) services of aircraft reduced to 5% from 18%.
- ❖ GST on handmade and machine-made matchsticks rationalised to 12%.

The GST Council

- ❖ It is a constitutional body introduced in 2016 by the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act.
- ❖ It was constituted under the article 279A of the Constitution.
- ❖ It is headed by the Union Finance Minister.

Reduction in Gold Imports

- ❖ The Commerce Ministry reported that the gold imports for the period April to February (2019-20) has reduced by 8.86% as compared to the previous year.
- ❖ India is the largest importer of gold in the world.
- ❖ Indian economy has been facing increased Current account deficit due to import of gold and fuel.

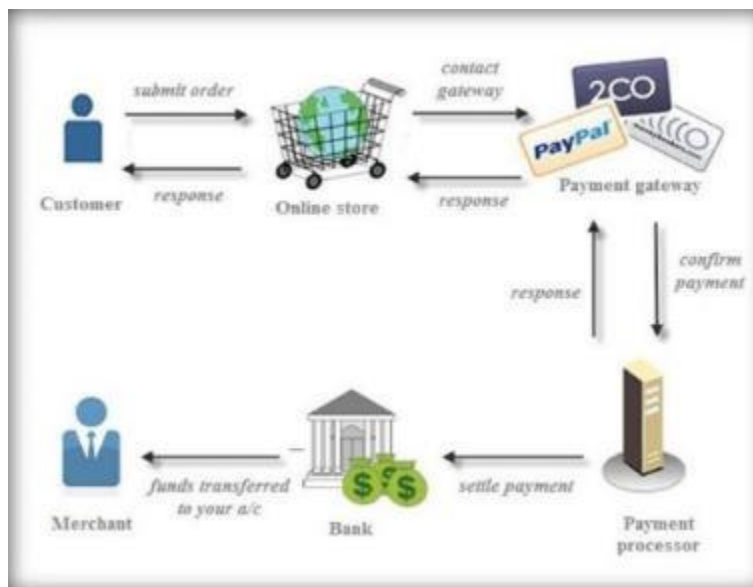
- ❖ The Current account deficit is the difference between money flowing in on exports and the money flowing out on imports.
- ❖ A country with increasing Current account deficit means that it is becoming uncompetitive.
- ❖ It also means that investors are not willing to invest.
- ❖ Therefore, reducing gold and oil imports will reduce Current account deficit.

New Guidelines for Payment Aggregators

- ❖ The RBI released new guidelines for payment aggregators (PA).
- ❖ Capital requirements for payment aggregators has been reduced to Rs 15 crore at the time of application for the licence.
- ❖ Pure-play payment gateway companies would be separated as an entity and would be identified as technology service providers for banks and non-banks.
- ❖ PAs have also been asked to adhere to strict security guidelines, adhere to all KYC (Know Your Customer) and AML (Anti Money Laundering) rules.
- ❖ The RBI has prohibited PAs from allowing online transactions to be done with ATM pin as the second factor of authentication, which few payment gateway companies were offering as a service.

Payment Aggregators

- ❖ These are players who integrate with e-commerce companies and connect them with banks.
- ❖ They receive payments on behalf of these companies and transfer the money to their accounts.
- ❖ Entities like Billdesk, CCAvenue, Firstdata, Razorpay, Cashfree, Paytm Payment Gateway and others are offering payment services to ecommerce companies.



MSP for crops

- ❖ The Union Government has increased the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Kharif and Rabi crops of 2019-20 season including Paddy, wheat, pulses and oilseeds on the line of fixing the MSP at a level of 1.5 times of the cost of production.
- ❖ The Government fixes MSPs of 22 mandated crops including wheat, pulses and oilseeds on the basis of recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP), after considering the views of State Governments and Central Ministries/Departments concerned & other relevant factors.
- ❖ In addition, MSP for Toria and De-Husked coconut is also fixed on the basis of MSPs of Rapeseed & Mustard and Copra respectively.
- ❖ While recommending MSP, CACP considers various factors viz. cost of production, overall demand-supply situations of various crops in domestic and world markets, domestic and international prices, inter-crop price parity, terms of trade between agriculture and non-agricultural sector, likely effect of price policy on rest of economy, rational utilization of land, water and other production resources and a minimum of 50 percent as the margin over the cost of production
- ❖ The National Commission on Farmers (NCF) headed by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan had recommended that the MSP should be at least 50 percent more than the weighted average cost of production.

PRICE CHART

Kharif MSP of major crops in 2019-20 (in ₹/quintal)

Crop	2018-19	2019-20	% Increase
Paddy (common)	1,750	1,815	3.71
Jowar (Hybrid)	2,430	2,550	4.9
Bajra	1,950	2,000	2.56
Maize	1,700	1,760	3.52
Arhar (Tur)	5,675	5,800	2.20
Moong	6,975	7,050	1.07
Groundnut	4,890	5,090	4.08
Soybean (yellow)	3,399	3,710	9.14
Cotton (medium staple)	5,150	5,255	2.03
Cotton (long staple)	5,450	5,550	1.83

Note: The kharif marketing season runs from July to June

Source: Government

Proposed MSP for Rabi Crops

Crops	(2019-20)		
	Existing MSP	Proposed MSP	% Hike
	(in Rs/quintal)		
Wheat	1,840	1,925	4.61
Barley	1,440	1,525	5.9
Mustard	4,200	4,425	5.35
Masur	4,475	4,800	7.26
Safflower	4,945	5,215	5.4

The Invest India Business Immunity Platform

- ❖ India's National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency called the Invest India launched "The Invest India Business Immunity Platform".
- ❖ The platform is to give real time updates about India's response and actions against Corona Virus.
- ❖ The Platform has partnered with SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India).

Transfer of Funds

- ❖ The Ministry of Labour and Employment transferred funds to the account of construction workers in the backdrop of outbreak of COVID-19.
- ❖ The Labour Ministry has directed the state governments and Union Territories to transfer Rs 52,000 crores to the accounts of construction workers.
- ❖ The step has been taken by the Ministry according to the ruling under Section 60 of Building and Other Construction Workers Act, 1996 (BOCW Cess Act).
- ❖ Under the Act, the cess is collected from every employer working in construction work of Government or other Public Sector undertaking.
- ❖ It is collected by the state Government.

Key measures in Economy

- ❖ The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman announced several key measures in the view of Corona Virus Pandemic.

Key points

- ❖ No charges on withdrawal of cash in bank ATMs.
- ❖ Also, the digital charges on trade transactions have been reduced.
- ❖ The PAN card and Aadhaar card linking were extended to June 30.
- ❖ The Vivaad Se Vishwas Scheme has been extended to June 30.
- ❖ The Compliances under Wealth Tax act, Income Tax Act, Black Money Act, Benami Transaction Act and Vivaad Se Vishwas have also been extended to June 30.
- ❖ The GST returns, Sabka Vishwas scheme filing dates have also been extended to March 31.

Drugs Prices Control Order, 2013

- ❖ The DPCO, 2013 (Drugs Prices Control Order, 2013) has helped to save Rs 12, 447 crores per annum.
- ❖ The DPCO is an order that was issued by the Government of India under Essential Commodities Act, 1955.
- ❖ The order provides details to fix the prices of the drugs, procedures to increase or decrease prices, penalties for defying the order, etc.
- ❖ The Order empowered the National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA) to fix the threshold prices of drugs.
- ❖ The NPPA is allowed to fix prices only on those drugs that are listed under National List of Essential Medicines.
- ❖ The list was prepared by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2011.

Agricultural and Processed food product Export Development Authority

- ❖ The Agricultural and Processed food product Export Development Authority (APEDA) signed Memorandum of Understanding with Small Farmers Agriculture-Business Consortium (SFAC).
- ❖ The agreement aims to link the Farmer Producer Organization and farmer cooperatives with the export value chain.
- ❖ The APEDA was established under an act of Parliament in 1985.

Innovate for Accessible India

- ❖ The NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies) recently launched the “Innovate for Accessible India” campaign along with Microsoft India.
- ❖ The other partners of the initiative include Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
- ❖ The Initiative aims to sort out issues of Divyangs (physically challenged) with the help of Artificial Intelligence and Microsoft Cloud and other technologies.
- ❖ The NASSCOM under its supervision operates National Institute of Smart Government and Data Security Council of India.

Fish Production in the World

- ❖ India is an important country that produces fish through aquaculture in the world.
- ❖ India is home to more than 10 percent of the global fish diversity.
- ❖ Presently, the country ranks second in the world in total fish production with an annual fish production of about 9.06 million metric tonnes.

Top five fisheries States in India in 2017-18 (in lakh tonnes)				Trend in export of marine products (in ₹ cr)	
States	Inland	Marine	Total		
Andhra Pradesh	28.45	6.05	34.5	2011-12	16,597.23
West Bengal	15.57	1.85	17.42	2012-13	18,856.26
Gujarat	1.34	7.01	8.35	2013-14	30,213.26
Kerala	5.34	1.51	6.85	2014-15	33,441.61
Tamil Nadu	1.85	4.97	6.82	2015-16	30,420.83
All India production	89.02	35.88	125.9	2016-17	37,870.90
				2017-18	45,106.89

- ❖ As the second largest country in aquaculture production, the share of inland fisheries and aquaculture has gone up from 46 percent in the 1980s to over 85 percent in recent years in total fish production.

- ❖ India's aquaculture production basically can be classified into freshwater and brackish water production.
- ❖ Freshwater aquaculture contributes to over 95 percent of the total aquaculture production.

Recapitalization of regional rural banks (RRB)

- ❖ The Union Cabinet under the chairmanship of PM Modi on March 25, 2020, approved the recapitalization of regional rural banks (RRB) to improve the capital to risk weighted assets ratio.
- ❖ An improved CRAR will help the rural banks to meet their credit requirements in rural areas.
- ❖ The RRBs should allocate 75% of their credit to priority sector lending.
- ❖ The recapitalization funds are being allocated to those banks that are unable to maintain minimum CRAR (Capital to Risk weighted Assets Ratio) of 9%.
- ❖ The CRAR for a bank is fixed by RBI.
- ❖ The Scheme of Recapitalization of RRBs was launched in 2011 on the recommendation of Dr K C Chakrabarty Committee.

Fertilizer Subsidy

- ❖ The Parliamentary Standing Committee report says that until December 2019, 1182.04 lakh metric tonnes of fertilizers have been sold under Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme.
- ❖ Currently, the identity of the buyer or farmer is authenticated through Aadhar-based identification, Kisan Credit Card, biometric or voter ID.
- ❖ The subsidies are paid to the fertilizer companies based on the receipts of their sales made by the retailers to the beneficiaries.
- ❖ The fertilizers subsidies consume 0.5% of GDP which is the second highest after food.
- ❖ The three major types of fertilizers used are Urea, Muriate of Potash and Diammonium Phosphate.
- ❖ Of all these fertilizers, urea accounts to 86%.
- ❖ Currently, the Government of India is taking several steps to control the use of urea and replace it with NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium) fertilizers.

Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0) Scheme

- ❖ The scheme provides for development of world class infrastructure along with common facilities and amenities through Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMCs).

- ❖ The Scheme would support setting up of both Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMCs) and Common Facility Centres (CFCs).
- ❖ An Electronics Manufacturing Cluster (EMC) would set up in geographical areas of certain minimum extent, preferably contiguous, where the focus is on development of basic infrastructure, amenities and other common facilities for the ESDM (Electronics System Development and Maintenance) units.
- ❖ For Common Facility Centre (CFC), there should be a significant number of existing ESDM units located in the area and the focus is on upgrading common technical infrastructure and providing common facilities for the ESDM units in such EMCs, Industrial Areas/Parks/industrial corridors.

COVID -19 Rehabilitation and Relief Fund

- ❖ The Confederation of Indian Industries has set up funds to assist rehabilitation of micro, small and medium enterprises.
- ❖ The fund is to be raised from the members of the confederation.

Modified New Pricing Scheme III

- ❖ The Union Cabinet recently gave its nod to remove ambiguities in Modified New Pricing Scheme-III.
- ❖ This was done to determine the costs of urea units.
- ❖ The Modified NPS scheme-III was launched in 2014.
- ❖ The Modified scheme provided incentives to the domestic urea manufacturers, encouraged investment in urea production sector, reduced urea imports.
- ❖ It mainly aimed to achieve self-sufficiency in urea production.

District Mineral Foundation (DMF)

- ❖ The Union finance minister said state governments should use district mineral foundation (DMF) funds for response and preparedness to fight the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.
- ❖ DMFs were instituted under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Amendment Act 2015.
- ❖ The Act says that every mine holder has to contribute 10% of their loyalty towards the funds.
- ❖ They are non-profit trusts to work for the interest and benefit of persons and areas affected by mining-related operations.
- ❖ It was set up in those districts that were affected by mining works.
- ❖ Its manner of operation comes under the jurisdiction of the relevant State Government.
- ❖ The fund is collected at the district level.

Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)

- ❖ The programme is meant to provide for the welfare of areas and people affected by mining related operations, using the funds generated by District Mineral Foundations (DMFs).
- ❖ The funds will be used for the following “high priority” issues
 - Drinking water.
 - Health
 - Women and child welfare.
 - Education
 - Livelihood and skill development.
 - Welfare of aged and disabled.
 - Sanitation



RBI Measures

- ❖ The Central bank advanced its Monetary Policy Committee meet due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ This was the 7th Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy Statement of the RBI for the financial year 2019-20.
- ❖ The RBI is to inject Rs 3.74 lakh crore into the Indian Economy.
- ❖ The repo rate was cut by 75 basis points (bps) to 4.4%, reverse repo rate was cut by 90 bps to 4%.
- ❖ RBI rules banks and other institutions such as non-banking financial companies, including housing financiers and other financial institutions to provide a three-month moratorium on all loans.
- ❖ The Cash Reserve Ratio was cut by 100 bps to 3% of NTDL (Net Time and Demand Liabilities).
- ❖ This would release liquidity worth Rs 1,37,000 crore within banks.
- ❖ The central bank's overall liquidity injection stands at 3.2 per cent of GDP.

- ❖ RBI is to introduce Net Stable Funding Ratio between April and October, 2020.
- ❖ It is the ratio between amount of stable funding available to the amount of stable funding required.
- ❖ RBI also allowed banks to restructure the working capital cycle for companies without worrying that these will have to be classified as non-performing assets (NPAs) during the 21-day countrywide lockdown.
- ❖ ₹1.37 trillion will be made available under the emergency lending window called the marginal standing facility (MSF).
- ❖ Banks will now be able to borrow 3% of their deposits under this window, up from the current 2%.

Halting of Policies

- ❖ As the outbreak of corona virus has hit revenue collection, the Government of India has dropped three crucial policies.
- ❖ The revenue collection for the fiscal year 2019-20 has contracted by 3.5% in the first 11 months.
- ❖ The food ministry had earlier proposed taxes on imported crude and refined vegetable oil from Malaysia.
- ❖ The Food Ministry had also proposed supply subsidized rice and wheat to millions of people.
- ❖ The Food Ministry also proposed to provide vitamin-fortified rice that involved an expenditure of 5 trillion rupees.

Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF)

- ❖ It was raised by the then PM Jawaharlal Nehru.
- ❖ The PM is the chairman of the fund.
- ❖ It has not been constituted by the Parliament.
- ❖ It is exempted under Income Tax Act.
- ❖ The PMNRF is used to support people affected by natural and man-made disasters.
- ❖ This includes acid attacks, accidents and riots.
- ❖ It is also allotted to people for kidney transplantation treatments, heat, surgeries, etc.
- ❖ It accepts only voluntary donations by individuals and institutions.
- ❖ Contributions flowing out of budgetary sources of Government or from the balance sheets of the public sector undertakings are not accepted.

PM-CARES Fund

- ❖ Prime Minister Modi announced PM-CARES Fund.
- ❖ PM-CARES is Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations fund.
- ❖ The fund is being raised to deal with the distress or emergency as that of COVID-19 pandemic.

About

- ❖ Prime Minister of India is the Chairman of the trust.
- ❖ The other members of the trust include Finance Minister, Home Minister and Defence Minister.
- ❖ Funds being donated to the PM-CARES trust is to be exempted from tax under Section 80(G) of the Income Tax Act.
- ❖ The account of the fund is held by the State Bank of India.

Mega Bank Consolidation Plan

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India is to implement a merger plan of 10 state-run banks into 4 larger banks from April 1, 2020.
- ❖ The RBI Act empowers the Government of India to make rulings on the functioning of RBI in matters of public interest.
- ❖ With this power, the Finance Minister has initiated the amalgamation plan and the plan has been approved by RBI.

NEXT-GEN BANKS				
Figures in ₹ trillion				
Merged entity	Total assets	Gross NPA	No. of branches	M-cap (Aug 30)
PNB+OBC+United Bank	12.0	1.1	11437	0.5
Canara+Syndicate Bank	10.0	0.6	10342	0.2
Union+Corporation+Andhra Bank	9.6	1.0	9609	0.3
Indian Bank+Allahabad Bank	5.3	0.4	6104	0.2

All figures, except market cap, are as of March 31, 2019. Figures have been rounded off to the nearest decimal
Source: Capitaline Compiled by BS Research Bureau

About

- ❖ According to the plan, the United Bank of India and Oriental Bank of Commerce are to be merged with Punjab National Bank.
- ❖ The Syndicate Bank is to be amalgamated with Canara Bank.
- ❖ The Allahabad Bank is to be amalgamated with Indian Bank.
- ❖ Also, Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank are to be amalgamated with Union Bank of India.

National Investment and Infrastructure Fund

- ❖ The Asian Development Bank announced that it is to invest 100 million USD in National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).
- ❖ The National Investment and Infrastructure Funds were set up in 2015.
- ❖ The main purpose of the fund is to aid Greenfield and brownfield projects in the country.
- ❖ The NIIF makes it mandatory that the funds shall be invested in the areas such as transportation, energy, water, housing, waste management.
- ❖ There are three major funds under NIIF.
- ❖ It includes Master Fund, Fund of Funds and Strategic Investment Fund.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

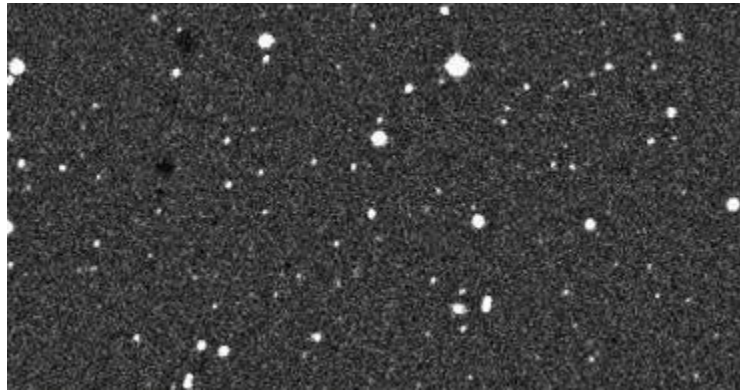
Biggest explosion in the Universe

- ❖ An international team of Astronomers have discovered biggest explosion seen in the universe since the Big Bang by using X-Ray and radio telescopes.
- ❖ They used other 3 telescopes used for the discovery including
 - NASA's (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) Chandra X-ray Observatory,
 - European Space Agency's (ESA) XMM-Newton and the
 - Murchison Widefield Array (MWA) in Western Australia.
- ❖ The explosion occurred in the Ophiuchus galaxy cluster, 390 million light-years from Earth.
- ❖ The explosive force of the explosion caused a huge gap in the plasma containing hot gases in the galaxy cluster.

Earth's 2nd moon

- ❖ Mini- moon or planet's 2nd moon "Dubbed 2020 CD3" was discovered by NASA-funded Catalina Sky Survey in Arizona, US.
- ❖ It is an asteroid about the size of the car & its diameter is about 1.9-3.5 metre.

- ❖ The mini moon is a temporary moon, dissimilar to our permanent moon which will break free of Earth's orbit & go off on its own way.
- ❖ This asteroid cross the Earth's orbit & when contend with the gravitational influence of our permanent moon & sun, it will be caught in Earth's orbit for a few years & will break free & go into independent orbit around the sun.
- ❖ This type of asteroid is termed as Temporarily Captured Object.
- ❖ This 2nd moon is captured into earth's orbit over 3 years.
- ❖ Previously In 2006, RH120 was discovered on 14 September 2006 with 27 inches.



Red pandas

- ❖ The Chinese Academy of Sciences have discovered that the red panda species are actually two separate species based on their genetic study.
- ❖ They have found divergence between the two species - Chinese red pandas and Himalayan red pandas - in three genetic markers in an analysis of DNA.
- ❖ This recognition could help us in the conservation of the endangered mammal.



Super Earth

- ❖ K2-18 b is a super Earth exoplanet that orbits a M-type star.
- ❖ A research team from the University of Cambridge has [announced](#) that [K2-18b](#) could have liquid water and habitable conditions.
- ❖ K2-18b is an exoplanet a bit more than twice the size of Earth.

2020 AV2 Asteroid

- ❖ Gianluca Masi, an astrophysicist has announced the confirmation of 2020 AV2 as the first asteroid orbiting entirely within the orbit of Venus.
- ❖ 2020 AV2 was discovered by the [Zwicky Transient Facility](#) on 4 January 2020.

Second Cloud region at Delhi

- ❖ Google to open its 2nd India Cloud region in 2021 at Delhi.
- ❖ The Delhi cloud region will have three zones to protect against service disruptions.
- ❖ The first Indian Cloud region was launched in Mumbai in 2017.
- ❖ It aims to serve healthcare and financial services, as well as public sector organisations across the country.
- ❖ In the Asia-Pacific region, Google has 22 cloud data-centres. Google cloud centres help other companies to store their data at the local level.

Cloud region

- ❖ A Cloud region is a specific geographical location where you can host your resources.
- ❖ Most of the regions have three or more zones.

Gene Editing Tool - used first time to treat blindness

- ❖ The Gene Editing Tool called CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) has been used for the first time to treat blindness in Oregon University, Portland, USA.
- ❖ However, doctors claimed that it will take a month to check if the vision of the patient has restored.
- ❖ This gene-editing technique try to edit a gene while the DNA is still inside a person's body.

Genome India Project

- ❖ Recently, the Ministry of Science and Technology has approved a gene-mapping project called the Genome India Project (GIP).
- ❖ The Genome India Project is a collaboration of 20 institutions that will enable new efficiencies in medicine, agriculture and the life sciences.
- ❖ Its aim is to ultimately build a grid of the Indian “reference genome”, to fully understand the type and nature of diseases and traits that comprise the diverse Indian population.

Genome

- ❖ A genome is all the genetic matter in an organism.

- ❖ It is defined as an organism's complete set of DNA, including all of its genes.
- ❖ Each genome contains all of the information needed to build and maintain that organism.

Ayush Grid

- ❖ The Ministry of AYUSH released digital platform called AYUSH GRID.
- ❖ The grid provides facilities associated with AYUSH hospitals and laboratories and promote traditional health care.
- ❖ The "AYUSH GRID" platform aims to digitize entire AYUSH sector.
- ❖ The Ministry of AYUSH has developed National Ayurveda Morbidity Codes.
- ❖ These codes classify diseases described in Ayurveda.
- ❖ In the first phase of the initiative 4 disease conditions have been identified namely KAsa, Kushtha, Jwara and Shwasa.
- ❖ Ministry of AYUSH is the backbone of Ayushman Bharat Yojana.

Polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel Cells

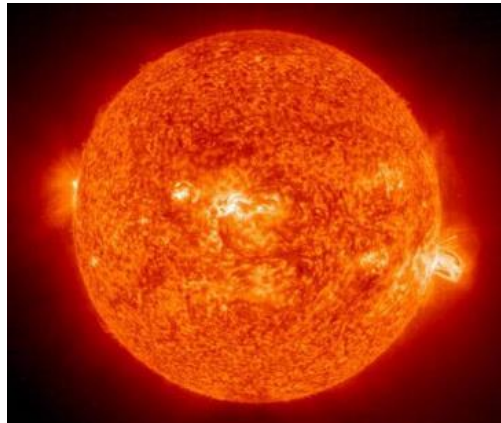
- ❖ Scientists at the International Advanced Research for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI), Hyderabad have developed polymer electrolyte membrane fuel cell (PEMFC) systems ranging in power from 1 kW to 20 kW.
- ❖ ARCI is an autonomous R&D facility under the Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- ❖ PEMFCs are also known as proton-exchange membrane fuel cells.
- ❖ They operate at low temperatures.
- ❖ Fuel cell systems provide sustainable electricity using hydrogen gas without the need for grid power, as required by conventional battery backup systems.
- ❖ This makes them highly useful for applications such as emergency operation centers, which need to respond immediately in emergency situations.

Sahyadri Megha

- ❖ In order to prevent the decline in the paddy cultivation, the University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences (UAHS), Shivamogga of Karnataka, has developed 'Sahyadri Megha', a new red variety of paddy.
- ❖ This variety is resistant to blast disease and also rich in nutrients.
- ❖ The new variety has been approved by the State-level Seed Sub-Committee and it will be available for farmers from the coming kharif season.
- ❖ Another objective of developing the new variety is to cater to the strong demand for red rice, rich in fibre and protein, by health-savvy consumers in urban areas.

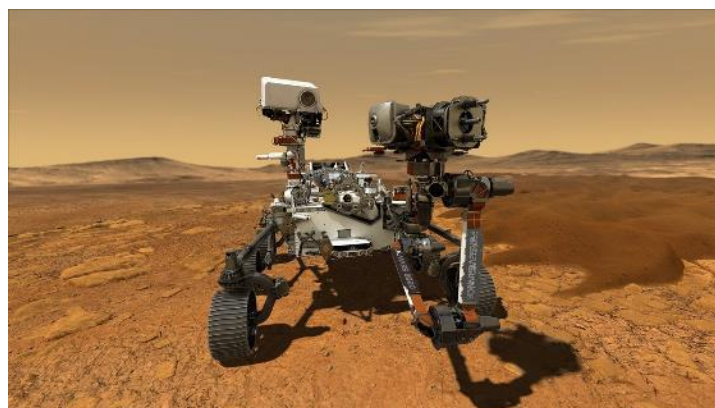
Sunspots

- ❖ The sunspots identified by researchers from IISER Kolkata herald the start of a new solar cycle.
- ❖ There are signs that cycle 25 has just begun.
- ❖ Sun spots are relatively cooler spots on the Sun's surface.
- ❖ Their number waxes and wanes in cycles that last 11 years approximately.
- ❖ Sunspots occur in pairs, with a leader and a follower.
- ❖ They originate deep within the Sun and become visible when they pop out.
- ❖ Their number is not constant but shows a minimum and then rises up to a maximum and then falls again in what is called the solar cycle.
- ❖ So far, astronomers have documented 24 such cycles, the last one ended in 2019.
- ❖ From our safe distance of about 148 million km, the Sun appears to be sedate and constant.



NASA's next Mars rover - Perseverance

- ❖ NASA's next Mars rover is named as Perseverance.
- ❖ The six-wheeled robotic explorer will be to collect Martian samples for eventual return to Earth.



- ❖ The name was suggested by seventh-grader Alex Mather as part of a naming contest for U.S. schoolchildren.

YUva Vigyani Karyakram

- ❖ It was launched by Indian Space Research Organisation.
- ❖ It is a special programme for School Children, in tune with the Government's vision "Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan".
- ❖ The Program is primarily aimed at imparting basic knowledge on Space Technology, Space Science and Space Applications to the younger ones with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of Space activities.

Coronavirus – pandemic

- ❖ The World Health Organization has finally declared the novel coronavirus a 'pandemic'.
- ❖ Earlier, on January 30 the WHO declared it was a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern".
- ❖ COVID-19 is a respiratory infection.
- ❖ COVID-19 is the official name given to the virus by the World Health Organization.
- ❖ Before WHO officially named the virus, it was also referred to as coronavirus, the novel coronavirus and 2019-nCoV (to indicate the year when the virus was first detected).

Outbreak, Epidemic and Pandemic

- ❖ An outbreak is understood to be a sudden rise in the cases of a disease in a particular place.
- ❖ An endemic disease is a disease that is always present in a certain population or region.
- ❖ Epidemic is a large outbreak of disease that attacks many peoples at about the same time and may spread through one or several communities
- ❖ A pandemic is "the worldwide spread of a new disease".
- ❖ There is no specific number of countries that a disease must touch for WHO to classify it as a pandemic.

Solar Receiver Tube Technology

- ❖ The Scientists from ARCI-International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials operating under DST (Department of Science and Technology), Ministry of Science & Technology have developed cost effective solar receiver tube technology.

- ❖ The tubes developed absorbs solar energy and converts the heat to required application.
- ❖ They provide high resistance to corrosion especially to Indian weather conditions.
- ❖ The Technology is a wet chemical process that is used to coat stainless steel tubes that are used in industrial heat applications.
- ❖ The tubes manufactured by this technology absorbs 93% of radiant energy and 14% of emittance.
- ❖ Emittance is the amount of light emitted by an area of a radiating surface.

Kaikaia gaga

- ❖ A newly discovered species of treehopper was named after the performer Lady Gaga.
- ❖ The insect species has been named as Kaikaia Gaga.
- ❖ Kaikaia Gaga is a part of the family Membracidae.
- ❖ The species is around 40 million years old. K. gaga was found nearly 30 years ago in a tropical forest near the Pacific coast of Nicaragua.
- ❖ The bugs are known for their bright colouring and individuality in appearance.
- ❖ It sings to each other by vibrating plant stems.
- ❖ American singer-songwriter and performance artist, known for her flamboyant costumes.



Methanotrophic Bacteria Culture

- ❖ The Agharkar Research Institute of Pune has isolated 45 strains of methanotrophic bacteria.
- ❖ These bacteria are capable of reducing methane emissions in rice plants.
- ❖ Apart from isolating the strains, the scientists have also created methanotrophic culture.

- ❖ The isolated bacteria were from southern and western India.
- ❖ The methanotrophs are also used as bio-inoculants.
- ❖ Bio-Inoculant are strains of bacteria, algae or fungi that take in nitrogen from atmosphere and prepare nitrates required for plants.
- ❖ After carbon-dioxide, methane is the second largest greenhouse gas contributor.
- ❖ With the use of methanotrophic bacteria in agriculture, emission of methane shall be greatly reduced.

ExoMars Mission

- ❖ The ExoMars Mission has been delayed by 2 years due to software problems.
- ❖ The European Space Agency mission (ESA) is now expected to be launched in 2022.
- ❖ The ExoMars or Exobiology on Mars mission is a collaborative program between the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Roscosmos (Russian space agency).
- ❖ Its objective is to look for life on Mars, apart from studying the history of water on the planet, its geochemistry, atmospheric compositions, etc.
- ❖ Rosalind Franklin is the rover that is to be launched on board the ExoMars mission.



New Hand Sanitizer without using chemicals

- ❖ The Scientists at the CSIR-IHBT (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology) has developed a new sanitizer without using chemicals.
- ❖ The scientists have used active tea constituents, alcohol and have developed the sanitizer according to the guidelines of World Health Organization.

- ❖ Usually chemicals such as triclosan, parabens, phthalates and synthetic fragrance are used in the production of sanitizers.
- ❖ None of these chemicals have been used in producing the CSIR formulated sanitizer.

First COVID -19 vaccine trial

- ❖ The United States of America began the first human trial evaluating COVID-19 vaccine.
- ❖ The vaccine was developed by a private firm called Moderna.
- ❖ During the trial phase, it is to be studied if the vaccines are safe and whether they stimulate the immune system of humans to create antibodies to stop COVID-19.
- ❖ The vaccine has been synthesized from a stretch of RNA embedded in a lipid nano particle.
- ❖ India contributes only 2.7% of global clinical trials.
- ❖ On the other hand, the US contributes 47%, followed by EU of 18%, Japan of 11%.
- ❖ In order to improve the situation, India should take active part in platforms like ICTRP of the World Health Organization.
- ❖ The International Clinical Trials Registry Platform (ICTRP) of WHO is a mission aimed to make sure a complete view of research is accessible to those who are involved in health care trials.

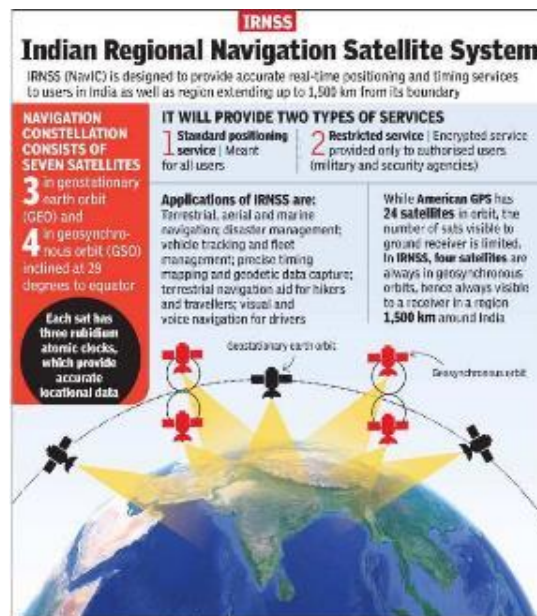


Testing of Corona Virus by private sector

- ❖ The Government of India has opened testing of Corona Virus to private sector.
- ❖ The price of testing is to range between Rs 9,000 and Rs 12,000.
- ❖ The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is to establish 51 testing centres apart from the private sector operated ones.
- ❖ These centres are to be authorized by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL).

NAVIC Messaging System

- ❖ The Department of Space reported at the Parliament that ISRO has designed NAVIC messaging system and receiver.
- ❖ The system is currently used by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information system (INCOIS).
- ❖ The system is used to broadcast emergency warning messages in cases such as tsunami, cyclone, high waves.
- ❖ The NAVIC is Navigation in Indian Constellation.
- ❖ It is an Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) developed by ISRO.
- ❖ There are 8 satellites in the constellation.
- ❖ The main objective of NAVIC is to provide continuous surveillance of the Indian sub-continent.



Hemostat

- ❖ Scientists at the INST (Institute of Nano Science and Technology), that operates under the Department of Science & Technology, have developed starch based 'Hemostat'.
- ❖ The starch-based 'hemostat' are developed to stop rapid blood loss during accidents, as it physically absorbs excess fluid and concentrates the natural clotting factors in blood.
- ❖ The product possesses increased absorption capacity, improved absorption, inexpensive and is biodegradable.
- ❖ Hemostats are surgical tools that are used to control bleeding.
- ❖ The Institute of Nano Science operates under Department of Science and Technology.

- ❖ It was established under the National Mission of Nano Science and Technology or NANO mission.

Nanocomposite Coatings

- ❖ International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI), an autonomous R&D center of the Department of Science & Technology (DST) has developed a process for size-selective deposition of nanocomposite coatings.
- ❖ Nanocomposite coatings are formed by mixing two or more dissimilar materials at nanoscale to improve the physical, chemical and physicochemical properties of the new materials.
- ❖ The scientists have found that nickel tungsten-based coatings with infusion of particular sized Silicon Carbide (SiC) submicron particles using a pulsed electroplating can provide an excellent combination of wear and corrosion resistance.
- ❖ Several aerospace, defence, automobile, space devices need to reduce friction, wear, and tear to enhance the life of components.

Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ)

- ❖ The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has reported that Ocean-sat Satellite data are used to prepare the Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ) advisories on the potential rich fishing areas and provide to the sea faring fishermen in all states.
- ❖ This methodology utilizes data on chlorophyll concentration (Chl) obtained from ISRO's Oceansat-2 satellite and the sea surface temperature from National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA / USA satellites).
- ❖ For seamless and effective dissemination of emergency information and communication on disaster warnings, Potential Fishing Zones (PFZ) and Ocean States Forecasts (OSF) to fishermen, the Government launched the Gagan Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information (GEMINI) device.

Anti-HIV Drugs for COVID 19

- ❖ The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued revised guidelines on the 'Clinical Management of COVID-19'.
- ❖ The Ministry has recommended use of drug combinations Lopinavir and Ritonavir (sold under the brand name Kaletra) depending upon the severity of the condition of a person having coronavirus infection.
- ❖ The use of this drug combination is suggested by an expert committee comprising doctors from the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS),

experts from National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and World Health Organization (WHO).

- ❖ Lopinavir-Ritonavir is recommended for high-risk groups of patients aged above 60 who are suffering from diabetes mellitus, renal failure, chronic lung disease and are immuno-compromised.
- ❖ Lopinavir-Ritonavir is used widely for controlling Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection.

Huntingtin disease

- ❖ A team of scientists from National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS) in Pune have observed that the pathogenic Huntingtin protein causes a decrease in the overall protein production in cells.
- ❖ Huntingtin disease is a progressive genetic disorder.
- ❖ It affects the brain and causes
 - uncontrolled movements,
 - impaired coordination of balance and movement,
 - a decline in cognitive abilities,
 - difficulty in concentrating and memory lapses,
 - mood swings and
 - personality changes.
- ❖ It is caused by a mutation in a gene called HTT gene (huntingtin gene).
- ❖ The HTT genes are involved in the production of a protein called huntingtin.
- ❖ They provide the instruction for making the protein.
- ❖ When the genes mutate, they provide faulty instructions leading to production of abnormal huntingtin proteins and these form into clumps.
- ❖ The clumps disrupt the normal functioning of the brain cells, which eventually leads to death of neurons in the brain, resulting in Huntington disease.

Hydroxychloroquine

- ❖ The Indian Council of Medical Research had constituted a National Task Force to fight against COVID-19.
- ❖ The task force has recommended the use of Hydroxychloroquine to treat Corona Virus.
- ❖ The drug is usually prescribed to malaria patients.
- ❖ Both South Korea and Italy have been using the drug to contain the spread of COVID-19.
- ❖ The US has also confirmed the efficiency of the in curing the disease in its early stages.

Fossil of “Elpistostege” - examined

- ❖ The Paleontologists of Canada have linked human hands to the fins of fish.
- ❖ The researchers examined a fossil of “Elpistostege”.
- ❖ The Elpistostege represents the pivotal stage of transition of fish into land vertebrates.
- ❖ The Elpistostege was completely aquatic.
- ❖ It had a crocodile-like body, flat triangular head, numerous teeth around jaws.
- ❖ The four-limbed animals that evolved from these Elpistostege were called tetrapods.
- ❖ The Elpistostege lived during Devonian period.
- ❖ The Devonian Period spans for 60 million years and is around 419 million years ago.
- ❖ It is named after the place Devon, England where the rocks of the era were first found.



National Super Computer Mission

- ❖ The National Super Computer Mission was launched in 2015.
- ❖ Under this mission, Three more Super Computers are to be installed at IIT-Kanpur, IIT-Hyderabad and JN Centre for Advanced Scientific Research by April 2020.

About

- ❖ The mission is jointly operated by Ministry of Electronics and IT, C-DAC, Ministry of Science and Technology and IISc, Bengaluru.
- ❖ Today India has 5 Super Computers that are ranked within top 500 list of Super Computers in the World.
- ❖ The Super Computer (Pratyush) at Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology India is ranked 39th in the World.

- ❖ So far under the mission, “Param Shivay” was installed in IIT Bhuvaneshwar, Param Brahma and Param Shakti installed in IISER, Pune and IIT-Kharagpur.

MyLab

- ❖ A Pune based testing services MyLab has become the first Indian company to get a commercial approval from CDSCO for the sales of COVID-19 testing kits.
- ❖ The testing methodology adopted have been validated by National Institute of Virology in Pune.
- ❖ It is First 'Made in India' COVID19 Test Kit that has been commercially approved by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO).
- ❖ The kits are based on Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain reaction
- ❖ A single kit can study 1000 samples.
- ❖ The testing time of COVID-19 in current lab testing services is 4 hours.
- ❖ However, MyLAB’s testing time is 2 ½ hours.
- ❖ The laboratory is to sell the kits at Rs 1,200 to Rs 1,500 per test.
- ❖ Currently, the Government of India has fixed the cap price of COVID-19 as Rs 4,500.



Hanta Virus

- ❖ A man in Yunnan Province of China has tested positive for Hanta Virus.
- ❖ The symptoms of Hanta Virus are similar to that of the Corona Virus.
- ❖ The Hanta Virus, also called the Orthohanta virus spreads through rats.
- ❖ It transits through urine, droppings, saliva of rodents.
- ❖ The virus enters humans through their nose, mouth or eyes.
- ❖ The virus does not spread from person-to-person.

Bio Safety Levels

- ❖ The National Centre for Disease Control provides four levels of Bio-Safety to be followed in India.
- ❖ Bio-Safety is the principle used to contain the spread of pathogens and toxins.
- ❖ India follows Bio-Safety Levels as prescribed by the World Health Organization
- ❖ There are four Bio-Safety levels.
- ❖ It includes
 - BSL-1 that are basic teaching laboratories.
 - BSL-2 offering diagnostic services
 - BSL-3 offers high containment special diagnostic services.
 - BSL-4 are those laboratories that handle dangerous pathogens.
- ❖ The COVID-19 has been put under BSL-4 level.

Biosafety Level	BSL-1	BSL-2	BSL-3	BSL-4
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Containment Defined organisms Unlikely to cause disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Containment Moderate Risk Disease of varying severity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Containment Aerosol Transmission Serious/Potentially lethal disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Max Containment "Exotic," High-Risk Agents Life-threatening disease
Sample Organisms	E.Coli	Influenza, HIV, Lyme Disease	Tuberculosis	Ebola Virus
Pathogen Type	Agents that present minimal potential hazard to personnel & the environment.	Agents associated with human disease & pose moderate hazards to personnel & the environment.	Indigenous or exotic agents, agents that present a potential for aerosol transmission, & agents causing serious or potentially lethal disease.	Dangerous & exotic agents that pose a high risk of aerosol-transmitted laboratory infections & life-threatening disease.
Autoclave Requirements	None	None	Pass-thru autoclave with Bioseal required in laboratory room.	Pass-thru autoclave with Bioseal required in laboratory room.

Biofortified high protein wheat variety

- ❖ The scientists of Agharkar Research Institute (Pune), operating under Department of Science and Technology (DST) have developed biofortified high quality wheat.
- ❖ The new variety is MACS 4028
- ❖ The new wheat variety has 14.7% better nutritional quality, 40.3 ppm of iron content and high milling quality.
- ❖ The new variety is semi-dwarf and matures in 102 days.

2020 CD3

- ❖ Recently astronomers discovered a mini-moon named 2020 CD3 orbiting the Earth, making it official for our planet to have two moons.
- ❖ However, it is turned out to be a brief affair of events as the mini-moon left the planet's orbit.
- ❖ 2020 CD3 was first discovered using the NASA-funded Catalina Sky Survey observatory in Arizona.
- ❖ Currently, it is on its way to follow its original trajectory around the Sun.

Procurement of 83 Tejas Fighter Jets

- ❖ The Defence Acquisition Council approved the procurement of indigenously built 83 Tejas fighter aircrafts for Indian Air Force.
- ❖ The Light Combat Aircraft LCA-Tejas was designed by the Aircraft Development Agency (ADA).
- ❖ The ADA operates under DRDO (Defence Research Development Organization).
- ❖ It was manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
- ❖ The Defence Acquisition Council operates under Ministry of Defence and is the highest decision-making body.
- ❖ It was formed in 2001 after Kargil war in 1999.



Antibody test

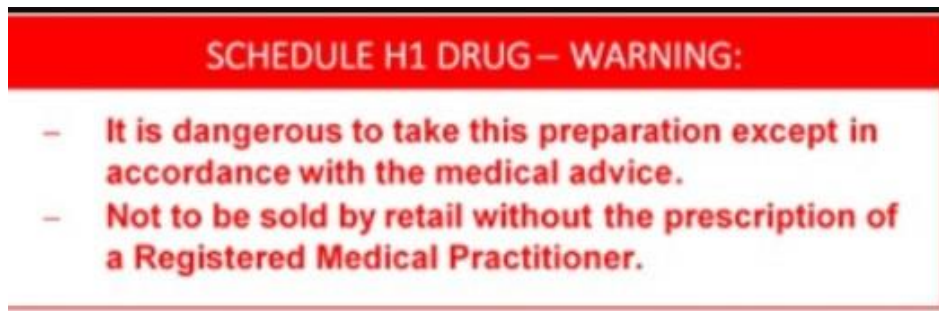
- ❖ India is all set to begin antibody tests to confirm if a person was previously infected with the virus.
- ❖ This will help understand the epidemiology of Covid-19.
- ❖ The methodology adopted by India is first in the world.
- ❖ It is a serological test that looks for antibodies in the blood.
- ❖ The test is different from the current methodologies to determine active infection.

- ❖ The antibody test is not a confirmatory test.
- ❖ However, it is a test for the purpose of surveillance.



H1 drug

- ❖ The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare declared the Hydroxy chloro quine as a Schedule H1 drug.
- ❖ It was done under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.
- ❖ Through this the Government has brought upon restrictions on sales and distribution of the drug.
- ❖ The drug listed under Schedule H1 should be labelled as “Rx” in red colour.
- ❖ The label should also carry precautionary warnings.
- ❖ The supply of H1 drugs are to be registered in a separate register.



Project Isaac

- ❖ Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IITGN) has launched Project Isaac to engage its students in creative projects to enhance their critical skills while they are confined to their homes because of Corona virus.
- ❖ The project is inspired by Sir Isaac Newton, who was similarly sent home by Trinity College, Cambridge, because of the Great Plague of London in 1665.
- ❖ Project Isaac is a model for academic institutions worldwide to explore ways to engage students in the midst of the pandemic.

CoNTec

- ❖ The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched CoNTec.
- ❖ CoNTec is COVID-19 Telecommunication Centre.
- ❖ The platform aims to connect the doctors in the country with AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences).
- ❖ Also, CoNTec is to be completely integrated with National Medical College Network.
- ❖ The programme operated by AIIMS is monitored by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Trials of WHO

- ❖ The ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) announced that India is to participate in trials of WHO (World Health Organization).
- ❖ The trials are to identify potential cures for the outbreak of COVID-19.
- ❖ With the number of cases increasing to 940, India becomes eligible to participate in the WHO solidarity trials.

Indian Scientists' Response to CoViD-19 (ISRC)

- ❖ It is a voluntary group of scientists from National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), the IITs, the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs) and many others.
- ❖ It will regularly discuss the rapidly evolving situation with its dire need for science communication.
- ❖ It aims to study the existing and available data to bring out analyses that will support the Central, State and local governments in carrying out their tasks.
- ❖ This platform works through two channels — phone and WhatsApp to connect people in need with those who can provide help.

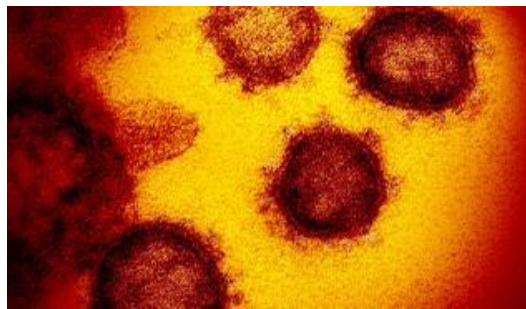
Source of Covid 19

- ❖ According to a research published in the journal "Pathogen", virus jumped to humans from Pangolins.
- ❖ Also, mutation was the main reason for the virus to target human cells so easily and hence leads to fast spread of the virus.
- ❖ Pangolins are the most trafficked animals in China.
- ❖ The COVID-19 virus has a spike protein.
- ❖ These proteins contain Receptor Binding Domain (RBD) that facilitates the entry of the virus.

- ❖ The RBD binds with the angiotensin-converting enzyme-2 (ACE-2) found in lungs, heart, kidneys and gastrointestinal tract.
- ❖ The researchers say that COVID-19 is a mutated version of SARS virus that created an epidemic in 2002-03.

Convalescent plasma

- ❖ The Food and Drug Administration of the United States has approved the use of Convalescent plasma collected from patients recovered from COVID-19 to treat seriously ill COVID-19 patients.
- ❖ The Convalescent plasma treatment had earlier been studied during the outbreaks of 2003 SARS-CoV-1 epidemic, 2009-10 H1N1 influenza virus and 2012 MERS-CoV epidemic.
- ❖ The treatment is mere collection of plasma from a COVID-19 recovered patient and injects them into a critically ill patient of COVID-19.
- ❖ The main role of plasma is to carry hormones, nutrients and proteins to different parts of the body.



ENVIRONMENT

17 new planets discovered

- ❖ University of British Columbia astronomy student Michelle Kunimoto has discovered 17 new planets.
- ❖ The 17 new planets were discovered by combining the data gathered by NASA's Kepler mission.
- ❖ Among the 17 planets, Earth-like world found was officially named 'KIC-7340288 b'.
- ❖ It is almost 1 ½ times the size of Earth.

Kepler mission

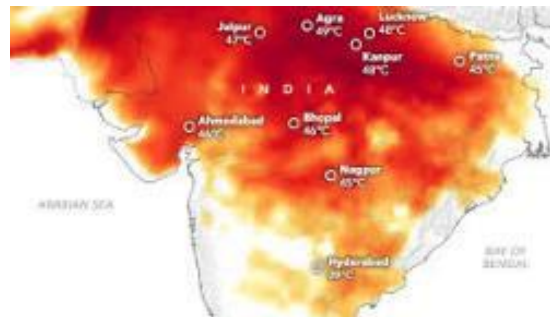
- ❖ NASA's Kepler mission was named after the astronomer Johannes Kepler.
- ❖ This spacecraft was launched in 2009 and the same was retired in 2018.

Heat waves in India

- ❖ The Indian Meteorological Department has announced that months of March, April and May are to be warmer than normal.
- ❖ Average maximum temperatures are likely to be warmer than normal by 0.5 degree Celsius over most of the meteorological subdivisions from central India and some subdivisions from north-west India.

Heat Waves

- ❖ According to the World Meteorological Organization, a Heat wave occurs when the daily maximum temperature of 5 consecutive days exceeds average maximum temperature by 5 degrees Celsius.
- ❖ During a heat wave, the weather is excessively hot and also highly humid.
- ❖ Heat waves usually occur in oceanic countries.



Eco-sensitive zone

- ❖ The Centre declared the National Chambal Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh, as eco-sensitive zone (ESZ).
- ❖ The Sanctuary acts as a home to Gangetic dolphins and 75 percent population of critically endangered species Gharial lives here.

ESZ

- ❖ The Eco-Sensitive Zones are protected areas that act as “shock absorbers”.
- ❖ They are governed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change.



Eurasian otters in Odisha

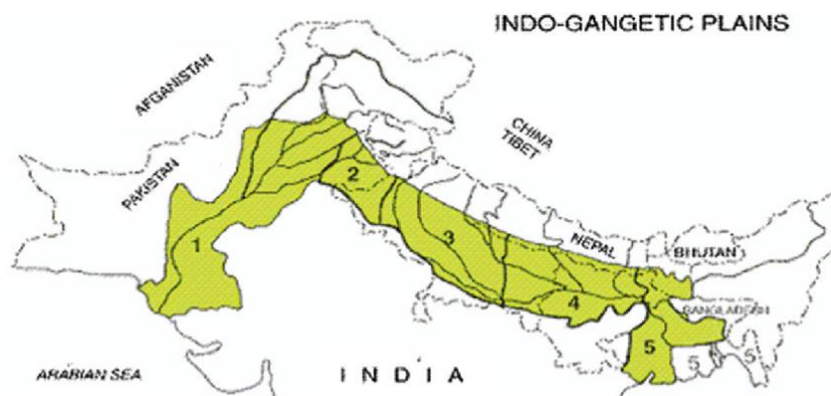
- ❖ Eurasian otters have been spotted in Odisha's Chilika Lake for the first time.
- ❖ Researchers conducting a study in Odisha's Chilika Lake have found the presence of a viable, breeding population of a fishing cat in the brackish water lagoon.
- ❖ It is a globally endangered species that is elusive and found in very few places in south and south-east Asia.



Black carbon concentration

- ❖ Black carbon concentrations near the Gangotri glacier rose 400 times in summer due to forest fires and stubble burning from agricultural waste.
- ❖ This result was given after a study by scientists at the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG).
- ❖ India is the second largest emitter of black carbon in the world.
- ❖ Its emissions are expected to increase dramatically in the coming decades, says the 'Atmospheric Research' journal.
- ❖ It also says that the Indo Gangetic plains is to be the largest contributor of this.

Black carbon



- ❖ Black carbon results from the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels and biomass.
- ❖ It is said to be the second largest contributor to climate change after CO₂.

Global Coalition for Biodiversity

- ❖ The European Commission has launched a new global coalition in Monaco.
- ❖ The Commission is calling for stronger mobilisation in raising awareness about the need to protect biodiversity.
- ❖ Ahead of the Fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15), meeting of the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) in October 2020, the Commission is aiming to boost public awareness about the nature crisis.
- ❖ During CoP 15, the 196 Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity are expected to adopt a new global framework to protect and restore nature.



Sukhna Lake

- ❖ The Punjab and Haryana High Court observed that Sukhna Lake is required to be declared as a legal entity for its survival, preservation and conservation.
- ❖ The Chandigarh administration has been directed to declare Sukhna lake a wetland within a period of three months.
- ❖ The Court also ordered demolition of buildings in catchment area in Chandigarh, Punjab, Haryana.

Second phase of the Swachh Bharat Mission

- ❖ The Centre approved the second phase of the Swachh Bharat Mission.
- ❖ The second phase will focus on Open Defecation Free Plus (ODF Plus), which includes
 - ODF sustainability and
 - Solid and liquid waste management (SLWM)
- ❖ The second phase will be implemented on a mission mode between 2020-21 and 2024-25.

Hard ground Swamp deer

- ❖ Hard ground Swamp deer, is seeing a revival in the Kanha National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR).
- ❖ It is the state animal of Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ KNPTR is on the Maikal range of the Satpura hills is located between Mandla and Balaghat districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ The swamp deer is endemic to KNPTR.

Swamp Deer

- ❖ There are three subspecies of swamp deer found in the Indian Subcontinent.

Name	Found In	Habitat
Western Swamp deer	Nepal	Swampy Area
Eastern Swamp deer	Kaziranga and Dudhwa National Parks	Swampy Area
Southern Swamp deer	Central and North India	Hard ground



Environment Related Crimes

- ❖ The Comptroller and Auditor General tabled the report for the year that ended on 31st March 2018 (2017-18).
- ❖ According to the report, between 2014 and 2016, 40% of environmental crimes in India were from Rajasthan.
- ❖ The report pointed out that Wildlife Crime Control units were not established in the state.
- ❖ The Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve and Sariska Tiger Reserve were not regulated due to the absence of Local Advisory Committee.

Nilgiri Tahr in the verge of Extinction

- ❖ International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has announced that around 30 thousand wild animals worldwide are on the brink of extinction.
- ❖ With respect to Tamil Nadu it has warned that Nilgiri Tahr is in the verge of Extinction.
- ❖ Nilgiri Tahr is the state animal of Tamil Nadu.



Coral Bleaching

- ❖ The Great Barrier Reef will face a critical period of heat stress over the coming weeks.
- ❖ The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is the world's largest coral reef system
- ❖ It is roughly the size of Italy.
- ❖ The reef is located in the Coral Sea, off the coast of Queensland, Australia.
- ❖ The Great Barrier Reef can be seen from outer space and is the world's biggest single structure made by living organisms.



- ❖ It was selected as a World Heritage Site in 1981.
- ❖ Coral reefs are important hotspots of biodiversity in the ocean.
- ❖ Coral reef bleaching is caused by heat stress from ocean temperatures and the duration of that heat.
- ❖ What is often called bleaching of corals is actually the loss of the algae that live on the coral.

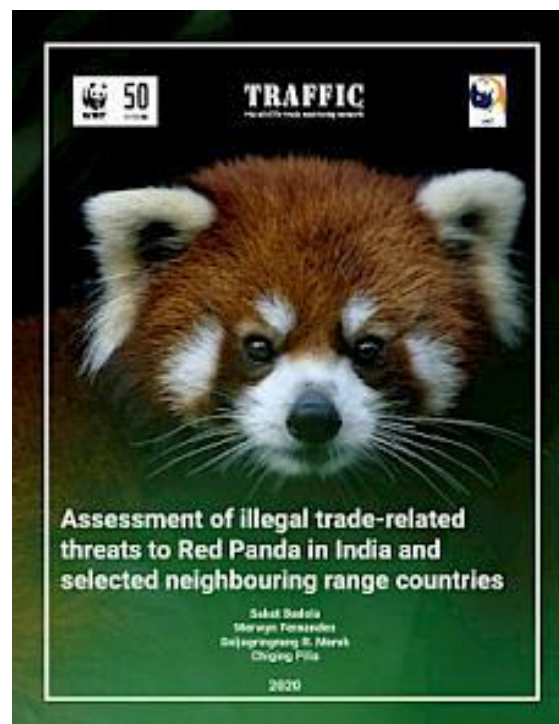
- ❖ Coral grows in tropical water temperatures – generally in the 70s to 80 degrees Fahrenheit.



Status of red panda by Traffic

- ❖ A report of TRAFFIC titled “Assessment of illegal trade-related threats to Red Panda in India and selected neighbouring range countries” has looked at a ten-year period from July 2010 to June 2019 and analysed poaching and illegal trade of the species.
- ❖ The red panda is a small arboreal mammal found in the forests of India, Nepal, Bhutan and the northern mountains of Myanmar and southern China.
- ❖ In India, it is found in Sikkim, western Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling district of West Bengal and parts of Meghalaya.
- ❖ It is also the state animal of Sikkim.

TRAFFIC



- ❖ TRAFFIC, the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network, is the leading non-governmental organization working globally on the trade of wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity and sustainable development.
- ❖ It was founded in 1976 as a strategic alliance of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- ❖ TRAFFIC's headquarters is located in Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Gaur back in Valmiki Reserve

- ❖ Gaur (*Bos Gaurus*), the largest extant bovine in the world, have not only returned to Bihar's Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR), but are also breeding there due to an increase in grassland cover.
- ❖ VTR was set up in the early 1990s.
- ❖ It is spread over 899 square kilometres in Bihar's West Champaran district, bordering Nepal's Chitwan National Park to its north and Uttar Pradesh to its west.
- ❖ The Gaur species is listed as 'vulnerable' on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species since 1986.



United For Biodiversity

- ❖ The Global Coalition for Biodiversity was launched.
- ❖ The initiative was launched by the European commission.
- ❖ The coalition was named "United for Biodiversity".



Changes in Snow Cover

- ❖ According to NASA and JAXA findings Winter snow cover is now expected to last for 110 days, down from the 126 days between 1982 and 2014.
- ❖ The patterns of change were visible in maps showing changes in the duration of winter snow cover between 2071 and 2100.
- ❖ This was compared to data from 1982-2014.
- ❖ The largest decline in snow cover was expected between 40 and 50 degrees latitude across North America and Asia.

Hazardous Contamination

- ❖ According to recent update of Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), there are 128 sites in India contaminated by toxic and hazardous substances.
- ❖ West Bengal led the list with 27 sites followed by Odisha at 23.

CPCB

- ❖ The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) of India is a statutory organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- ❖ It was established in 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of pollution) Act, 1974.
- ❖ The CPCB is also entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- ❖ CPCB has its head office in New Delhi, with seven zonal offices and 5 laboratories.
- ❖ It advises the central government to prevent and control water and air pollution.

White giraffe

- ❖ Poachers have killed two extremely rare white giraffes in northeast Kenya, leaving just one such animal in the world.
- ❖ The white appearance of the giraffe is due to leucism, a genetic condition that causes skin cells to have no pigmentation.
- ❖ Leucism is different from albinism where no melanin is produced at all.
- ❖ The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) had classified giraffes as vulnerable in the Red List in December 2016.
- ❖ According to IUCN, the four principal factors that have led to a population decline among giraffes are habitat loss, civil unrest, poaching and ecological issues.



Oculudentavis khaungraae

- ❖ It is the smallest dinosaur discovered yet.
- ❖ The scientists found the fossilised skull of a dinosaur trapped in a 99-million-year-old amber in northern Myanmar.
- ❖ It is in the size of a modern hummingbird.
- ❖ The fossil represented the smallest dinosaur from the Mesozoic era — about 250 million to 65 million years ago.



National Clean Air Programme

- ❖ Union Ministry for Environment has asked for city-level plans for the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) as these problems need to be dealt with at the local level.
- ❖ The Indian government launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in January 2019.

Danube-Oder-Elbe canal

- ❖ The Danube-Oder-Elbe canal intends to connect the three rivers Danube, Oder and Elbe.
- ❖ This is to provide an alternate route of navigation from Black sea to Baltic and North seas.
- ❖ However, several concerns are being raised by the environmental organizations against the construction of the canal.

Bengaluru's Water Conservation Score

- ❖ Karnataka's capital Bengaluru — high on the list of India's water-stressed districts.
- ❖ This is a cause of concern for the Union government's Jal Shakti Abhiyaan (JSA) initiative.
- ❖ The initiative addresses the water and irrigation needs of 255 water-stressed districts across the country.
- ❖ Bengaluru received an abysmal 200th rank in terms of water conservation work done under JSA, with a score of a mere 11 percentage.
- ❖ Laws were placed since 2008 that mandate construction of rainwater harvesting structures in all public spaces and residence buildings.
- ❖ Still the city has been under considerable stress over depleting water sources and immense pollution in its several lakes.
- ❖ Also, Karnataka's 2017 wastewater policy also advocates for interventions similar to those described under JSA and allocates a 20 per cent reuse target.
- ❖ None of these was reflected in the Bengaluru district's scorecard that gave it a zero on all fields except for uploading details of five conservation sites.

Normal Monsoon rains for India

- ❖ The Indian Meteorological Department announced that the El Nino Weather Phenomenon is to remain neutral this year between May and July.
- ❖ This will bring in normal rains to India during South West Monsoon.
- ❖ The Indian Monsoon is greatly affected by the El Nino and La Nina Weather Phenomenon.
- ❖ The neutral event of the weather phenomenon is addressed as ENSO Oscillation.
- ❖ The ENSO phenomenon strengthens the trade winds that give good rains to India during Monsoon.
- ❖ Therefore, India receives good rainfall when ENSO is neutral.

Earth quake at Pacific

- ❖ On March 25, 2020, 7.5 magnitude earthquake hit northern Pacific.
- ❖ The quake was 37 miles deep and struck the eastern Kuril Islands of Russia.
- ❖ The Kuril Islands are a volcanic Archipelago that separates Sea of Okhotsk from the Pacific Ocean.
- ❖ The islands are currently under Russian Administration.
- ❖ However, claims of Japan over 4 southern most islands of the Archipelago have led to the ongoing Kuril Islands Dispute.
- ❖ The Islands are located at the tectonically instable region called the “Ring of Fire”.
- ❖ The Ring of Fire is the areas of Pacific Ocean where several volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur.



GM Crop - White Flies Resistant Cotton Field Trials

- ❖ The National Botanical Research Institute developed pest resistant cotton variety.
- ❖ The cotton variety is to be field tested at the Center of Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana.
- ❖ In 2015, the whiteflies devastated more than two-third cotton crops in Punjab.
- ❖ Whiteflies feed on the underside of plant leaves.
- ❖ They are common in warm tropical climates.
- ❖ They are more prevalent in greenhouses.



Akshay Urja Portal

- ❖ Akshay Urja Portal is launched by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- ❖ The portal aims to develop ways to use akshay urja or renewable energy more efficiently.
- ❖ It promotes innovation to adopt renewable energy sources to produce power for the electricity grid and for several standalone applications and decentralized power production.

Sikkim Glaciers

- ❖ The Scientists of Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun conducted a study and have found that glaciers in Sikkim region are melting at faster.
- ❖ Since 2000, the western and central Himalayan glaciers have showed reduced melting.
- ❖ Whereas in case of Sikkim Glaciers, the melting rate has increased.
- ❖ Summer temperature increase is the main reason for glacier changes.
- ❖ This study is the first in India to study about multiple parameters of glaciers namely length, Debris cover, area, glacial lakes, snow line altitude.

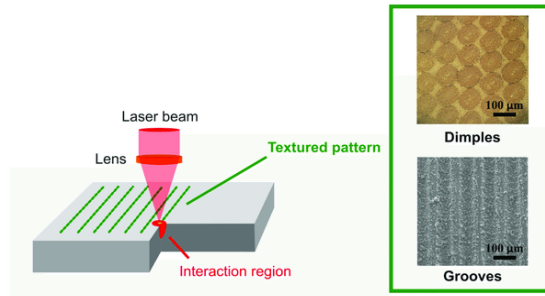


Report on Peatland

- ❖ The Food and Agriculture Organization operating under United Nations released a report recently on Peatlands.
- ❖ The report says that though Peatlands cover only 3% of the earth's surface, they trigger the carbon that were locked in a few decades.
- ❖ When they are released, they emit greenhouse gases.
- ❖ They have the potential to release up to one giga tonne of carbon.
- ❖ The report says that peatlands consists of 30% of world soil carbon.
- ❖ Indonesia has 40% of tropical peatlands.

Fuel efficiency of internal combustion engines.

- ❖ The International Advanced Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI) operating under Department of Science and Technology, Government of India has developed a technology to improve fuel efficiency of internal combustion engines.



- ❖ The technology improves the fuel efficiency by reducing friction in the engines.
- ❖ This has been achieved through Laser surface micro-texturing.
- ❖ In this technology, the friction is controlled by controlling the size, density and shape of the micro-surface texture features.
- ❖ Such a texture is created by using a pulsating laser beam.

BS IV to BS VI

- ❖ With the Nation-wide Lock Down to contain the spread of Corona Virus, the Supreme Court extended transition from BS IV to BS VI by 10 more days.
- ❖ The BS VI standard emits five times lesser than that of BS IV standard.
- ❖ The major upgrade that is being brought in BS VI standard is in terms of fuel.
- ❖ A BS VI vehicle should use BS VI fuel.
- ❖ The BS VI fuel has five times lesser Sulphur.
- ❖ Also, the nitrogen oxide levels for BS VI petrol and diesel engines are to be brought down by 70% and 25%.

BS IV vs BS VI		
Vehicle	Sulphur content (part per million)	
	BS IV	BS VI
Diesel Vehicle	50	10
Petrol Vehicle	30	10

• Oxides of Nitrogen down by 68 per cent in BS VI norms
 • Particulate levels down by 82 per cent in BS VI norms

- ❖ The Bharat Stage Emission norms were brought in 2000 based on European Emission standards.
- ❖ The standards are set by the Central Pollution Control Board.

Earth Hour

- ❖ Earth Hour 2020 is scheduled for March 28, from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm
- ❖ Earth Hour is a worldwide movement organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).
- ❖ The Earth Hour is held every year on the last Saturday of March
- ❖ It is held for one hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.
- ❖ It was started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007.
- ❖ The event is held annually by encouraging individuals, communities, and businesses to turn off non-essential electric lights.
- ❖ The main aim of the marking Earth Hour is to call attention towards global warming, loss of biodiversity and climate change.



Himalayan Ibex

- ❖ A recent study by scientists of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has proved that Himalayan Ibex is a distinct species from the Siberian Ibex.
- ❖ It is distributed in the trans-Himalayan ranges of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The study was done under a project funded through the National Mission on Himalayan Studies.
- ❖ The Project is implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- ❖ The latest genetic analysis provided first evidence to claim that Himalayan Ibex is genetically different from all other ranges of Siberian Ibex.



STATES

1000 Springs Initiative

- ❖ Union Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda launched the "Programme for [Capacity Building](#) of Scheduled Tribe Representatives in Local Self Governments" in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- ❖ He also launched "1000 Spring Initiatives" and an online portal on GIS-based [Spring Atlas](#) with hydrological and chemical properties of the Springs on the occasion.
- ❖ 1000 Springs Initiative aims at improving access to safe and adequate water for the tribal communities living in a difficult and inaccessible part of rural areas in the country.
- ❖ The online portal on GIS-based [Spring Atlas](#) has been developed to make these data easily accessible from an online platform.

Nimad Chilli Festival 2020

- ❖ A unique initiative "Nimad Chilli Festival 2020" organised by Madhya Pradesh Government begins in Khargone district, Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ The aim of this festival is to promote Chilli production & Chilli based industries in the state & specially to promote Nimari brand of chillies in India & abroad.
- ❖ This festival is locally called 'Mirch Mahotsav'.

Sonbhadra Gold Mines

- ❖ The Geographical Survey of India (GSI) provided estimates for the amount of gold that can be extracted from a site in Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The total gold that can be extracted is found to be 160 kg.
- ❖ GSI arrived at this estimate by two basic processes,
 - by the study of rocks, and drilling of the ground. Laboratory analysis of the rocks indicates the possibility of these containing a particular mineral. And,
 - another indicator is the age of the rocks, which is determined by radiometric dating processes.

Tribal organizations demand the ILP system

- ❖ Tribal organisations in Meghalaya have been demanding the ILP (Inner Line Permit) system for restricting the entry of outsiders into the State.
- ❖ It is a document required by non-natives to visit or stay in a state that is protected under the ILP system.

- ❖ ILP helps to protect the indigenous culture of the place and also prevents illegal migrants and encroachment by the outsiders.
- ❖ At present, four North eastern states are already covered in this system.
- ❖ They are Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland.
- ❖ The ILP is issued by the concerned state government.
- ❖ The Inner Line Permit is an extension of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act 1873.



Safe homes to be setup in Kerala

- ❖ The Department of Social Justice of Kerala has unveiled the unique initiative to set up 'safe homes' for inter-caste and inter-faith couples.
- ❖ Here such couples can stay up to one year after marriage.

Mission Bhagiratha

- ❖ The Mission Bhagiratha is a safe drinking water project that was launched for the state of Telangana.
- ❖ It aims to provide drinking water to every village and city household.
- ❖ It will supply clean drinking water from the rivers Krishna and Godavari.
- ❖ According to hindu culture, Bhagiratha is an Indian king who brought the holy river Ganga to the earth.
- ❖ River Bhagirathi does not flow in Telangana.
- ❖ It flows through Uttarkhand state.

Land Immigration Check Posts

- ❖ Ghojadanga of West Bengal and Agartala of Tripura were designated as land immigration check posts.
- ❖ They are located in Indo-Bangladesh border.
- ❖ India has adopted the policy of “Guarding and Securing” in order to secure its boundary at Bangladesh border.
- ❖ The visas issued by Indian high commission in Bangladesh is the highest of all the Indian missions.

Kerala Postal Department Chief from TN

- ❖ Saradha Sampath from Tamil Nadu is appointed as the chief of Kerala Postal Department.
- ❖ She has set a record by creating 23 post offices where women only work.

Special Gram Sabhas

- ❖ To mark the International Women’s Day, special gram sabhas were organised in all the gram panchayats in Chhattisgarh.
- ❖ The gram sabhas held discussions on subjects such as women nutrition, education, health, equality, security among other relevant issues.

Kishori shakti karyakram

- ❖ Fourteen teenage girls from Odisha’s Berhampur have started a campaign ‘kishori shakti karyakram’ beginning from the International Women’s Day.
- ❖ This aims to empower young girls living in slums of the city.
- ❖ These activists are in the age group of 14 to 18 years.
- ❖ The campaign includes making adolescents and the community aware about menstrual hygiene, right age for marriage, motivating school and college drop-outs to restart studies, promoting gender equality, skill development and formation of adolescent groups.

Attukal Pongala festival

- ❖ Attukal Pongala is a 10-day festival celebrated at the Attukal Temple, Thiruvananthapuram.
- ❖ There will be a huge gathering of millions of women on the ninth day.
- ❖ These women prepare a divine food made of rice in earthen pots and offer it to the Goddess of the Temple.
- ❖ This temple is also known as the women’s Sabarimala.



Court orders removal of 'name and shame' hoardings

- ❖ Allahabad High Court has directed the Lucknow administration to remove forthwith the controversial 'name and shame' hoardings.
- ❖ These contains the names of those arrested during protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.
- ❖ The police put up several hoardings across Lucknow identifying those accused of violence during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.
- ❖ The Allahabad High Court had taken Suo motu notice of this act.
- ❖ It violates the Article 21 of the Constitution of India.
- ❖ Also, no power is available in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 to police or the Executive to display personal records of a person to public at large.



Solar Rooftop Installations

- ❖ Gujarat has topped solar roof top plants across the country.
- ❖ The state government has adopted the scheme called "Surya Gujarat" in order increase the use of solar energy at domestic level.
- ❖ The scheme aimed to cover more than 8 lakh domestic consumers by 2022.
- ❖ It had also provided 40% subsidy to projects with capacity between 3 KWhr and 10 KWhr.

Agreement on Climate Resilient Rain-Fed Agriculture


- ❖ The Government of India, Government of Himachal Pradesh and the World Bank today signed a loan agreement to improve water management practices.
- ❖ It will increase agricultural productivity in selected Gram Panchayats (Village Councils) in Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The project will improve upstream water sources in forests, pastures and grasslands and ensure sufficient water is available for sustainable agriculture in Himachal Pradesh and in downstream states.

Basmati GI tag

- ❖ Madhya Pradesh government's struggle to join the elite 'basmati' league has failed once again
- ❖ The Madras high court has dismissed the state's plea seeking geographical indication (GI) tag for basmati rice grown in areas falling under the state.
- ❖ The court said that Two GI certificates of registration for a same produce cannot be issued.

Background

- ❖ In May 2010, GI status was given to basmati grown only in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and parts of western Uttar Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.
- ❖ But Madhya Pradesh demanded that its 13 districts be recognised as traditional Basmati growing regions.
- ❖ Geographical Indications are covered as a component of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.

<p>What is a Geographical Indication? A 'geographical indication' (GI) is a place name used to identify the origin and quality, reputation or other characteristics of products. For instance, Champagne.</p> <p>Why is it important? Article 22 of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights agreement says unless a geographical indication is protected in the country of its origin, there is no</p>	<p>obligation under the agreement for other countries to extend reciprocal protection.</p> <p>India's Basmati credentials... India is the largest producer and exporter of Basmati rice in the world. Exports totalled Rs. 27,597 crore in 2014-15.</p> <p>Some popular registered GIs in India Darjeeling Tea, Mysore Silk, Mysore Pak (sweet), Thanjavur Veena</p>	 <p>Pusa Basmati 1, a high-yielding Variety of scented Basmati rice. — FILE PHOTO</p> <p>Sources: WTO and APEDA</p>
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- ❖ GI is also governed by the World Trade Organisation's (WTO's) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

- ❖ In India, Geographical Indications registration is administered by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 which came into force with effect from September 2003.
- ❖ The first product in India to be accorded with GI tag was Darjeeling tea in the year 2004-05.

State Health Emergency

- ❖ Odisha CM Naveen Declares Coronavirus Outbreak As “State Calamity” or state disaster.
- ❖ Earlier, Kerala has declared a health emergency in four districts.

Phool Dei festival

- ❖ Uttarakhand celebrated the traditional harvest festival “Phool Dei”.
- ❖ The festival also showcases the inner bonding between the communities who all are residing in the hills.
- ❖ On this traditional festival young girls pluck the first flowers of the season to decorate their houses with flowers.
- ❖ The term ‘Dei’ refers to ceremonial pudding which is the key food in the festival that is made from jaggery, White flour & curd, are offered to everyone.

Stadiums under Uttaran scheme

- ❖ The Assam Government plans to construct 33 stadiums across the state under the Uttaran Scheme.
- ❖ The Uttaran Scheme is adopted by the Assam Government to give a new dimension to the visions of the MLAs and to implement innovative projects which will be suitable to local needs.

Karnataka seeks quota for locals

- ❖ The Karnataka government has insisted the private companies to provide 80% reservation in jobs for locals (Kannada-speaking people) in all categories.
- ❖ The government has already amended the Karnataka Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Rules, 1961, to reserve 100% for group ‘C’ and group ‘D’ jobs for locals in the private sector.

Kerala Government ordered poultry culling

- ❖ Kerala government ordered the poultry culling in Parappanangadi in the backdrop of bird flu.
- ❖ Special squads have been deployed to cull all poultry within a one-kilometre radius of the epicentre.



Recovery of Damage to Public Properties Ordinance 2020

- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet recently passed the 'Recovery of Damage to Public Properties Ordinance 2020' for recovery of losses caused by damage to public property during violent protests.
- ❖ It aims to prevent loss of public property in the state.

ROPAX

- ❖ The Ministry of Shipping has launched a roll on-roll off cum passenger ferry service, called 'ROPAX', between Mumbai and Mandwa (Maharashtra).
- ❖ The road distance from Mumbai to Mandwa is about 110 kilometres, and it takes three to four hours, whereas by waterway the distance is about 18 kilometres and a journey of just an hour.
- ❖ The benefits of this service include reduction in the travel time, vehicular emission and traffic on the road.

Public Safety Act

- ❖ Former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Omar Abdullah was released from detention after 7 months.
- ❖ He was booked under Public Safety Act
- ❖ Public Safety Act, 1978 The act is a preventive detention law.
- ❖ Under the act, any person can be taken into custody in order to prevent them from acting harmful against the security of the state.
- ❖ The Act applies only to the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Arr-Rinam

- ❖ It is a tribal lockdown ritual observed in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ It has been imposed now on account of COVID- 19 spread.
- ❖ The Galos are one of the 26 major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh that dominate West Siang district
- ❖ This District practise the Arr-Rinam ritual.

Project Arunank

- ❖ It is being implemented by BRO in the state of Arunachal Pradesh
- ❖ The Border Road Organization (BRO) is working in full swing to completely replace the Daporijo bridge.
- ❖ The bridge is the only line of communication to 451 villages located in the China border.
- ❖ The Daporijo bridge is being constructed across the Subansiri river.
- ❖ The Subansiri river runs in the states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ It is the largest tributary of Brahmaputra river.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

6th Swami Vivekananda Karmayogi Award 2020

- ❖ Forest Man of India & environmentalist 'Molai' Payeng is honoured with the 6th annual Swami Vivekananda Karmayogi award 2020.
- ❖ He is honoured for his consistent efforts in creating a manmade forest through afforestation.
- ❖ In 2015, he was honoured with Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India.
- ❖ Karmayogi award is presented to recognize extraneous achievement towards development of the North east region of India.



19th edition of World Productivity Congress-2020

- ❖ The 19th edition of World Productivity Congress (WPC) will be held at Bengaluru.
- ❖ The WPC is the world's largest convention for productivity development which promotes innovation and world class practices that shape future productivity growth.

- ❖ Previous WPC was held in India in 1974 and this year is to be held in India after 45 years.
- ❖ The Theme of 19th Productivity Congress 2020: “Industry 4.0 – Innovation and Productivity”.
- ❖ World Confederation of Productivity Science, headquartered at Montreal of Canada, has been organising this future-shaping event since 1969.

Vu Ve Swaminathan World Tamil Award

- ❖ TM Abdul kadar, former Tamil department head of Islamiah College, Vaniyambadi has been honoured with Vu Ve saminathan World Tamil Award.
- ❖ The topic given for the competition, for the year 2019 was ‘Silapthikarathil Ara-kotpaadu’.

Islamica 500 Award

- ❖ Mohammed Jinnah from Singapore, gets award for his excellence in Islamic Economy from Islamica 500.
- ❖ He is of Tamil origin.
- ❖ ISLAMICA 500 is the reference providing hard-to-find biographical details for 500 of the world’s most prominent and influential personalities in the Islamic world and economy.

Lalit Kala Akademi awards

- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind conferred the 61st annual awards of the National Lalit Kala Akademi at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.
- ❖ The National Lalit Kala Akademi awards are conferred to recognize individuals for their outstanding work in the field of art.

Greatest leader in World history

- ❖ Maharaja Ranjit Singh is named as the 'greatest leader ever' in the world in a survey conducted by BBC World History Magazine.



- ❖ Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the Indian ruler of the Sikh Empire of 19th century.
- ❖ He also prohibited *Jiziya* from the Hindus and Sikhs.

Indira Gandhi and Amrit Kaur

- ❖ TIME Magazine has named India's former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and freedom fighter Amrit Kaur among 100 greatest women of the year.
- ❖ TIME has created 100 covers for 100 women from 1920 to 2020.
- ❖ TIME has named Amrit Kaur as the women of the year for 1947 and Indira Gandhi for 1976.



Indian Sports Women of the year Award

- ❖ World champion shuttler P. V. Sindhu was voted as the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year.
- ❖ She gained more popular votes than boxer Mary Kom, para-shuttler Manasi Joshi, sprinter Dutee Chand and wrestler Vinesh Phogat.
- ❖ On the same occasion, the legendary athlete P.T. Usha was bestowed the Lifetime Achievement Award.



Avvaiyar award

- ❖ Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami honoured R. Kannagi from Tiruvannamalai, with the Tamil Nadu government's Avvaiyar award for the current year,
- ❖ The award was given recognising her work for the uplift of rural women for over 18 years.
- ❖ Ms. Kannagi, a burial ground assistant, is popular among the women's Self-Help groups (SHGs) in Tiruvannamalai district.

Bhawna Dehariya

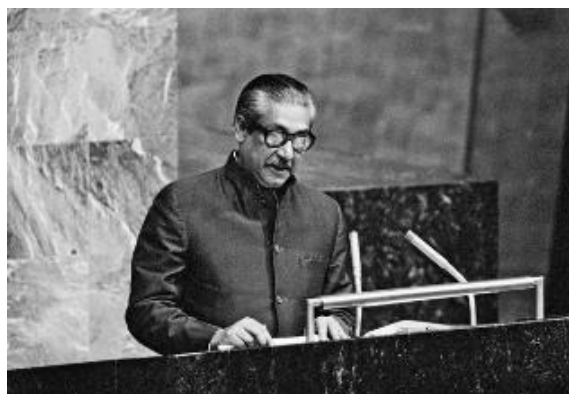
- ❖ Indian mountaineer Bhawna Dehariya has successfully scaled Mount Kosciuszko, the highest mountain peak in Australia.
- ❖ She scaled Mount Everest and Mount Kilimanjaro in the year 2019.
- ❖ Dehariya, who hails from Madhya Pradesh, thanked Chief Minister Kamal Nath for supporting and motivating her to climb the summit.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

- ❖ On March 17, 2020, Bangladesh celebrated 100th birth anniversary of "Jatir Pita" Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- ❖ PM Modi participated in the celebrations through video conferencing.

About

- ❖ Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a Bangladeshi politician.
- ❖ He is called the father of Bangladesh.
- ❖ He was the first president of Bangladesh.
- ❖ Later he served as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh between 1971 and 1975.
- ❖ He was assassinated in 1975.
- ❖ He founded Awami League in 1949.
- ❖ His daughter Sheikh Hasina is the current leader of the Awami League and also the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.



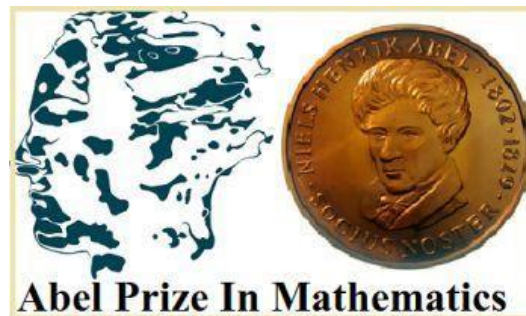
Dr. Kalaighnar Karunanidhi Porkili Awards

- ❖ The Booksellers and Publishers' Association of South India has announced writers to be honoured with the Dr. Kalaighnar Karunanidhi Porkili Awards for 2020.
- ❖ The awardees are,

Awardees	Awarded for
N. Murugesu Pandian	Prose
A. Mangai	Drama
Arivumathi	Poetry
Ponneelan	Novel
Siddhalingaiyya	Kannada language
R. Balakrishnan	English language

Abel Prize

- ❖ The Norwegian Academy of Science is to award the Abel Prize for the year 2020 to the two great mathematicians Hillel Frustenberg and Gregory Margulis.
- ❖ They are being honoured for their work towards probability and dynamics in number theory, combinatorics and Group Theory.
- ❖ The Abel Prize is a Norwegian prize that is being presented annually by the King of Norway.



Satyarup Siddhanta

- ❖ The Indian Mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta has entered 'Limca Book of Records'.
- ❖ He has set the record of becoming the first Indian to climb the highest volcanoes in the world of all the 7 continents.
- ❖ The Limca Book of Records is considered second to the World Guinness Book of Records.
- ❖ It consists of achievements made by Indians inside India and also in other countries

❖ His achievements

- Mt Kilimanjaro, Africa (5,895 m)
- Mount Elbrus, Europe (5,642 m)
- Mt Pico de Orizaba, North America (5,636 m)
- Mt Giluwe, Australia (4,367 m)
- Mt Sidley, Antarctica (4,285 m)
- Mt Ojos del Salado, South America (6,893 m)
- Mt Damavand, Asia (5,610 m)

SPORTS

Maria Sharapova retires

- ❖ Five-time grand slam singles winner Maria Sharapova, Russia retires from tennis.
- ❖ Sharapova became a global star [in 2004 by winning Wimbledon at age of 17.](#)

5 Grand Slam titles	2004 Wimbledon	2006 US Open	2008 Aus Open	2012 French Open	2014 French Open
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Asian Squash Federation performance award list

- ❖ Saurav Ghosal and Veer Chotrani have been shortlisted among Indians for the Asian Squash Federation performance award list for 2019.
- ❖ Ghosal has been nominated for the Dato Alex Award for 'the outstanding performance of the year' in the senior category.
- ❖ Chotrani has been picked for the Hassan Musa Award for 'the outstanding performance of the year' in the junior category.
- ❖ The awards will be presented at the Asian Team Championships to be held from March 25 to 29 in Kuala Lumpur.

Khelo India Winter Games

- ❖ The first-ever Winter Games will be held in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir from March 7 to 11.
- ❖ The Union Territory of Ladakh will also host the Khelo India Winter Games in the third week of March.
- ❖ Both the games will be funded by the Ministry of Youth affairs and Sports.



Women's T20 - 2020

- ❖ The Defending champion Australia claimed their fifth Women's Twenty20 Cricket World Cup title against India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.
- ❖ With this win, Australia lifted their fifth WT20 in their sixth final.

Note

- ❖ It was held in Australia
- ❖ was the seventh ICC Women's T20 World Cup tournament
- ❖ It was the first time that India had progressed to the final of the Women's T20 World Cup.
- ❖ Australia's Beth Mooney was the leading run-scorer in the tournament, with 259 runs. She was the Player of the Series.



Olympic flame 2020

- ❖ The Olympic flame for the 2020 Tokyo Games was lit in ancient Olympia in Greece.
- ❖ Greek Olympic shooting champion Anna Korakaki was the initial torch-bearer, the first time a woman has been chosen for the role.



- ❖ This will be the second time that Japan and specifically Tokyo has hosted the Summer Olympic Games.
- ❖ The first was in 1964.
- ❖ It is making Tokyo the first city in Asia to host the summer Games twice.
- ❖ Overall, these will be the fourth Olympic Games to be held in Japan, which also hosted the Winter Olympics in 1972 (Sapporo) and 1998 (Nagano).



Ranji Trophy 2019-20

- ❖ The 2019–20 Ranji Trophy was the 86th season of the Ranji Trophy.
- ❖ Saurashtra wins maiden Ranji title by defeating Bengal team at Rajkot.
- ❖ The Ranji Trophy is a domestic first-class cricket championship played in India between multiple teams representing regional and state cricket associations.
- ❖ The competition is named after the first Indian cricketer who played international cricket, Ranjit Singh, who was also known as 'Ranji'.

Tokyo 2020 Olympics

- ❖ The 2020 Summer Olympics officially the Games of the XXXII Olympiad and commonly known as Tokyo 2020 would be postponed to 2021.
- ❖ It was announced by the International Olympic Committee and the Tokyo Organizing Committee of Japan.
- ❖ The Games will still be publicly branded and marketed as Tokyo 2020, even with the change in scheduling.

Postponed History

- ❖ Olympic Games that were scheduled but cancelled, in all cases due to World War I (1916 at Berlin) or World War II (1940 at Tokyo and 1944 at London).
- ❖ The Winter Olympics (1940 in Japan and 1944 at Italy) were also cancelled due to Second World War.

Country's first team of transmen

- ❖ The north eastern State Manipur is now host to the country's first team of transmen.
- ❖ They have created history by becoming the captain, goalkeeper and striker of arguably the first transgender football team in the country.

FIFA's COVID -19 Campaign

- ❖ The World Governing body FIFA (International Federation of Association Football) has selected Indian Football Captain Sunil Chhetri among 28 other stars for its campaign.
- ❖ Apart from Sunil, it also includes other best players from the world such as Argentine Lionel Messi and other world cup winners Casillas, Philip Lahm and Cales Puyol.
- ❖ The campaign is to combat COVID -19.
- ❖ The campaign is called "Pass the message to kick out Corona Virus".
- ❖ The campaign is to spread five key steps that are in line with WHO guidance
- ❖ It includes hand washing, not touching the face, coughing etiquette, physical distance and staying home.



IMPORTANT DAYS

Zero Discrimination Day - March 1

- ❖ Every year, Zero Discrimination Day is celebrated on March 1 to end discrimination against girls and women.
- ❖ Zero Discrimination Day also promotes the necessity of equal rights, opportunities and treatments.
- ❖ The day was first celebrated on March 1, 2014, and was launched by UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé on 27 February.
- ❖ The theme of this year's Day is "fight against discrimination faced by women and girls".



World Civil Defense Day - March 1

- ❖ This day was incorporated in 1990 by the International Civil Defence Organisation (ICDO).
- ❖ The day marks the entry into force of the ICDO Constitution as an intergovernmental organisation in 1972.
- ❖ It aims to bring the attention of the world public about the importance of Civil protection and to pay tributes to the efforts, sacrifices, and accomplishments of all the services responsible to fight against disasters.
- ❖ The theme of this year's World Civil Defence Day was "Children's safety, our responsibility".

World Wildlife Day - March 03

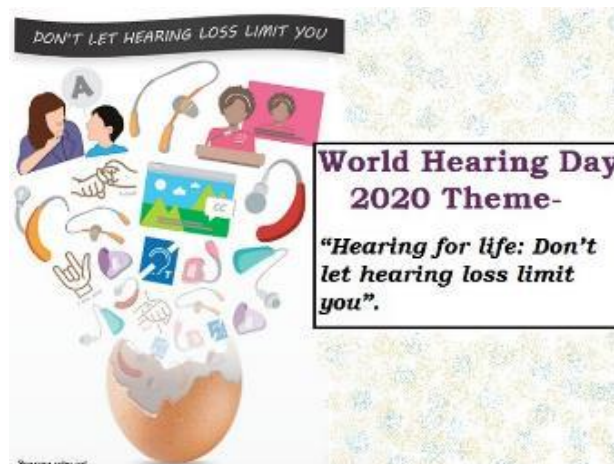
- ❖ The theme of United Nations World Wildlife Day 2020 is 'Sustaining all life on Earth'.
- ❖ In 2013, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 3 March as UN World Wildlife Day.

- ❖ It marks the day of signature of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973.



World Hearing Day - March 03

- ❖ The WHO commemorates World Hearing Day each year by deciding the theme and developing brochures and other advocacy materials including posters and banners.



National Safety Day - March 04

- ❖ The National Safety Council (NSC) observes a National Safety Week to raise awareness for "safety".
- ❖ Here safety refers it in any concern regarding life to prevent accidents and mishaps due to carelessness or recklessness.
- ❖ This year's theme is "Enhance Health & Safety Performance by Use of Advanced Technology".
- ❖ The first observance of National Safety Day took place in 1966, on the day when the National Safety Council (NSC) was founded.
- ❖ Its headquarters is situated in Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra.



World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development - March 04

- ❖ World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development will be celebrated on 4th March every year as a UNESCO international day of engineers and engineering starting from 2020 onwards.
- ❖ Engineers and engineering will be celebrated each year, as well as the important contributions of the profession to sustainable development and modern life.

Jan Aushadhi Divas (Generic Medicine Day) – March 7

- ❖ It is observed to create awareness about the use of generic medicines.
- ❖ It was started on March 07, 2019.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) scheme was announced on July 01, 2015 by the Prime Minister of India.
- ❖ It is initiated by the Department of Pharmaceuticals under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India.

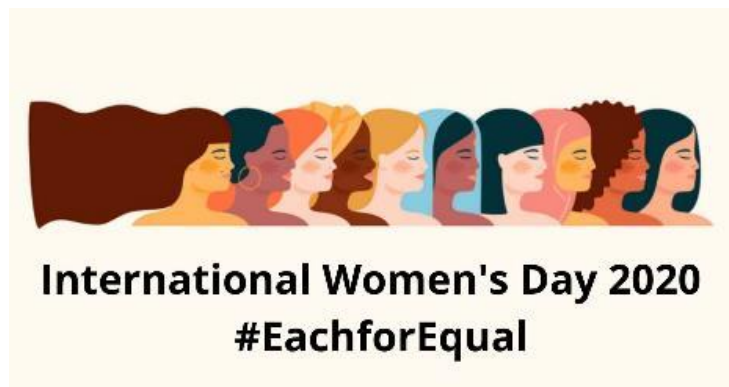


- ❖ The Government aims to have at least 1 PMBJP Kendra in each block of the country by 2020.
- ❖ The prices of high-quality medicines are being reduced by the government below the market price under this scheme.

- ❖ 'Jan Aushadhi Stores' has been set up by the government, where generic medicines are being made available.
- ❖ Generic medicines are much cheaper than branded medicines.

International Women's Day – March 8th

- ❖ This day honours women around the world, celebrates their social, economic, cultural, and political achievements.
- ❖ Theme for this year is "Each for Equal".
- ❖ After women gained suffrage in Soviet Russia in 1917, March 8 became a national holiday there.
- ❖ The United Nations began celebrating the day in 1977.
- ❖ The UN theme for International Women's Day was: 'I am Generation Equality': Realizing Women's Rights'.



Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Raising Day – March 10

- ❖ 50th Raising Day of the CISF was celebrated this year.
- ❖ CISF was established on 10 March 1969.
- ❖ It is a Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) in India.
- ❖ It is directly under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and not the Ministry of Defence.
- ❖ Its headquarters is at New Delhi.
- ❖ The Director-General of CISF is Rajesh Ranjan, IPS.
- ❖ CISF protects the country from some vital installations in the aerospace, nuclear, government, and private sectors.
- ❖ It also plays a major role in Disaster Management.

Major Duties of CISF

Safeguard sensitive government buildings.

Safeguard Delhi Metro.

Provide airport security.

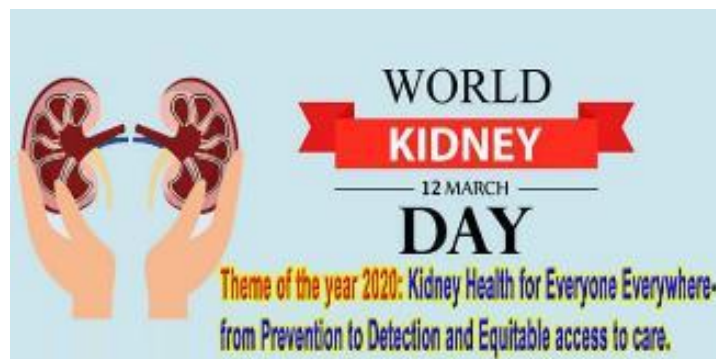
- ▶ The CISF or Central Industrial Security Force is the central armed force of India.
- ▶ On this day, in 1969, the CISF was set up under an act of Parliament of India with a strength of 2,800.
- ▶ CISF is directly under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ▶ Its headquarters are at Delhi.

How is CISF Raising Day celebrated ?

- A parade is established by the CISF officials.
- Service medals are distributed for distinguished and meritorious services.
- The PM lays a wreath at the Martyr's Memorial and signs the visitor's book.
- CISF is praised and thanked for safeguarding the vital institutions of the country.
- Awareness is created amongst the citizens to cooperate with the CISF to maintain peace and security in the country.

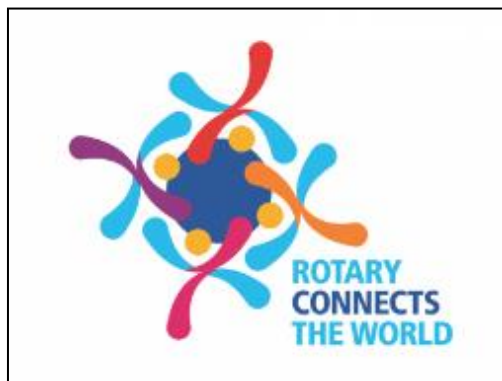
World Kidney Day 2020 – March 12

- ❖ On every second Thursday in the month of March, the World Kidney Day is celebrated.
- ❖ This year's theme is "Kidney health for everyone everywhere - from prevention to detection and equitable access to care".



World Rotaract day – March 13

- ❖ It aims to recognize the services offered by the Rotaractors throughout the World.
- ❖ "Rotaract" stands for "Rotary in Action".



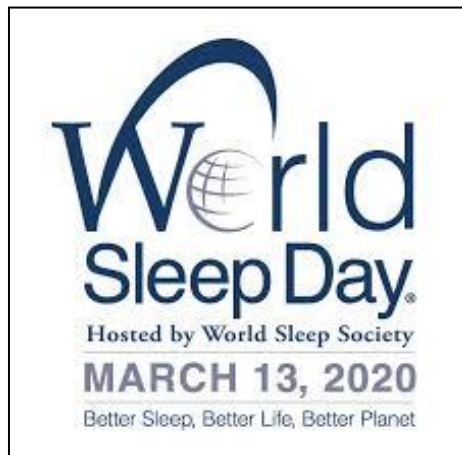
- ❖ Rotary Club is community service organization for young men and women.
- ❖ Rotaract was began as Rotary International youth program in 1968 at North Carolina, USA.
- ❖ The first Rotaract Club was founded on March 13th, 1968.
- ❖ The Motto of Rotary Club is Self-Development – Fellowship Through Service.

World Sleep Day – March 13

- ❖ It is observed annually on the Friday before the March Equinox or the northern hemisphere vernal equinox.
- ❖ It is an annual event organized by the World Sleep Day Committee of the World Sleep Society.
- ❖ The first World Sleep Day was held on 14 March 2008.
- ❖ Theme of the year 2020 is 'Better Sleep, Better Life, Better Planet'.

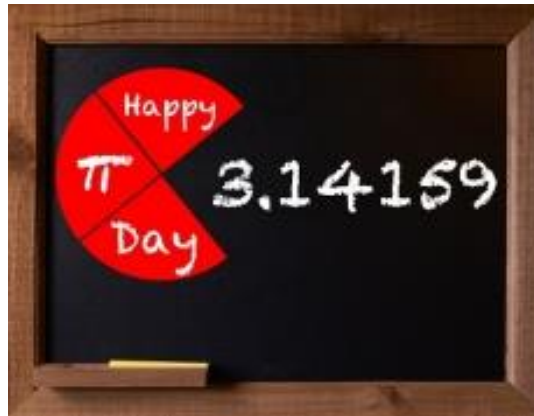
About

- ❖ The March equinox is known as the vernal equinox (spring equinox) in the Northern Hemisphere and as the autumnal equinox in the Southern.
- ❖ The March equinox may be taken to mark the beginning of spring and the end of winter in the Northern Hemisphere but marks the beginning of autumn and the end of summer in the Southern Hemisphere.



Pi Day - March 14

- ❖ Pi Day is an annual celebration of the mathematical constant π (pi).
- ❖ UNESCO's 40th General Conference decided Pi Day as the International Day of Mathematics in November 2019.
- ❖ Coincidentally, March 14 is also Physicist Albert Einstein's birthday.
- ❖ Pi Approximation Day is observed on July 22 (22/7 in the day/month format)
- ❖ Two Pi Day, also known as Tau Day for the mathematical constant Tau, is observed on June 28 (6/28 in the month/day format).



International Day of Action for Rivers – March 14th

- ❖ This day is celebrated to raise awareness about the importance of rivers and climate change.
- ❖ The International Day of Action for Rivers 2020 theme is “Women, Water, and Climate Change”.
- ❖ The main objective behind generating this day is to raise voices in unison against destructive water development projects, reclaim the health of watersheds and demand for equitable and sustainable management of our rivers.

International Day of Mathematics – March 14th

- ❖ This day is celebrated to raise awareness about the beauty and significance of mathematics and the fundamental role in everybody’s life.
- ❖ The theme for 2020 is “Mathematics is Everywhere”.
- ❖ March 14 is as of now known as Pi Day and celebrated in numerous nations around the globe.

World Consumer Rights Day – March 15th

- ❖ This day is celebrated to spread awareness about a consumer's rights and needs.
- ❖ The theme for World Consumer Rights Day 2020 is ‘The Sustainable Consumer’.



National Vaccination Day – March 16th

- ❖ This day is observed to convey the importance of vaccination to the people in the country.
- ❖ This day is also known as National Immunisation Day.
- ❖ It was first observed on 16 March, 1995 when the first dose of Oral Polio Vaccine was given.
- ❖ The main purpose behind the celebration of National Vaccination Day is to make all people aware of arming against polio and eradicating it completely from the world.

Note

- ❖ World Immunization Week 2020 celebrated in the last week of April (24 to 30 April).
- ❖ The theme of World Immunization Week 2020 is 'Vaccines Work for All'.

Ordnance Factories Day – March 18

- ❖ It is an industrial organisation, functioning under the Department of Defence Production of Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
- ❖ Ordnance Factories Board (OFB) is the world's largest government-operated production organisation, and the oldest organisation run by the Government of India.
- ❖ The Board is responsible for manufacturing small arms, missiles, rocket launchers, chemicals, explosives, mines, grenades, anti-tank warfare, etc.
- ❖ It is often called the "Fourth Arm of Defence", and the "Force Behind the Armed Forces" of India.
- ❖ OFB is the 37th largest defence equipment manufacturer in the world, 2nd largest in Asia, and the largest in India.
- ❖ The first Indian ordnance factory can trace its origins back to the year 1712 when the Dutch Ostend Company established a Gun Powder Factory in Ichhapur at West Bengal.



ORDNANCE FACTORIES Day (India)

- ❖ In 1801, Gun Carriage Agency was established at Cossipore, Calcutta.

- ❖ This is the oldest ordnance factory in India still in existence.
- ❖ There are 41 ordnance factories in the country.

International Day of Happiness - March 20

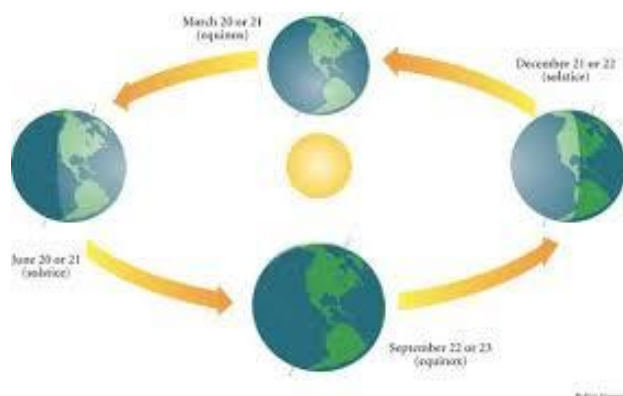
- ❖ The theme of 2020 is "Happiness for all, Together".
- ❖ The first International Happiness Day was observed on March 20 in the year 2013.

World Sparrow Day - March 20

- ❖ Every year March 20 is observed as World Sparrow Day to raise awareness about the bird.
- ❖ The theme for this year is "I LOVE Sparrows"

Equinox Earth Day - March 20

- ❖ The Equinox Earth Day, like the World Earth Day (April 22nd), is a time to celebrate the progress made by mankind in the preservation of the planet and plan out better strategies for the betterment of the climate.
- ❖ Every year, the Equinox Earth Day is celebrated on the Vernal equinox (This year – 20th of March).
- ❖ The day marks the first day of spring in the northern hemisphere and the first day of autumn in the southern hemisphere.
- ❖ The tradition began since March 21, 1970, when the first Equinox Earth Day and also the first Earth Day was celebrated.
- ❖ This day is also known as "Equinoctial Earth Day"



World Oral Health Day – March 20

- ❖ World Oral Health Day is celebrated to raise awareness about oral health.
- ❖ World Oral Health Day is organised by FDI World Dental Federation and is celebrated across the world.

- ❖ Adults those are healthy should have a total 32 teeth and 0 dental cavities.
- ❖ If expressed in numerical basis the above mentioned can be translated as 3/20 therefore 20th of March is chosen.
- ❖ The theme of World Oral Health day 2020 is "Unite for Mouth Health".

FDI

- ❖ FDI is an international, membership-based organization that serves as the main representative body for more than 1 million dentists worldwide.
- ❖ It was founded in the year 1900.
- ❖ Its headquarters is based in Geneva, Switzerland.



Global Recycling Day – March 18

- ❖ The Recyclables are called the “Seventh Resource”.
- ❖ This year’s theme is Recycling Heroes.
- ❖ They help to save 700 million tonnes of Carbon-Dioxide every year.
- ❖ The Global Recycling Day is being organized by Global Recycling Foundation.

World Poetry Day – March 21

- ❖ It celebrates one of humanity’s most treasured forms of cultural and linguistic expression and identity.
- ❖ UNESCO first adopted 21 March as World Poetry Day during its 30th General Conference in Paris in 1999.
- ❖ It aims to support linguistic diversity through poetic expression and increasing the opportunity for endangered languages to be heard.

International Day of Nowruz – March 21

- ❖ It is the Iranian New Year and also known as the Persian New Year.
- ❖ Nowruz marks the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere and is celebrated on the day of the astronomical vernal equinox, which usually occurs on 21 March.

- ❖ The United Nations officially recognized the "International Day of Nowruz" with the adoption of UN resolution in 2010.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination – March 21

- ❖ The United Nations General Assembly reiterates that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and have the potential to contribute constructively to the development and well-being of their societies.
- ❖ This year, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is focused on the midterm review of the International Decade for People of African Descent undertaken by the Human Rights Council in Geneva.
- ❖ 2020 Theme - Recognition, justice and development: The midterm review of the International Decade for People of African Descent

Background

- ❖ On that day, in 1960, police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the apartheid pass laws.
- ❖ Proclaiming the day in 1966, the United Nations General Assembly called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.

International Day of Forests – March 21

- ❖ The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests (IDF) in 2012.
- ❖ The day is celebrated by the joint partnership of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- ❖ The theme for 2020 is Forests and Biodiversity.



World Down syndrome Day – March 21

- ❖ Down syndrome occurs when an individual has an extra partial (or whole) copy of chromosome 21.

- ❖ In December 2011, the United Nations General Assembly declared 21 March as World Down Syndrome Day
- ❖ This year the theme is "We Decide".

World Water Day – March 22

- ❖ It is about focusing attention on the importance of fresh water.
- ❖ This year's theme is 'Water and Climate Change'.
- ❖ The UN World Water Development Report (WWDR) is released each year around World Water Day.
- ❖ UN-Water is the convener for World Water Day.
- ❖ The first World Water Day, designated by the United Nations, was in 1993.

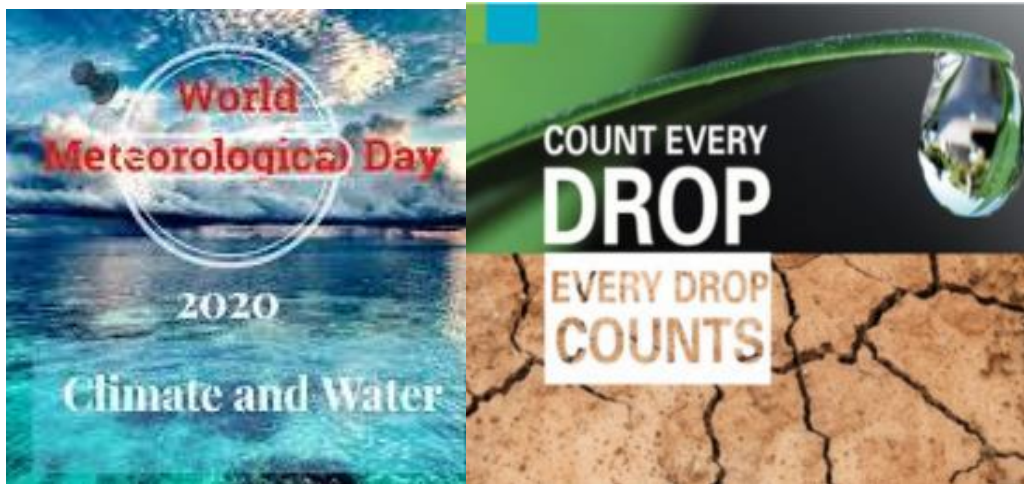


Martyr's Day – March 23

- ❖ Every year, March 23rd is celebrated as Shaheed Diwas or Martyr's Day.
- ❖ The Day is observed to commemorate the courage and heroism of three great young leaders Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru.

World Meteorological Day – March 23

- ❖ The day was established at the first International Meteorological Congress in Vienna, Austria, in 1873 and on March 23, 1950, International Meteorological Organization became the World Meteorological Organization.
- ❖ The theme for 2020 is 'Climate and Water', which will align with the theme of World Water Day 2020, focusing on climate change and water.
- ❖ The slogan for World Meteorological Day 2020 or WMD 2020 is "Count Every Drop, Every Drop Counts".



World Tuberculosis Day – March 24

- ❖ It is designed to build public awareness about the global epidemic of tuberculosis (TB) and efforts to eliminate the disease.
- ❖ Dr Robert Koch announced the discovery of the bacterium causing Tuberculosis on the very same day.
- ❖ It is one of eight official global public health campaigns marked by the World Health Organization (WHO), along with World Health Day, World Blood Donor Day, World Immunization Week, World Malaria Day, World No Tobacco Day, World Hepatitis Day and World AIDS Day.
- ❖ The theme for World TB day 2020 is "It's time to End TB!".



International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims – March 24

- ❖ This annual observance pays tribute to the memory of Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero, who was murdered on 24 March 1980.
- ❖ Monsignor Romero was actively engaged in denouncing 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 – March 25

- ❖ It is a United Nations international observance designated in 2007.
- ❖ The day honours and remembers those who suffered and died as a consequence of the transatlantic slave trade, which has been called "the worst violation of human rights in history".

International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members – March 25

- ❖ It is observed annually by the United Nations.
- ❖ The day aims to mobilize action, demand justice and strengthen staff in the non-governmental community and the press.
- ❖ It commemorates the anniversary of the abduction of Alec Collett, a former journalist who was working for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) when he was kidnapped by armed gunman in 1985.



World Theatre Day – March 27

- ❖ It was initiated in 1962 by the International Theatre Institute (ITI).
- ❖ This day is a celebration for those who can see the value and importance of the art form "theatre".

Rajasthan Day – March 30

- ❖ The state was earlier known as Rajputana.
- ❖ On March 30, 1949, princely states like Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Jaipur, and Jodhpur got merged with the Union of India and the state of Rajasthan came into existence.



Speciality

- ❖ It is popularly known as the 'Lands of Kings'.
- ❖ It is the largest Indian state going by the area and the seventh-largest state according to population.
- ❖ It has the Dilwara Temples, a Jain pilgrimage site at Rajasthan's only hill station, Mount Abu in the ancient Aravalli mountain range.
- ❖ The state of Rajasthan has the ruins of the Indus Valley Civilisation at Kalibanga and Balathal.
- ❖ It has Keoladeo National Park near Bharatpur, a World Heritage Site known for its birdlife.
- ❖ The state is also home to three national tiger reserves, the Ranthambore National Park in Sawai Madhopur, Sariska Tiger Reserve in Alwar and Mukundra Hill Tiger Reserve in Kota.

World Idly Day – March 30

- ❖ The World Idli Day was started by Eniyavan, a famous Idli caterer from Chennai.
- ❖ It only started in 2015.
- ❖ Although idli is an Indian staple food, some historians say that its origin is in the country of Indonesia.
- ❖ This country is known for its long tradition of fermenting foods.
- ❖ The tradition then went on to India in the form of steamed idli which was around 800 to 1200 CE.
- ❖ Some experts say that the term idli came from the word “iddalige” which is a food made from urad dal batter.
- ❖ This was mentioned in a Kannada work back in 920 AD.
- ❖ In addition, the Sanskrit Manasollasa from the 1130 AD mentions the term “Iddarika” which is a dish made from urad dal.
- ❖ During the 17th century, the Tamil people first mentioned the food as “Itali”.

MISCELLANEOUS

Wordline India Digital Payments 2019 report

- ❖ The “Wordline’s India Digital Payments 2019” report was recently released by the online payment processor Worldline India.
- ❖ According to the report, Bengaluru accounted for the highest number of digital transactions in India in 2019, followed by Chennai, Mumbai and Pune.
- ❖ Among states, Maharashtra has topped with the highest number of digital transactions.

Freedom House's annual report

- ❖ India has become one of the world’s least free democracies according to the annual report on political rights and civil liberties by Freedom House
- ❖ The Freedom in the World 2020 report ranks India at the 83rd position, along with Timor-Leste and Senegal.



Indian Pharmaceutical industry in Top 5

- ❖ The Indian pharmaceuticals market is the third largest in terms of volume and 14th largest in terms of value, as per a report by Equity Master.
- ❖ India is now among the top five pharmaceutical emerging markets of the world.
- ❖ The Supply Annual Report of UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund) recognized India as the world’s largest supplier of generic medicines.
- ❖ India’s second largest export market is Africa, followed by Europe.

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