CURRENT AFFAIRS

April 2020

Summary and Multiple Choice Questions

Current Affairs — April 2020

This is a guide to provide you a precise summary and a huge collection of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) covering national and international current affairs for the month of **April 2020**.

This guide will help you in preparing for Indian competitive examinations like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Gradeand Officer Grade, etc.

Audience

Aspirants who are preparing for different competitive exams like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade, Officer Grade, etc.

Even though you are not preparing for any exams but are willing to have news encapsulated in a roll, which you can walk through within 30 minutes, then we have put all the major points for the whole month in a precise and interesting way.

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Appointments

1. Justice Rajnesh Oswal sworn in as permanent Judge of High Court of J&K, Ladakh

Justice Rajnesh Oswal was sworn in as a permanent Judge of the common High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. He has administered oath of office by Chief Justice Jammu and Kashmir High Court, Justice Gita Mittal. He is the first Judge of the High Court to take oath under the Indian Constitution.

All previous Judges of High Court had taken oath under the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, which ceased to have effect since August 5, 2019. With the appointment of Justice Oswal, the strength of Justices of J&K High Court increased from eight to nine.

2. Dillip Kumar Patel takes over as Director (HR), NTPC

Dillip Kumar Patel has taken charge as Director (HR) of NTPC. Mr. Patel had been the HR Head in various NTPC projects like NSPCL Bhilai, Sipat, and Tanda for around 12 years. He was also the Regional Head of HR in the Eastern Region-2, before he was appointed as the Director (HR).

NTPC is India's largest energy conglomerate. It became a Maharatna company in May 2010. NTPC is ranked No. 2 Independent Power Producer (IPP) in Platts Top 250 Global Energy Company rankings.

3. GoI extends tenure of Madhabi Puri Buch as WTM at SEBI

The Government of India has extended the term of Madhabi Puri Buch as a Whole Time Member (WTM) at Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) by 6 months. Buch was appointed in April 2017 and her three-year tenure was due to end in March 2020.

Buch is SEBI's first woman WTM and the first from the private sector to be appointed a SEBI board member. Earlier in February, the government had given a six months extension to SEBI chairman Ajay Tyagi.

4. UB Pravin Rao appointed as Chaiman of NASSCOMM

National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) has appointed Mr. UB Pravin Rao as its Chairman for 2020-21. Mr Rao is Chief Operating Officer, Infosys. He will take on the position from his previous role as Vice Chairman of NASSCOM, succeeding Mr. Keshav Murugesh, Group CEO, WNS Global Services, who served as Chairman of NASSCOM for the year 2019-20.

Ms. Rekha M. Menon has been appointed as Vice Chairperson, NASSCOM. She is the Chairman and Senior Managing Director of Accenture in India. The President of NASSCOM is Debjani Ghosh.

5. Bharti AXA Life Insurance appointed Parag Raja as new MD & CEO

Parag Raja was appointed by the Bharti AXA Life Insurance as its new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer. Parag Raja replaced Vikas Seth. Prior to this appointment, he has handled various responsibilities in the domestic life insurance industry and has exhibited his leadership across different areas such as the agency, bancassurance, broking and direct sales force channels.

Bharti Axa General Insurance Company Ltd. is a joint venture between Bharti Enterprises and Axa business Group that offers online general insurance policy for car, two wheeler, travel, health, etc.

6. New CJs for Bombay, Meghalaya and Orissa High Courts

The Union Government cleared the appointment of next Chief Justices of the Bombay, the Orissa and the Meghalaya High Courts. Justice Dipankar Datta, a judge from the Calcutta HC, has been appointed as the next Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court.

Justice Mohammad Rafiq will take over as Chief Justice of Orissa high court. Prior to the appointment, he was serving as Chief Justice of Meghalaya High Court. Justice Biswanath Somadder, who is a judge in the Allahabad High Court, has been appointed as the next Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High Court.

7. N Kamakodi reappointed MD&CEO of City Union Bank

Reserve Bank of India has approved the re-appointment of N Kamakodi as MD and CEO, for a period of three years with effect from May 1. Kamakodi joined the bank as Deputy General Manager in 2003 and was later elevated as General Manager in 2005.

In 2006, he was appointed as Executive Director. From May 2011, he was serving the bank as its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer. The City Union Bank Limited was originally called The Kumbakonam Bank Limited.

8. Huawei India appointed David Li as new CEO

Huawei Telecommunications India has appointed David Li as its new Chief Executive Officer of its operations in the country. He replaced Jay Chen who has been promoted to handle Asia Pacific level business role.

Li joined Huawei in 2002 and has experience of working in the India market, including in roles like Vice President sales and Vice President HR during different phases of his career. He was serving as CEO of Huawei Cambodia before returning to India to take on his new role.

9. Mahabaleshwara M S reappointed as MD and CEO of Karnataka Bank

The Reserve Bank of India has approved the reappointment of Mahabaleshwara M S as MD and CEO of Karnataka Bank for next three years. RBI has also approved for reappointment ofP Jayarama Bhat as part time (Non-Executive) Chairman.

Mahabaleshwara took charge as MD & CEO of Karnataka Bank on April 12, 2017 and has over 29 years of banking experience both at administrative and operational levels. Karnataka Bank Limited is India's twelfth largest private sector bank with a network of 848 branches and 1540 ATMs.

10. Former IAS officer Kapil Dev Tripathi appointed as new Secretary to President

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the apppointment of former IAS officer Kapil Dev Tripathi as the Secretary to President Ram Nath Kovind. He has been appointed on contract basis, for a term co-terminus with the tenure of the President.

Mr. Tripathi is a 1980 batch IAS officer (Retired) of Assam-Meghalaya cadre. He is currently serving as the Chairman of Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB). Mr. Tripathi will replace Sanjay Kotahri who has been appointed as the Chief Vigilance Commissioner.

11. Former Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar appointed PESB Chief

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the apppointment of former Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar as the Chairperson of the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB). Mr. Kumar is a 1984 batch IAS officer of Jharkhand cadre and retired as the finance secretary in February 2020.

Rajiv Kumar has been appointed to the post for a period of three years. He has been appointed in place of Kapil Dev Tripathi who has taken over as the Secretary to President Ram Nath Kovind.

12. Birupaksha Mishra became new Executive Director of Union Bank of India

Birupaksha Mishra took charge as the Executive Director (ED) of Union Bank of India (UBI), after its amalgamation with Corporation Bank and Andhra Bank. He has held various responsibilities in Credit and Credit Monitoring Portfolio of the Bank and headed IT vertical of the Bank. Prior to this appointment, he worked as Executive Director at Corporation Bank.

The amalgamation with Corporation Bank and Andhra Bank, which came into effect on 1 April 2020, the amalgamated entity becomes the fourth largest bank in terms of branch network and fifth largest in terms of business.

13. Vineet Arora appointed as new MD & CEO of Paytm General Insurance Ltd

Paytm General Insurance Ltd named Vineet Arora as its new MD and CEO. Paytm is an Indian e-commerce payment system and financial technology company, based out of Noida.

Prior to this, Vineet served as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Aegon Life Insurance Company and was part of the India Leadership team. Vineet Arora worked as Senior General Manager and Head Product, Distribution, Marketing and Wealth Management at ICICI Securities Ltd.

14. Ajay Mahajan appointed as new MD & CEO of "CARE Ratings"

Ajay Mahajan has been appointed Managing Director & Chief Executive of Care Ratings. Credit Analysis & Research Ltd (CARE Ratings) is a full service rating company that undertakes rating exercise based on information provided by the company, in-house database and data from other sources that CARE considers reliable.

Prior to this appointment, Ajay worked as MD & Country Head of Global Markets Group in Bank of America, management team at inception of Yes Bank and IDFC Bank. He is popularly known for turning IDFC from an Infrastructure Financing NBFC to a full service commercial bank.

15. BSNL CMD P K Purwar took over additional charge of MTNL

The Chairman and Managing Director of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), P. K. Purwar has been given the additional charge as CMD of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) for a period of three months. The appointment is subject to the approval of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).

Purwar was selected through the Public Enterprise Selection Board (PESB). Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, d/b/a MTNL, is a state-owned telecommunications service provider and wholly owned subsidiary of BSNL.

16. Rakesh Sharma appointed as President of IMMA

The International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association (IMMA) has appointed Rakesh Sharma as its President. He has been elected from its member organisation SIAM, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers for a 2-year mandate.

Sharma succeeds Johannes Loman, Director of PT Astra International Tbk and Executive Vice President Director PT Astra Honda Motor (AHM) Indonesia. Rakesh Sharma had joined

Bajaj Auto in October 2007 as President for International Business and is currently the Executive Director.

17. Sanjay Kothari takes over as Central Vigilance Commissioner

Retired IAS Officer, Sanjay Kothari, took oath as Chief Vigilance Commissioner. Mr. Kothari will have tenure till late June 2021. The name of Mr Kothari was recommended by a high-level selection panel headed by the prime minister in February.

The post of the Central Vigilance Commissioner was lying vacant since June 2020 after KV Chowdary completed his tenure. Mr Kothari, a 1978-batch IAS officer of Haryana cadre, retired in June 2016 from the post of secretary, the Department of Personnel and Training.

18. Shiv Das Meena appointed as new CMD of HUDCO

Shiv Das Meena has been appointed as Chairman and Managing Director of Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO). He is a 1989 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Tamil Nadu cadre. Prior to the appointment, he was serving as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

Meena has also held additional charge of CMD of NBCC Limited in 2019. HUDCO is a Miniratna PSU under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.

Awards

1. Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik received PETA award for allocating funds to feed community animals

Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik, has been conferred with 'Hero to Animals Award' by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India. He received the honour for allocating funds to feed community animals in Odisha during the lockdown over the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The Chief Minister approved of Rs 54 lakhs from a relief fund to feed animals of the community to ensure that the animals do not go starving during the lockdown. He received a framed certificate and a letter of appreciation.

2. Adam Higginbotham's Midnight in Chernobyl won William E. Colby Award 2020

Adam Higginbotham's "Midnight in Chernobyl: The Untold Story of the World's Greatest Nuclear Disaster" has won the William E. Colby Award, given for an outstanding book on military or intelligence history. The award carries a reward of $5,000 prize.

The award is presented by Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont and sponsored in part by the Chicago-based Pritzker Military Foundation. It is named after the late CIA director and was established in 1999. "Midnight in Chernobyl" had earlier won the American Library Association's Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Non-fiction.

3. Tata Power won Edison Award for its social innovation campaign

Tata Power was conferred with the honourable Global, "Edison Award" for its "Club Enerji #Switchoff2SwitchOn" campaign under Social innovation category and Social Energy Solutions subcategory. Club Enerji's #SwitchOff2SwitchOn is a call to action campaign hosted on Green Community & amplified via Digital, BTL, PR, Internal Platforms & on-ground activities.

The campaign hosted several Contests, Plastic Cleanliness Drives, Educational AVs & creatives to Switch Off irresponsible consumption & Switch On smart practices leading to savings. The Edison Awards, named after Thomas Alva Edison, recognizes and honours the world's best innovations and innovators.

1. President gave assent to Ordinance to protect healthcare workers

President Ram Nath Kovind has approved promulgation of Ordinance to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 in the light of COVID-19 pandemic situation making acts of violence against the healthcare workers as cognizable and non-bailable offences. It has provision for compensation in cases of injury to healthcare service professionals or damage to their property.

The amendment also makes a provision of imprisonment for up to seven years and fine of up to two lakh rupees in cases of violence and damage. The ordinance covers public and clinical healthcare service providers, such as doctors, nurses, paramedical workers, etc.

2. Power Ministry introduced new draft of Electricity Amendment Bill

The Union Ministry of Power has introduced the fourth draft of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill since 2014, which seeks to set up an Electricity Contract Enforcement Authority (ECEA) having power of a civil court to settle disputes related to power purchase agreement between discoms and gencos.

The draft provides that the ECEA will have sole authority to adjudicate matters related to specific performance of contracts related to purchase or sale of power, between power generation companies (gencos) and distribution companies (discoms).

3. Government ordinance extended various time limits under Taxation and Benami Acts

Government provided for extension of various time limits under the Taxation and Benami Acts. The ordinance also provided for extension of last date for filing of original as well as revised income-tax returns for the financial year 2018-19 to 30th June.

The ordinance provided tax relief to Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES FUND). The Aadhaar-PAN linking date and last date of furnishing of the Central Excise returns was also extended to 30th June.

4. Finance Commission advises states to use FRBM 'escape' clause to fight Covid

Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission, NK Singh, has said that states can use the escape clause under their Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRBM) to raise additional resources to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. Under the FRBM Acts, the limit for the fiscal deficit is 3% and there is an escape clause to raise the deficit up to 50 basis points in exceptional situations.

Several states recently asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for forbearance in FY21, for raising the deficit level to 5%.
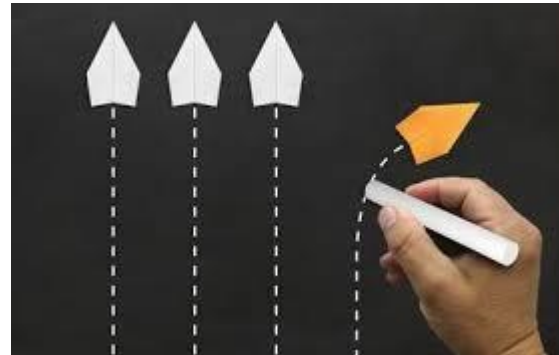
5. Centre expanded domicile rule for J&K for 15 years

The Centre has defined new domicile rule for Jammu and Kashmir which includes those who have lived in the Union Territory for 15 years. A person residing in Jammu and Kashmir for at least 15 years will now be eligible to be a domicile of the Union Territory, according to the new rule issued by the Centre.

The provisions of the Act authorize the Tehsildar as a competent authority for issuing the domicile certificate by way of a gazette notification in the form of a SRO-29 state laws have been repealed while 109 have been amended.

## 1. Pulitzer Prize winner Mary Jordan penned book on Melania Trump

The Pulitzer Prize-winning American reporter for The Washington Post, Mary Jordan penned a book on Melania Trump. The unauthorized biography of first lady Melania Trump is titled as 'The Art of Her Deal: The Untold Story of Melania Trump'. It is published by Simon & Schuster. The biography details 100 interviews, which depicts Melania Trump, the first woman to be more influential in the White House than most people realize.

Melania Trump is a Slovenian-American former fashion model and the current first lady of the United States, as the wife of the 45th President of the United States Donald Trump.

2. Shuttling to the Top: The Story of P.V. Sindhu, written by V. Krishnaswamy

A book titled, "Shuttling to the Top: The Story of P.V. Sindhu" and written by V. Krishnaswamy, was released. The book narrates the magnificent story of one of the finest badminton players in the world. It chronicles her life from the early days of hard work to becoming a world champion.
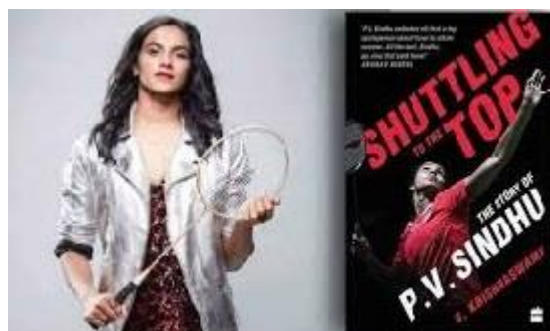
The book documents the hardships she faced on the way to be a promising global star and discuss what lies ahead for the young athlete. The young sports icon is the only Indian named in Forbes' list of the world's top-10 highest paid female athletes.

3. Abdelouahab Aissaoui bagged 13th International Arab Fiction Prize 2020

"The Spartan Court" by Abdelouahab Aissaoui was honored with the 13th International Prize for Arabic Fiction. With this win, he became first Algerian to win the prize. He was awarded USD $50,000 (£39,950), as well as funding for the English translation of the novel. His novel 'The Spartan Court' was published by Dar Min in 2018.

The Spartan Court novel describes about the interconnected lives of five characters in Algiers from 1815 to 1833. The International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) is the most prestigious and important literary prize in the Arab world.

Committees

1. Empowered Group constituted to coordinate COVID-19 related Response Activities

Government has constituted an Empowered Group chaired by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant for coordinating with Private Sector, NGOs and International Organisations for COVID-19-related Response Activities. It will address the issues pertaining to identification of problems, effective solutions and formulation of plans with three groups of stakeholders.

The Empowered Group had detailed meetings with UN Resident Coordinator for India, and country heads of WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, ILO, UN Women, UN-Habitat, FAO, World Bank, and Asian Development Bank. UN in India has built a Joint Programme Response Plan and submitted to NITI Aayog, defining their clear activities.

2. Devi Shetty committee recommended continuance of lockdown at all hotspots in Karnataka state

In Karnataka, a Government appointed Committee headed by cardiologist Dr. Devi Shetty has recommended to continue lockdown at all the hotspots in the state with high prevalence of COVID-19 positive cases. It has suggested that close observation of the pandemic should continue for next six months.

The committee has recommended closure of schools and colleges till May end. It has also suggested that inter-state flight and train services and AC buses must not operate now.

3. UGC constituted committee to promote online learning amid nationwide lockdown

University Grants Commission constituted a committee to promote online learning and look after the examinations and academic calendar in the present circumstances. UGC will issue guidelines for universities in consultation with Union HRD Ministry to maintain social distancing, online learning and e-education.

The University Grants Commission of India is a statutory body set up by the Government of India in accordance to the UGC Act 1956 under Ministry of Human Resource Development.

4. IMF Chief named Raghuram Rajan to key external advisory group

IMF MD Kristalina Georgieva named former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan and 11 others to her External Advisory Group. The group will provide perspectives from around the globe on key developments and policy issues including policy responses to the exceptional challenges the world is facing due to the novel Coronavirus and its economic impact.

Other members of the group include:
- Tharman Shanmugaratnam, senior minister of Singapore and chairman of the Monetary Authority of Singapore
- Kristin Forbes, Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Kevin Rudd, former Prime Minister of Australia Lord Mark Malloch Brown, former United Nations deputy secretary-general

5. Inter-Ministerial Committee constituted by Government of India

The Government of India has constituted inter-ministerial teams, 2 for Gujarat, one for each Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Maharashtra. The teams will make on-spot assessment of violations of lock down in the country.

The IMCTs focus on a range of issues including compliance and implementation of lockdown measures as per guidelines issued under the Disaster Management Act 2005. These teams would use expertise of the Centre and augment State efforts to fight and contain spread of COVID-19 effectively.

Deaths

1. Veteran cricketer Tony Lewis passed away

Tony Lewis, one of the men behind the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method used in weather-affected limited overs cricket matches passed away. Tony, alongside fellow mathematician Frank Duckworth, devised the Duckworth-Lewis method which was introduced in 1997 and adopted officially by the ICC (International Cricket Council) in 1999.

Renamed the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern Method in 2014, the mathematical formula continues to be used in rain reduced limited overs cricket games across the globe. The formula has been criticized for not being suited to Twenty20 matches.

2. Tamil folk singer Paravai Muniyamma passed away

`Tamil Folk Singer and Actress Paravai Muniyamma passed away. She performed 2,000 stage performances on folk songs and appeared as actress in over 50 films in role of grandmother. She was popularly known for "Madurai Veeran" song.

Paravai Muniyamma was honoured with the Kalaimamani title by the Tamil Nadu government. She has performed in various movies such as Dhool (2003), Kovil (2004), Maan Karate (2014), Veeram (2014) and Veluthu Kattu.

3. Legendary historian Arjun Dev passed away

Professor Arjun Dev, the legendary educationist and historian passed away. He served as a historian at the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT). He penned a number of extremely popular textbooks for the NCERT on Modern and Contemporary India and the World.

Prof. Arjun worked on a project named as Indian Council of Historical Research as a rejoinder to the British government-inspired Transfer of Power Volumes which documented the history of the last ten years of colonial rule in India.

4. Padma Shri awardee Bhai Nirmal Singh passed away

Padma Shri awardee Bhai Nirmal Singh Khalsa passed away at the age of 67 years after testing positive for COVID-19. Nirmal Singh served as a Gurbani exponent at the Golden Temple in Amritsar and had the knowledge of all 31 "raags" in the Gurbani of the Guru Granth Sahib. He was honored with Padma Shri award in 2009.

Nirmal Singh was former 'Hazoori Raagi' (spiritual singer) at Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar.

5. Emmy award-winning singer Adam Schlesinger passed away

Award-winning singer-songwriter Adam Schlesinger passed away due to COVID-19 infection. He was known for cofounding pop-rock band 'Fountains of Wayne' of the 2000. He was honored with Emmy Award in 2019 for his outstanding original music and lyrics for Antidepressants Are So Not A Big Deal from the TV musical drama Crazy Ex-Girlfriend.

Adam Schlesinger composed songs for 2003 hit band's "Stacy's Mom", "A Colbert Christmas: The Greatest Gift of All!", "Too Late With Adam Carolla", "The Howard Stern Radio Show" and "The Dana Carvey Show".

6. Nobel laureate Phillip Anderson passed away

Nobel Prize-winning physicist Philip Warren Anderson passed away. Philip W. Anderson was an American physicist whose explorations of electronic behavior in solid materials like glass, crystals and alloys earned him Nobel Prize in Physics in 1977.

Anderson's most influential work concentrated on behavior of electrons within disordered materials, which include certain kinds of semiconductors and research into spin glasses, a class of materials that has complex magnetic behavior. His research of how electrons behave when trapped, or localized, became known as Anderson localization.

7. World-renowned virologist Geeta Ramjee passed away

World-renowned virologist Geeta Ramjee passed away at the age of 50 years after contracting COVID-19. She became the first Indian-origin South African to have died due to COVID-19. She was a brilliant vaccine scientist and an HIV prevention research leader.

Ramjee was the Clinical Trials Unit Principal Investigator and Unit Director of the HIV Prevention Research Unit of the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC). She was honored with the Outstanding Female Scientist Award by the European Development Clinical Trials Partnerships (EDCTP) for her lifetime commitment to finding new HIV prevention methods.

8. Journalist Brahm Kanchibotla passed away

Indian-American journalist Brahm Kanchibotla passed away at the age of 66 years due to coronavirus in the US. For several years, Brahm Kanchibotla was the New York and UN correspondent of the United News of India.

In recent years, he was writing for two ethnic Indian American publications: The Indian Panorama and South Asia Times. During his 28-year career in the US, he had worked for 11 years as a content editor for Merger Markets, a financial publication, and also did a stint with News India-Times weekly newspaper.

9. Grammy-winning writer and singer Bill Withers passed away

Three-time Grammy Award winner, Bill Withers, passed away at the age of 81 years. He wrote some of the most memorable and often-covered songs of the 1970s, including "Lean on Me," "Ain't No Sunshine" and "Use Me".

"Ain't No Sunshine" and "Lean on Me" are among Rolling Stone magazine's list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2015 by Stevie Wonder.

10. Veteran American actor Forrest Compton passed away

Veteran Hollywood actor Forrest Compton passed away at the age of 94 years due to Coronavirus. He is known for portraying attorney Mike Karr, the central character on the long-running soap opera The Edge of Night.

Mr. Compton served with the 103rd Infantry Division in France during World War II. He also appeared on the CBS series Gomer Pyle: USMC as the no-nonsense Lieutenant Colonel Edward Gray. His TV credits include The Twilight Zone, That Girl, Mayberry RFD, and Hogan's Heroes.

11. Veteran Malayalam music composer MK Arjunan passed away

Veteran Malayalam music composer MK Arjunan passed away at the age of 84 years. He was popularly known as Arjunan master. Arjunan scored music for more than 600 songs in over 200 Malayalam films.

Arjunan was also known for recording the first song of legendary Carnatic vocalist and playback singer KJ Yesudas and gave the chance to Oscar winning musician AR Rahman to play the keyboard in a film. He received the Kerala state award for the song in Jayaraj directed movie Bhayanakam in 2017.

12. Former Libya Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril passed away

Mahmoud Jibril, the former leader of the opposition Libyan government during the civil war that toppled Muammar Gaddafi after 40 years of rule, passed away at the age of 67 years due to the coronavirus. Jibril had been interim prime minister for about seven months in 2011 and resigned after Gaddafi was captured and killed in the city of Sirte.

Jibril headed the rebel National Transitional Council (NTC), the interim government during the NATO-backed rebellion that toppled and killed Gaddafi.

13. Former New Zealand Wicketkeeper Jock Edwards passed away

Former New Zealand wicket-keeper batsman Jock Edwards passed away at the age of 64 years. He played 8 Tests & 6 ODIs for the national team. he also played 67 first-class matches. Edwards managed to score 377 runs in Tests and in the ODIs he scored 138 runs.

Edwards was an important contributor in regional cricket for Nelson. He was a part of the Nelson side that was dominant in the Hawke Cup - the multi-day inter-zonal competition, which is more than a century old - between 1979 and 1983.

14. Former Real Madrid coach Radomir Antic passed away

Former Real Madrid, Barcelona and Atletico Madrid coach Radomir Antic passed away at the age of 71 years. He coached Real Madrid from March 1991 to January 1992, Atletico Madrid for 5 years and took charge of Barcelona in 2003. He served as manager for Real Zaragoza, Real Ovideo, Celta Vigo and the Serbia national team at the 2010 World Cup.

Antic was honored with La Liga in1995–96, Copa del Rey in 1995–96, Don Balón Award of Best Coach in 1995–96 and Serbian Coach of the year in 2009.

15. James Bond film actress Honor Blackman passed away

'Goldfinger' Bond girl Honor Blackman passed away. She was popularly known for playing legendary Bond girl Pussy Galore in the 1964 James Bond movie 'Goldfinger' starring alongside Sean Connery. She appeared in the popular 1960s TV spy series 'The Avengers' while playing the character of "Cathy Gale". Some of her popular works include goddess Hera in 1963 film 'Jason and the Argonauts', Laura West in the 1990s sitcom The Upper Hand.

Honor worked as a member of the Liberal Democrats and was previously a member of the Liberal Party, campaigning for the party at the 1964 general election.

16. Renowned Hindustani classical singer Shanti Hiranand Chawla passed away

Renowned Hindustani classical singer and Padma Shri awardee Shanti Hiranand Chawla passed away. She was popularly trained in thumri, Dadra and ghazal singing by Begum Akhtar. She authored book "Begum Akhtar: The Story of My Ammi" based on her journey with her music guru, Begum Akhtar.

Shanti Hiranand Chawla was honored with Padma Shri in 2007. She featured in various performances across world in countries such as Lahore, Islamabad, Toronto, Boston, New York, and Washington. She taught music at Triveni Kala Sangam, Delhi in her last decades.

17. Former Liverpool player, Michael Robinson, passed away

Former Liverpool and Republic of Ireland star Michael Robinson passed away at the age of 61 years. Robinson won the European Cup, First Division and League Cup with the Liverpool side of 1983-84. He also played for Brighton & Hove Albion, Manchester City and Queens Park Rangers before ending his career with Spain's Osasuna.

Robinson scored four goals in his 24 appearances with Ireland between 1980 and 1986. He settled in Spain after retiring from football in 1989. He went onto become a successful commentator and media pundit on La Liga matches and Spanish national team games.

18. Former Minister Saharai Oram passed away

Former Cabinet minister and five-time MLA Saharai Oram passed away at the age of 78 years. He was known for his work towards development of tribals. He was a close associate of late Chief Minister Biju Patnaik.

Oram was first elected to the Odisha Assembly from Champua constituency in 1971 as an Utkal Congress candidate. He was elected from Champua as a Janata Party candidate in 1977, in 1980 as Janata-S candidate, 1990 as Janata Dal candidate and in 2000 as an Independent.

19. Oscar-winning animator and filmmaker Gene Deitch passed away

American Oscar-winning illustrator, animator, film director and producer, Gene Deitch, passed away at the age of 95 years. Deitch directed timeless classic cartoon series Tom and Jerry and Popeye. In 2004, he received the Winsor McCay Award for his lifelong contribution to animation.

Deitch's won the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film in 1960 for his film 'Munro'. He was nominated for Academy Award for Sidney's Family Tree in 1958. (As co-producer). He also nominated for Oscar Award for Best Animated Short Film in 1964 for 'Here's Nudnik and How to Avoid Friendship'.

20. Former Fiji Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase passed away

Former Fiji Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase passed away at the age of 79 years. He served as Fiji's sixth Prime Minister from 2000 to 2006. He was appointed Prime Minister in 2000 after the military quashed a coup by failed businessman George Speight that had removed the government of Mahendra Chaudhry.

In 2006, Laisenia Qarase was removed from power in a military coup led by Frank Bainimarama and later imprisoned on corruption charges. He was the founder of the Soqosoqo Duavata Ni Lewenivanua Party.

21. BMW Group India CEO Rudratej Singh passed away

BMW Group India President and Chief Executive Officer Rudratej Singh passed away at the age of 46 years. Rudratej Singh had been appointed as the CEO and President of BMW's India wing in June 2019 and officially taking over the position from August 1 2019.

Prior to BMW India, Rudratej Singh was the Global President at Royal Enfield. He had also worked with Unilever India. BMW India started operations in January 2007.

22. British Comedian Tim Brooke-Taylor passed away

British Comedian Tim Brooke-Taylor passed away at the age of 79 years with coronavirus. He began his acting career at Cambridge University. Brooke-Taylor was a regular panellist on BBC Radio 4's "I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue" for over 40 years and became popular with "The Goodies" on TV in the 1970s.

Brooke-Taylor was even part of the TV show "At Last The 1948 Show". In 2011, Brooke-Taylor was appointed an OBE for his services to entertainment.

23. Legendary Formula One driver Stirling Moss passed away

British Formula 1 legend Sir Stirling Moss passed away at the age of 90 years. He was considered one of the finest race car drivers of all time. However, he also had the unfortunate and unofficial distinction of being the greatest Formula One driver never to have won the world championship.

Beginning in 1955, he finished runner-up four straight times and then third for the next three seasons. His career, spanning a number of different racing series, saw him win an incredible 212 out of 529 races that he had entered.

24. Former Chelsea and England goalkeeper passed away

Legendary Chelsea and England goalkeeper Peter Bonetti passed away at the age of 78 years. He was described by Chelsea as a "goalkeeping superstar of the 1960s and 1970s" and "one of our indisputably all-time great players". He was nicknamed "The Cat" for his outstanding reflexes and agility.

Bonetti made seven appearances for England, including in the 1970 World Cup finals. He was part of England's 1966 World Cup-winning squad but was unused throughout the tournament.
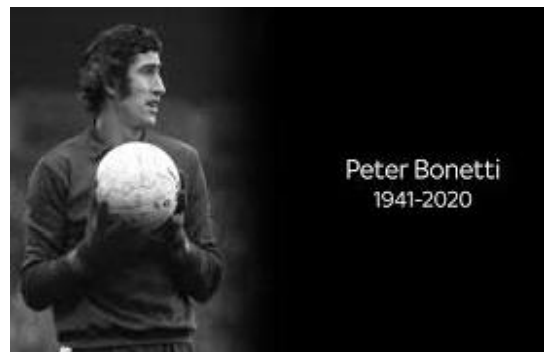
25. Former Union Minister Rajasekharan passed away

Veteran Congress Leader & Former Union Minister Rajasekharan passed away. He worked as politician from the Indian National Congress party and a member of the Legislative Council Karnataka in the upper house of the Government of Karnataka.

Rajasekharan served as Union Minister of State for Planning in the Manmohan Singh Ministry and represented Kanakapura, Karnataka constituency in Lok Sabha. He had set up an institute to make studies on rural development.

26. Father of modern Iraqi architecture Rifat Chadirji passed away

Rifat Chadirji, the father of modern Iraqi architecture and an accomplished photographer, passed away after contracting Covid-19. He was known for designing Iraq's most valuable structures and iconic "Freedom Monument" in the now protest hub of Baghdad's Tahrir Square. He also designed Iraq's magnum opus, elegant arch entitled "The Unknown Soldier".

Rifat was honored with Sheikh Zayed' Book Award in 2008, Lifetime Achievement Award from Tamayouz Excellence Award in 2015 and Chairman's Award of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1986.

27. Former pro golfer Doug Sanders passed away

Former pro golfer Doug Sanders passed away. He was popularly known as the "peacock of the fairways" for his stylish and bright-hued clothing. He won 20 titles on the PGA Tour, 1957 Colombian Open, 1963 Yomiuri International and 1959 Sahara Pro-Am.
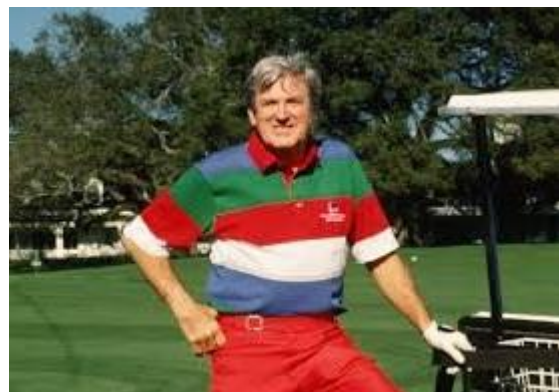
Sanders was inducted as a member of the Florida Sports Hall of Fame, Georgia Sports Hall of Fame, the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame and University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great. Sanders was the last amateur to win on the PGA Tour until Scott Verplank in 1985.

28. Swiss Ice Hockey player Roger Chappot passed away

Former Switzerland's Ice hockey player Roger Chappot passed away due to Coronavirus. He appeared in more than 100 games for Switzerland's national team including at the 1964 Winter Olympics. He represented for HC Villars and Genève-Servette HC in the National League A. He was the Swiss league's leading scorer in the 1964 season.
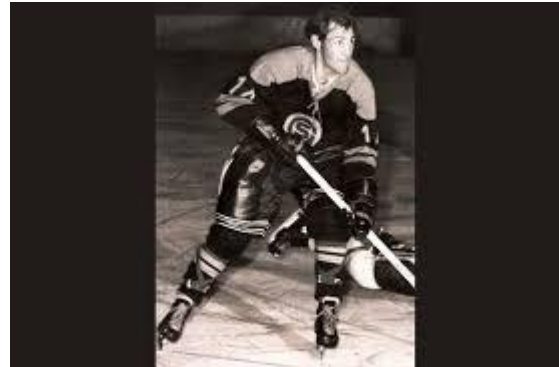
Roger Chappot was known as legend in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and one of the best centers in the country in the '60s.

29. NFL Hall of Famer Willie Davis passed away

Football legend and NFL Hall of Famer Willie Davis passed away. He was popularly known for becoming the first African-American captain in Green Bay Packers' history in 1965. He spent 10 years with the Wisconsin team, from 1960 to 1969. He became one of the first Black Americans to own a Class A radio broadcasting license.

Willie featured in 12 seasons in the National Football League (NFL) and played for the Cleveland Browns (1958-59) and the Green Bay Packers (1960-69). He contributed majorly to the Packers' five NFL championship teams during the 1960s.

30. Renowned thespian Usha Ganguly passed away

Renowned South Asian thespian and founder of Rangakarmee, Usha Ganguly, passed away at the age of 75 years. Usha was a trailblazer for women in Indian theatre. The veteran director was known for her non-conformist productions. She is credited for developing Hindi plays in Kolkata.

Ganguly was applauded with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for direction in 1998, and also honoured by the West Bengal Government as the Best Actress, for the play Gudia Ghar.

31. Former Australian all-rounder Graeme Watson passed away

Australia's enigmatic sportsmen and cricket all-rounder, Graeme Watson passed away at the age of 75 years. Primarily a middle-order batsman and a medium-pace bowler, he played five Tests from 1967 to 1972 and two ODIs in 1972. He was a celebrated person for his multi-skilled nature, both as a cricketer and sportsman.

Watson was the first Australian cricketer to represent three Sheffield Shield teams. He finished his career with 4,674 runs and 186 wickets from 107 first-class games.

32. Former Bihar Governor Devanand Konwar passed away

Veteran politician and former Governors of Bihar, Tripura, and West Bengal, Devanand Konwar passed away at the age of 86 years. Konwar joined the Indian National Congress in 1955 as a student leader and he was also a member of the state cabinet in 1991 in the Hiteshwar Saikia government. He was also the cabinet minister in 2001 Tarun Gogoi government.

Professionally, Konwar served as Government Advocate for the States of Assam, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram in the Gauhati High Court. He began his career as a lecturer in the English Department in Cotton College.

33. Renowned actor Irrfan Khan passed away

Renowned actor Irrfan Khan passed away at the age of 53 years. He is cited as one of the finest actors in Indian cinema. In a career spanning over 30 years, he earned numerous accolades, including a National Film Award, an Asian Film Award, and four Filmfare Awards. In 2011, he was awarded the Padma Shri, India's fourth highest civilian honour.

In 2013, Khan won India's National Film Award for his leading role in Paan Singh Tomar. His international movie career included hits such as Slumdog Millionaire, Life of Pi and The Amazing Spider-Man.

34. Noted Odia dramatist Bijay Mishra passed away

Noted playwright and lyricist of Odisha Bijay Mishra passed away at the age of 83 years. He won the Kendriya Sahitya Akademi award for his play 'Vanaprastha'. He had also won the Odisha Sahitya Akademi. He also received the prestigious Jayadev Award for his lifetime contribution to Odia film industry at the 30th Odisha State Film Awards.

Mishra's widely acclaimed play 'Tata Niranjana' has been translated in Hindi, Nepali, Kannada and in several other Indian languages. It won him a national award from All India Radio. He had written at least 60 dramas and 55 film scripts.

35. Ex-NASA administrator James Beggs passed away

Former NASA administrator James M. Beggs passed away at the age of 94 years. He served in the agency's top position from July 1981 to December 1985. He resigned after the Challenger disaster killed seven astronauts in 1986.

NASA had more than 20 successful space shuttle missions during Beggs' tenure. He had served in managerial roles for various such corporations as Summa Corporation, General Dynamics, and Westinghouse prior to his work in NASA.

36. Veteran actor Rishi Kapoor passed away

Rishi Kapoor passed away at the age of 67 years. He received the Filmfare Best Actor Award in 1974 for his debut film Bobby (1973). he played the romantic lead in 92 films between 1973 and 2000. Rishi Kapoor was awarded the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008.

He was part of hit films such as Amar Akbar Anthony, Laila Majnu, Rafoo Chakkar , Sargam, Karz, Prem Rog, Chandni, Heena, Karz, Bol Radha Bol, Saagar and others.

37. Veteran actor Ranjit Chowdhry passed away

Veteran television and theatre actor Ranjit Chowdhry passed away. He worked in several movies such as Baton Baton Mein, Khatta Meetha, Mississippi Masala, Khubsoorat, Bandit Queen, Kaante, Lonely in America and Bollywood/Hollywood. He had also worked in television serial The Office.

Ranjit Chowdhry's most noted role was in Last Holiday (2006), starring Queen Latifah. Ranjit received honorable mention at Cannes in 1991 for his screenplay and act in Sam & Me (directed by Deepa Mehta). He was briefly hired for The Michael Scott Paper Company.

1. L&T signed pact with Indian Army for advanced IT-enabled network

Larsen & Toubro (L&T) signed an agreement with the Indian Army to set up an advanced IT-enabled system to operate the Armed Forces network under the Network of Spectrum (NFS). The unified network management system will manage, support and operate the countrywide Armed Forces Network under the NFS such as management and control system for all the 7 layers under NFS which interconnects 414 Defence stations. It will cost around Rs 2,500 crore and Rs 5,000 crore.

The project includes the creation of a resilient Cloud-based IT infrastructure on Infrastructure as a service (IAAS) model that allow real-time monitoring of the complete IT network of Indian Army.

2. US approved sale of anti-ship missiles, torpedoes worth USD 155 million to India

The US State Department has cleared two deals to sell India Harpoon Block II air launched missiles and lightweight torpedoes worth $ 155 million. The anti-ship missiles and the torpedoes would be integrated with the P-8I aircraft, also called the "submarine killer".

The 10 AGM-84L Harpoon Block II air launched missiles is estimated to cost $ 92 million. It has a range of about 124 km. The 16 MK 54 All Up Round Lightweight Torpedoes and three MK 54 Exercise Torpedoes are expected to cost $ 63 million.

3. Indian Navy designed air evacuation pod for COVID-19 emergencies

Naval Aircraft Yard, Kochi has indigenously designed an air evacuation pod (AEP). It will be used for safe air evacuation of COVID-19 patients from remote areas like islands and ships in a fully sealed transfer capsule. It will thus help eliminate the risk of infection for pilots and evacuation teams.

The evacuation pod, weighing 32 Kg, is constructed using aluminium, nitrile rubber and perspex (transparent thermoplastic), costing Rs 50,000 to manufacture.

4. DRDO developed kiosk "COVSACK" for COVID-19 sample collection

COVID Sample Collection Kiosk (COVSACK) has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad. The COVSACK is a kiosk for use by healthcare workers for taking COVID-19 samples from suspected infected patients. Patient under test walks into the Kiosk and a nasal or oral swab is taken by health care professional from outside through the built in gloves.

The Kiosk is automatically disinfected, by spraying disinfectant mist for a period of 70 seconds, after the patient leaves the Kiosk. It is further flushed with water & UV light disinfection.

5. DRDO introduced two new products to enable COVID-19 disinfection process

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed two new products to contribute towards fight against COVID-19.

a) Automatic Mist Based Sanitiser Dispensing Unit: It is a contactless sanitiser dispenser which sprays alcohol based hand rub sanitiser solution for sanitisation of hands while entering the buildings/office complexes, etc.

b) UV Sanitisation Box and Hand-held UV device: It is designed for disinfecting personal belongings like mobile phone, tablets, purse, currency, cover of office files, etc. COVID-19 virus will be deactivated by using UVC lamps in one minute placed equi-distantly in a box with UV dose of 100 mJ/cm2.

6. DRDO developed India's first mobile virology research lab

Defence Research and Development Organisation developed India's first Mobile Virology Diagnostics and Research Laboratory. It was inaugurated in Hyderabad at the ESI medical college.

The Bio safety level-3 laboratory can test thousand samples for Corona virus daily and can scale up to 2000 in future. The laboratory also has a facility to trial drugs and conduct research on Corona virus. The lab will also help in convalescent plasma-derived therapy, virus culturing for drug screening, and early clinical trials which will be specific for the Indian population.

7. Exercise Pitch Black 2020 cancelled

Exercise Pitch Black 2020 has been cancelled to ensure compliance with COVID-19-related Government restrictions and to protect the Air Force personnel. Exercise Pitch Black 20 is the Royal Australian Air Force's biennial capstone International Engagement activity with forces participating from a wide range of regional, coalition and allied nations developing and enhancing military relationships at all levels.

The exercise is a biennial three week multi-national large force employment exercise conducted primarily from RAAF Base Darwin and RAAF Base Tindal.

8. Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam manufactured portable multi-feed oxygen manifold

Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam has manufactured an innovative ventilator design that can cover six patients simultaneously. The innovative 'Portable Multi-feed Oxygen Manifold (MOM)' uses 6-way radial header fitted to a single cylinder.

The entire set up was made operational by the manufacture of a fine adjustment reducer and specific adapters of requisite dimensions for connecting the oxygen cylinder and the portable MOM. A typical Oxygen providing facility at hospitals comprises an oxygen cylinder feeding only one patient through a Ventimask arrangement.

9. Naval Dockyard Mumbai designed low cost Temperature Gun

Naval Dockyard, Mumbai has designed and developed its own handheld IR based temperature sensor with accuracy of 0.02 deg Celsius. The instrument has been manufactured under Rs. 1000/ - through in-house resources.

The non-contact thermometer has a Infrared sensor and an LED display integrated with a microcontroller which runs on a 9V battery. This initiative has provided a tool for undertaking screening of large number of personnel at the entry gates of the yard thereby reducing the load on the security sentries at the gate.

10. DRDO designed casualty evacuation bags

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has designed a casualty evacuation bag to transport or isolate persons infected with Covid-19. The bag is water and air-proof and treated to deal with biological agents.

The bag, in the shape of a rigid cylinder, is made of non-woven, water-repellant fabric with air and waterproof zippers as well as a ventilator. It is coated with a film to cater to a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) environment with requisite protection against blood and viral penetration.

Economic

1. India's foreign exchange reserves rise by 5.65 billion

India's foreign exchange reserves have surged by $5.65 billion to $475.56 billion in the week ended on 27th of March. Foreign currency assets increased by $2.56 billion to $439.66 billion. In the previous week, the reserves had declined by $11.98 billion to $469.91 billion as the RBI was supplying dollars to contain fall in the rupee.

Gold reserves also increased by $3.03 billion to $30.89 billion. India's special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund went up by $14 million to $1.42 billion, while the country's reserve position also increased by $44 million to $3.58 billion.

2. CCI approved acquisition of 18.951% of the Religare Health Insurance by Trishikhar Ventures

The Competition Commission of India has approved acquisition of 18.95% stake in Religare Health Insurance Company by Trishikhar Ventures under the green channel route. Trishikhar is a part of the Kedaara Group which invests in a variety of companies through acquisitions and corporate restructurings.

Religare provides general insurance products relating to health segment, which comprises of health insurance, personal accident insurance and travel insurance. The green channel concept allows automatic system for speedy approval for certain categories of merger and acquisitions.

3. IMF declared World in "Recession" state at present

International Monetary Fund Chief Kristalina Georgieva announced that the World has clearly entered a recession due to the coronavirus pandemic. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.

IMF discussed the unprecedented challenge posed to the world by COVID-19. It declared that recession is worse than in 2009 and a sizeable rebound is expected in 2021 only if world is able to contain the virus spread and prevent liquidity problems from becoming a solvency issue.

4. Tata Power joint venture started Shuakhevi HPP in Georgia

Adjaristsqali Georgia LLC, a Joint Venture between Tata Power, Norway's Clean Energy Invest (CEI), and International Financial Corporation (IFC) announced the start of commercial operation of the 178 MW Shuakhevi Hydro Power Project (HPP) located in southwest Georgia. Further, AGL will be soon commissioning 9 MW Skhalta Hydro Power Project which is also a component of the overall Shuakhevi Project scheme.

The project will generate around 450 GW of clean energy to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by more than 200,000 tonnes a year.

5. World Bank report predicted 11 million to enter poverty in Pacific and East Asia due to Covid19

According to a World Bank report, East Asia and the Pacific could see up to 11 million people driven into poverty, with low wage and informal sector workers becoming the most vulnerable due to the economic fallout in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

The report estimated that under the baseline growth scenario, 24 million fewer people will escape poverty across the region in 2020 than would have in the absence of the pandemic. If the economic situation were to deteriorate, then poverty is estimated to increase by about 11 million people.

6. "Asian Development Outlook 2020" released by Asian Development Bank

The Asian Development Bank has released its annual economic publication "Asian Development Outlook 2020".

Highlights
-Projected India's growth to slow down to 4% in 2020-2021 and 6.2% for 2020-21,
-Downside risks to the outlook are severe due to COVID-19.
-Growth in the major industrial economies is expected to contract by 0.3% in 2020 before recovering to 1.8% in 2021.
-South Asia's growth rate is forecast to slow from 5.1% in fiscal 2019 to 4.1% in 2020-21.
-Regional inflation is projected to increase to 3.2% in 2020 and to 2.3% in 2021.

7. CCI approved Hitachi's proposed acquisition of 80.1% in power grid business of ABB Limited

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved proposed acquisition by Hitachi in the power grid business of ABB Limited. The proposed combination envisages acquisition of 80.1% share capital of ABB Management Holding AG (ABB Management) by Hitachi Limited (Hitachi) from ABB Limited (ABB).

Hitachi, headquartered in Japan, is the parent company of the Hitachi group of companies. It is active in a variety of business segments including IT Solution, Energy Solution, Industry Solution, Mobility Solution, and Smart Life Solution. ABB involves development, engineering, manufacturing and sale of products, systems and projects in the power grids sector.

8. CCI approved acquisition of GMR Kamalanga Energy Limited by JSW Energy Limited

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved the acquisition of 100% shareholding by JSW Energy Limited of GMR Kamalanga Energy Limited.

JSW Energy is engaged in power generation, power transmission, power trading, coal mining and power equipment manufacturing. Presently, it has a power generation capacity of 4,541 MW comprising of portfolio of thermal (3,140 MW), hydro (1,391 MW) and solar (10 MW). GMR Kamalanga is engaged in generation of power through its coal based thermal power plant at Kamalanga village, Dhenkanal district, Odisha.

9. Quick Estimates of Index of Industrial Production, February 2020

The Quick Estimates of Index of Industrial Production (IIP) with base 2011-12 for the month of February 2020 stands at 133.3, which is 4.5% higher as compared to the level in the month of February 2019. The cumulative growth for the period April-February 2019-20 over the corresponding period of the previous year stands at 0.9%.

The IIP for the Mining, Manufacturing and Electricity sectors for the month stand at 123.7, 133.5 and 149.1 respectively with the corresponding growth rates of 10%, 3.2% and 8.1% as compared to February 2019. The cumulative growth in these three sectors during April-February 2019-20 over the corresponding period of 2018-19 has been 1.9 percent, 0.6 percent and 1.5 percent respectively.

10. CPI inflation likely to ease from 4.8% in Q1 to 4.4% in Q2

According to the RBI, Consumer price index based inflation is tentatively projected to ease from 4.8% in Q1:2020-21 to 4.4% in Q2, 2.7% in Q3 and 2.4% in Q4. RBI had injected 50 billion USD of liquidity to the banks to support the economy.

Currently, RBI is following target inflation rate in the country. The inflation target has been set at 4% with +2% and -2% as target bands on either sides. This means that RBI will try to maintain the inflation rate between 2% and 6%. The Inflation Targeting was adopted by GoI in 2015.

11. UN projected India's GDP at 4.8% in FY21

According to a UN report titled 'Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) 2020: Towards sustainable economies', the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to impact the global economy including that of India. The report has projected India's GDP to slow down to 4.8%.

According to the report, COVID-19 is having far-reaching economic and social consequences in the Asia and Pacific region, with strong cross-border spillover effects through trade, tourism and financial linkages. Economic growth for the country could stand at 5.1 per cent for fiscal year 2021-22, the report said.

12. India's unemployment rate increased to 23% due to Covid-19 lockdown

According to a survey conducted by the CMIE Center for Monitoring Indian Economy Pvt. Ltd. India's unemployment rate might have gone to more than 20% as the economy lost jobs after a nationwide lockdown due to Covid-19 outbreak. Based on a sample size of 9,429 observations, the unemployment rate was 23.4% for the week ended April 5, 2020.

For the full month of March, CMIE estimated the jobless rate to be 8.7% compared with 7.8% in February 2020.

13. Retail inflation eased to 5.91% in March 2020

Retail inflation slowed to 5.91% in March over February, mainly due to easing food prices. The retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 6.58% in February 2020 and 2.86% in March 2019.

The inflation in the food basket was 8.76% in March 2020, lower from 10.81% in February 2020. The Reserve Bank of India mainly factors in the retail inflation while deciding its bi-monthly monetary policy. The government has mandated the central bank to keep inflation at around 4%.

14. UN ESCAP projected India's GDP for FY21 at 4.8%

The UN 'Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) 2020 predicted India's GDP for FY21 at 4.8%. The title of the UN report was 'Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) 2020: Towards sustainable economies'.

Highlights
-Indian Economic growth predicted at 5.1% for fiscal year 2021-22.
-Exports to be affected by global trade tensions and extreme weather events.
-COVID-19 increased the downside risks to the Asia and Pacific region's near-term economic outlook.
-Global economy is forecast to slow to 2.0% in 2020.

15. Facebook bought 9.9% stake in Reliance Jio

Facebook has bought a 9.9% stake in Reliance Jio for $5.7 billion (Rs 43,574 crore). Jio is the telecom unit of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL). The deal values Jio at Rs 4.62 lakh crore ($65.95 billion).

It is the largest FDI in the technology sector in India and values Jio Platforms amongst the top 5 listed companies in India by market capitalization. The deal is also expected to accelerate Reliance Retail's new commerce business on the JioMart platform.

16. Fitch Ratings slashed India's economic growth projections to 0.8% in current fiscal

Fitch Ratings, in its Global Economic Outlook, has slashed India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth to 0.8% for the year April 2020 to March 2021 as compared to an estimated 4.9% growth in the previous fiscal. The report has however projected the economy to rebound to 6.7% in 2021-22.

Fitch Ratings said that World GDP is now expected to fall by 3.9% in 2020, a recession twice as severe as the 2009 recession. The slump in growth was mainly due to a projected fall in consumer spending and contraction in fixed investment.

17. Remittances to India likely to drop by 23% this year: World Bank

According to a World Bank report on the impact of the COVID-19 on migration and remittances, remittances to India are likely to drop by 23% from 83 billion US Dollars in 2019 to 64 billion US Dollars in 2020. The Corona virus pandemic has resulted in a global recession.

The report also projected remittances to plunge by about 20% globally in 2020. Total remittances are expected to fall to 445 billion dollar from 554 billion dollar in 2019.

18. IMF predicts Asia to witness 0% growth in 2020

The International Monetary Fund in a blog titled 'COVID-19 Pandemic and the Asia-Pacific Region: Lowest Growth Since the 1960s', has projected Asia's growth at 0% in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic. This would be the worst growth performance in almost 60 years, including during the Global Financial Crisis, when the growth stood at 4.7%; and the Asian Financial Crisis when it stood at 1.3%.

IMF projected a GDP growth of 1.9% for India in 2020 while China's growth is projected to decline from 6.1% in 2019 to 1.2% in 2020.

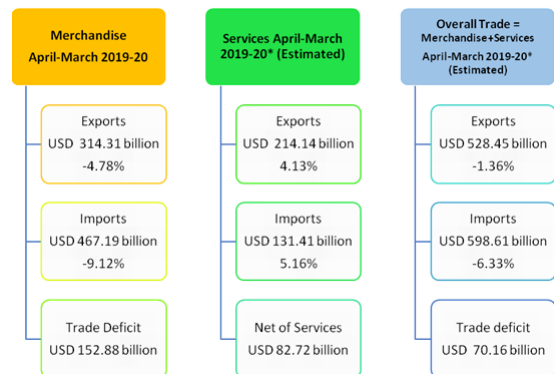## 19. Airtel and Nokia signed multi-year deal to boost network capacity

Nokia and Bharti Airtel ("Airtel") announced a multi-year agreement to deploy Nokia's SRAN solution across 9 circles in India, helping Airtel to enhance the network capacity of its networks, in particular 4G, and improve customer experience.

The rollout, which will also lay the foundation for providing 5G connectivity in the future, will see approximately 300,000 radio units deployed across several spectrum bands, including 900 Mhz, 1800 Mhz, 2100 Mhz and 2300 Mhz, and is expected to be completed by 2022.

20. INDIA'S FOREIGN TRADE: March 2020

India's overall exports (Merchandise and Services combined) in April-March 2019-20 are estimated to be USD 528.45 billion, exhibiting a negative growth of -1.36% over the same period last year. Overall imports in April-March 2019-20 are estimated to be USD 598.61 billion, exhibiting a negative growth of -6.33% over the same period last year.

Merchandise April-March 2019-20	Services April-March 2019-20* (Estimated)	Overall Trade = Merchandise+Services April-March 2019-20* (Estimated)
Exports USD 314.31 billion -4.78%	Exports USD 214.14 billion 4.13%	Exports USD 528.45 billion -1.36%
Imports USD 467.19 billion -9.12%	Imports USD 131.41 billion 5.16%	Imports USD 598.61 billion -6.33%
Trade Deficit USD 152.88 billion	Net of Services USD 82.72 billion	Trade deficit USD 70.16 billion

- **Merchandise**: Total exports was USD 292.91 billion down 1.50% while total imports was USD 436.03 billion down 7.30%. The trade deficit was USD 143.12 billion.
- **Services**: Total exports was USD 198.73 billion up 7.98% while total imports were USD 123.42 billion up by 10.41%. The net of services was USD 75.31 billion.
- **Overall Trade**: Total exports was USD 491.64 billion up by 2.13% while total imports was USD 559.45 billion down 3.90%. The trade deficit was USD 67.81 billion.

21. Wholesale Price Inflation stands at 1% in March 2020

India's Inflation as measured by the Wholesale Price Index fell to 1% in March from 2.26% in February. It is the lowest since November 2019. The official Wholesale Price Index for 'All Commodities' (Base: 2011-12=100) for the month of March, 2020 declined by 0.90% to 121.1 (provisional) from 122.2 (provisional) for the previous month.

Also, retail inflation eased to 5.9% in March, falling below the Monetary Policy Committee's upper target of 6% for the first time since November 2019.

22. TVS acquired Britain's most iconic sporting motorcycle brand 'Norton'

TVS Motor Company has acquired the most iconic sporting motorcycle of the United Kingdom, 'Norton', in an all-cash deal, for £16 million (about ₹153 crore). TVS acquired certain assets of Norton Motorcycles (UK) (in administration), through one of its overseas arms.

Founded by James Lansdowne Norton, in Birmingham, in 1898, Norton Motorcycles is among the most popular British motorcycle brands of all time. Norton bikes are known for their classic models and eclectic range of luxury motorcycles.

23. Electric vehicle sales up by 20% in FY20

According to the Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV), the electric vehicle sales in the country increased by 20%. The EV industry sold 156,000 electric vehicles in FY2019-20 from an off-take of 130,000 units in FY2018-19. Out of the 156,000 units, 152,000 were two-wheelers, 3,400 cars and 600 buses.

The sales figure is expected to surge to 2 million units in 2025 and 21 million units in 2030 with the cuts in production costs.

24. India's foreign exchange reserves surge to $479.57 Billion

According to the latest data from the Reserve Bank of India, India's foreign exchange reserves increased by $3.09 billion to $479.57 billion in the week ended April 17. The reserves had increased by $1.81 billion to $476.47 billion in the previous week.

While the foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, rose $1.55 billion to $441.88 billion, the gold reserves increased $1.54 billion to $32.68 billion in the reporting week. Special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were up by $3 million to $1.43 billion.

25. CCI approved acquisition of majority shareholding in B.M.M Ispat Limited by JSW Projects Limited

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved proposed combination relating to acquisition of majority shareholding in B.M.M Ispat Limited (BMM) by JSW Projects Limited (JPL).

JPL, a part of the JSW group, is engaged in the business of manufacture of direct reduce iron/ sponge iron, coke dry quenching and captive power generation which are ultimately used in the manufacture of steel and steel products on a job work basis for JSW Steel Limited. BMM, incorporated India, is engaged in the manufacture and sale of steel products including iron ore pellets, sponge iron, TMT bars and semis.

26. Chemicals, Petrochemicals industry becomes top exporting sector for first time

India's chemical exports rose by 7% to 2.68 lakh crore rupees during April-January period of the last fiscal, and became the top exporting sector in the country for the first time.

During April 2019-January 2020, the export of chemicals grew by 7.43% over the corresponding period of the previous fiscal. Total export of chemicals during this period reached 2.68 lakh crore rupees. This constitutes 14.35% of the total exports.

Sadananda Gowda
@DVSadanandGowda

I congratulate the chemicals industry and assure them to support to make in India a leading global hub for manufacturing of chemicals and petrochemicals for supplying quality chemicals to the world. 3/n

27. India Ratings cuts FY21 GDP growth further to 1.9%

India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has revised its FY21 gross domestic product (GDP) growth of India further down to 1.9% from its forecast of 3.6% published earlier. This will be the lowest GDP growth in the last 29 years (FY92: GDP grew 1.1%) and is based on the assumption that the partial lockdown will continue till mid-May 2020.

Ind-Ra's estimate suggests that GDP may come back to the 4QFY20 level only by 3QFY21. However, if the lockdown continues beyond mid May 2020 and a gradual recovery takes root only from end-June 2020, GDP growth may slip further to negative 2.1%, lowest in the last 41 years and only the sixth instance of contraction since FY52.

Environment

1. Indonesian Anak Krakatau volcano witnessed longest eruption since its explosive collapse in 2018

Indonesia's Anak Krakatau volcano spewed a column of ash 500 meters into the sky in the longest eruption since its explosive collapse in 2018. Anak Krakatau, which means child of Kratakau, is the offspring of the famous Krakatau volcano, whose monumental eruption in 1883 triggered a period of global cooling.

Krakatau volcano in the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra, Indonesia experienced a major caldera collapse around 535 CE; it formed a 7-km-wide caldera ringed by three islands. Remnants of this volcano joined to create the pre-1883 Krakatau Island which collapsed during the major 1883 eruption.

2. Air pollution in India drops during COVID-19 lockdown

According to satellite data published by US space agency National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Air pollution over northern India has plummeted to a 20-year-low for this time of the year. NASA retrieved the data from the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) on its Terra satellite.

According to a report by the European Space Agency (ESA), Mumbai and Delhi have witnessed a significant reduction of around 40 to 50% of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) compared to the same period last year.

3. New species of pit viper discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

A new species of reddish brown pit viper - a venomous snake, has been discovered in Arunachal Pradesh's West Kameng district by a team of herpetologists led by Ashok Captain. The snake has a unique heat-sensing system. India had four brown pit vipers - Malabar, Horseshoe, Hump-nosed and Himalayan - before the Arunachal Pradesh discovery.

The viper, called Trimeresurus Salazar, has a unique orange to reddish stripe, present on the head and body in males. It has been named after Salazar Slytherin, a characted in JK Rowling's Harry Potter novels.

4. Thailand's turtles have built the most nests in 20 years

Thailand has found the largest number of nests of rare leatherback sea turtles in two decades on beaches bereft of tourists because of the coronavirus pandemic. Authorities have found 11 nests since November.

Leatherbacks are the world's largest sea turtles. They are considered endangered in Thailand, and listed as a vulnerable species globally by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. They lay their eggs in dark and quiet areas, scarce when tourists thronged the beaches.

## 5. 11th session of Petersberg Climate Dialogue conducted via video conference

The 11th session of Petersberg Climate Dialogue took place through a video conference. 30 countries including India took part in the conference. The dialogue was conducted to discuss the ways of tackling the societies and economies after COVID-19.

The 11th session of Petersberg Climate Dialogue was hosted by Germany, and it was co-hosted by the United Kingdom (UK). India suggested to have a Climate Technology that is open to everyone at affordable cost. India also suggested to create 1 trillion USD grant to the developing world immediately.

6. Largest hole in the Ozone Layer heals by itself and closed

The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) and Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS), by the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), confirmed that the largest hole in the Ozone layer above the Arctic had closed. The ozone hole was the largest one ever recorded in the Arctic region spanning an area of over 620,000 square miles.
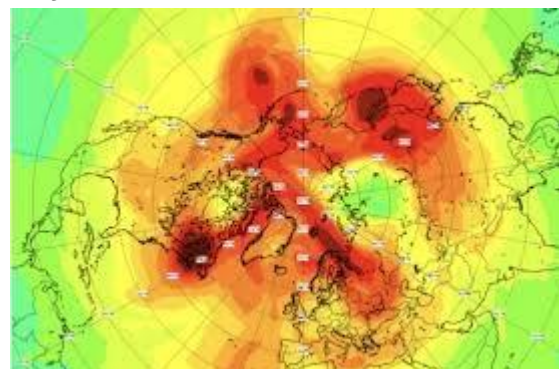
The ozone layer is a protective layer of gas in the stratosphere. It shields the planet from the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation.

1. SBI lists $100 million green bonds on India INX

State Bank of India has listed green bonds of USD 100 million (about Rs 750 crore) under its USD 10 billion Global Medium Term Note Programme on India INX's Global Securities Market Green Platform (GSM). SBI has earlier also listed its maiden green bond issuance on India INX of USD 650 million.

The bond issue has been priced after adding 80 basis points over three-month London-Interbank Offered Rate (Libor) and is rated BBB- by Fitch. Generally, funds raised through green bonds are used to finance green projects that do not emit toxic elements.

2. IRDAI modified Arogya Sanjeevani Policy guidelines

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has introduced a standard health cover policy called "Arogya Sanjeevani" that must be offered by all general and standalone health insurers. IRDAI has modified the guidelines of the policy:

- It is set to be cheaper for policyholders.
- IRDAI has allowed insurers to issue the policy contract of Arogya Sanjeevani Policy in the electronic or digital format to the policyholders.
- The maximum sum insured in Arogya Sanjeevani Policy is Rs 5 lakh and minimum sum insured is Rs 1 lakh.

3. IIM-B & ICICI Securities teamed up to launch fintech incubator programme

ICICI Securities (I-Sec) joined hands with N S Raghavan Centre of Entrepreneurial Learning (NSRCEL), the startup hub at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB), in supporting promising startups in the fintech space through a structured program.

The programme will provide mentorship to these startups. These startups can then glide through to the Go-to-Market stage and work on scaling up through guidance, workshops, shared learning, funding, goal-setting through launch of POCs and extensive business growth opportunities. Startups will be getting exclusive access to IIMB resources and industry connections in Fintech.

4. PNB Housing Finance signed pact with JICA to raise $75 million

PNB Housing Finance has signed an agreement with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to raise $75 million with co-financing of $25 million by Citibank based on the Facility for Accelerating Financial Inclusion in Asia. The fund will be utilized to finance mortgage loans in the affordable housing segment.

This would be JICA's first debt funding in the housing finance sector in India. PNBHF closed the year with healthy assets under management (AUM) of ₹84,000 crore and deposit mobilisation of ₹9,200 crore in FY20.

5. SIDBI to provide emergency working capital of up to Rs 1 crore to MSMEs

The Small Industries Development Bank of India - SIDBI, will provide emergency working capital of up to one crore rupees to small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) against their confirmed government orders. The SIDBI Assistance to Facilitate Emergency response against Corona virus - SAFE PLUS will be offered collateral free and disbursed within 48 hours. It will be offered at an interest rate of 5%.

SIDBI also had launched SAFE loans, the limit of which has been enhanced from 50 lakh rupees to two crore rupees. The scheme was launched to provide financial assistance to MSMEs engaged in manufacturing of hand sanitizers, masks, gloves, head gear, bodysuits, shoe-covers, ventilators and goggles used in dealing with COVID-19.

6. RBI launched Twitter campaign to promote digital modes of payment

Reserve Bank of India launched a twitter campaign urging bank customers to adopt digital modes of payment that are convenient and safe. Under this campaign, RBI urged people to use the multiple digital payment options such as NEFT, IMPS, UPI and BBPS that are available 24*7. Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan has been selected as brand ambassador of the campaign.

The campaign is launched so that people use digital banking, maintain social distancing and avoid spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

7. Flipkart inked partnership with ICICI Lombard to offer health plan for Covid-19

E-commerce marketplace Flipkart, in partnership with ICICI Lombard and Go Digit General Insurance launched two health insurance policies named as 'COVID-19 Protection Cover' and 'Digit Illness Group Insurance'. About 56% of the Indian population is not covered under any health insurance policy.

'COVID-19 Protection Cover' by ICICI Lombard provides an instant Rs.25,000 benefit plan paid to the customer on positive diagnosis of COVID-19 at an annual premium of Rs.159. 'Digit Illness Group Insurance' offered by Digit Insurance allows consumers to avail a hospitalization cover up to a sum assured of Rs.1 lakh with an annual premium of Rs.511.

8. SIDBI launched liquidity support scheme for MSMEs

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has launched a liquidity support scheme for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. SIDBI had received Rs 15,000 crore from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to provide financial aid to MSMEs.

SIDBI will provide the financing to MSMEs through banks, non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) and micro-finance institutions (MFIs). The tenor of these loans will be 90 days.

9. HDFC Bank launched Safety Grid campaign for social distancing

HDFC Bank launched its HDFCBankSafetyGrid campaign to encourage and reinforce social distancing. Using the outer grid of the HDFC Bank logo, the Bank has created physical markers on the ground to help people maintain the World Health Organisation (WHO) prescribed social distance while waiting in queue at a shop or in any an establishment.

The physical markers have been created using the outer grid of HDFC bank logo at a distance of 1 meter from each other outside outlets such as pharmacies, grocery stores, ATMs among others.

10. RBI announced measures to help maintain liquidity & increase credit flow

The Reserve Bank of India cut the reverse repo rate by 25 bps from 4% to 3.75% aimed to discourage banks from deploying surplus funds with it. RBI kept the repo rate unchanged at 4.40%. Additional measures announced:

- Targeted long-term repo operations (TLTRO) worth Rs 50,000 crore opened for NBFCc and MFIs
- Special refinance facilities of Rs 50,000 crore provided to NABARD, SIDBI and NHB
- Ways and Advances (WMA) limit of States raised by 60%
- Liquidity Coverage Ratio for banks relaxed from 100% to 80%
- Timeline for resolution under IBC extended by another 90 days from the existing 210 days
- 90-day NPA norms for the moratorium period relaxed

11. ICICI Bank launched voice-banking services

ICICI Bank has integrated its AI powered multi-channel chatbot, 'iPal', with the world's two most popular voice assistant apps, Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant, to enable its retail banking customers to undertake an array of banking services with just a simple voice command. It will help the customers connect to the bank from home during the Corona pandemic.

To get the benefit of the voice banking offering, customers need to download the Alexa / Google Assistant and link their ICICI Bank account through a secure two factor authentication process.

12. RBI launches latest round of quarterly survey - OBICUS

The Reserve Bank of India launched its 49th round of order books, inventories and capacity utilisation survey (OBICUS) of the manufacturing sector. The survey covers the reference period between January-March 2020. The RBI has been conducting the OBICUS of the manufacturing sector on a quarterly basis since 2008.

In the 48th round of the OBICUS for the quarter October-December 2019 as many as 704 manufacturing companies were covered. As per the last survey, capacity utilisation (CU) had declined to 68.6% in the third quarter of 2019-20 from 69.1% in the previous quarter.

13. People's Bank of China raises its stake in HDFC

People's Bank of China (PBOC) has raised its stake from 0.8% to 1.01% in the country's largest housing finance lender HDFC. The stakes comprises of 17.49 million shares of HDFC i.e. nearly 1.75 crore equity shares.

HDFC Ltd owns 19.43% stake in HDFC Bank and 52.7% in HDFC Asset Management Company and 51.45% in HDF Life Insurance Company. HDFC Ltd is a major provider of finance for housing in India, dealing in asset management, venture capital, realty, education, deposits and education loans, etc.

14. Tata AIA Life Insurance became first to provide additional benefits related to COVID-19

Tata AIA became the first Life Insurance Company to announce additional benefits related to COVID-19 for Policyholders and Agents at no additional cost. Tata AIA Life Insurance will give an additional amount up to Rs. 5 lakhs for death claims due to COVID-19.

Active Tata AIA Life Insurance agents and their families to get medical reimbursement up to Rs. 25,000 for COVID 19 related hospitalization and pre-existing accidental cover that ranges between INR 300,000 – INR 10,00,000 for its Agent workforce.

15. TCS BaNCS to power Israel's first fully digital bank

Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. will launch Israel's first fully digital bank. TCS was selected by Israel's Ministry of Finance to transform its banking sector by building a banking service bureau that would serve as a shared, plug-and-play, digital banking operations platform – powered by the TCS BaNCS Global Banking Platform.

The digital bank, which is yet to be named, is the first to receive a banking license in the country, in over 40 years and is set to launch in 2021.

16. Singapore's Caladium raised its stake in Bandhan Bank to 4.49%

Singapore's GIC affiliate Caladium Investment PTE has raised stake in Kolkata-based Bandhan Bank to 4.49% in the March quarter from 3.39% in the December quarter. It now holds 7.2 crore shares in the bank.

Caladium Investment is an affiliate of Singapore's sovereign wealth fund. Bandhan Bank's latest shareholding pattern reveals that 13.05% of its total shares are held by foreign investors while the promoter Bandhan Financial Holdings owns 60.95%.

17. Banking declared as public utility service for six months

The government has declared banking industry as a public utility service for six months till October 21 under the provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act. Bringing banking services under the provisions of this Act means that the banking sector would not see any strikes by employees or officers during the operation of the law starting from April 21.

The notification was issued by the labour ministry against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic which has significantly impacted economic activities.

18. RBI announced Special Liquidity Facility for Mutual Funds of Rs 50,000 crore

The Reserve Bank of India announced a Special Liquidity Facility for Mutual Funds (SLF-MF) of 50,000 crore rupees with a view to easing liquidity pressures on MFs. Under the Special Liquidity Facility for Mutual Funds (SLF-MF), the RBI shall conduct repo operations of 90 days tenor at the fixed repo rate.

The funds availed under the SLF-MF shall be used by banks exclusively for meeting the liquidity requirements of MFs by extending loans, and by undertaking outright purchase of and or repos against the collateral of investment grade corporate bonds, Commercial Papers (CPs), debentures and Certificates of Deposit (CDs).

19. Indian Overseas Bank launched special scheme for SHGs

Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) has introduced a special borrowing programme for self help groups (SHGs) to help them tide over the challenges inflicted by COVID-19. The maximum loan amount is Rs 5,000 per member of a self help group (SHG) with a cap of Rs 1 lakh for the group.

SHGs with a good track record and a history of minimum two loans from IOB will be eligible for this loan facility, which can be availed till June 30, 2020. Only those SHGs whose existing loans are standard and performing as on March 1, 2020, are eligible to avail loan under this special scheme.

20. Axis Bank to acquire 29% stake in Max Life Insurance

Axis Bank is looking to acquire an additional 29% stake in Max Life Insurance for an estimated price of Rs. 1,592 crore, raising its total holding to 30%. Max Financial Services currently holds a 72.5% in Max Life and Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance (MSI) owns 25.5% stake.

Axis is looking to purchase around 556 million shares of Max Life Insurance at a price of Rs. 28.61 per share. Post the deal, Max Life will be a 70-30 joint venture between Max Financial Services and Axis Bank.

1. International Transgender Day of Visibility

International Transgender Day of Visibility is an annual event occurring on March 31 dedicated to celebrating transgender people and raising awareness of discrimination faced by transgender people worldwide, as well as a celebration of their contributions to society. It aims to bring attention to the accomplishments of trans people everywhere.

The day was founded in 2009 by Rachel Crandall, a licensed psychotherapist specializing in transgender issues.
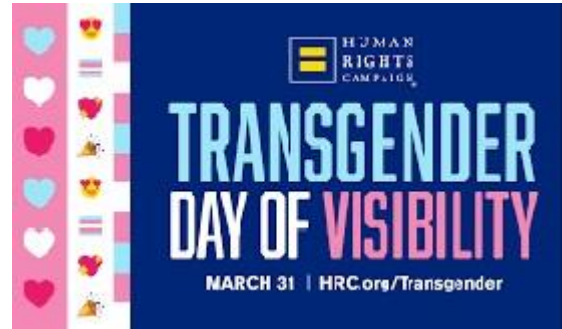
2. Utkal Divas or Odisha Day celebrated on 1 April

Utkal Divas (Odisha Day) is celebrated every year on 1st April all over Odisha. Odisha Day is celebrated in the memory of the formation of the state as a separate province. Odisha was born as a separate state on April 1, 1936, on a linguistic basis. The state was carved out of the combined Bengal-Bihar-Orissa province.

Thousands of shops and jhankis are organized to celebrate festival every year. Various competitions are arranged by popular local politicians like fireworks competition.

3. World Autism Awareness Day observed globally on 2 April

The United Nations General Assembly unanimously declared 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day to highlight the need to help improve the quality of life of those with autism so they can lead full and meaningful lives as an integral part of society.

The theme of World Autism Awareness Day 2020 was 'The Transition to Adulthood' to draw attention towards the adulthood of people with autism. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neuro-developmental disorder which affects communication and socialization.

4. International Mine Awareness Day observed globally

The United Nations' International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action is observed on April 4. Mine Awareness Day aims to raise awareness about the dangers of landmines. "Mine action" refers to a range of efforts to clear landmines and explosive remnants of war and to mark and fence off dangerous areas.

Established in 1997, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) works to eliminate the threat posed by mines, explosive remnants of war. UN Secretary-General designated the renowned actor Daniel Craig as the first UN Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards.

5. National Maritime Day observed on 5th April

April 5 marks the National Maritime Day of India. On this day in year 1919, navigation history was created when SS Loyalty, the first ship of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company, journeyed to the United Kingdom. The National Maritime Day was first celebrated on 5 April 1964.

Year 2020 marks the 57th edition of the National Maritime Day. The theme for the 57th National Maritime Day is "Sustainable shipping for a sustainable planet."

6. April 5 declared as International Day of Conscience

The United Nations declared 5th April as the International Day of Conscience with the aim to create peaceful and friendly relations based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms to race, sex, language or religion.

On 25 July 2019, UNGA adopted a draft resolution submitted by the Kingdom of Bahrain, titled "Promoting the Culture of Peace with Love and Conscience". UNGA then declared 5 April as the International Day of Conscience. April 5, 2020 marked the first International Day of Conscience.

7. International Day of Sport for Development and Peace

In order to support United Nations' objectives for development and peace and to achieve objective of 2030 sustainable development sports goal, 6 April was announced in 2013 to observe as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP) by the UN General Assembly.

The day promotes healthy lifestyles and emphasizes the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) focus on giving as many people as possible access to sport. The campaign this year is let's #BeActive.

8. World Health Day

The World Health Day (WHD) is observed annually on 7th April on the founding day of the World Health Organization. The tagline for World Health Day 2020 is: Support nurses and midwives. WHO chose the year 2020 as the "Year of the Nurse and Midwife" because of the contribution which nurses and midwives are making in making the world a healthier place.

World Health Day is an opportunity to highlight the work of nursing and midwifery around the world. The global nursing workforce is around 28 million, of which more than 19 million are professional nurses.

9. CRPF Valour Day observed on April 9

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) celebrated the 55th CRPF Valour Day (Shaurya Diwas) on 9 April 2020. On April 9, 1965 a small contingent of the 2nd battalion of the CRPF successfully fought and repulsed an attack by a Pakistani brigade. The soldiers, despite being outnumbered, fought off an attack by a Pakistani force on April 9, 1965. The valiant CRPF personnel killed 34 and captured four Pakistani soldiers. Six CRPF soldiers died in the attack.

The Central Reserve Police Force is India's largest Central Armed Police Force. Its primary role lies in police operations to maintain law and order.

10. World Homoeopathy Day observed globally on 10 April

World Homoeopathy Day is observed globally on 10 April every year. It marks the birth anniversary of the founder of Homoeopathy, Dr. Samuel Hahnemann. Homoeopathy is a pseudoscientific system of alternative medicine. The day aims at spreading awareness about homoeopathy as a form of medicine and work towards improving its success rate.

The theme of World Homoeopathy Day 2020 was "Linking research with education and clinical practice: Advancing scientific collaborations". Dr. Samuel Hahnemann was known for finding the way to heal through the use of homeopathy.

11. National Safe Motherhood Day observed globally on 11 April

The government of India declared in 2003 the national safe motherhood day on April 11, the anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi's birth. With this, India became first country to do so. White Ribbon Alliance decides theme every year. WRAI aims to reduce maternal and newborn death globally.

Safe Motherhood Day aims at bringing the importance that women must have the availability and adequate access to care during pregnancy childbirth and postnatal services. India is one of the most high-risk places in the world to give birth, accounting for 15% of total maternal deaths worldwide.

12. International Day of Human Space Flight observed on April 12

The United Nations (UN) celebrates the International Day of Human Space Flight on April 12 each year to mark of the anniversary of the first human space flight by Yuri Gagarin. On 12 April 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first human to orbit the Earth, opening a new chapter of human endeavour in outer space.

The day celebrates the beginning of the space era for mankind, reaffirming the important contribution of space science and technology in achieving sustainable development goals.

13. World Chagas Disease Day observed globally on 14 April

For the first time, the global community announced to celebrate 14 April as the first World Chagas Disease Day. The day is aimed to raise the visibility and public awareness of people with Chagas Disease and its prevention. The proposal to designate 14 April as World Chagas Disease Day was initiated by the International Federation of Associations of People Affected by Chagas Disease.

Chagas disease is spread through triatomine bug and causes swelling, fever and congestive heart failure. It is common in places like South America, Central America and Mexico.

14. World Art day celebrated on 15 April

World Art Day, an international event of fine arts, is celebrated on 15 April. The day was declared by the International Association of Art (IAA/AIAP), a partner of UNESCO, to promote awareness of creative activity worldwide. The first World Art Day was held on April 15th, 2012, a date chosen in honor of Leonardo da Vinci's birthday.

World Art Day celebrations help reinforce the links between artistic creations and society and highlight the contribution of artists to sustainable development. UNESCO encourages everyone to join in through various activities such as debates, conferences, workshops, cultural events and presentations or exhibitions.

15. World Hemophilia Day observed globally on 17 April

World Hemophilia Day is an international awareness day for hemophilia and other bleeding disorders. It is held annually on April 17, date of the birthday of Frank Schnabel, founder of the World Federation of Hemophilia. The WFH Humanitarian Aid Program provides a range of integrated care development training programs to ensure the local infrastructure and medical expertise are available to optimize and appropriately use donated products.
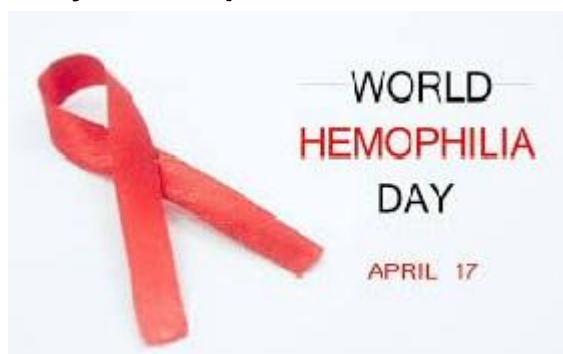
2020 is the 30th edition of World Haemophilia Day. The theme of World Haemophilia Day 2020 was "Get + Involved".

16. World Heritage Day 2020 observed globally on 18 April

World Heritage Day is also known as 'The International Day for Monuments and Sites.' Every year on 18 April, ICOMOS celebrates the "International Day for Monuments and Sites", whose establishment was approved by the 22nd UNESCO General Conference in 1983. The theme of World Heritage Day 2020 was "Shared Culture, Shared Heritage and Shared Responsibility".

The 2020 International Day for Monuments and Sites invited participants to explore the idea of sharing—and its counterpoints, contestation and resistance—in relation to cultures, heritage and responsibility.

17. World Liver Day observed globally on 19 April

World Liver Day is observed on every 19 April, to spread awareness about liver related disease such as Hepatitis A, B or C, Alcoholic fatty liver, Cirrhosis and fatty liver. The liver is the second largest and the most complex organ in the body, with the exception of the brain.

Liver is responsible for the synthesis of various proteins, coagulation factors, cholesterol and for detoxifications of drugs, alcohol and control of infections. As per World Health Organisation (WHO), liver diseases are 10th most common cause of death in India.

18. Civil Services Day celebrated by India on 21st April

Every year, on the 21st of April, the "Civil Service Day" is observed by all Civil Services to re-dedicate and re-commit themselves to the cause of the people. It provides a unique opportunity for introspection as also chalking out future strategies to deal with the challenges being posed by the changing times.

On this occasion, all officers of Central and State Governments are honoured for excellence in public administration with The 'PM Award for Excellence in Public Administration'. The awards recognise the exemplary initiatives impacting the delivery of public services.

19. World Creativity and Innovation Day observed on 21 April

World Creativity and Innovation Day is observed globally on 21 April every year. United Nations designated 21 April as World Creativity and Innovation Day to raise the awareness of the role of creativity and innovation in all aspects of human development.

The main objective of the day is to encourage people to use new ideas, make new decisions, and do creative thinking. Culture is an essential component of sustainable development and represents a source of identity, innovation and creativity for the individual and community.

20. World Book Day 2020

The World Book and Copyright Day is celebrated annually on April 23rd. UNESCO undertakes the responsibility of the event and aims to inculcate reading habits among people and highlight the various issues, specially, the copyright issue surrounding authors, publishers and other related parties. The World Book Capital for 2020 is Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
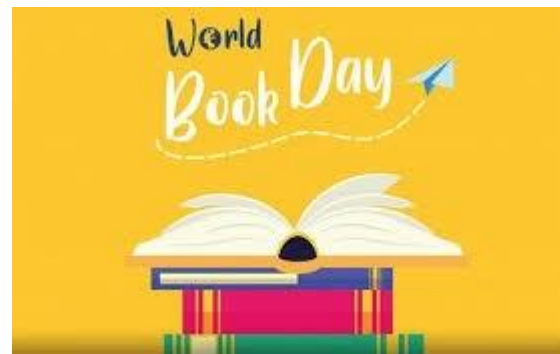
The slogan for 2020 is "KL Baca – caring through reading". Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched a campaign "#MyBookMyFriend" on the occasion of World Book Day.

21. English Language Day

The English Language Day is observed annually on 23 April. The day coincides with both birthday and death day of William Shakespeare and World Book Day. The English language is one of the most popular languages used across the world. The day prospects the development, history, culture and achievements associated with the language.

The purpose of the UN's language days is to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity as well as to promote equal use of all six official languages throughout the Organization.

22. National Panchayati Raj Day

The National Panchayati Raj Diwas was observed on 24th April. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched e-GramSwaraj Portal and mobile application. The Prime Minister also launched the Swamitva Scheme.

Then Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh declared the first National Panchayati Raj Day on 24 April 2010. The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 that came into force with effect from 24 April 1993 has institutionalized Panchayati Raj through the village, Intermediate and District level Panchayats.

23. The International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace

The International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace is observed annually on 24th April. It was established on 12 December, 2018 through resolution A/RES/73/127 and was first observed on April 24, 2019.

The day aims to preserve values of international cooperation and multilateralism, based on which the UN Charter and 2030 Sustainable Development Goals are framed. Also, the day is marked to promote and support three pillars of the United Nations - peace and security, human rights and development.

24. World Malaria Day (WMD)

The World Malaria Day (WMD) is an international observance observed every year on 25th April. The day gives people the chance to promote or learn about the efforts made to prevent and reduce Malaria around the world. The theme for 2020 is "Zero malaria starts with me".

WMD is one of eight official global public health campaigns currently marked by the World Health Organization (WHO). World Malaria Day was established in May 2007 by the 60th session of the World Health Assembly, WHO's decision-making body.

25. International Delegate's Day 2020

The United Nations (UN) organized the first official International Delegate's Day on April 25, 2020. The day is celebrated in order to raise awareness of the role of representatives and delegates of the Member States to the United Nations.

Delegates embody the multilateralism, which the UN stands for. The 2020 International Delegate's Day also marks the milestone seventy-fifth anniversary of the San Francisco Conference, an event that laid the foundations of the United Nations.

26. World Immunization Week

The World Immunization Week 2020 is being held between 24th to 30th April across the globe. The theme this year is #VaccinesWork for All and the campaign will focus on how vaccines – and the people who develop, deliver and receive them – are heroes by working to protect the health of everyone, everywhere.

World Immunization Week aims to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease. The main goal of the campaign is to urge greater engagement around immunization globally.

27. World Intellectual Property Day

The World Intellectual Property Day is celebrated annually on April 26. The day endorses the role that intellectual property rights (patents, trademarks, industrial designs, copyright) play in encouraging innovation and creativity. The theme for 2020 is "Innovate for a Green Future".

The event was established by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 2000. World Intellectual Property Day is sometimes referred as World IP Day. It aims to increase people's awareness and understanding of intellectual property (IP).

28. International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day

The United Nations (UN) has proclaimed April 26 International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day. The day was first observed in 2016, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the 1986 nuclear disaster. The day remembers the explosion at the No.4 reactor in the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant.

An explosion at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1986 spread a radioactive cloud over large parts of the Soviet Union. Nearly 8.4 million people in Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation were exposed to the radiation.

29. World Day for Safety and Health at Work

The World Day for Safety and Health at Work is observed annually on 28th April to improve the safety and health of young workers. The theme for World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2020 is "Stop the pandemic: Safety and health at work can save lives". Various campaigns were organized to accelerate action to achieve Sustainable Development Goal target of safe and secure working environments for all workers by 2030.

The World Day for Safety and Health at Work day promotes safe, healthy and decent work. It has been observed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) since 2003.

30. International Dance Day

The International Dance Day is observed globally on 29 April every year. It was created in 1982 by the Dance Committee of the International Theatre Institute, partner for the performing arts of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

This day is celebrated to give value to this art. International Dance Day is a wake-up-call for governments, politicians, and institutions, and society to realize its potential for economic growth. The day is celebrated on the occasion of birth anniversary of father of modern ballet, Jean-Georges Noverre.

1. IBM offers 'Watson Assistant for Citizens' to quickly address covid-19 queries

IBM is offering its AI platform 'Watson Assistant for Citizens' free of cost for at least 90 days, which will provide reliable information on covid-19 related queries. It is available on IBM's public cloud. It is available in English and Spanish and 11 other languages. The Watson service also has 15 pre-trained COVID-19 intents.

Watson Assistant for Citizens ingests data from various sources such as the US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and local authorities such as states, cities and school districts.

2. UN issued its first coronavirus resolution

The UN General Assembly unanimously adopted its first resolution on the coronavirus pandemic co-sponsored by India and 187 other nations, calling for intensified global cooperation to defeat the deadly disease. The resolution was titled 'Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)'.

Unlike the UN Security Council, the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly are not binding but have a strong political value depending on their support.

3. NATO chief appointed experts for reflection process

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced the appointment of a group of experts to support his work in a reflection process to further strengthen NATO's political dimension. The group of five men and five women will be co-chaired by Thomas de Maizière and Wess Mitchell, and will report to the Secretary General.

The experts will offer recommendations to reinforce Alliance unity, increase political consultation and coordination between Allies, and strengthen NATO's political role. The group will engage with Allied capitals and the North Atlantic Council, NATO's decision making body, and other relevant stakeholders.

4. Apple launched COVID-19 information app

Apple released a new screening tool and set of resources to help people stay informed and take the proper steps to protect their health during the spread of COVID-19, based on the latest CDC guidance. The new COVID-19 website, and COVID-19 app allow users to answer a series of questions around risk factors, recent exposure and symptoms for themselves.

The app and website also offer access to resources to help people stay informed and get the support they need. Users will receive answers to frequently asked questions about COVID-19.

5. Tiger at New York's Bronx Zoo tested positive for COVID-19

A four-year-old female Malayan tiger, Nadia from the Bronx Zoo in New York City, has tested positive for the coronavirus. Nadia is believed to be the first known case where transmission of the novel coronavirus from human to an animal has been confirmed.

The test result was confirmed by the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Iowa. Nadia is believed to have been infected by a zoo-keeper who was asymptomatic at the time. Apart from human beings, multiple viruses belonging to the corona viruses family can affect mammals.

6. Joe Biden becomes Democratic nominee as Sanders drops out of Presidential race

Former Vice President Joe Biden is now the Democratic nominee for the American Presidential Race. Mr. Biden won the democratic nomination after US Senator Bernie Sanders has dropped out of the Presidential race. Presidential elections are due in November 2020 where Biden will now take on US President Donald Trump.

Biden served as the 47th vice president of the United States from 2009 to 2017. He unsuccessfully sought the Democratic presidential nomination in 1988 and in 2008. Bernard Sanders is the longest-serving independent in U.S. congressional history.

7. Major Oil producers except Mexico agreed to output cuts

Major oil producers except Mexico agreed to cut output in May and June by 10 million barrels per day, after marathon talks to counter collapse in prices. The agreement, which reduces production to eight million barrels per day from July to December, depends on Mexico's support for it to take effect.

Global fuel demand has plunged by around 30 million barrels per day, or 30% of global supplies, as steps to fight the virus have grounded planes, cut vehicle usage and curbed economic activity.

## 8. $5mn fund allocated by SAARC development for Covid-19 projects

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Development Fund (SDF) has allocated $5 million for COVID-19 related projects in its member states. The funds will help member states in mitigating the financial losses and severe socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic such as poverty alleviation, social development focusing on education, health, and human resource development, among others.

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are the eight member states of the SAARC. SAARC Development Fund has implemented 90 projects in SAARC countries of $198.24 million.

9. Google announced to launch new virtual Braille Keyboard

Google announced the launch of a virtual Braille keyboard for Android users with low vision or blindness. "TalkBack" braille keyboard is integrated directly into Android. It's a fast, convenient way to type on phone without any additional hardware. The keyboard uses a standard 6-key layout and each key represents one of 6 braille dots which, when tapped, make any letter or symbol.
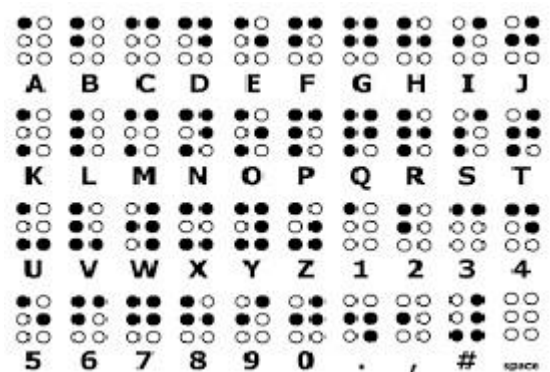
Talkback braille keyboard works across all apps on the Android device, supports braille grade 1 and grade 2 and is available initially in English.

10. Iran launched its first military satellite "Noor" into orbit

Iran has successfully launched the nation's first military satellite, Noor, into orbit. The satellite was launched from three-stage carrier Qased and was placed in 425-km orbit. Noor means "light" while Qased means "messenger".

Iran placed its first satellite into orbit in 2009, then performed successful satellite launches in 2011, 2012 and 2015, all using Safir rockets. All three orbital launch attempts using the larger Simorgh rocket have failed.

11. US Senate passed $484 billion coronavirus pandemic aid package

The US Senate approved a supplemental $484 billion coronavirus aid bill, a month after the massive $2 trillion stimulus bill was passed. The new package is aimed to help small businesses and hospitals get through the tough times.

The package allocates $380 billion towards small business loan programs, $75 billion to emergency funding for hospitals and $25 billion for disease testing. The U.S. Senate had earlier unanimously passed a $2 trillion bill aimed at helping unemployed workers and industries hurt by the coronavirus epidemic.

12. Donald Trump appointed Indo-American Sudarsanam Babu in NSB

US President Donald Trump has appointed Indian-American Sudarsanam Babu as a member of the National Science Board for a six-year term. He is from the prestigious Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). Sudarsanam Babu would be the third Indian American in the National Science Board.

One of the major roles of the NSB is to serve as a body of advisers to both the President and the US Congress on policy matters related to science and engineering and education in science and engineering. The board consists of 25 members appointed by the President.

13. Indian High Commission (UK) hosts virtual meet for businesses

The Indian High Commission in United Kingdom has organised a virtual roundtable COVID-19 meet for businesses "Covid-19: Issues, Challenges and Way Forward". The virtual conference was held to address concerns around the economic impact of the coronavirus lockdown in the United Kingdom. It was held in partnership with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

The "Covid-19: Issues, Challenges and Way Forward" meet also deliberated on the issues faced by Indian businesses across various sectors such as financial services, hospitality, healthcare, information technology and IT services.

14. Facebook launched third party fact checking in Bangladesh

Facebook has launched its third party fact checking system in Bangladesh to discourage the spread of fake news in the country. Facebook in partnership with Boom Fact check will review and rate the stories, including photos and videos.

When third party fact-Checkers rate a post as false or fake, it will appear less or at the bottom of news feed. This will reduce the spread of the post. Facebook will debunk misinformation on topics from health and medicine to current affairs so that Facebook users in Bangladesh are able to identify factual information and news online.

15. 5th Annual Meeting of Board of Governors of New Development Bank

The Board of Governors of the New Development Bank held its 5th Annual Meeting virtually on April 20, 2020. The BoG approved Audited Financial Accounts of the Ordinary Operations for the year 2019. The BoG also approved Audited Financial Accounts for the Project Preparation Fund for the year 2019.

The Sixth Annual Meeting will be held in Russia in 2021. The NDB was established by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging countries.

16. Lebanon legalized cannabis farming for medicinal use

The Lebanese parliament legalized cannabis farming for medicinal use. The move is aimed to boost the economy currently in a financial crisis. Cannabis has long been farmed openly in the fertile Bekaa Valley in Lebanon.

The idea of legalizing cannabis cultivation with the aim of producing high value-added medicinal products for export was explored in a report by consultancy firm McKinsey commissioned by Lebanon in 2018. According to the United Nations, the country is the world's third largest supplier of cannabis resin, or hashish, after Morocco and Afghanistan.

17. UNIDO and CUTS look to e-commerce to counter economic impact of COVD-19

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) have signed an agreement to empower consumers to contribute to the global development agenda as well as support their respective governments in times of global crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted and hampered economic activities.

CUTS is an India-based institution that facilitates good governance through grassroots capacity-building, networking, and awareness, leading to government engagement to bring marginalized voices to the table and ensure accountability of policy practices. The Director General of UNIDO is LI Yong.

18. Apple and Google partner on COVID-19 contact tracing technology

Google and Apple have teeamed up to enable the use of Bluetooth technology to help governments and health agencies reduce the spread of the corona virus. The partnership will allow an estimated 3 billion people to opt in to location tracking through Bluetooth on their smartphones for the purposes of combating the Covid-19 pandemic.

Users will be able to receive alerts if they came into contact with someone who tested positive for Covid-19. Since COVID-19 can be transmitted through close proximity to affected individuals, contact tracing is a valuable tool to help contain its spread.

19. South Korean ruling party won the election

South Korean President Moon Jae-in's left-leaning ruling party won an absolute majority in parliamentary elections. The Democratic Party and its satellite party won 180 out of 300 parliamentary seats while the conservative opposition coalition won 103 seats. It is the first time in 16 years that left-leaning parties have secured a majority.

South Korea was among the first countries to hold a national vote since the pandemic began. South Korea has never postponed an election including the presidential election of 1952, which went ahead despite the country being in the middle of the Korean War.

20. Google launched 'Nearby Spot' to help users find local stores

Google Pay launched a Nearby Spot feature to help users find local stores selling grocery. Google Pay is a digital wallet platform and online payment system developed by Google to power in-app and tap-to-pay purchases. Nearby Spot feature has been launched in Hyderabad, Chennai, Mumbai, Pune, and Delhi. This Spot also helps users to donate to PM-CARES Fund or to NGOs.

Previously, feature was launched for business listings but now it has been launched for local public. Google Pay has aggregated information about the ongoing pandemic sourced from the Health Ministry.

21. ADB increased its COVID-19 Response Package to $20 Billion

Asian Development Bank (ADB) increased the size of its COVID-19 Response Package from $6.5 billion to $20 Billion to address the needs of its developing member countries (DMCs) as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The additional regular loan resources of $13 billion is made available for countercyclical expenditure financing to help counter the severe macroeconomic impacts stemming from the COVID19 pandemic. ADB has also approved ways and means to streamline its actions for quicker and more flexible delivery of assistance.

22. US FDA approved first at-home COVID-19 test kit

The US Food and Drug Administration has approved the first at-home COVID-19 test kit. The test kit has been developed by LabCorp, an American company. The test kit costs 119 dollars in the United States.

The test kit is expected to bring coronavirus testing to the doorsteps of every household. The LabCorp home self-collection kit includes a specific Q-tip-style cotton swab for patients to use to collect their sample.

23. NASA developed COVID-19 Prototype Ventilator in 37 days

NASA has developed a new high-pressure ventilator tailored to treat coronavirus (COVID-19) patients. It has been named VITAL (Ventilator Intervention Technology Accessible Locally). VITAL has passed a key test at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City, ahead of the process for approvals by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

VITAL can be built faster and maintained more easily than a traditional ventilator. Its flexible design means it also can be modified for use in field hospitals being set up in convention centers, hotels, and other high-capacity facilities.

24. Saudi Arabia ends death penalty for crimes committed by minors

Saudi Arabia has ended the death penalty for crimes committed by minors. The Human Rights Commission President Awwad Alawwad, citing a royal decree, stated that the death penalty was abolished for those convicted of crimes committed while they were minors. Saudi Arabia also recently abolished flogging as a form of punishment.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - which Riyadh has signed - says capital punishment should not be used for offences carried out by minors.

25. Pakistan Navy successfully test-fired anti-ship missiles

The Pakistan Navy successfully test-fired a series of anti-ship missiles in the North Arabian Sea, fired from surface ships, fixed and rotary-wing aircraft. The anti-ship missiles currently in service with Pakistan Navy are — Zarb, Hatf-VIII (Ra'ad), Babur and Harbah.

The Anti-Ship Missiles are those missiles that are used against large boats and ships. The anti-ship missiles possessed by India include BrahMos, Nirbhay, Dhanush, BrahMos II and BrahMos NG.

26. UK unveiled 100% state-backed 'Bounce Back Loan Scheme' for small businesses

United Kingdom's Finance Minister Rishi Sunak has unveiled a 100% state-backed 'Bounce Back Loan Scheme' for the small businesses to help them tide through the coronavirus pandemic lockdown. The new fast-track finance scheme, would help bolster the existing package of support available to crisis-hit UK businesses.

Under the scheme, qualifying small businesses can apply online to borrow between 2,000 pounds and 50,000 pounds as interest-free loans for the first 12 months. No repayments will be due during the first 12 months.

27. US President Donald Trump nominated Indian-American as US envoy to OECD

US President Donald Trump has nominated senior Indian-American diplomat Manisha Singh as America's next envoy to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD. Manisha is currently Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs at the State Department.

Manisha previously served as the Acting Under Secretary of Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment, and as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs at the State Department. Headquartered in Paris, France, the OECD is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries to stimulate economic progress and world trade.

28. "Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator" launched by G-20

The group of 20, G20, launched 'Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator', an international initiative to accelerate access to health tools needed to fight the coronavirus pandemic. The initiative will be a global platform for action to enhance connections and leverage interdependencies for collective partnership, problem-solving, mobilising and guiding investments and driving equitable access for new Covid-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.

G20 is working hard to bridge approximately $8 billion funding gap to battle the corona pandemic. Saudi Arabia, as the Chair of the G20 in 2020, pledged USD 500 million to support global efforts to tackle this disastrous outbreak.

29. WHO launched COVID-19 Tools Act Accelerator

World Health Organization (WHO) has launched the "Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator or the ACT Accelerator" in partnership with Global Fund, UNTAID, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). This initiative aims to mobilise the significant resources needed to advance work towards protecting the world from COVID-19.

The process will help "speed up and harmonize" the development, production, and equitable distribution of vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics for COVID-19.

Miscellaneous

1. Wimbledon, the oldest Grand Slam tennis tournament, has been cancelled for the first time since World War-II because of the Coronavirus pandemic.
2. The International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) has suspended all planned events till June 30 and froze the world rankings due to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Rajasthan police have launched a mobile app "RajCop citizens app" to enable individuals and company employees in the state take permission for venturing out in necessary conditions.
4. The 2021 World Athletics Championships which was originally scheduled to be held in Eugene, Oregon from August 6-15, 2021 will now be held in 2022 as the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic.
5. In an advisory to all states and Union Territories, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has extended the validity of documents that expired since 1st February 2020.
6. The Centre has extended the tenure of Reserve Bank Deputy Governor BP Kanungo by a year with effect from April 3, 2020.
7. Lakshminarayanan Duraiswamy was appointed as the new Managing Director of the Sundaram Home Finance.
8. Interest rate for Public Provident Fund reduced from 7.9 to 7.1%. It is savings-cum-tax saving scheme.
9. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has launched a dedicated Twitter handle for COVID-19 updates.
10. PhonePe has partnered with Bajaj Allianz General Insurance for a unique coronavirus hospitalisation insurance policy called "Corona Care."
11. The United Nation's COP26 climate change conference which was set to take place in Glasgow in November has been postponed till next year due to COVID-19.
12. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) decided to make available all National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs) and their hostels across the country for conversion into quarantine facilities.
13. International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials, ARCI, Hyderabad has produced hand sanitizer as per the WHO standards.
14. The Andhra Pradesh government has started distributing pensions at doorstep to 58,44,240 beneficiaries using its 2.5 lakh volunteer eliminating the need for pensioners to step out of their homes.
15. Veteran Japanese comedian Ken Shimura passed away due to coronavirus.
16. BharatPe and ICICI Lombard united to launch the 'COVID-19 Protection Insurance Cover' for shopkeepers across the age group of 18-65 years
17. Senior diplomat Anurag Srivastava took charge as the Spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs, succeeding Mr Raveesh Kumar.
18. The National Health Authority (NHA) has inked pact with "Uber" to provide transportation service to public healthcare workers who are involved in treatment of COVID-19 patients.
19. Britannia Industries Ltd has partnered with Dunzo, an on-demand e-commerce platform, to deliver its range of products during the nationwide lockdown.
20. FIFA has postponed the U-17 Women's World Cup India and the Under-20 Women's World Cup to be jointly held in Panama and Costa Rica due to the coronavirus pandemic.

21. International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda is observed globally on 7 April every year.
22. The innovation cell of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has launched an online challenge called "SAMADHAN" to fight against COVID-19.
23. The Airtel Payments Bank has partnered with Bharati AXA General Insurance to launch a COVID-19 insurance policy with a fixed cover offering 100% sum insured as a lump sum.
24. Kannada actor "Bullet" Prakash who was known for his comic roles and performances in films like Aithalakkadi and Aryan, passed away at the age of 44 years.
25. Malayalam actor Sasi Kalinga passed away at the age of 59 years.
26. The Delhi state government has launched a 5T plan, which consists of Testing, Tracing, Treatment, Team work, Tracking and monitoring to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.
27. Bangladesh former President Sheikh Mujib's killer Abdul Majed hanged in Dhaka. The convicted killer of Bangladesh's first President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was hanged.
28. Anamika Roy Rashtrawar has been appointed as the MD & CEO of IFFCO TOKIO General Insurance Company Limited.
29. The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) instructed the State Nodal Departments and Implementing Agencies to initiate procurement of Minor Forest Produces (MFPs) at Minimum Support Price (MSP) from the available funds under MSP for MFP Scheme.
30. Former Madhya Pradesh minister and a six-time MLA from Seoni-Malwa Assembly constituency, Hoshangabad, Hazarilal Raghuwanshi passed away.
31. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the extension of tenure of all members and the current part-time chairman of the Bank Board Bureau (BBB) by 2 years, which was to end on April 11, 2020.
32. The Union Government has set up 723 COVID-19 hospitals across the country along with 1.86 lakh beds and over 24,000 ICU facility beds to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.
33. Telangana Government extended Corona quarantine period from the existing 14 days to 28 days.
34. US President Donald Trump will be signing an executive order to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States.
35. US President Donald Trump has instructed his administration to stop US funding for the World Health Organization (WHO). United States contributes 400-500 million dollars annually to the WHO.
36. International Monetary Fund (IMF) has proposed to deploy its full 1 trillion US Dollar lending capacity to support countries battling COVID-19 outbreak. The IMF Board has already approved debt relief for 25 of its poorest members.
37. NAFED and Food Corporation of India (FCI) have procured Pulses and Oilseeds worth Rs 1313 crore benefiting more than 1,74,000 farmers.
38. Asian Development Bank has assured 2.2 billion dollars or about 16,500 crore rupees of support to India in its fight against the COVID-19.
39. Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has suspended the Indian Premier League 2020 indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
40. National Conference on Kharif crops 2020 was held through video conference to discuss various issues and list out steps in consultation with the States about preparedness for Kharif cultivation in view of the lockdown situation.

41. The Central Government has decided to provide a compensation of Rs 10 lakh each to all postal employees including Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS) succumbing to COVID-19 on duty.
42. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has specified a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for sign in and sign off of seafarers on ships.
43. The Administration of Pathanamthitta district in Kerala has launched a vehicle called 'Tiranga' (Total India Remote Analysis Nirogya Abhiyaan) for rapid screening of COVID-19 symptoms.
44. Paytm Payments Bank has partnered with Mastercard for the issuance of virtual and physical debit cards.
45. The G-20 Extraordinary Agriculture Ministers Meeting was held through Video Conferencing under the presidency of Saudi Arabia.
46. The Imphal East District Administration in Manipur has introduced a new initiative called 'Food Bank' to provide immediate aid in the form of free food to the poor and needy who are facing scarcity of essential commodities due to the long statewide lockdown in view of the threat of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19).
47. Prasar Bharati has launched a new channel DD Retro that will air classic shows.
48. North Korea launched multiple short-range anti-ship cruise missiles into the sea and Sukhoi jets fired air-to-surface missiles as part of military exercises.
49. Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi addressed his countrymen and announced the extension of lockdown until 3rd of May 2020.
50. Freedom fighter R V Bhuskute, who had participated in the Quit India Movement passed away.
51. The Ministry of Labour and Employment has set up 20 control rooms to address wage related grievances arising in the backdrop of Covid-19.
52. UN Chinese Language Day is observed globally on April 20 every year. The day has been chosen to pay tribute to Cangjie, who is a mythical figure who is presumed to have invented Chinese characters about 5,000 years ago.
53. Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh BhupeshBaghel, has recently launched a website 'Cghaat' to provide home delivery of fruits and vegetables during the lockdown.
54. SBI waived service charges for all ATM transactions.
55. Former India's Attorney General and senior advocate Ashok Desai passed away.
56. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) is going to run live counseling sessions on free-to-air DTH channels for secondary and senior secondary levels respectively in order to overcome the loss of academic time of the students.
57. Government of Manipur has launched Electronic format of comic textbooks.
58. World-famous cycle race tournament "Tour de France" has been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.
59. YSR Nirman and COVID-19 portals have been launched by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh to fight against the Coronavirus pandemic.
60. The 44th session of the UNESCO's World Heritage Committee has been postponed due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
61. The Ministry of Home Affairs has released a list of new activities that have been exempted from lockdown restrictions to fight COVID-19.
62. The licence of the Mapusa Urban Co-operative Bank of Goa Ltd. has been cancelled by the Reserve Bank of India.
63. Veteran tribal leader and former Odisha Minister SaharaiOram passed away.
64. Rs.10 lakhs Compensation was announced for all Postal employees.GraminDakSevaks performed various departmental duties as well as serving the social cause in the crisis times.

65. NIIT Inc. USA, a wholly owned subsidiary of NIIT, has signed Managed Services agreement with a US based EdTech company to provide virtual services to education providers for a period of 5 years.
66. Indian High Commission in Bangladesh and India Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (IBCCI) has jointly organized a webinar on trade promotion.
67. Former Rajya Sabha member from Odisha Basanta Das passed away at the age of 80 years.
68. National Book Trust, India and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) has organized a WEBINAR on Post-COVID Publishing Scenario in New Delhi.
69. A team of engineering students from IIT Bombay, NIT Srinagar and Islamic University of Science & Technology (IUST), Awantipora, Pulwama has come up with a low-cost ventilator using locally available materials. The ventilator has been named Ruhdaar.
70. Vodafone Idea and Paytm have launched 'Recharge Saathi' programme that enables any Paytm customer to start selling Vodafone and Idea recharges on Paytm app.
71. The Reserve Bank of India has given its approval to Transcorp International Ltd to issue co-branded prepaid cards.
72. Veteran sports photojournalist Ronojoy 'Ronny' Roy passed away at the age of 57 years.
73. Automobile giant Maruti Suzuki has developed low-cost ventilators for helping the government in the fight against COVID-19.
74. Grammy-nominated gospel singer and record label founder, Troy Sneed, passed away at the age of 52 years.

1. Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launched new features of e-NAM Platform

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launched the following new features of National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) Platform.

- **Negotiable Warehouse Receipt (e-NWRs) module**: It will enable small & marginal farmers to directly trade their stored produce from selected Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) accredited warehouses.
- **Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) trading module**: This will enable FPOs to upload the picture and quality parameters of the produce for bidding, which will help distant bidders to visualise the produce before bidding.
- **Logistic Module**: This will promote inter-State trade under e-NAM by providing online transport facilities for distant buyers.

2. World Bank approved USD 1 billion Emergency Fund for India to help tackle Corona virus

The World Bank has approved one billion US Dollars Emergency Fund for India to help it tackle the Corona virus pandemic. The World Bank's first set of aid projects, amounting to 1.9 billion US Dollars, will assist 25 countries. The largest chunk of the emergency financial assistance of one billion US Dollars has gone to India.

In South Asia, the World Bank also approved 200 million US Dollars for Pakistan, 100 million for Afghanistan, 7.3 million for the Maldives and 128.6 million for Sri Lanka.

3. Government of India launched 'Aarogya Setu' app

The government has launched 'Aarogya Setu' app that will help people track Covid-19 infections more accurately and effectively. The app has been developed by the National Informatics Centre.

The 'Aarogya Setu' tracking app will help track the coronavirus infection by using the smartphone's GPS system and Bluetooth. The application determines if the user is at risk, by scanning through a database of known cases

across India, and also via location.

4. Civil servants form 'Caruna', an initiative to fight Coronavirus

Associations representing officers of Central Civil Services, including the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS), have formed an initiative called 'Caruna' to support and supplement the government's efforts in fighting corona virus.

The acronym 'Caruna' stands for "Civil Services Associations Reach to Support in Natural Disasters" and represents a collaborative platform, on which civil servants, industry leaders, NGO and IT professionals among others have come together to contribute their time and abilities.

5. DRDO developed equipment for effective sanitisation of public spaces

The Centre for Fire Explosive & Environment Safety (CFEES), Delhi of the Defence research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed two configurations of sanitising equipment to combat the Corona Virus Pandemic.

- **Portable Backpack Area Sanitisation Equipment**: It can be mounted as a backpack for spraying decontamination solution consisting of one per cent Hypochlorite (HYPO) solution. It is capable of disinfecting up to 300 square metre area.
- **Trolley Mounted Large Area Sanitisation Equipment**: It is carried on a trolley and has a tank capacity of 50 litres. It is capable of disinfecting up to 3,000 square metre area.

6. IIT Roorkee developed low-cost face shields to fight COVID-19

IIT Roorkee has developed low-cost face shields for first line healthcare professionals at AIIMS Rishikesh for protection from COVID-19. The frame of face shield is 3D printed. The shield can be used along with the protective gear by healthcare personnel while entering the wards housing COVID-19 patients.

The spectacle-type design of the protection shield provides the ease of replacement as the transparent sheet is not bound to a reusable frame. The manufacturing cost per shield is approximately Rs. 45.

7. 'Hack the Crisis-India' hackathon launched

An online hackathon, Hack the Crisis - India, was launched to find working solutions for overcoming COVID-19 pandemic. It was organised by 'Hack A Cause - India' and 'FICCI Ladies Organization Pune'.

Top Winning ideas were as follows:
- **Big bang boomsolutions**: Ventilator – Completely modular & remotely operational.
- **Autonomous UV disinfectant robot**: UV Robot for disinfection of quarantined spaces used by corona patients.
- **Humans AI**: Labelling data to provide a means of income to who require it the most.
- **Falcon Virus Tracking**: Risk contact determined with alert to healthcare systems.
- **Surveillance and Developer eyes m**: Digital Hospital & Laboratory.

8. Government approved release of Rs. 11,092 Cr under SDRMF to all States

Union Government has approved the release of Rs. 11,092 crore under the State Disaster Risk Management Fund, SDRMF to all States. This Fund was allowed to be utilised for setting up quarantine facilities, sample collection and screening, setting up additional testing laboratories, cost of consumables, purchase of personal protection equipment, thermal scanners, ventilators and consumables for Government hospitals.

With a view to make additional funds available to the State Governments for taking preventive and mitigation measures for containment of COVID-19, Centre had made a special dispensation for utilisation of State Disaster Response Fund, SDRF.

9. DRDO developed bio suit to keep personnel engaged in combating COVID-19 safe from virus

Defence Research and Development Organisation developed a bio suit to keep the medical, paramedical and other personnel engaged in combating COVID-19 safe from the virus.

The suit has been prepared with the help of the industry and subjected to rigorous testing for textile parameters as well as protection against synthetic blood. The protection against synthetic blood exceeds the criteria defined for body suits by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The current production capacity is

7,000   suits   per   day.

10. Government regulated 24 classes of medical devices as drugs for quality control

Government regulated 24 classes of medical devices, which have been notified and regulated as drugs under Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945. Remaining non-scheduled medical devices are notified and regulated as drugs. National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) will monitor maximum retail prices of these drugs. NPPA revised the ceiling price of 883 scheduled formulations.

The NPPA in its order stated that all medical devices shall be governed under the provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013. All medical devices shall be regulated by the government as drugs for quality control and price monitoring.

11. NPPA revised ceiling price of 883 scheduled formulations

National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) revised the ceiling price of 883 scheduled formulations. The WPI increase has been based on the data published by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. Increase in ceiling price is based on Wholesale Price Index (WPI), which is 1.88%.

The revision in ceiling price of formulations included the revision of ceiling price of cardiac stents also. The revised prices will be applicable from tomorrow and the detail of revised prices is available on NPPA's website www.nppaindia.nic.in.

12. NCC offered its volunteer cadets for national duty to fight COVID-19 under 'Ex NCC Yogdan'

National Cadet Corps (NCC) has offered a helping hand to civilian authorities in the country's fight against COVID-19 by extending the services of cadets under 'Exercise NCC Yogdan'. It has issued guidelines for temporary employment of its cadets to augment relief efforts and functioning of various agencies involved in battling the pandemic.

The NCC is the largest uniformed youth organisation of the country and has been engaged in conducting various social service and community development activities.

13. Domino's Pizza launched 'Domino's Essentials' service

India's largest pizza chain, Domino's has joined hands with packaged consumer goods major ITC Foods to launch 'Domino's Essentials'. The delivery infrastructure of Jubilant FoodWorks arm will be leveraged under this partnership to help customers order everyday grocery essentials offered by ITC Foods.

The service would be available for consumers first in Bengaluru and then in the cities of Noida, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Hyderabad. Dominos Safe Delivery Expert would follow the Zero Contact Delivery practice to deliver the package.

## 14. SCTIMST tied up with Wipro 3D to manufacture automated ventilators

Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) has tied up with Wipro 3D, Bengaluru to jointly build up on a prototype of an emergency ventilator system based on Artificial Manual Breathing Unit (AMBU).

AMBU bag or a bag-valve-mask (BVM) is a hand-held device used to provide positive pressure ventilation to a patient who is either not breathing or who is breathing inadequately. SCTIMST is an institute of National Importance of the Department of Science and Technology.

15. Government extended existing foreign trade policy (2015-20) till March 2021

The Government extended the existing foreign trade policy (2015-20) till March 2021 amid coronavirus outbreak and the lockdown. Various other changes were also made extending the date of exemptions by one year and extending validity of Duty Free Import Authorisation (DFIA) and Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) authorisations for import purposes.
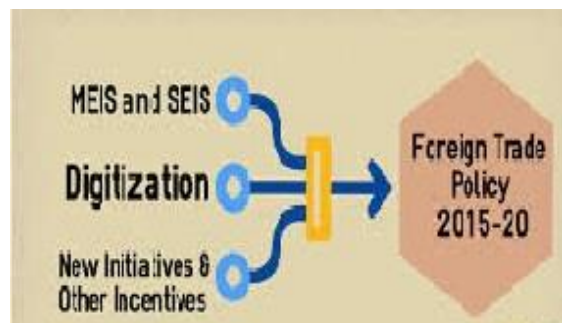
The advance authorisation is also issued to allow duty free import of inputs, which is physically incorporated in export product. Under the DFIA scheme, exporters are allowed to import certain goods like sugar at zero duty.

16. ADB announced 100 million US Dollars funding for Indian infrastructure sector

Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced a 100 million US Dollars funding for the Indian infrastructure sector, through the government-promoted National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF). It will be investing in NIIF, tranche of funds, which will ensure that the actual money invested will be a few times more than the 100 million dollars.

ADB has been funding to private equity fund managers who may be struggling to raise money from overseas sources. It has made commitments to three funds aggregating to over 2,600 crore rupees or 350 million dollars.

17. CCI approved joint venture between Adani Green Energy Limited and Total S.A.

The Competition Commission of India approved formation of joint venture between Adani Green Energy Limited and Total S.A. in the business of power generation through solar energy in India. The proposed combination envisages Adani Green Energy Limited transferring certain of its subsidiaries to a newly incorporated company. Subsequently, Total S.A. would directly or indirectly acquire 50% of the equity share capital of the JV.

Total Group is an international integrated energy producer with operations in every sector of the oil and gas industry and Total S.A. is the ultimate parent entity of the Total Group.

18. Ministry of Corporate Affairs introduced "Companies Fresh Start Scheme 2020"

The Corporate Affairs Ministry (MCA) has come up with the 'Companies Fresh Start Scheme 2020' to enable companies make good of any filing-related defaults, irrespective of duration of default, and make a fresh start as a fully compliant entity.

The new scheme has been introduced to provide relief to law abiding companies and

the Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) amid COVID-19 pandemic. MCA has also revised "LLP Settlement Scheme, 2020". Both the schemes also contain provision for giving immunity from penal proceedings.

19. ICMR reported three quasi-sub species of COVID-19 virus in circulation in India

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) unveiled in its report that, a mixture of three quasi-subspecies of COVID-19 virus is in circulation in India, but scientists are yet to classify a SARS-Cov-2 variant as an Indian strain. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

A committee named as Science and Technology Empowered Committee is formed to co-ordinate among science agencies, scientists, industries and regulatory bodies and take speedy decisions on research and development keeping in view of the critical need to increase the testing facilities for COVID-19 disease.

20. Operation Sanjeevani: IAF airlifted medical and hospital consumables for the Maldives

IAF launched `Operation Sanjeevani' to airlift around 6.2 tonnes of essential medicines and hospital consumables onboard C-130 aircraft from India to Maldives. Medicines including influenza vaccines, anti-viral drugs such as Lopinavir and Ritonavir (these two medicines are being used in other countries to treat COVID-19) have gone to the Maldives.

This is the first such assistance by India in fight against COVID. India has also supplied essential food grains and edibles despite logistical challenges in wake of lockdown.

21. Government of India launched training module 'iGOT' for management of COVID-19

Government has launched a training module for management of COVID-19 named 'Integrated Government Online training (iGOT) portal on DIKSHA platform of Ministry of Human Resources and Development. The portal aims at enhancing capacity building of front line workers to handle the pandemic efficiently.

To begin with nine courses on iGOT have been launched on topics like Basics of COVID, ICU

Care and Ventilation Management, Clinical Management, Infection Prevention through PPE, Infection Control and Prevention, Quarantine and Isolation, Laboratory Sample Collection and Testing, Management of COVID 19 Cases, COVID 19 Training.

22. NHAI achieved highest ever construction of National Highways in FY 2019-20

NHAI has accomplished construction of 3,979 km of national highways in the financial year 2019-20. With this, NHAI has achieved an all-time high construction, since its inception in 1995. Government has envisaged an ambitious highway development programme Bharatmala Pariyojana, which includes development of about 65,000 km national highways.

Under Phase-I of Bharatmala Pariyojana, the Ministry has approved implementation of 34,800 km of national highways in 5 years with an outlay of Rs. 5,35,000 crore. NHAI has been mandated development of about 27,500 km of national highways under Bharatmal Pariyojna Phase-I.

23. Government sanctioned Rs. 15,000 crores for India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package

`The Government of India sanctioned Rs. 15,000 crore for the "India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package" aimed at fighting the global pandemic. The funds sanctioned will be utilized for immediate support (amount of Rs.7,774 crores) and rest for medium-term support (1-4 years).

The project will be implemented in three phases from January 2020 to March 2024. The key objectives of the package include mounting emergency response to slow and limit COVID-19 in India. The government has already disbursed Rs 4,113 crore to all states and Union Territories to deal with the emergency COVID-19 response.

24. Lifeline UDAN launched by Union Civil Aviation Ministry

Union Civil Aviation Ministry launched 'Lifeline Udan' to ensure a steady supply of essentials, even in the most remote locations. Lifeline Udan is a government initiative for air transport of medical cargo and essential supplies across India at the time of the Covid-19 crisis.

The flights under the initiative 'Lifeline Udan' have been operated by Air India, Alliance Air, Indian Air Force, Pawan Hans and

private carriers. More than 138 tonnes of medical supplies have been supplied through 107 flights across the country till April 3.

25. PM, President and MPs to take 30% salary cut, MPLAD funds suspended for two years

The Union Cabinet has promulgated an ordinance to effect a 30% pay cut for all members of Parliament (MPs), including the PM, President, MPs and Governors starting from April 1, 2020, for a year due to the impact of the novel coronavirus.

The Union Cabinet has also approved the temporary suspension of Member of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) fund scheme during 2020-21 and 2021-22. These funds will be used for managing health services and the adverse impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

26. "Swasth ke Sipahi" delivered essential medicines under PMBJP

Pharmacists, popularly known as "Swasth ke Sipahi", of Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Kendra, delivered essential services and medicines at doorstep of patients and elderly under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP). PMJKs are being run by Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India(BPPI) under Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers.

Presently, more than 6300 PMJAKs are functioning across the nation, covering 726 districts of the country. In order to stop the spreading of Coronavirus, Government of India placed a lockdown of 21 days i.e. up to 14th April, 2020, across the country.

27. MHRD declared DigiLocker as National Academic Depository

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has designated DigiLocker as the sole National Academic Depository (NAD) and has also directed the University Grants Commission (UGC) to implement NAD as a permanent scheme within DigiLocker.

DigiLocker is primarily a cloud-based safe, which allows users to store electronic versions of important documents like Aadhaar card, birth certificates, voters ID cards, PAN cards, driving license, property documents and provides access to these on the go.

28. USAID provided $2.M to support India's COVID-19 efforts

The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), announced $2.9 million to support India in its response to the novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19. The funds will help the Government of India slow the spread of COVID-19, provide care for the affected, and support local communities with the tools needed to contain the disease.

These new funds will support two organizations: $2.4 million for USAID's health strengthening project, implemented by Jhpiego, an international non-profit health organization affiliated with Johns Hopkins University, and $500,000 for the World Health Organization (WHO).

29. TRIFED launched a digital campaign in collaboration with UNICEF

TRIFED has collaborated with UNICEF for developing a digital communication strategy for promoting a digital campaign for Self Help Groups (SHGs) to ensure Tribal Gatherers carry on their work safely, highlighting the importance of Social Distancing.

UNICEF would provide the necessary support to be circulated to the SHG centers in the form of Digital Multimedia content, Webinars for Virtual trainings (basic orientation on COVID response, key preventive behaviours), Social Media campaigns (on social distancing, home quarantine, etc.) and Vanya Radio.

30. Biofortified carrot variety developed by farmer scientist

Shri Vallabhbhai Vasrambhai Marvaniya, a farmer scientist from the Junagarh district of Gujarat, has developed a Madhuban gajar which is a biofortified carrot variety with high Beta-Carotene & iron. It has been benefitting more than 150 local farmers in the area and the average yield, which is 40-50 t/ha, has become the main source of income to the local farmers.

The Madhuvan Gajar is a highly nutritious carrot variety developed through the selection method with higher β-carotene content (277.75 mg/kg) and iron content (276.7 mg/kg) dry.

31. Three types of Health Care Facilities set up to manage COVID-19 cases

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has classified hospitals and health facilities into following three types of COVID-19 health centres:

- **COVID Care Centre**: These centres will attend cases that are clinically assigned as very mild or mild. They are makeshift facilities. They can be hostels, stadiums, schools, lodges, etc.
- **Dedicated COVID Health Centre**: These centres will attend cases that are assigned as "moderate". These centres will compulsorily have oxygen support in all beds.
- **Dedicated COVID Hospital**: These hospitals attend cases that have been clinically assigned as "severe".

32. India topped Hydroxychloroquine production export chart

India became largest producer and exporter of Hydroxychloroquine with 70% of annual global production due to availability of enough stock of API and manufacturing capacity of Hydroxychloroquine formulations to meet country's requirement as well as export obligations.

The use of Hydroxychloroquine is as prophylaxis and not as treatment. Hydroxychloroquine is an antimalarial drug. It is also being used for Covid-19 treatment. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by Sars-Cov2 virus.

33. ICMR approved plasma therapy for COVID-19 treatment

Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Kerala, has obtained approval from ICMR to provide innovative plasma therapy treatment to patients suffering from COVID-19 disease. "Convalescent-plasma therapy" aims at using the immune power gained by a recovered person to treat a sick person. The therapy, like blood transfusion, harvests the antibody from a recovered patient and ingest into a sick person. Helped by the antibody, the immune system mounts robust combat on the virus.

The Trivandrum based SCTIMST is an Institution of National Importance under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

34. ICMR approved diagnostic machines used for coronavirus tests

As part of its efforts to ramp up the testing capacity, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) approved the use of diagnostic machines used for testing drug-resistant tuberculosis for conducting coronavirus tests. ICMR has validated 'TruenatTM beta CoV test on TruelabTM workstation' and has recommended it as a screening test.

Under Truenat beta CoV, throat or nasal swabs will be collected in the viral transport medium (VTM) with virus lysis buffer provided along with the kit. , Truenat beta CoV test should only be performed with all biosafety precautions in BSL-2 or BSL-3 setups at laboratories.

35. HRD Ministry launched Bharat Padhe Online campaign

Human Resources Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank launched Bharat Padhe Online campaign for improving online education ecosystem of India. The campaign aims to invite all the best brains in India to share suggestions or solutions directly with HRD Ministry to overcome constraints of online education, while promoting the available digital education platforms.

The ideas can be shared on bharatpadheonline.mhrd@gmail.com and the educators across the country can also come forward to contribute with their expertise in the field of education.

36. ADB assured India of 2.2 billion US dollar support to fight against COVID-19 pandemic

Asian Development Bank has assured India of 2.2 billion dollars (16,500 crore rupees) support to India in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds will help alleviate the economic impact of the pandemic on the poor; informal workers; micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises; and the financial sector.

ADB assistance for India will be further increased if needed. All financing options

available with ADB will be considered to meet India's needs, including emergency assistance, policy-based loans, and budget support to facilitate swift disbursement of funds.

37. IIL united with Griffith University to develop Covid-19 vaccine

Hyderabad-based vaccine manufacturer Indian Immunologicals (IIL) and Griffith University in Australia united to develop a potential vaccine named as 'Live Attenuated SARS – CoV-2 vaccine'. It is developed using codon de-optimisation technology. Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) will conduct clinical trials.

Vero cell platform technology will be used for mass production of the vaccine. The vaccine will be highly effective by providing very strong cellular and antibody immune responses against the virus.

38. SCTIMST scientists designed super absorbent material for safe management of infected respiratory secretions

Scientists at Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) have designed and developed a highly efficient superabsorbent material for liquid respiratory and other body fluid solidification and disinfection for the safe management of infected respiratory secretions. The material is titled Chitra Acrylosorb Secretion Solidification System'.

AcryloSorb can absorb liquids at least 20 times more than its dry weight and also contains a decontaminant for in situ disinfection. Containers filled with this material will immobilise the contaminated fluid by solidifying it (gel-like), thus avoiding spillage and will also disinfect it.

39. CSIR-NCL & BEL inked partnership to develop IR Thermometer and OEU

CSIR's constituent Lab, CSIR-NCL Pune partnered with Bharat Electronics Ltd, Pune and developed Digital IR Thermometer and Oxygen Enrichment Unit (OEU) to assist within the mitigation of the Coronavirus outbreak. About 100 prototype units will be made for pilot distribution and testing at TUV Rheinland India Pvt Ltd., Bangalore.

Oxygen enrichment unit (OEUs) will increase the oxygen concentration from the ambient air of 21-22% to 38-40%. OEU is hollow fiber membrane bundles for separation and filtration of ambient air to produce enriched oxygen for patients in home and hospital settings.

40. CollabCAD launched in Atal Tinkering Labs

Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog and National Informatics Centre jointly launched CollabCAD, a collaborative network, computer enabled software system, providing a total engineering solution from 2D drafting & detailing to 3D product design. The aim of this initiative is to provide a great platform to students to create and modify 3d designs with free flow of creativity and imagination.

This software would also enable students to create data across the network and concurrently access the same design data for storage and visualisation. AIM also launched the Game Development module, where students can start their learning journey, while tinkering from home.

## 41. 5,000 crores transferred for free delivery of LPG to Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries'

Oil marketing companies have initiated transfer of Rs 5,606 crore to 7.15 Crore Pradhan Mantri Ujwala Yojana beneficiary accounts for availing free delivery of LPG cylinder under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan package. There are 27.87 Crore active LPG consumers in the country, with the PMUY beneficiaries accounting for over 8 crore.

Under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, free LPG Refills are to be provided to Ujjwala beneficiaries over the period of 3 months, from April to June. Since the lockdown, 50 to 60 lakh cylinders are being delivered daily in the country.

42. COVID-19 hotspots categorised as Red Zones, Green zones and Orange zones

The COVID-19 hotspots have been named as Red Zones, Green zones and Orange zones depending on intensity of spread of Covid-19. Red zones indicate infection hotspots, orange denotes some infection, while green indicates an area with no infections. Six major Indian cities, including the capital Delhi and the financial capital Mumbai, were designated coronavirus "red zones". Around 170 districts of India were designated red zones.
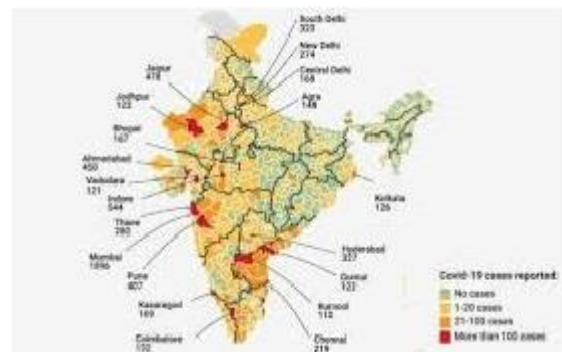
Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The disease causes respiratory illness (like the flu).

43. DST funded startup developed Active Virosome Vaccine Production

Seagull Bio Solutions, a startup working on new biological technologies, funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), developed Active Virosome (AV)-Vaccine and Immunodiagnostic kits for COVID-19 emergency. AVT is useful for the production of vaccines & immunotherapeutic agents.
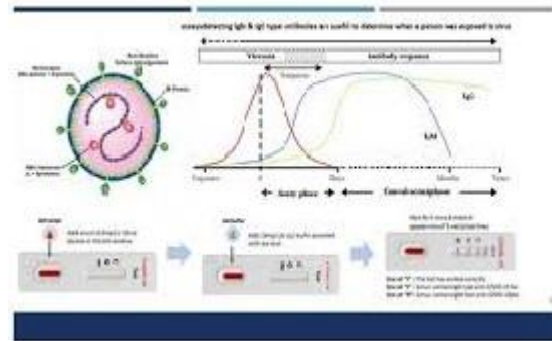
The AVT platform is useful for producing novel, non-hazardous & economical Active Virosome agents expressing desired antigens from the target pathogen. These will be used to develop a novel vaccine and immunodiagnostic ELISA kits for COVID-19. Immunodiagnostic kits are expected to be ready by Aug 2020.

44. Wormivet Herbal Medication developed by NIF to treat worms

National Innovation Foundation India (NIF) has brought out an indigenous herbal medication (dewormer) in form of commercial product for livestock owners as an alternate to chemical method of treatment of worm.

Internal parasite is a significant health problem as it causes diarrhoea, loss in body weight, anaemia, reproductive health concern, thereby limiting productivity and growth. Inappropriate use of chemical dewormer generates resistance. The presence of internal parasite during regular diagnosis and contamination of soil health by chemical based therapy necessitates alternative sustainable therapies. NIF helped organise the knowledge to control endoparasite infestation and its valorization.

45. HRD Minister launched VidyaDaan 2.0

The Union Human Resource Development Ministry has launched VidyaDaan 2.0 for inviting e-learning content contributions. VidyaDaan is conceptualised as a common national program for individuals & organisations across the country to donate/contribute e-learning resources. The content will be used on the DIKSHA app to help millions of children across the country to continue their learning anytime and anywhere.

The programme has been launched due to the increasing requirement for e-learning content for students in the backdrop of Covid- 19 and also due to the urgent need to integrate digital education with schooling.

46. Cabinet approved relaxation of Aadhaar data seeding for beneficiaries of Assam, Meghalaya, J&K & Ladakh

The Cabinet approved to relax the mandatory requirement of Aadhaar data seeding for beneficiaries of Assam, Meghalaya and Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh for release of benefits under PM-Kisan Scheme upto 31st March 2021. From 1st December 2019, release of benefits is done only through Aadhaar seeded data of beneficiaries uploaded on the PM-KISAN portal.

PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi

The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme aims to provide an amount of Rs.6000/- per year in three 4-monthly installments of Rs.2000/- each directly into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

47. Cabinet approved fixation of Nutrient Based Subsidy rates for Phosphatic & Potassic fertilizers

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs gave its approval for fixation of Nutrient Based Subsidy, NBS rates for Phosphatic and Potassic (P and K) Fertilizers for the year 2020-21.The approved rates for NBS will be Rs 18.78 per kg for Nitrogen, Rs 14.88 per kg for Phosphorus, Rs 10.11 per kg for Potash and Rs 2.37 per kg for Sulphur.

CCEA
The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs

The CCEA also approved the inclusion of a complex fertilizer namely Ammonium Phosphate under the NBS Scheme. The expected expenditure for release of subsidy on Phosphorus and Potassium Fertilizers during 2020-21 will be over Rs 22,186 crore.

48. Cabinet approved Rs. 15,000 Crore for "India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package"

The Union Cabinet has approved investments of Rs. 15,000 crore for 'India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package'. The funds sanctioned will be utilised in three phases. Rs 7,774 crore has been provisioned for immediate COVID-19 Emergency Response and rest for medium-term support (1-4 years) to be provided under mission mode approach.

Rs 3,000 crore has been released under the Package to States for strengthening of existing health facilities as COVID Dedicated Hospitals, Dedicated COVID Health Center and Dedicated COVID Care Centers. All health workers have been covered with insurance under the "Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package".

49. TIFAC plans to come up with white paper on strategising revival of Indian economy after COVID-19

The Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) is preparing a white paper to strategise revival of post-COVID 19 Indian economy. This document would mainly focus on strengthening Make in India initiatives, commercialisation of Indigenous technology, developing a technology-driven transparent Public Distribution System (PDS), adoption of emerging technology domains like AI, Machine Learning, Data Analytics and many more.

TIFAC is an autonomous technology think tank under the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India.

50. SVP Institute becomes first to carry out plasma research in view of Covid-19

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Institute of Medical Science and Research became the first authorized study centre in the country to carry out plasma research under trial in view of Covid 19. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Ahmedabad based institute.

In the Convalescent plasma therapy, antibodies from the blood of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 are used to treat severely infected patients.

51. New Development Bank announced one-billion-dollar emergency assistance to India

New Development Bank has announced financial assistance of about five billion dollars to BRICS countries including Emergency Assistance of one billion dollar to India to combat COVID-19 pandemic.

The NDB was established by the BRICS countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa in 2014. The purpose of the Bank is to mobilise resources for

infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging market economies and developing countries to complement the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development.

52. Ministry of Tourism launched its "DekhoApnaDesh" webinar

Ministry of Tourism launched a new webinar series, "Dekho Apna Desh", to provide information on the many destinations and the sheer depth and expanse of the culture and heritage of Incredible India. The first webinar touched upon the long history of Delhi and was titled " City of Cities- Delhi's Personal Diary'.
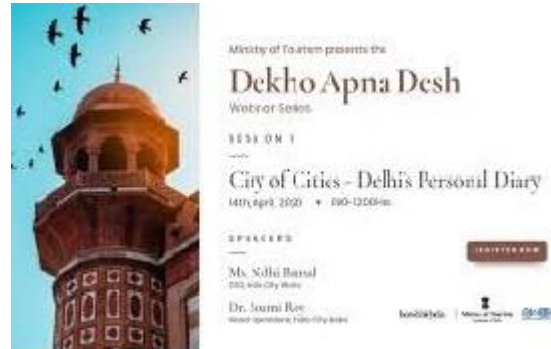
The other webinars were as follows:
- "Calcutta – A Confluence of Cultures"
- "The Monuments of Mammallapuram – Stories Etched in Stone"
- "World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism at Humayun's Tomb"
- "Ladakh – Explore the Unexplored"

53. Government amends the extant FDI policy

The Government of India amended the extant Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy 2017 for curbing opportunistic takeovers/acquisitions of Indian companies, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. According to new revised policy, an entity of a country, which shares land border with India or where the beneficial owner of an investment into India is situated in or is a citizen of any such country, can invest only under the government route.

This change has brought China in the ambit of 'government permission'. There are two modes on FDI in India: automatic route and government route.

54. BRO builds 484-meter permanent bridge on Ravi

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has constructed and opened a new permanent bridge on the river Ravi connecting Kasowal enclave in Punjab to the rest of the country. The bridge was built at a cost ₹17.89 crore, excluding the approaches. It consists of 16 cells of 30.25-metre length each.

The bridge is 484-meter-long and it was built by 141 Drain Maintenance Coy of 49 Border Roads Task Force (BRTF) of Project Chetak. BRO has succeeded in constructing the road much ahead of its schedule.

55. Government launched online data pool of critical human resource

Union Government has created an online data pool on https://covidwarriors.gov.in. The Dashboard is a master database of details of Healthcare Professionals and Volunteers and it has been made operational. It contains state wise and dustrict wise availability of the large pool of human resources from various groups alongwith contact details of the nodal officers.

The dashboard is available for use by various authorities to prepare Crisis Management and Contingency Plans based on the available manpower, in co-ordination with nodal officers for each group.

56. Government launched National list of intangible cultural heritage of India in New Delhi

The government launched the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India in New Delhi in order to create awareness about the various intangible cultural heritage sites from different states of India at national and international level and ensure their protection.

This list is a part of the vision 2024 of the Culture Ministry & has been built in collaboration with Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA).

57. HRD Minister launched web portal 'YUKTI'

Minister for Human Resource Development Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank launched a web-portal YUKTI (Young India Combating COVID with Knowledge, Technology and Innovation) in New Delhi. The portal will monitor and record the efforts and initiatives of Ministry of HRD. The portal will cover both qualitative and quantitative parameters for effective delivery of services to the academic community at large.

The portal will also allow various institutions to share their strategies for various challenges and give inputs for better planning.

58. KVIC developed double-layered Khadi masks

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has successfully developed a double layered Khadi mask. KVIC has also bagged an order to supply 7.5 lakh pieces of Khadi Masks to Jammu & Kashmir Government.

KVIC is using double twisted Khadi fabric for manufacturing of these masks as it helps retain 70% of the moisture content inside, while providing an easy passage for the air to pass through. The masks are made of hand-spun, hand-woven khadi fabric which is breathable, easy to reuse, washable and biodegradable.

59. Government plans to set up 'Suraksha Stores' to meet daily needs

The government of India plans to set up a chain of 20 lakh retail shops called 'Suraksha Stores' across India. These 'Suraksha Stores' will provide daily essentials to citizens while maintaining stringent safety norms in the wake of COVID-19. The Suraksha Stores will not only be for groceries but also consumer durables, apparel and salons.

Also, the Consumer Affairs Ministry is working on creating 'Suraksha Circle' where lead manufacturing plants will help their business partners and smaller factories in their vicinity.

60. CDRI signed MoU with KGMU to sequence virus strains

Central Drug Research Institute has inked an MoU with King George's Medical University, Lucknow to sequence the virus strains obtained from COVID-19 patients in Uttar Pradesh. Initially, the Lucknow-based lab will sequence the virus strains from the samples of a few patients. As of now, eight different variants of the virus are known to be causing the COVID-19 infection.

A team has been put into place for analyzing whether changes to the viral sequences, if any, will impact the proposed treatment strategies.

61. MNRE urged to set up renewable energy equipment parks

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has urged states to set up renewable energy (RE) equipment manufacturing parks to meet domestic demand as well as make India a global production hub. Many international firms are looking to move their production base out of China after the COVID-19 outbreak.

RE facilities will manufacture equipment like silicon ingots and wafers, solar cells and modules, wind power equipment and ancillary items like back sheet, glass, steel frames, inverters and batteries.

62. AIIB to invest $500 million funding for healthcare system in India

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is considering a proposal for financing $500-million project in India to strengthen country's national health care systems. The objective of the project is to prevent, detect and respond to the threat posed by COVID-19 and to strengthen national health systems for preparedness in India.

This project is proposed under the COVID-19 Recovery Facility. AIIB (the Bank) will co-finance this project with the World Bank (WB).

63. Government raised red flags over video conference app Zoom

The Union home ministry has red flagged video conferencing software Zoom as unsafe and vulnerable to cyber crimes. MHA has asked government officials not to use Zoom video meet app for holding meetings. The MHA has red-flagged the platform following advisories issued by the national cyber-security agency – Computer Emergency Response Team of India (CERT-in).

The US-based Zoom app, according to the government, can be easily hacked and confidential data and material stolen. The Cyber Co-ordination (CyCord) Centre of MHA has issued a detailed advisory for private individuals, who want to use the platform for private purposes.

64. AIIMS set up India's first remote health monitoring system in Rishikesh

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Rishikesh along with Bharat Heavy Electronics Limited (BHEL) has set up India's 1st remote health monitoring system. The system is developed for state of Uttarakhand to monitor COVID-19 patients.

The digital medical system helps the doctor sitting in AIIMS to monitor the patient's body temperature and the amount of oxygen in the blood and the speed of his breath, while at home and the vital parameters of the patient will be displayed in the AIIMS command & control center.

65. Integrated geospatial platform "SAHYOG" rolled out by DST

The Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, has created an Integrated Geospatial Platform out of available geospatial datasets, standards-based services, and analytic tools, named as "SAHYOG". It is to help decision making during the current COVID-19 outbreak and aid devising area-specific strategies to handle the socio-economic impact in the recovery phase.

The mobile application SAHYOG, as well as the web portal (https://indiamaps.gov.in/soiapp/) prepared by the Survey of India, has been customised to collect COVID-19 specific geospatial datasets through, community engagement to augment the response activities by Government of India to the pandemic.

66. PM launched E-Gramswaraj Portal, Mobile App

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the e-Gramswaraj Portal and Mobile app as well as Swamitva Scheme for the upliftment of the rural areas of India. The portal was launched on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day 2020.

e-Gramswaraj Portal and Mobile app helps to prepare and plan Gram Panchayat Development Plans. The portal is a major

step towards digitisation down to the Gram Panchayat level. The Swamitva scheme was launched in pilot mode in 6 states to map rural inhabited lands using drones and latest survey methods. It will ensure streamlined planning, revenue collection and provide clarity over property rights in rural areas.

67. Government launched Kisan Rath Mobile App

Agriculture Ministry has launched Kisan Rath Mobile App to facilitate transportation of food grains and perishables during lockdown. This mobile application is developed by the National Informatics Centre to ensure farmers and traders are able to find transport for Agriculture and Horticulture produce.

"Kisan Rath" will ensure smooth and seamless supply linkages between farmers, warehouses, FPOs, APMC mandis and intra-State & inter-State buyers and help in reduction of food wastage by providing timely services.

68. NTPC launched Hydrogen Fuel bus and car project for Leh and New Delhi

NTPC Ltd has invited Global Expression of Interest (EoI) to provide 10 Hydrogen Fuel Cell (FC) based electric buses and an equal number of Hydrogen Fuel Cell based electric cars in Leh and Delhi. The EoI has been issued by NTPC's wholly owned subsidiary, NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam (NVVN) Limited.

The move to procure Hydrogen Fuel Cell based vehicles is first of its kind project in the country, wherein a complete solution from green energy to the fuel cell vehicle would be developed. The move to launch hydrogen powered vehicles aims at decarbonising mobility segment.

69. India looks up to IMF and World Bank to fill data gaps

India has approached International Monetary Fund and World Bank to prepare economic indicators such as industrial production, retail inflation and economic growth. The Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown has created the challenge of data inadequacy, which could affect the accuracy and reliability of the indicators.

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has, hence, collaborated with global institutions on data

collection practices and to learn from the experiences of other countries facing the same issues.

70. CSIR-NBRI scientist developed herbal decongestant spray on mask to protect from suffocation

Scientists at CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI), Lucknow, have developed a herbal decongestant spray. The spray will address breathing and congestion in the respiratory system, which is caused by wearing a mask for a long time.

Herbal decongestant spray is a fine blend of four plant-based oils. The product is developed based on the principles of Ayurveda. Lucknow-based NBRI is a constituent laboratory of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

71. CSIR-IICT initiatives to reduce dependency for APIs and drug intermediates

Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), Hyderabad has collaborated with integrated pharmaceutical company, LAXAI Life Sciences, to develop and manufacture APIs and drug intermediates. The initiative may help in reducing the dependency of the Indian pharmaceutical sector on Chinese imports of these ingredients.

The Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) are also known as bulk drugs. They are the main part of the drugs that produce intended effects. Around two-third of the API of India are imported from China.

72. ADB approved USD 1.5 billion loan to India to help fight corona virus

Asian Development Bank has approved 1.5 billion dollars loan to India to help fund its fight against corona virus pandemic. The loan has been sanctioned with a view to support immediate priorities such as disease containment and prevention, as well as social protection for the poor and economically vulnerable sections.

The quick-disbursing fund is part of a larger

package of support that ADB will provide in close coordination with the government and other development partners.

73. CSCs to spearhead online retail for rural India

Government of India is positioning Common Service Centres (CSCs) as an alternative to foreign online retailing giants like Flipkart and Amazon to provide essential products and services in India's rural areas. The outlets are set up and run by private individuals but under the aegis of the ministry of electronics and IT.

Customers can go online and order supplies through a specially curated app that has been provided to village-level entrepreneurs (VLEs) or those given the charge of retail and other CSC activities.

Persons in News

1. Englishman Bob Weighton confirmed as the world's oldest man living at 112

Bob Weighton, from the UK, has been officially confirmed as the oldest person living (male) at 112 Years and 1 day as of 30 March 2020. Bob was born on March 29th 1908, in Kingston-Upon-Hull, Yorkshire.

Bob Weighton received the record title after Mr. Chitetsu Watanabe (Japan, b. March 5, 1907) passed away on February 23rd 2020 at 112 years and 355 days. Kane Tanaka is currently the oldest person living (female) and celebrated her 117th birthday in January.

2. Spain Princess Maria Teresa became 1st royal to die from COVID-19

Spanish Princess Maria Teresa of Bourbon-Parma became the first royal to pass away due to COVID-19. The 86-year-old was a cousin of Spain's King Felipe VI. Spain is one of the worst-hit nations due to Corona pandemic.

Princess Maria Teresa worked as a professor at Paris' Sorbonne as well as a professor of Sociology at Madrid's Complutense University. She was famously known as "Red Princess" due to her outspoken views and activist work. In 2014, she published a history of the Bourbon-Parma family.

3. Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey pledged $1 billion to combat COVID-19

Jack Dorsey, the CEO of Twitter, has pledged to donate $1 billion to charities working towards combatting the global COVID-19 pandemic. The donation makes it the largest amount pledged by a private individual in the fight against the global coronavirus pandemic. The donation represented approximately 28% of his wealth.

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg has committed $30m. Amazon's Jeff Bezos has donated $100m to food banks in the US.

4. Mukesh Ambani tops Jack Ma as Asia's richest person

Mukesh Ambani has regained the top position as Asia's richest person ahead of Jack Ma consequent to the $5.7 billion investment in Ambani-led Reliance Jio Platforms by Facebook. Facebook is investing ₹43,574 crore for a 9.99% stake on a fully diluted basis in Jio Platforms.

Ambani's fortune rose about $4.7 billion to $49.2 billion. The jump put Ambani about $3.2 billion ahead of China's Jack Ma. Globally, Ambani sits at the 17th spot in the list of world's top 10 richest people ahead of MacKenzie Bezos and Jack Ma.

5. Shivraj Singh Chouhan sets record by becoming CM without cabinet for longest duration

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has set a record by becoming the longest serving CM without a council of ministers. Chouhan served for 25 days in power as chief minister without a cabinet.

This record was previously held by Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, who had formed his Cabinet after 24 days of assuming power. Governor Lalji Tandon administered the oath of office and secrecy to five Ministers - Narottam Mishra, Tulsi Silavat, Kamal Patel, Govind Singh Rajput and Meena Singh.

6. PV Sindhu named ambassador for 'i am badminton' awareness campaign

Badminton World Federation (BWF) has appointed World Champion shuttler PV Sindhu as one of its ambassadors for 'i am badminton', an awareness campaign. Sindhu will be promoting a healthy platform for players where they would "express love and respect for badminton by advocating and committing to clean and honest play",

Other ambassadors for the BWF campaign include Michelle Li of Canada, Zheng Si Wei and Huang YaQiong of China, England's Jack Shephard, Germany's Valeska Knoblauch, Hong Kong's Chan Ho Yuen and Germany's Marc Zwiebler.

7. Viswanathan Anand named ambassador for WWF India

Five-time World chess champion Viswanathan Anand is the new Ambassador for World Wide Fund (WWF) India's Environment Education programme. Anand will support wildlife conservation and work to educate children across India on issues related to the environment.

Environment Education is the oldest programme of WWF-India starting way back in 1976 with the Nature Clubs of India (NCI) initiative. Currently, the environment education programme undertakes five large initiatives that reach out to school children, youth and citizens across the country.

1. Ahmedabad railway station gets sanitizing tunnel

Ahmedabad station of Western Railway has got the unique distinction of becoming the first station on Indian Railways to install a Walk Through Mass Sanitizing Tunnel. The tunnel is fitted with a sensor so that, when a passenger approaches the tunnel entrance, it starts fogging automatically with WHO approved sanitizer.

The tunnel has a capacity of sanitizing 25 to 30 persons per minute and consumes approximately 20 ml sanitizer per person. The system runs on the principle of Vaporization process which converts the sanitizer mixture into vapour which forms a uniform layer over the surface which dries up quickly.

2. Pusa Decontamination & Sanitizing Tunnel inaugurated

Pusa Decontamination and Sanitizing Tunnel, developed by Division of Agricultural Engineering, ICAR- Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, was inaugurated by the Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Framers' Welfare, Shri Kailash Choudhary.

The sanitisation protocol includes hand washing with foot-operated soap and water dispenser and fogging in a sanitising tunnel for 20 seconds. In this tunnel, Quaternary Ammonium Compounds (QAC) are used at concentration of 0.045%, which is recommended by the Health Department.

3. Thuthukudi airport in Tamil Nadu upgraded to level 3

The Thuthukudi airport in Tamil Nadu, near the strategically important Bay of Bengal coast, has been upgraded to level 3 by the Airport Authority of India. This signifies a rise in the operational potentials of the airport and increases the scope of getting more funds for expansion activities.

The airport run way is at present being extended to 3115 metres to enable bigger planes to use it. Plans are also in the pipeline for starting hopping flights to nearby destinations like Trivandrum, Kochi, Madurai etc.

4. KGMU in Lucknow becomes first government hospital to successfully launch Plasma Therapy Treatment for COVID-19

The King George Medical University in Uttar Pradesh has become the first government hospital in the country to successfully launch the plasma therapy treatment for the COVID-19 patients.

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has recently allowed states to start clinical trials of plasma therapy. Convalescent Plasma Therapy is an experimental procedure for COVID-19 patients. In this treatment, plasma from a cured COVID-19 patient is transfused to a critically ill coronavirus patient.

5. Kerala government hospital deployed robot to serve COVID-19 patients

Ernakulam Government Medical College Hospital has deployed a robot to serve food and medicines to coronavirus patients with an aim to reduce risk of infections for doctors and health workers. The robot is named 'KARMI-Bot'.

The robots developed by ASIMOV robotics, a company working under maker village of Kerala start-up mission. The robot can carry a payload of up to 25 kgs and is capable of achieving a maximum speed of 1 m per sec. It featured in the latest cover story of Forbes magazine.

6. IIITM-K developed an advanced search engine for COVID-19

Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management – Kerala (IIITM-K) has developed Vilokana, a search engine based on artificial intelligence to enable researchers to get deeper insights into scientific studies on Covid-19. The search engine is accessed through the website www.vilokana.in.

The user can supply key-words based queries, the meaning of which the search engine will be able to understand and find the relevant text from the scientific papers. The user also has the option to upload any scientific text for analysis.

7. Saranda Forest Division makes immunity booster drinks

Officials of Saranda Forest Division in West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand have come up with immunity booster herbal drinks made from barks of Arjun trees, Tulsi leaves, Guava leaves and other immune building herbs. The drink will help everyone restore their immune system. The immunity booster drinks are prepared to increase the general health of people as well.

सत्यमेव जयते

Ministry of AYUSH

Saranda Forest has been house to several medicinal plants. The idea is being taken from Kilimili, a word used in local language for a traditional tribal herbal medicine house.

8. SIMFED launched mobile ration van in Gangtok

Sikkim State Co-operative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd (SIMFED) launched a mobile ration van in Gangtok, for doorstep delivery of essential commodities and food. SIMFED's van will deliver essential commodities like rice, mustard oil, pulse, flour, sugar, salt and soaps at reasonable rates.

The co-operative will work according to the route plan and customers would be informed in advance about the movement of the mobile ration van. SIMFED has made provisions for cashless transactions.

9. Pune Municipal Corporation designs 'Saiyam app' to track home quarantined people

Pune Municipal Corporation has developed a mobile application named Saiyam under Smart Cities Mission to effectively track the home-quarantined citizens and ensure that, they are staying in the home. The Mobile Application has GPS tracking so that, whenever quarantined citizens leave their homes, City Administration gets alert and the local ward or the local police station gets informed.

The concerned people have instructions to keep the mobile running for 24 hours and to keep the GPS open at all times. The movement of the isolates will be observed in Red, Amber or Green, as in the central observatory.

10. IIT-Bombay developed digital stethoscope called "AyuSynk"

Ayu Devices, a startup of IIT Bombay, has developed a digital stethoscope named as AyuSynk. AyuSynk will help in listening chest sounds such as wheezing and crackles that shows seriousness of the disease COVID-19. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome SARS-CoV-2. The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.

The digital device AyuSynk has ability to amplify chest sounds, send sounds from patients to doctors without physical tubing, store the auscultated sound as part of the health record of the patient and shares with other doctors for confirmatory opinion.

11. IIM Kozhikode girl develops COVID-19 website

An international team led by an Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode student has developed a vital digital tool to fight the COVID-19 pandemic of misinformation. The website 'COVID FYI' (covidfyi.in) is a one-stop digital directory for all Covid19 related services and help released by official sources.

The website aims to bring the right information from the right sources to the right people, as only official information from government organisations is put on this platform to ensure authenticity and credibility.

12. WHO map shows Ladakh's Aksai Chin as part of China

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has reportedly shown parts of Ladakh as Chinese territory. It shows the Aksai Chin region as a part of China with a dotted line and colour code. The WHO map also marks Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) with dotted lines, suggesting it as a disputed territory. Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and the rest of India are marked in different colour codes.

This is probably the first time that Ladakh and J&K are shown in different colour codes than the rest of India.

1. Jharkhand government launched PRAGYAAM app to issue e-passes

The Jharkhand Government launched a mobile app PRAGYAAM to issue e-passes to everyone associated with delivery of essential services during the national lockdown to combat COVID-19. District Transport Officers have been given authority to issue e-passes to vehicles through online mode after verification of the documents uploaded through the app. These passes will be issued to those involved in the regular supply services, medical, banking and other necessary services.

Officials can also verify the status of the e-passes, user's identity on the app to curb the chances of fake e-passes.

### 2. Andhra Pradesh state government sets up Mobile Hand-wash facilities

Andhra Pradesh State government has set up Mobile Hand-wash facilities for the benefit of Slum Dwellers amidst lockdown in the state. With social distancing and sanitising hands are the only available methods of cure for Covid-19, the mobile Hand Wash facility has become handy for both the state authorities and slum dwellers to access facility of hands cleaning.

Authorities fitted a water tanker to a vehicle, with four tap connections and four wash basins. Two soap dispensers are also fitted to the installation. It will also help the slum dwellers and homeless people to maintain hygiene.

3. Karnataka state government launched 'Corona Watch' app

Karnataka state government has launched a mobile application 'Corona Watch' to track the movement history of persons tested positive. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.
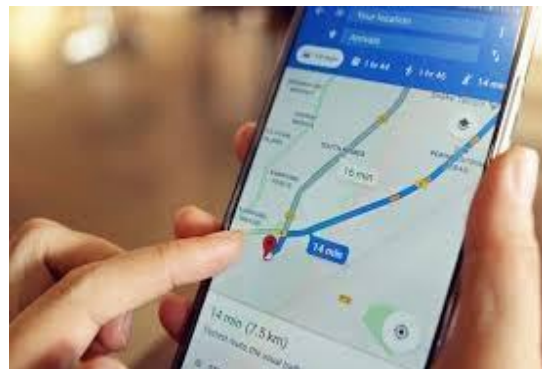
App is meant to track the movement history of persons tested positive, the date and time of visit to spots by the patients, before their detection and list of hospitals in order to take precautions and to contain the coronavirus outbreak.

4. "Active Case Finding Campaign" started by Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur launched 'Active Case Finding Campaign' to provide information about the symptoms of COVID-19 to the people at their doorsteps. Under this campaign, ASHA workers and health workers, in the teams of two will visit every house to gather health information of every individuals and share it with department through Google form for investigating suspected persons accordingly.

The state has kept 3,085 persons under surveillance of 28 day period for the Covid-19 check-up.

5. 'Modi Kitchen' set up in Tamil Nadu

A 'Modi Kitchen' with a capacity to serve 500 meals every day was set up in Kovai (Coimbatore). The kitchen made arrangements to deliver food parcels within a radius of 10 km. The assorted parcels include a main dish, two kinds of side dishes and a sweet. The dishes are prepared under advice from nutrition experts.

The functionaries of the Common Service Centre has organised the kitchen and has planned to provide the service till April 14th.

6. Andhra Pradesh state government purchased MOM from Indian Navy

The Andhra Pradesh government has come forward to purchase the portable Multi-feed Oxygen Manifold (MOM) from Indian Navy for COVID-19 patients. Indian Naval Dockyard Visakhapatnam (NDV) personnel designed the innovative 'Portable Multi-feed Oxygen Manifold' (MOM) using a 6-way radial header fitted to a single cylinder.

MOM is a novel contraption to meet any emergency requirement of oxygen supply to coronavirus patients. Around 5-8% of critical corona virus patients require ventilator support while about 20% need oxygen supply.

7. Andhra Pradesh allotted sites for the houses to 25 lakh poor

Under modified guidelines of Andhra Pradesh state's Navaratnalu-Pedalandariki Illu program, sites for the houses were allotted at a concessional rate of Rs.1 to the beneficiaries with white ration cards. Navaratnalu-Pedalandariki Illu (Houses for all the poor) program aims to use the sites for no purpose other than constructing houses. Beneficiaries deposited Rs.20 for cost of stamp paper and lamination charges.

Andhra Pradesh state government aims to tie up with HUDCO and other organizations for securing loans.

8. Unique disinfectant named 'V Safe Tunnel' installed in Telangana to sanitize people

A unique disinfectant named 'V Safe Tunnel' has been installed in Telangana state to sanitize people within 20 seconds from any possible bacteria and other microbes. The disinfectant used in the V Safe Tunnel consists of a combination of a water-soluble polymer and iodine in a form of spray.

The tunnel is designed to provide maximum protection to people passing through the tunnel in around 20 seconds. The first-of-its-kind tunnel installed in the state, is aimed at reducing the local transmission of Coronavirus in the state.

9. Online cultural competition "Mo Prativa" launched in Odisha

Government of Odisha along with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) started online cultural competition to keep children engaged at home during the lockdown period. The competition is named Mo Prativa (My talent) for the children in the age group of 5 to 18 years.

Mo Prativa is based on theme 'Being at home during lockdown & My responsibility as a young citizen during COVID-19'. It will enable children to participate in various activities such as painting, writing of slogans, short stories, poems etc. The children can post their entries between 10 am to 6 pm every day.

10. Arunachal Pradesh government launched COVIDCARE app to fight COVID-19

Arunachal Pradesh state government has launched a newly developed app called COVIDCARE, in an effort to fight COVID-19. This app has been developed for those people who are quarantined, asymptomatic or COVID-19 patients to self-report their health status, including body temperature and vital symptoms and in case of emergency, the patient will be able to call for help through the app itself.

The platform will also offer friendly a geo-fencing feature to ensure that people don't break isolation norms. COVID CARE has been developed by Atsuya Technologies, a Chennai-based IT company.

11. Chhattisgarh Police create 'Rakhsa Sarv' app to keep a check on home quarantined patients

The police in Chhattisgarh's Janjgir-Champa district have created a mobile application 'Rakhsa Sarv' app to keep a check on home quarantined patients. The police developed the app with the help of Noida-based startup Mobcoder.

'Rakhsa Sarv' app enables the police to track the quarantined people through Google Map. If the home-quarantined people turn off the phone or location or internet connection or steps out of the house (along with mobile) beyond 200 metres, the app will send an alert to the local police station.

12. Telangana government deployed Vera's COVID-19 Monitoring System App

The Government of Telangana deployed India's first automated "COVID-19 Monitoring System App". The app identifies patients, undertake live surveillance, track, monitor, and provide real-time analytics to the chief minister and the state health department.

The system empowers each health worker to handle 1,500+ phone calls, and simple chatbot conversations each day with a patient. The user-friendly app has been developed by an early stage start-up Vera Smart Healthcare based out of Hyderabad and the US.

13. 'Operation SHIELD' launched in Delhi

Delhi Government launched 'Operation Shield' in the 21 hotspot areas to combat the spread of COVID-19. Under the Operation SHIELD launched by the Delhi government, door-to-door checks of 188 homes were conducted.

In the Operation SHIELD: S stands for: Sealing of area; H stands for: Home quarantine; I stands for: Isolation of infected patients; E stands for: Essential services ensured; L stands for: Local sanitisation; D stands for: Door to door survey.

14. JKSLSA launched helpline under 'Serve-the-Seniors Initiative' for senior citizens

Jammu and Kashmir State legal Services Authority (JKSLSA) has launched a helpline under 'Serve-the-Seniors Initiative' under the guidance of Justice Gita Mittal, Patron-in-Chief and Justice Rajesh Bindal Executive Chairman of State Legal Services Authority.

The initiative has been taken realising the fact that the elderly are doubly affected by the COVID lockdown and are not only vulnerable to contracting the virus in view of their old age but are in tremendous difficulty to manage their day to day needs like groceries and medicines.

15. Goa became first state to be Corona free

Goa became the country's first state to have zero covid-19 cases with no case of coronavirus being reported from April 3. Goa had a total of seven positive cases. Manipur became the second state to be Corona free and Tripura is the third such state.

Manipur had two confirmed COVID-19 case but both the patients have been discharged from hospital. Tripura also had two confirmed COVID-19 patients.

16. Delhi government launched "Assess Koro Na" app

The Delhi government has launched 'Assess Koro Na' mobile application and advised the officials to use the new 'Assess Koro Na' app to do door-to-door survey in COVID-19 containment zones.

This mobile application will speed up decision-making by analysing the real-time data and hence removing a major obstacle in the efforts to contain the virus. Through this app, the collected data can be uploaded in real-time on the servers for its immediate analysis.

17. Uttar Pradesh becomes first state to geotag community kitchens

Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in the country to geotag its 7,368 community kitchens and community shelters across 75 districts. The kichens produce 12 lakh food packets a day. Remote Sensing Applications Centre (RSAC), Lucknow developed an application to learn about the location of the community kitchens by feeding data of the latitudes and longitudes.

The state government has also tied up with Google to 'Geo-map' the locations of all these establishments on the Google Maps app for ease of beneficiaries. Out of these 7,368 community kitchens, 668 are being run by NGOs and religious institutions.

18. "e-sanjeevani-opd" facility rolled out in Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh government has rolled out "e-sanjeevani-opd" for free online medical consultation to sick people, who were feeling uncomfortable to visit hospitals in view of COVID-19 pandemic. The "e-sanjeevani-opd" service will provide free online medical consultation to sick people at their residence throughout the state.

To reap the benefits of "e-sanjeevani-opd", a person should have a computer, laptop, tablet along with webcam mike, speaker as well as internet connection.

19. Rajasthan government launched Aayu & Sehat Sathi app

The Rajasthan government has partnered with healthcare startup MedCords to launch a 24*7 online consultation and medicine delivery to people of Rajasthan. The app, 'Aayu & Sehat Sathi app', is aimed to help fight the COVID-19 outbreak.

With its integrated healthcare ecosystem, Aayu & Sehat Sathi helps families consult with qualified doctors and order necessary medicines, irrespective of their geographical limitations. The app also has a built-in comprehensive coronavirus guide for users to clear their myths and check their symptoms.

20. Gujarat government approved 3rd edition of "Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan"

Gujarat state government has approved the 3rd edition of 'Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan' (SSJA). The scheme will continue till June 10, 2020 with a focus on deepening of lakes, check dams and rivers by removing silt.

The SSJA was started in 2018 after a weak monsoon to transform Gujarat from a water-deficit state to a water-surplus one. The second edition was launched in February of 2019. The water storage capacity has increased by 2.3 billion cubic feet till date.

21. GMR received approval to develop, operate Bhogapuram International Airport

GMR Airports Limited, a subsidiary of GMR Infrastructure Ltd, has received the Letter of Award for the development and operation of a greenfield international airport at Bhogapuram in Andhra Pradesh. GMR Airports had emerged as the highest bidder for project on a public–private partnership basis.

The project involves design, build, finance, construction, development, up-gradation, modernization, operation and maintenance of Bhogapuram International Airport for 40 years, extendable by additional 20 years.

22. Madhya Pradesh launched 'Chief Minister COVID-19 Yoddha Kalyan Yojana'

The Madhya Pradesh state government launched the "Chief Minister COVID-19 Yoddha Kalyan Yojana". Under this initiative, around one lakh Anganwadi workers and Assistants of the state will get the benefit. They will also get a special health insurance cover of Rs. 50 lakhs.

The move will benefit Anganwadi workers, who are taking risks and going door-to-door survey in every district. Besides, they are also visiting from house to house for providing nutritional food to the children.

23. Kerala set to trial plasma therapy for COVID-19 treatment

Kerala became the first state of India to start clinical trial plasma therapy for COVID-19 treatment. Kerela will use Convalescent Plasma Therapy and transfuse plasma from a COVID-19 patient into a coronavirus patient who is in critical condition.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) approved to Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala to start clinical trial convalescent plasma therapy treatment.

24. UP became first state to start "Pool Testing" of Covid-19 samples

Uttar Pradesh became the first state in the country to start pool testing of corona virus samples. The move is aimed at speeding up the screening process and also, brings down the cost of testing samples.

The death audit will help in providing better treatment to other COVID-19 patients. In the pool testing method, multiple swab samples are pooled together and tested. If the result of a collection of samples comes negative, then that means all the samples in that group are negative. Pool testing will fasten the screening process and bring down the cost.

25. Jharkhand hospitals employed 'COBOT-Robotics' to serve COVID-19 patients

Jharkhand hospitals employed 'COBOT-Robotics' Robots to serve food, medicine to COVID-19 patients without human intervention. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome SARS-CoV-2. The disease spread globally, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic.

Other countries where robots have been deployed include hospitals across United States, China and Italy for cleaning, disinfecting wards and assisting patients. District Deputy Development Commissioner (DDC) Aditya Ranjan and his team of engineers developed 'COBOT-Robotics' Robots.

26. Goa became first state to use Ayurveda to COVID-19 patients

Goa became first state to integrate Allopath and Ayurveda to boost the immunity of COVID-19 patients and those who have been quarantined. Ayurveda is 5,000-year-old system of medicine that origins in the Vedic culture of India. Ayurveda will boost immunity and not cure Covid-19.

The treatment will be administered in consultation with doctors who are dealing with COVID-19 patients, who is also an Ayurvedic practitioner. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome SARS-CoV-2.

27. CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan launched Jeevan Shakti Yojana in Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan has launched the Jeevan Shakti Yojana. Under this scheme, women in urban areas can earn by making masks at home. The government will pay them Rs. 11 per mask.

Women wishing to make masks will have to register themselves by calling on the Call Centre number through their telephone or mobile. The government has instucted that the mask should be made of cotton cloth. The payment will be credited into the bank account on the next day of delivery.

28. Assam government launched new scheme 'Dhanwantari' for home delivery of medicines

Assam government has launched a new scheme Dhanwantari under which, locally unavailable medicines are provided to patients at home. Medicines below 200 rupees will be provided free of cost to patients. Health workers are delivering medicines for patients who cannot get it within 10 kilometer of their radius.

If the medicine is available within the district, the health department will supply the medicine within 24 hours. Similarly, 48 hours will be required for delivery from other places, i.e. from the Regional Center and one week will be required for delivery from outside the State.

29. UP became first state with in-house facility of virtual courts

Uttar Pradesh has become the first state to have the requisite infrastructure in all its courts for hearing cases through video conferencing. The Allahabad High Court took a number of initiatives to facilitate court proceedings through video conferencing and recently a software has been installed in the high court and district courts of the state.

The courts can conduct multiple court proceedings through virtual courts within the court premises without any internet connection. The facility is completely secure.

30. Madhya Pradesh CM launched 'Jeevan Amrit Yojana'

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched Jeevan Amrit Yojana, a unique scheme to boost immunity system of citizens of the state. Under this scheme, the State Government will distribute packet of special Trikut Churna prepared by the AYUSH Department free of cost to the citizens.

Under Jeevan Amrit yojna, packets of 50 grams each of the kadha have been prepared by Madhya Pradesh Laghu Vanopaj Sangh in collaboration with the Department of AYUSH. This kadha made of peepal, ginger and black pepper was distributed free of cost to one crore people in the state.

31. Andhra Pradesh CM launched 'Jagananna Vidya Deevena' Scheme

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Y. S.Jaganmohan Reddy launched the 'Jagananna Vidya Deevena' Scheme. Under this scheme over Rs. 4,000 crores of funds have been released along with Rs. 1,880 crore towards pending amount left by the earlier government.

Under this scheme, fee reimbursement will be credited directly to mothers' accounts instead of college accounts in the coming academic year 2020-21. Through this scheme, the government will provide Fee Reimbursement for ITI, B.Tech, B. Pharmacy, MBA, MCA, and B.Ed Courses. An amount of Rs 15,000 to Rs 20,000 will be offered for the eligible candidates.

32. Call Records Management System introduced in Jammu for real time response to grievances

District administration Jammu has introduced a Call Records Management System (CRMS) for real time response to the grievances and queries received at the district control room. The technology will enable immediate sharing of any information received through COVID helpline numbers, in the district control room for near real time response.

The software application will maintain database of every call received in the control room and forward the grievance/query to the district level head of the concerned department for suitable response.

33. Tripura developed mobile COVID-19 sample collection kiosk

Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC) in Tripura has designed a three-wheeler heavy-duty auto rickshaw into mobile COVID-19 sample collection kiosk, where medical staffs can collect swab samples without physical contact with patients. AMC has built the kiosk taking a cue from Kerala model of testing, where stationary testing kiosks are placed in front of the hospitals.

The glass encasement will ease the requirement of wearing Personal Protection Equipment (PPE). The mobile testing vehicle is the first of its kind in the whole northeastern region.

1. UN report predicts 40 Crore Indian workers to go into poverty due to Corona-19 pandemic

The International Labour Organization (ILO) in its report titled 'ILO Monitor 2nd edition: Covid-19 and the world of work', has described coronavirus pandemic as "the worst global crisis since World War II". The report has predicted about 400 million people working in the informal economy in India are at risk of falling deeper into poverty, due to the coronavirus crisis.

The report said the disruption to the world's economies caused by the covid-19 pandemic is expected to wipe out 6.7% of working hours globally in the second quarter of this year which is equivalent of 195 million jobs worldwide.

2. Forbes billionaires list unveiled "The Richest in 2020"

Forbes unveiled the 34th annual world's billionaires list named as "The Richest in 2020". Jeff Bezos is the world's wealthiest person for the third year in a row at $113 billion followed by Bill Gates ($98 bn) at 2nd spot and Bernard Arnault ($76 bn) at 3rd spot.

Alice Walton, heir to the Walmart fortune, is the richest woman, ranked No.9 at $54.4 billion. The U.S. remained the country with the most billionaires followed by greater China. The world's billionaires are worth $8 trillion, down $700 billion from 2019.

3. India ranked high on "Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker"

Governments took a wide range of measures in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker aims to track and compare policy responses around the world among 73 countries. The "Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker" identified India's response to Covid-19 as one of the most stringent in the world.
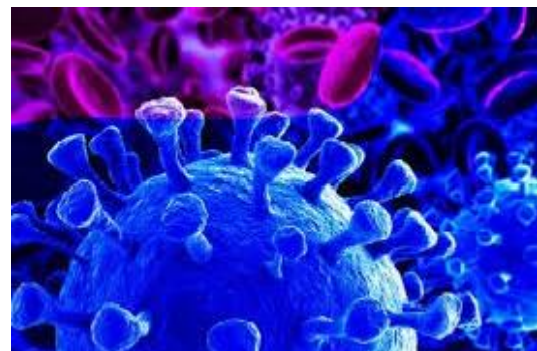
Czech Republic, Itay, Lebanon and France scored in the 90s in the index. Germany and the United States have scored below these countries in the 80s. The tracker is created by researchers from Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford.

4. PM Modi's approval ratings increase between January 1 and April 14

According to a survey conducted between January 1 and April 14 by Morning Consult, a US-based survey research firm, the approval ratings for Prime Minister Narendra Modi increased from 62% to 68%. It is the highest among 10 world leaders during the global coronavirus pandemic.

Mr Modi's popularity turned out to be better than world leaders such as UK PM Boris Johnson, US President Donald Trump, Canada PM Justin Trudeau, German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The data was based on 447 daily interviews per non-US leader conducted and 7,039 for US President Donald Trump.

5. United Nations World Food Programme released Global Annual Report

The United Nation's (UN) World Food Programme (WFP) released its fourth annual Global Report on Food Crises. According to the report, number of people in food crisis rose by nearly 10% to 123 million people. The coronavirus pandemic could nearly double the number of people around the world facing acute hunger.

The number of people facing acute food insecurity stands to rise to 265 million in 2020, up by 130 million from the 135 million in 2019, as a result of the economic impact of Covid-19.

6. India ranked 142nd on global press freedom index

According to "The World Press Freedom Index 2020", India has dropped two places to be ranked 142nd out of 180 countries in the annual Reporters Without Borders analysis. Pakistan dropped three places to 145, and Bangladesh dropped one place to 151.

Norway is ranked first in the Index and China is at 177th. North Korea is placed at the bottom at 180th. Paris-based Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF), or Reporters Without Borders, is a non-profit organisation that works to document and combat attacks on journalists around the world.

7. World Bank released "South Asia Economic Focus" report

World Bank released a report titled "South Asia Economic Focus".

The highlights are as follows:
- The regional growth will get dropped to a range between 1.8% and 2.8% in 2020.
- World Bank Group is deploying up to $160 billion in financial support over the next 15 months to help countries protect the poor.
- South Asian countries must keep their sovereign debt sustainable through fiscal prudence and debt relief initiatives.
- Report warned that a protracted COVID-19 crisis may threaten food security.
- This deteriorated forecast will linger in 2021, with growth projected to hover between 3.1% and 4%.

8. Indian startups attracted USD 2.5 bn funding in Q1 2020

According to a report by research and consulting firm HexGn, Indian tech-led startups attracted funding worth 2.5 billion dollars in the first quarter of 2020, a 14% rise compared to the same period last year.

The report states, the number of startup funding deals in India has jumped 30% in the first quarter of 2020 to 277 from 210 in the same quarter of 2019. Also, the Indian funding in the same quarter was not dominated by mega-billion dollar-plus infusions.

9. SIPRI reports India as the third largest military spender in the world

According to a report titled "Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2019" by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India has become the third-largest military spender in the world, after the US and China. The military spending of India grew by 6.8% to $71.1 billion in 2019.

The report stated that the total global military expenditure rose to $1,917 billion in 2019, which is an increase of 3.6% from 2018 and the largest annual growth in spending since 2010. Russia and Saudi Arabia complete the big-five list.

10. 5 million displaced in India in 2019 as per GRID Report 2020

According to the Global Report on Internal Displacement, GRID 2020 released by Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, IDMC, 5 million people have displaced in India in 2019, the highest in the world. South Asia recorded a total of 9.5 million new displacements associated with disasters in 2019.

The report highlighted that the displacements were caused due to a combination of increasing hazard intensity, high population exposure, and high levels of social and economic vulnerability.

11. APEC economy to reduce by 2.7% in 2020

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region is expected to post a 2.7% economic decline in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19 as per the report by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat. This will be the most significant fall since the near-zero growth rate logged in 2009 during the global financial crisis.

The 21-member region recorded economic growth of 3.6% in 2019. The report has however projected an economic rebound in 2021 with the anticipated growth of 6.3% , higher than the projected global economic growth of 5.8%.

1. IWF Chief Tamas Ajan resigned on account of allegations of corruption

International Weightlifting Federation President Tamas Ajan stepped down from his role after 43 years of service in the organization. Tamas served at the IWF since 1976, as General Secretary for 24 years and as President for 20 years. He resigned on account of allegations of corruption and doping violations.

Allegations include financial irregularities, corruption, doping control distribution, doping sample manipulation, doping payment irregularities etc. Tamas is replaced by American Ursula Papandrea. Ursula will lead the federation as Acting President.

2. Former Pakistan Captain Sana Mir announced retirement

Sana Mir, the former Pakistan captain and world No.1, has announced her decision to retire from international cricket. Mir, 34, has represented Pakistan in 226 internationals since her debut in 2005, and was captain in 137 of them.

Sana is Pakistan's leading ODI wicket-taker with 151 wickets in 120 ODIs at an average of 24.27. She took 89 women's T20I wickets from 106 matches. Mir is also Pakistan's third-highest run-scorer in ODIs (1,630). She was the No.1 on the MRF Tyres ICC Women's ODI Rankings for bowlers back in October 2018.

3. PCB banned Umar Akmal for three years

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has banned its batsman Umar Akmal for three years. The ban was imposed by the Disciplinary Panel Chairman Justice (retired) Fazal-e-Miran Chauhan.

The PCB Anti-Corruption officials had charged Umar with two separate cases of not reporting an approach made to him to spot fix matches in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 5. He was provisionally suspended on Feb 20 and barred from playing in PSL for his franchise Quetta Gladiators.

4. Middle-distance runner Jhuma Khatun banned for four years by AIU

Middle-distance runner Jhuma Khatun has been banned for four years by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) of World Athletics for testing positive for dehydrochloromethyl testosterone. Jhuma's sample showed no adverse analytical finding (AAF), when it was tested at New Delhi's National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL). However, when retested in World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) accredited laboratory in Montreal, Canada, it showed presence of the prohibitive substance.

Khatun had won a bronze medal each in 1,500m and 5,000m at the Championships in Guwahati. She was also a part of the 2011 Asian Championships 4x400m relay race silver-winning quartet.

1. Bharat Biotech working on developing a nasal vaccine for COVID-19

Hyderabad-based biotech company, Bharat Biotech, is working on developing a nasal vaccine for COVID-19. An international collaboration of virologists at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and the vaccine companies FluGen along with Bharat Biotech has begun the development and testing of a vaccine called CoroFlu.

Bharat Biotech will manufacture the vaccine, conduct clinical trials, and prepare to produce almost 300 million doses of vaccine for global distribution. CoroFlu will build on the backbone of FluGen's flu vaccine candidate known as M2SR.

2. NASA selected SunRISE Mission to study Giant Solar Particle Storms

NASA has selected a new mission to study how the Sun generates and releases giant space weather storms, known as solar particle storms into planetary space. The new mission, called the Sun Radio Interferometer Space Experiment (SunRISE), is an array of six CubeSats operating as one very large radio telescope.

The mission will improve information on understanding of how our solar system works and can help in protecting the astronauts who are traveling to the Moon and the Mars, by providing better information on how the Sun's radiation affects the space environment they must travel through.

3. IISc Bengaluru developed indigenous ventilator prototype in view of COVID-19 crisis

A group of Scientists and students in Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru have developed an indigenous ventilator prototype to tackle the worst case scenario of contagious disease COVID-19. The prototype is developed under project Praana.

The prototype has mass flow sensors and controllers which accurately tell how much oxygen is flowing and what volume the patient is inhaling in one breath. Pneumatics is built around mass produced water filter hardware. The control system is built around open source industrial controller.

4. Prana Vayu Portable Ventilator developed by IIT Roorkee

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Roorkee, in collaboration with All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), Rishikesh, has developed a low-cost ventilator. It will cost ₹25,000 per unit. It is low-cost, safe, reliable, and can be quickly manufactured.

'Prana-Vayu' is a closed-loop ventilator that can deliver the required amount of air to the patient, with an automated process controlling the pressure and flow rates. It also has feedback that can control tidal volume and the number of breaths per minute.

5. Bione launched India's first home screening test kit of COVID-19

Genetic and microbiome testing firm Bione launched a rapid COVID-19 at-home screening test kit. It is a simple point-of-care home screening kit that displays accurate results within minutes. The kit priced between INR 2000-3000, is approved by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

COVID-19 Screening test kit is an IgG & IgM based tool, where user has to clean their finger with alcohol and use the lancet provided to finger-prick. The cartridge provided reads the results from the blood sample within 10 minutes.

6. Indian Railways makes low cost prototype of Ventilator

Indian Railways developed a low-cost ventilator named as Jeevan, at its Kapurthala Rail Coach Factory, that can be useful to ensure the survival of COVID-19 patients. Ventilator costing Rs. 10,000 without compressor is yet to get approval from ICMR.

Jeevan ventilator has compressed air container to work the Ambu bag with air without any moving parts like servo motor or piston or link mechanism. It will provide control on breathing rate, expiratory ratio and tidal volume.

7. NASA's Artemis to launch first human base camp on moon's south-pole by 2024

With the Artemis program, NASA will land the first woman and next man on the Moon by 2024, using innovative technologies to explore more of the lunar surface than ever before. NASA unveiled plan to setup 'Artemis', the first human base camp on Moon's south-pole by 2024.

Artemis Base Camp would be a lunar foundation surface habitat, that could host four astronauts at the south-pole for visits. The base could also be a site for testing new techniques for dealing with pesky lunar dust and the long, cold lunar nights, turning local materials into resources like water.

8. Indian scientists begin genome sequencing to track covid-19 spread

Indian scientists have started genome sequencing strains of the novel coronavirus isolated from patients in different parts of the country. The project is led by National Centre for Disease Control with the help of Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, and the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), New Delhi.

Whole-genome sequencing is the method used to determine the complete DNA sequence of a specific organism's genome. This will help the institutes to establish the family tree of the virus.

9. Genrich Membranes developed 'Membrane Oxygenator Equipment'

A Pune based company Genrich Membranes funded by Department of Science and Technology (DST) has developed a membrane oxygenator equipment to treat COVID-19 patients. The device is slated to be used to treat breathlessness, one of the critical symptoms of COVID-19.

This equipment can also be used to treat patients who have been discharged from Intensive Care Units (ICU). The device enriches oxygen in the air up to 35 per cent and does not require trained manpower for its operation.

10. Fish gills used to develop efficient low-cost electro-catalysts

Scientists at the Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST), Mohali have recently come up with an efficient, low-cost electro-catalyst from fish gills, that can help develop environment friendly energy conversion devices. This bio-inspired carbon nanostructure can help overcome the bottleneck in the realization of several renewable energy conversion and storage technologies such as fuel cell, bio-fuel cell, and metal−air battery.

The present strategy enriches a route to synthesize low-cost, highly efficient bio-inspired electro-catalyst that is better than commercial Platinum on carbon (Pt/C) catalyst and could be utilised as next-generation non-precious carbon-based electro-catalyst for energy conversion and storage applications.

11. ARI researchers develop bug sniffer for efficient detection of pathogens

Researchers at the Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune have developed a sensitive and low-cost sensor to rapidly detect bacteria. The portable device can detect as low as ten bacterial cells from a sample size of one milliliter in just 30 minutes.

The team calls it the 'bug sniffer,' which is a biosensor that uses synthetic peptides, magnetic nanoparticles, and quantum dots to detect the presence of bacteria, providing a cost- and time-effective way of screening water and foodborne pathogens.

12. IIA conducted the first systematic study on Gamma-ray flux variability of luminous and high energy blazars

Researchers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bangalore have conducted the first systematic study on the gamma-ray flux variability nature on different types of blazars. Their study could provide clues to the processes happening close to the black hole, not visible through direct imaging.
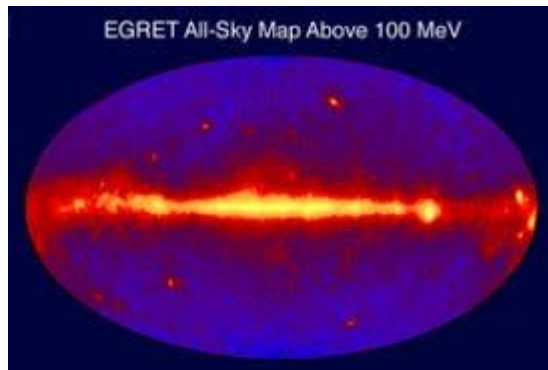
Blazars are active galactic nuclei (AGN). Some blazars are thought to host binary black holes in them and could be potential targets for future gravitational-wave searches.

13. IIT - Ropar designed 'WardBot'

A team of researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar has come up with a design of an autonomous 'WardBot'. The design of an autonomous WardBot is such that, it can be instructed to receive and deliver food and medicines and necessary equipment from one room to the other from the remotely located control room.
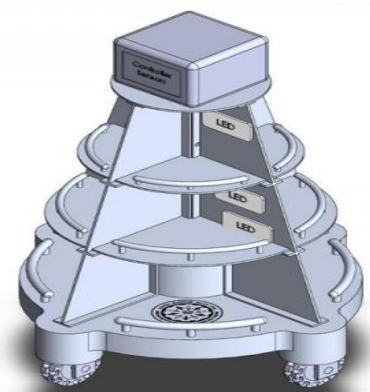
Lines drawn on the floor will help the IR-sensor-fitted wardbot find its way. The bot will have at least twelve shelves and a carrying capacity of 4 to 5 kg. It should be able to serve 10 to 12 patients.

14. IIT Mandi team developed Magnetic RAM capable of high data storage, faster computation

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mandi have developed Magnetic Random-Access Memory (MRAM) technology. MRAM is faster, more energy-efficient and capable of storing more information in a smaller volume than existing data storage technologies.

Magnetic RAMs, in which data are represented as spin of electrons, promise better storage capabilities than conventional charge-based RAM. MRAM has the capability to transform next-generation computers, smartphones and other gadgets leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and Internet-of-Things (IoT) technology.

15. Scientists develop new model to predict Ionospheric Electron Density

Researchers from Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG), Navi Mumbai have developed a global model to predict the Ionospheric Electron Density with larger data coverage—a crucial need for communication and navigation. IIG, Navi Mumbai is an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India.
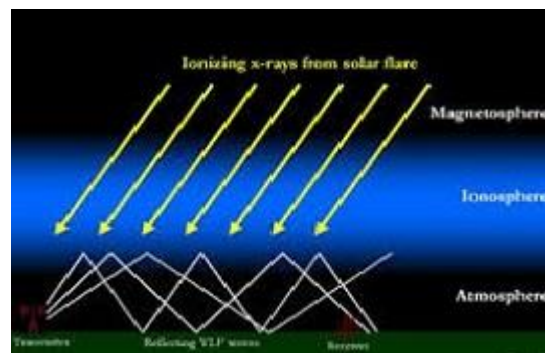
The team of scientists has developed a new Artificial Neural Networks based global Ionospheric Model (ANNIM), using long-term ionospheric observations to predict the ionospheric electron density and the peak parameters.

16. CeNS developed sensor for heavy metal detection in water

Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS) developed a compact solid-state sensor to detect the heavy metal ions in water. It is a portable device, which can help onsite detection in remote areas.

Heavy metal ions such as lead, mercury and cadmium pose severe potential threats to living beings, as they can easily be accumulated in the body and cannot be detoxified by any chemical or biological processes. The health hazards associated with heavy metal ions in water demanded the development of efficient and portable sensors for rapid onsite detection of these ions.

17. Human trials of vaccine developed by Oxford University against novel corona virus began in UK

Human trials of vaccine developed by the Oxford University against the novel coronavirus began in the United Kingdom. Scientists have given the vaccine an 80% chance of success.

Elisa Granato is the first volunteer in an initial group of 800 to be part of the ground-breaking trial. The Oxford vaccine project is headed by Professor Sarah Gilbert. The vaccine is named "ChAdOx1 nCoV-19" and is made from a virus (ChAdOx1), which is a weakened version of a common cold virus.

18. Feluda- CSIR's low cost paper strip test for COVID-19

A team of scientists at the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR-IGIB) has developed "Feluda" a low-cost coronavirus test strip. It is a simple way of detecting Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-coV2). The total time required for the test is less than one hour.

The test has been developed by Debojyoti Chakraborty and Souvik Maiti. It is named after "Feluda", the detective character in legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray's stories.

19. ARCI developed advanced tool "NanoBlitz 3D"

Scientists from International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI) in collaboration with Nanomechanics Inc., Oak Ridge, USA have jointly developed an advanced tool for mapping nano-mechanical properties of materials like multi-phase alloys, composites, and multi-layered coatings. The tool is called NanoBlitz 3D.

An important aspect of this technique is, its high-throughput, with just a few hours of testing required for generating more than 10,000 data points, that can be processed using machine learning (ML) algorithms. ARCI is an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology of the Government of India.

20. NIF boosts new varieties of Anthurium

D Vasini Bai, a women innovator from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, has developed ten varieties of Anthurium, a flower with high market value, by cross-pollination. National Innovation Foundation-India has facilitated mass multiplication and large scale production of four highly demanded varieties through tissue culture technique at the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), Bangalore, for the diffusion of the varieties in similar agroclimatic zones of the country.

Anthurium is a vast group of beautiful blooming plants available in a wide range of colors. The plants of the varieties are having high demands, due to its use as indoor decorative plants.

21. China's first Mars exploration mission named Tianwen-1

China National Space Administration (CNSA) has announced that the first Chinese Mars exploration mission has been named Tianwen-1. The name comes from the long poem "Tianwen," meaning Questions to Heaven, written by Qu Yuan (about 340-278 BC), one of the greatest poets of ancient China.

All of China's planetary exploration missions in the future will be named the Tianwen series. CNSA also unveiled the logo of China's planetary exploration missions, featuring the letter C, signifying China, international cooperation and capacity of entering space. China plans to launch the Mars probe in 2020.

22. Scientists discover 19 interstellar asteroids between Jupiter and Neptune

Astronomers at the Universidade Estadual Paulista in Brazil, have discovered 19 interstellar asteroids (asteroids from outside our solar system) orbiting the sun between Jupiter and Neptune. These asteroids, the first known permanent population, belong to a group of space objects called Centaurs.

The findings have been published in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society & the lead author of the study was Fathi Namouni. The origin of Centaurs has been a mystery to astronomers since the first member of the group, called Chiron, was recognised in 1977.

23. First merger of two black holes with unequal masses detected

The gravitational wave observatories at LIGO scientific collaboration have detected a merger of two unequal-mass black holes for the first time since it started functioning. The event is dubbed as GW190412. It was detected nearly a year ago.
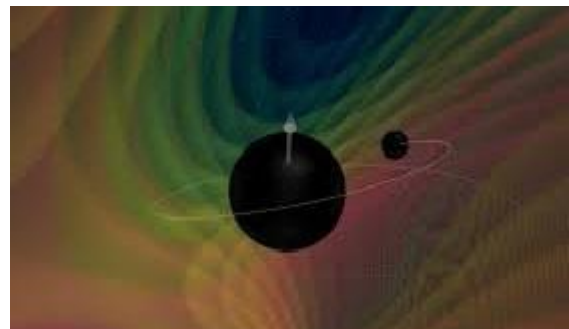
One of the black holes was around 30 times the mass of the Sun and the other had a mass nearly 8 times the sun's mass. The actual merger took place at a distance of 2.5 billion light years away. The Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) is the world's largest gravitational wave observatory.

24. NASA's Hubble Telescope marks 30 years in space

NASA's Hubble Space Telescope completed 30 years in space. Hubble was carried aloft from the Kennedy Space Center aboard the space shuttle Discovery, along with a five-astronaut crew on April 24, 1990.

Hubble's top accomplishments include measuring the expansion and acceleration rate of the universe; finding that black holes are common among galaxies; characterising the atmospheres of planets around other stars and looking back in time, across 97% of the universe to chronicle the birth and evolution of stars and galaxies.

25. JNCASR scientists developed a natural product based Alzheimer inhibitor

Scientists from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre For Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) have modified the structure of Berberine, a natural and cheap product similar to curcumin, available commercially, into Ber-D to use as a Alzheimer's inhibitor. Their research work has been published in the scientific journal iSceince.

The team developed Ber-D to effectively target multifaceted Aβ toxicity of Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease is the most prevalent neurodegenerative disorder and accounts for more than 70% of all dementia.

26. CSIR developed HCARD, a robot, to assist frontline COVID-19 healthcare warriors

CSIR lab, Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute in Durgapur, has developed a robotic device HCARD, to help frontline healthcare workers in maintaining physical distance from those infected by coronavirus. HCARD stands for Hospital Care Assistive Robotic Device.

HCARD is equipped with various state-of-the-art technologies and works both in automatic as well as manual modes of navigation. This robot can be controlled and monitored by a nursing booth with a control station having such features as navigation, drawer activation for providing medicines and food to patients, sample collection and audio-visual communication.

27. CSIR-CSIO transferred Electrostatic Disinfection technology for commercialisation

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR's Scientific Instruments Organisation, CSIO, Chandigarh, has developed an innovative technology for effective disinfection and sanitisation to fight with corona pandemic. CSIR-CSIO has transferred this technology to a Nagpur-based company, Rite Water Solutions Private Limited for commercialisation and large-scale production.

Electrostatic Disinfection Machine has been developed based on the electrostatic principle. It produces uniform and fine spray droplets of disinfectants of 10 to 20 micrometres to kill micro-organisms and viruses.

1. Official mascots of 19th Asian Games unveiled in Hangzhou, China

The official mascots of the 19th Asian Games were unveiled at a digital launch ceremony in Hangzhou, China. The three robots, which are going to be the mascots for the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games are collectively known as the smart triplets. The Mascots - Congcong, Lianlian and Chenchen reflect the internet prowess of Hangzhou city and Zhejiang province.

The Olympic Council of Asia's 19th Asian Games will be held in Hangzhou from September 10 to 25, 2022. It will be the third Asian Games to be hosted by China following Beijing in 1990 and Guangzhou in 2010.

2. 2021 World Games in Birmingham, Alabama postponed to 2022

The 2021 World Games have been postponed to 2022 to avoid clashing with the Tokyo Olympics, which were rescheduled due to the coronavirus pandemic. The World Games were scheduled to take place in Birmingham, Alabama, from 15–25 July, 2021.

Birmingham was set to host the 11th edition of the World Games, which first began in 1981. It is held every four years and features 32 sports, that are not part of the Olympic program. The International World Games Association (IWGA) President is Jose Perurena.

3. Kobe Bryant officially inducted into Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame

Los Angeles Lakers legend Kobe Bryant has been posthumously inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. The five-time NBA champion passed away at the age of 41 years in January 2020. He retired in 2016.

Los Angeles Lakers great Bryant was the NBA Most Valuable Player in 2008, was Finals MVP twice and earned 18 All-Star selections. He was in the United States team, that won Olympic gold in 2008 and 2012. The Hall of Fame is named after Dr. James Naismith, the Canadian physician who invented basketball.

4. Malaysia, Thailand weightlifters banned from Tokyo Olympics

International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) has imposed disciplinary sanctions on Thailand and Malaysia and banned both the countries from participating in weightlifting events at the Tokyo Olympics because of multiple doping offences.

The Independent Member Federation Sanctions Panel (IMFSP) of the IWF also suspended the Thai Amateur Weightlifting Association (TAWA) for three years, while the Malaysian Weightlifting Federation (MWF) has been given a one-year ban. Additionally, the Thai federation has also been fined USD 2,00,000.

5. Ben Stokes named Wisden's Leading Cricketer in the World 2020

England all-rounder Ben Stokes was named the 'Leading Cricketer in the World' in the 2020 edition of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack. Stokes had a remarkable 2019, in which he guided England to their maiden World Cup title before, producing one of the great Test innings to beat Australia in the Headingley Ashes Test.

Australia's allrounder Ellyse Perry was named as the leading woman player in the world.
West Indies' Andre Russell was named as the leading T20 player in the world.

6. India retained at 108th slot in FIFA's latest ranking

Indian football team retained 108th spot in the latest FIFA rankings. Belgium topped the FIFA rankings followed by France at 2nd place and Brazil at 3rd spot followed by England at 4th position. Uruguay is ranked 5th in the chart. Croatia, Portugal, Spain, Argentina and Colombia complete the top ten respectively.

In the women's rankings, USA is the top ranked team followed by Germany, France, Netherlands and Sweden in the top-five. The Indian women's team is ranked 55th in the list.

7. BCCI created Team Mask Force to spread awareness

BCCI has created a new video promoting the idea of wearing masks calling Team India Team Mask Force. The Team Mask Force has been created to spread awareness about wearing masks in public places.

The 'Team Mask Force' video has messages from Virat Kohli, Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Smriti Mandhana, Rohit Sharma, Harbhajan Singh, Harmanpreet Kaur, Virender Sehwag, Rahul Dravid and Mithali Raj. Earlier, the BCCI contributed Rs. 51 crore to the Prime Ministers' Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund.

8. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc won virtual Chinese Grand Prix

Charles Leclerc has won his second straight F1 Virtual Grand Prix, after he won the virtual Chinese Grand Prix. He finished ahead of Red Bull's Alexander Albon and Guanyu Zhou, who races for UNI-Virtuosi Racing in Formula 2.

The actual Chinese GP, originally scheduled for April 19, was postponed in February due to Corona virus pandemic. With the F1 season halted by the coronavirus pandemic, the sport launched a virtual series to keep fans entertained.

9. India will host Asian Boxing Championship in November

India will host the Asian Boxing Championships for men and women in November-December 2020. The Asian Amateur Boxing Championships is the highest competition for boxing amateurs in Asia. India last hosted the men's Asian meet back in 1980 and women's event in 2003 in Hisar. The Olympic qualification program will resume around November 2020.

India last hosted the men's Asian meet back in 1980 in Mumbai, while it conducted the women's event in 2003 in Hisar.

10. "Feifei" to be the mascot for Hangzhou 2022 Asian Para Games

Feifei, a 'Divine Bird,' has been selected as mascot for the 4th Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, China. The 4th Asian Para Games are going to be held from October 9-15, 2022, featuring 22 sports with Taekwondo and Para-Canoe to form their Games debuts.

The design is inspired by the motif of the 'Divine Bird' that brings bliss, and is a messenger of joy and cultural distinction. It is the fusion of Hangzhou's heritage and its drive for technological innovation, carrying the longing for harmonious co-existence between humans and nature.

11. World Games unveil new logo, title after postponement to 2022

The World Games in Birmingham, Alabama has unveiled an updated logo and title after postponement to 2022, due to coronavirus pandemic. It will now be known as The World Games 2022.

The World Games are held every 4 years, one year after the Summer Olympic Games. he World Games are organised and governed by the International World Games Association (IWGA), recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

12. Alireza Firouzja defeated Magnus Carlsen in final of Banter Blitz Cup

Iranian refugee Alireza Firouzja defeated world champion Magnus Carlsen in the final of the $78,000 Banter Blitz Cup. Alireza Firouzja left his native Iran, due to its policy of forbidding games against Israeli opponents, and now plays under the Fide global chess body flag.

With the win, Alireza Firouzja, at 16 years of age, becomes the second-youngest player to reach the 2700 Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE) rating.

13. India loses hosting rights of men's World Boxing Championships

India has lost the hosting rights of the 2021 men's world boxing championship to Serbia after the Boxing Federation of India failed to pay the host fee. International Boxing Association (AIBA) terminated the agreement signed in 2017.

This would have been the first instance for India to have hosted the tournament. It will now be held in the Serbian city of Belgrade. The world boxing body is under suspension from the International Olympic Committee and has been barred from organising the Tokyo Olympics competition.

1. COVID-19 Fact Check Unit became operational

The COVID-19 Fact Check Unit became operational. The government had decided to constitute a COVID-19 Fact Check Unit (FCU) in the Press Information Bureau (PIB) under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

FCU will receive messages by email at pibfactcheck@gmail.com to send response in a defined time-frame. The official version of any news on COVID-19 can be obtained from the Unit. The unit will be headed by DG, PIB Nitin Wakankar.
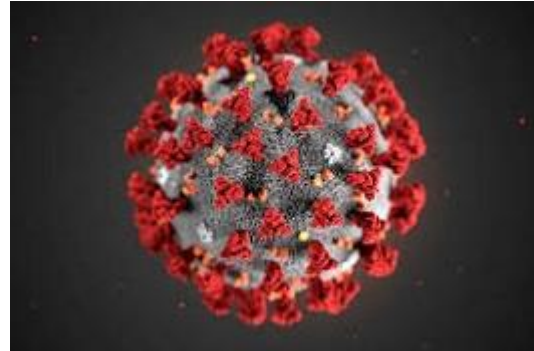
2. C-DOT and Telecom Service Providers developed COVID Quarantine Alert System

The Department of Telecommunication and C-DOT in co-ordination with Telecom Service Providers developed and tested an application, which automatically triggers an email or SMS, if any identified corona positive person moves away from their quarantine location.

A Standard Operating Procedure for location based monitoring of potential cases from the telecom network data has been established. The system would send triggers to the identified monitoring agencies for any potential violations from the quarantined location subject to network availability and triangulation limitations.

3. Geo-fencing app to locate quarantine violators

The government has tested an application named, COVID-19 Quarantine Alert System (CQAS), to trigger emails and SMS alerts to an authorised government agency, if a person has jumped quarantine or has escaped from isolation, based on the person's mobile phone's cell tower location.

Kerala is one of the first states to use this CQAS which combines telephone data, including device location, into a common secure platform and alerts local agencies, if COVID patients violate who are monitored or in isolation. Maharashtra government has introduced the MahaKavach app, which helps them to track the suspected COVID-19 cases in the state.

4. NHA partnered with Uber to provide free rides for healthcare workers

Uber, in partnership with National Health Authority, has launched UberMedic service which provides our frontline healthcare workers safe, reliable and efficient transportation. The partnership will initially facilitate the provision of 150 cars free of cost to support medical facilities in New Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad, Kanpur, Lucknow, Prayagraj and Patna.

UberMedic cars supplied to NHA will be equipped with roof-to-floor plastic sheeting enclosing the driver's seat, thereby acting as a protective barrier between the rider and driver. Each UberMedic car will also be disinfected after every ride to ensure the highest possible safety and hygiene standards.

5. DARPG launched "National Monitoring Dashboard on COVID-19 Grievances"

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh launched DARPG's National Monitoring Dashboard on COVID-19 Grievances. The National Monitoring Dashboard was developed and implemented at https://darpg.gov.in, where COVID-19 related grievances are monitored on priority basis by a technical team of DARPG. The portal will be monitored at senior levels in Government on a daily basis.

The DARPG issued advisories to all line Ministries/ Departments and State Governments to ensure disposal of COVID 19 Public Grievance cases on priority basis preferably in 3-days time.

6. Ministry of Tourism launched 'Stranded in India' portal

The Ministry of Tourism with an aim to extend support to the foreign tourists who are stranded in India, has come up with a portal to disseminate information regarding the services that can be availed by foreign tourists, who are stuck far away from their home land. The portal is titled 'Stranded in India' and aims to act as a support network for foreign tourists stuck in various parts of the country.

The portal strandedinindia.com consists of Comprehensive information around COVID-19 helpline numbers and help support section.

7. IIT Bombay developed mobile app 'CORONTINE'

A team at IIT Bombay designed a mobile app named 'CORONTINE' to help in tracking the potential or suspected asymptomatic carriers (AC) of coronavirus, if they leave their quarantine zone. With the help of GPS co-ordinates of the mobiles, app can auto track a user, if he/she leaves a specified quarantined zone marked by a geo-fence. App can send GPS coordinates on server under the supervision of AA.

The Indian Institute of Technology Bombay is a public technical and research university, found in 1958.

## 8. AICTE launched "MHRD AICTE COVID-19 Student Helpline Portal"

Union HRD Minister launched MHRD AICTE COVID-19 Student Helpline Portal developed by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) in New Delhi. Student Helpline Portal (https://helpline.aicte-india.org) will address the issues faced by students, due to closure of colleges and hostels amid national lockdown due to COVID-19 outbreak.

The nature of support includes Accommodation, Food, on line Classes, Attendance, Examinations, Scholarships, Health, Transport, Harassment etc. Students in difficulty are encouraged to directly get connected with them through this portal.

9. nCoVSENSE Module: Funded by DST to develop Rapid Test of COVID-19

The Department of Science & Technology has funded 'Module Innovations", a Pune based healthcare startup to develop a product for detecting COVID 19 with a 10 to 15 minute test. Module is now developing nCoVSENSEs (TM), which is a rapid test device for detection of antibodies that have been generated against the COVID 19 in the human body.
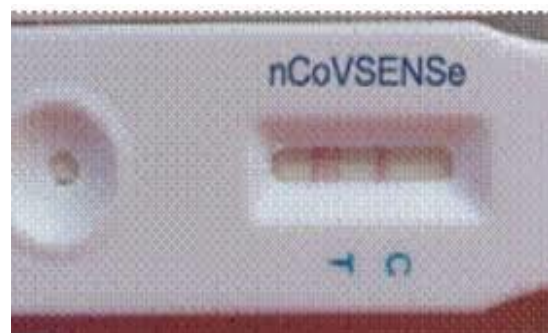
The nCoVSENSe test is aimed at detecting the IgG and IgM antibodies generated in the human body upon the onset of viral infection and is targeted against the Spike proteins making it specific for COVID 19.

10. DST approved funding for developing a gel for nasal passage as prevention for COVID 19

Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), is supporting a technology by the Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering (DBB), IIT Bombay for capturing and inactivation of novel corona virus, the causative agent of COVID-19.

The funding will help the team of DBB, IIT Bombay develop a gel, that can be applied to nasal passage. This solution is expected to protect the safety of health workers and also lead to reduction in community transmission of COVID-19.

11. Anti-Microbial Coating Technology developed by JNCASR

The Department of Science and Technology has approved a one-step curable anti-microbial coating developed by the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR). This coating is capable of completely killing the influenza virus and resistant pathogenic bacteria and fungi, including Coronavirus 2 (SARS-COV-19).
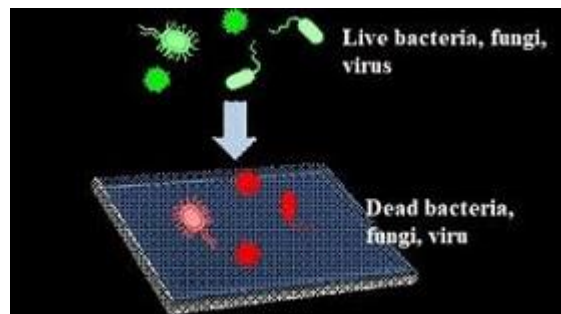
During the COVID-19 outbreak, the coating may be used to protect personal protective tools, clothes and equipment of health workers. It is anticipated that, the coating will not allow microorganisms to become active on coated surfaces.

12. HUL united with UNICEF to support India to combat COVID-19

Hindustan Unilever partnered with UNICEF to support India's fight against COVID-19 and undertake a mass communication campaign to inform and empower the general public about the COVID-19 pandemic. The Campaign brings together the marketing expertise and scale of HUL and the technical knowledge of UNICEF to create engaging communication tools, that can help people change behaviours and stay safe during this time of the pandemic.

The mass media campaign titled '#BreakTheChain #VirusKiKadiTodo' generates short informative assets on social distancing, handwashing and generosity across India through television, news portals and prominent social media channels.

13. Dr. Harsh Vardhan launched 'COVID India Seva'

Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launched the "COVID India Seva". It is an interactive platform aimed at providing real time solutions to Covid-19 related queries. People can post their queries to the COVID INDIA SEVA twitter handle for getting swift replies from the team of trained experts.

Through this, people can pose queries @CovidIndiaSeva and get them responded to the same, in almost real time. It works off a dashboard at the backend that helps process large volumes of tweets, converts them into resolvable tickets, and assigns them to the relevant authority for real-time resolution.

14. CSIR-NAL developed Personal Protective Coverall Suit to Combat COVID-19

CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (CSIR-NAL), Bengaluru along with MAF Clothing Pvt. Ltd., Bengaluru have developed and certified Polyproplylene spun laminated multi-layered non-woven fabric based Coverall to ensure the safety of Doctors, Nurses, Paramedical staff and Health Care workers, who are working round the clock to fight COVID-19.

The Coveralls have gone through stringent testing at SITRA, Coimbatore and have been qualified for use. The major advantages of these Coveralls are that, they are highly competitive in price as compared to other manufacturers and the import content is negligible.

15. NBRI developed alcohol-based herbal sanitizer

National Botanical Research Institute, NBRI has developed alcohol-based herbal sanitizer. The product is developed under Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR-Aroma Mission as per the World Health Organisation's guidelines.

The herbal sanitizer contains Tulsi essential oil as herbal constituent, which is strong natural antimicrobial agent and 60% of isopropyl alcohol for killing germs. It has been clinically tested and found to be highly effective against surface microbes. The product will be available in the market under the brand name of 'Clean Hand Gel'.

16. MoRTH launched dashboard on its website to provide 'dhabas and repair shops' details

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has created a dashboard link on its website for providing list and details of Dhabas and Truck repair shops available across the country by various organisations like NHAI, States, Oil Marketing companies. The list can be accessed at www.morth.nic.in.

National Highway Authority of India's centralised call number 1033 has also been activated to answer calls and provide information about the dhabaas and repair shops along National Highways.

17. CSIR to test "sepsis drug" against novel coronavirus

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has decided to develop/repurpose an approved immunomodulator, Sepsivac®, to enhance innate immunity of the body to limit the spread of COVID-19. Sepsivac® is expected to protect the close contacts of COVID-19 patients and health care staff, by boosting their innate response. It is also expected to provide quicker recovery to the hospitalised COVID-19 patients.

Sepsivac® contains heat-killed Mycobacterium W (Mw). It is found to be extremely safe in patients and no systemic side effects are associated with its use. Sepsivac® is manufactured by Cadila Pharmaceuticals Ltd., Ahmedabad.

18. Science communication initiative "Covid Gyan" launched

An initiative "Covid Gyan" has been launched by Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), and Tata Memorial Centre (TMC). Covid Gyan website serves as a hub to bring together, a collection of resources in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. These resources are generated by public supported research institutions and associated programs.

The primary objective of this website is to create public awareness and bring in a holistic approach, to the understanding of this disease and potential means to mitigate it. The content presented here, relies on the best available scientific understanding of the disease and its transmission.

19. UNODC launched 'Lockdown Learners' series for students, teachers of India

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) has launched a 'Lockdown Learners' series of online dialogues with students and educators in India on COVID-19 and its impact on Sustainable Development Goals, peace and rule of law. The dialogues have been launched by the United Nations body under its flagship Education for Justice initiative.

The Lockdown Learners series, also provides a platform for students to receive mentorship and knowledge support through activity-based learning.

20. IIIT-Delhi developed 'WashKaro' app

Researchers at IIIT-Delhi have developed an app, WashKaro app, which warns people about a coronavirus containment zone nearby and helps them check, whether a news item about the pandemic is genuine or fake. The research team had also presented the app at the World Health Conference in Geneva through video conferencing.

WashKaro app houses Covid-Tracer, which tells people if their safety is compromised because, they are close to a coronavirus hotspot. It uses bluetooth technology for communication and does not need internet or location services.

## 21. CISF launched 'e-karyalay' app for movement of files

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has launched an e-office application, that enables movement of files and documents without physical touch. The application called "e-karyalay" (electronic office) has been designed, by the in-house technical team of the force.

The application has been hosted at CISF cloud with all security arrangements in place to safeguard the data. A data recovery site has also been established to maintain round-the-clock services of e-karyalay.

22. IIT Delhi researchers develop web-based COVID-19 dashboard 'PRACRITI'

IIT Delhi researchers have developed a web-based dashboard for predicting the spread of COVID-19 in India. The mobile-friendly dashboard, named as PRACRITI (Prediction and Assessment of Corona Infections and Transmission in India), gives detailed state-wise and district-wise predictions of COVID-19 cases in India. The projections are given for a three-week period, which is updated on a weekly basis.
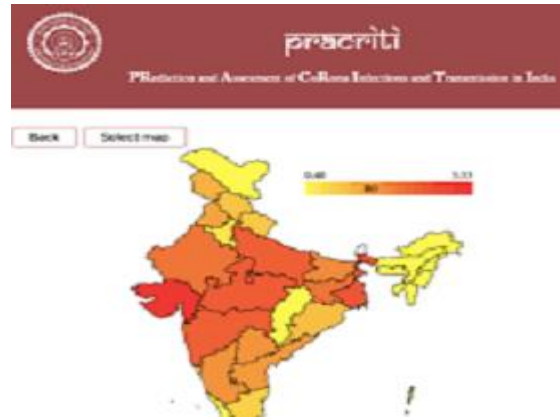
PRACRITI provides the R0 values of each district and state in India based on the data available from sources such as the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and WHO.

23. CSIR to begin trial on anti-leprosy drug for COVID-19 vaccine

The Council of Science and Industrial Research is scheduled to begin its trials on the anti-leprosy vaccine called Mw (Mycobacterium w), to see, if it can be used as a Covid-19 vaccine. CSIR along with Gujarat-based pharma-giant Cadila Pharmaceuticals Ltd. would be working on Mw vaccine for Covid-19.

Three hospitals will also be involved in this clinical trial, which includes AIIMS Delhi, AIIMS Bhopal and PGI Chandigarh. This would be a three-part trial. The trials will compare the safety and the desired results in COVID-19 patients but not in the ones who are critical.