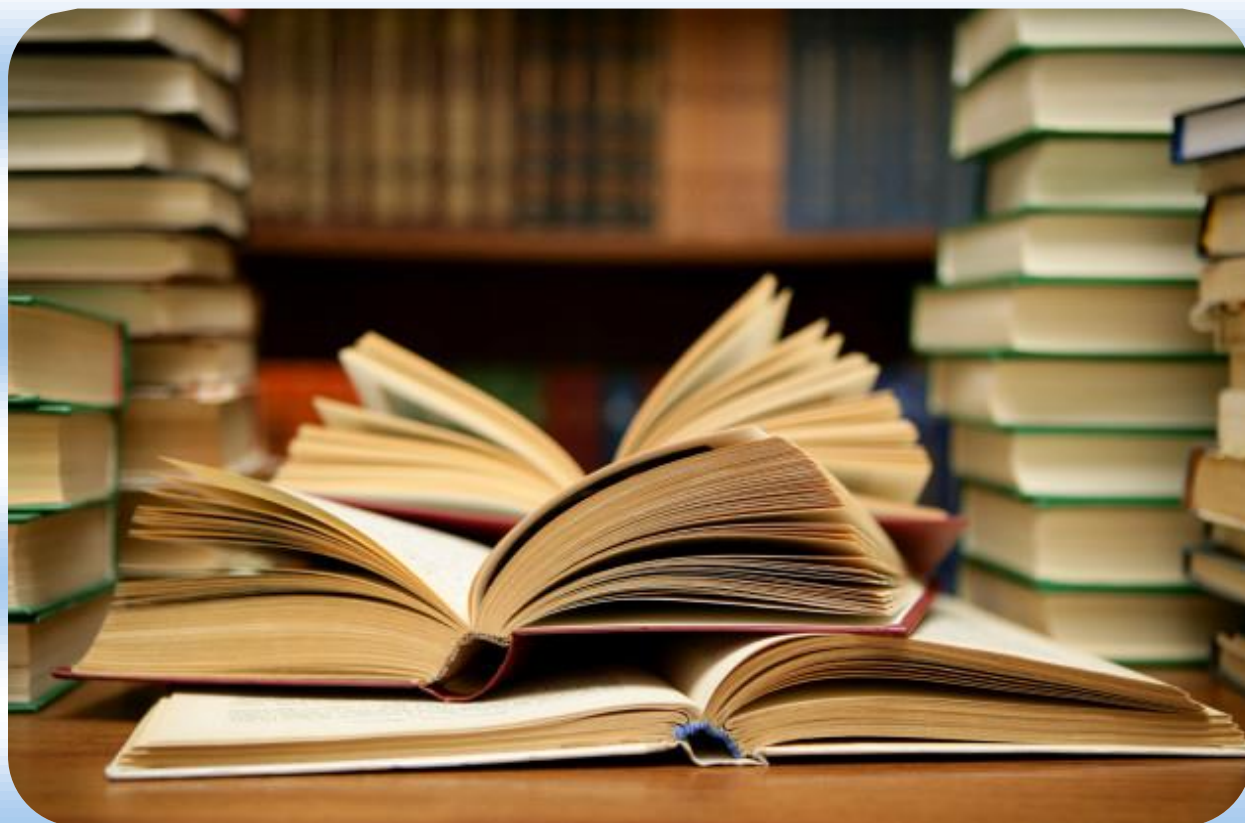


**LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA**

**GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY**



**AUGUST-2021**

# NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## ***India's GDP growth accelerates to 20.1% in Q1 FY22***

Indian economic growth touched a record high in the quarter through June, reflecting a very weak base last year, a rebound in consumer spending, and improved manufacturing in spite of a devastating second wave of Covid cases, government data showed on Tuesday. Gross domestic product rose 20.1% in the three-month period, compared with a record contraction of 24.4% in the same quarter a year earlier. "GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in Q1 of 2021-22 is estimated at Rs 32.38 lakh crore, as against Rs 26.95 lakh crore in Q1 of 2020-21, showing a growth of 20.1 percent as compared to contraction of 24.4% in Q1 2020-21. Quarterly GVA at Basic Price at Constant (2011-12) Prices for Q1 of 2021-22 is estimated at Rs 30.48 lakh crore, as against Rs 25.66 lakh crore in Q1 of 2020-21, showing a growth of 18.8%," said Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation in a statement.

## ***World's highest motorable road inaugurated in Ladakh***

A strategically important road, which connects Leh to the Pangong Lake, was inaugurated in Leh on Tuesday by Ladakh MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, who said that the stretch passing through the Kela Pass at 18,600 feet will be the world's highest motorable way.



## ***IIT Madras to Develop Online Marketplace called e-Source***

IIT Madras is developing an online platform called e-Source to tackle e-waste by linking various stakeholders in the formal and informal sectors. This initiative can become a critical resource by enabling reverse logistics supply chains and can help recycle 53.6 million tonnes of e-waste generated annually around the world and is potentially a \$50 billion market, says a press release. 'e-Source' will be an exchange platform that will serve as an online marketplace for waste electrical and electronic equipment and facilitate a formal supply chain between various stakeholders (buyers and sellers). IIT Madras researchers, focused on the 'circular economy,' are working to address the gaps in the e-waste sector.

### ***Toy-train safari launched on Darjeeling Himalayan Railway route***

Tourists can enjoy the breathtaking views of Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary and the hills from the toy train. It is a three-hour journey and after reaching Rongtong station they will come back to Siliguri junction again.



### ***IIT Roorkee-NDMA develop App to Predict Natural Disasters***

In a joint venture with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), IIT Roorkee has built an app that can predict natural disasters. As per the information shared by Uttarakhand Cabinet Minister Dhan Singh Rawat on Monday, the app will alert about the probable natural calamities beforehand. "I've also formed an expert committee. It'll intimate us about the amount of rainfall that'll be received in every area so that we make arrangements beforehand," he told ANI. Rawat further said that he had requested the Central government to simplify the 2011 disaster parameters and was bringing a proposal for the same. The minister also informed that the Doppler radar in Mukteshwar has started functioning and will also be set up at Surkanda Devi within 1-1.5 months.

### ***Paralympics 2020: Avani Lekhara wins gold in shooting, Yogesh clinches silver in discus throw***

Indian paralympic shooter Avani Lekhara won country's first gold medal in shooting at the Tokyo Paralympics in the women's 10m air rifle standing SH1 event on Monday. While making India proud, India's discus thrower Yogesh Kathuniya clinched silver in the final F56 category. Yogesh came up with the best attempt of 44.38m to finish at the 2nd spot.



### ***IBBI proposes amends in Liquidation Process***

Major changes in the insolvency process have been proposed by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India. These changes are being brought about to increase transparency and address issues that have come up recently. The Board (IBBI) is seeking public views till September 17, on the same. Among other things, a code of conduct has been introduced for the Committee of Creditors (CoC). The 31-point code of conduct requires creditors to disclose any conflict of interest, maintain full confidentiality and not try to adjust funds of the corporate debtor against their dues during the resolution process.

### ***PhonePe to serve as Direct Insurance Broker***

Mumbai: PhonePe has received an insurance broking licence from the industry regulator, a crucial win when India's biggest digital payments operators by transactions is looking to turn into a full-stack financial services provider. The fintech startup, part of the Walmart-owned Flipkart Group, can now distribute policies from all companies across categories thereby helping the firm diversify its offerings while also being able to offer recommendations. PhonePe started se ..

### ***Indian Oil to build India's First Green Hydrogen Plant***

Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) on Friday announced that it will set up India's first 'Green Hydrogen' plant at its Uttar Pradesh's Mathura refinery, with the view to strengthening its bouquet of clean energy offerings.



### ***Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award renamed after Major Dhyan Chand***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced Friday the renaming of the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, the country's highest sporting honour, after hockey wizard Major Dhyan Chand, setting off a political war of words with the Opposition Congress.



### ***Govt plans to set up National Farmers Database***

The coronavirus wave will lead to new problem loans in the retail and SME segments, but a severe asset quality decline is unlikely, according to Moody's Investors Service. Banks' improved profitability, capital and loss buffers will help them absorb anticipated loan losses and maintain credit strength, the global credit agency said in a report. Moody's observed that India's second coronavirus wave is increasing asset risks for banks, but the country's economic recovery, a tightening of loan underwriting criteria and continued government support will prevent a sharp spike in problem loans.

### ***LIC launched Mobile App for agents***

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has launched Ananda mobile app. "Atma Nirbhar Agents New Business Digital Application, the digital paperless solution for new business processes in LIC has now been provided a new dimension with the launch of Ananda mobile app," LIC said in a statement. Built on paperless KYC process using Aadhaar based e-authentication of the life proposed, the digital application is a tool for the on boarding process to get the life insurance policy through a paperless module with the help of the agent or intermediary.

### ***India's first mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccine***

India's first mRNA vaccine against coronavirus – developed by Pune-based Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Ltd (part of Emcure group of companies) – has been found to be safe and it has been given the go-ahead from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) to move into Phase II and III of clinical trials. The firm had submitted the interim clinical data of its Phase I trial to the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), the Government of India's National Regulatory Authority.

### ***WHO Chief Scientist: India may be entering endemic stage of COVID***

New Delhi: COVID-19 in India may be entering some kind of stage of endemicity where there is low or moderate level of transmission going on, Chief Scientist of the World Health Organisation Dr Soumya Swaminathan said. The endemic stage is when a population learns to live with a virus. It's very different from the epidemic stage when the virus overwhelms a population. On clearance to Covaxin, she said she is fairly confident that the WHO's technical group will be satisfied to give Covaxin clearance to be one of its authorised vaccines and that could happen by mid-September.

### ***The Ashok and 7 other ITDC hotels to be monetised***

The sprawling 'The Ashok' 5-star hotel in the heart of the national capital is planned to be leased out to private operators as part of the government's ambitious target of monetising "under-utilised" public sector assets. The Ashok and the adjacent Hotel Samrat are among the eight ITDC properties that have been listed in the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) released by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), a PSU under the Tourism Ministry, runs hotels, restaurants.

### ***India showcased Indigenous Fighter Aircraft at 'ARMY- 2021' in Moscow***

Moscow and New Delhi are also looking at ideas for expanding cooperation in our common area of interest, Central Asia, says Indian Ambassador in Russia D.B. Venkatesh Varma Amid unprecedented developments in the region, India and Russia have a series of engagements lined up in the next few months leading up to the summit between the two leaders. In an exclusive interview to The Hindu, Indian Ambassador in Russia D.B. Venkatesh Varma delved into the entire gamut of cooperation — defence, upcoming maiden 2+2 dialogue.

### ***India overtakes US to become 2nd Most attractive Manufacturing Hub***

India has overtaken the United States (US) to become the second-most sought-after manufacturing destination globally, driven mainly by cost competitiveness, according to real estate consultant Cushman & Wakefield. China remains at the number one position, the consultant said in its 2021 Global Manufacturing Risk Index, which assessed the most advantageous locations for global manufacturing among 47 countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia-Pacific (APAC).

### ***ISRO's 'Announcement of Opportunity' to analyse Chandrayaan-2 orbiter data***

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has come out with an 'Announcement of Opportunity' (AO), seeking proposals towards scientific analysis and utilisation of data from all experiments of the Chandrayaan-2 orbiter. According to ISRO, the data from Chandrayaan-1 had been extensively used by Indian researchers to understand lunar morphology, surface age determination and composition of the lunar surface, studies on the possible presence of magmatic as well as exogenic water

### ***Finance Minister launches EASE 4.0***

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who is in Mumbai, will undertake an annual performance review of public sector banks (PSBs) on Wednesday. This is the first visit by the finance minister since the onset of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic and comes at a time when a greater focus is on the government for aiding recovery because high inflation constrains the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Sitharaman will also launch EASE 4.0 (Enhanced Access and Service Excellence) later in the day. EASE is a common reform agenda for Public Sector Banks aimed at institutionalising clean and smart banking.

### ***NeoBolt: India's first indigenous Motorised Wheelchair Vehicle***

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras claimed to have developed India's first indigenous motorised wheelchair vehicle that can be used not only on roads but also on uneven terrains. Called 'NeoBolt', it has a maximum speed of 25 kmph and travels up to 25 km per charge. It empowers wheelchair users with a convenient, safe and low-cost mode of outdoor mobility when compared to cars, auto-rickshaws or modified scooters, they said.

### ***N. S. Vishwanathan Panel on Urban Co-operative Banks***

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday released the report of the Expert Committee on Primary Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs). The committee was set in February to examine the issues and to provide a road map for strengthening the sector. Today, the central bank said the committee has submitted its report, and a copy of which has been placed on the RBI website for comments of stakeholders and members of the public. The committee has suggested a four-tier structure for the urban cooperative banks (UCBs) depending upon the deposits. It has also prescribed different capital adequacy and regulatory norms for them based on their sizes.

### ***Covid third wave could peak between Oct-Nov***

India may see a third wave of COVID-19 peaking between October and November if a more virulent mutant than the existing ones emerge by September, but its intensity is expected to be much lower than the second wave, a scientist involved in the mathematical modelling of the pandemic said on Monday. Manindra Agrawal, an IIT-Kanpur scientist who is part of the three-member team of experts that have been tasked with predicting any surge in infections, said if no new virulent emerges, then the situation is unlikely to change.

### ***Hurriyat groups to be banned under UAPA***

A ban under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) may be imposed on both factions of the secessionist conglomerate, the Hurriyat Conference, which has been spearheading the separatist movement in Jammu and Kashmir for over two decades, officials said. A recent probe into the granting of MBBS seats to Kashmiri students by institutions in Pakistan indicated that the money collected from aspirants by some organisations that were part of the Hurriyat Conference conglomerate was being used for funding terror organisations in the Union Territory, officials said.

### ***Delhi CM to inaugurate India's First Smog Tower***

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated on Monday the country's first 'smog tower,' an experimental set up worth Rs 20 crore to purify air in a 1-km radius around the structure, at a rate of around 1,000 cubic metres of air per second.



### ***BRICS deal on cooperation in remote sensing satellite data sharing***

Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) signed an agreement for cooperation in remote sensing satellite data sharing, according to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). The pact inked on August 17 enables building a virtual constellation of specified remote sensing satellites of BRICS space agencies and their respective ground stations will receive the data, ISRO said. "This will contribute in strengthening multilateral cooperation among BRICS space agencies in meeting the challenges faced by mankind, such as global climate change, major disasters and environmental protection," the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency said in a statement.

### ***Sanskrit Week: being celebrated from August 19 to 25***

New Delhi: Sanskrit Week has been celebrated from today, August 19 to August 25. This Sanskrit Week is observed to promote and popularise the ancient language. As part of the celebration of Sanskrit Week beginning today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged everyone to learn and promote the ancient language. While the Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has asked to take a pledge and generate a new enthusiasm towards Indian cultural traditions and languages and to make Sanskrit accessible to people easily.

### ***DCGI approves ZyCoV-D vaccine for Emergency Use Authorization***

New Delhi: Zydus Cadila said it got emergency use authorization for its ZyCoV-D coronavirus vaccine on Friday, becoming the first jab to be cleared for children in the 12-18 age group in India. The Drugs Controller General of India's (DCGI's) approval of the country's second indigenously developed vaccine will also help India speed up its immunization effort to halt the spread of the deadly virus. On Thursday, an expert panel recommended authorizing Zydus Cadila's three-dose covid-19 vaccine for emergency use, clearing the way for the formal approval by the DCGI.

### ***INSACOG report: Delta variant driving infections in India***

The Delta variant remains most responsible for the continuing spread of infections in India, according to a weekly update from the India Sars Cov2 Genome Consortium (INSACOG), a repository of labs tasked with monitoring the coronavirus variants.



### ***Assam announced Covid Relief Package for helpers, drivers & priests***

In a bid to reduce carbon emission, the Assam government on Friday decided to procure 200 electric and 100 CNG buses, adding that these buses will be pressed into service in Guwahati city. The government has also decided to provide one-time financial assistance of ₹10000 to inter-district bus drivers and handymen who have been hit hard by Covid-induced lockdown. The government will also provide ₹15,000 to temple priests and naamghorias.

### ***Facebook India launched 'Small Business Loans Initiative'***

Facebook India on Friday announced a new programme called the "Small Business Loans Initiative", in partnership with online lending platform Indifi, to help small and medium businesses (SMBs) that advertise on Facebook to get quick access to credit through independent lending partners. India is the first country where Facebook is rolling out this programme. It is open to businesses registered across 200 towns and cities of India.

### ***WTO: Global Goods Trade continues recovery***

Global merchandise trade is continuing its robust recovery from the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, as per the WTO's Goods Trade Barometer, which hit a record high in its latest reading issued on Wednesday.



### ***Supreme Court allows women to appear for NDA exam***

Supreme Court on Wednesday slammed the Indian Army for not allowing women to take part in National Defence Academy (NDA) entrance exams. Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati appearing for the government and Indian Army told the court that it's a policy decision not to allow women to take the NDA exam, the apex court called the Army's "policy decision" gender discrimination.



### ***TCS: 2nd Indian company to cross m-cap of Rs 13 lakh crore***

Tata Consultancy Services crossed the ₹13-lakh crore mark in market capitalisation, recording fresh highs on Tuesday. At 1:30 pm, TCS was trading at ₹3522.55 on the BSE, up ₹50.80 or 1.46 per cent. It recorded a fresh 52-week high of ₹3,530.00. The company's M-cap stood at ₹13,03,083.32 crore. TCS had opened at ₹3,484.45 on the BSE against the previous close of ₹3471.75. It hit an intraday low of ₹3464.00. On the NSE, it was trading at ₹3,522.40, up ₹49.45 or 1.42 per cent.

### ***Student Entrepreneurship Program 3.0***

Taking the onus to nurture and support student innovation in India, the Public policy think tank of the Government of India, NITI Aayog has joined hands with La Fondation Dassault Systemes to commence the third series of the 'Student Entrepreneurship Program' (SEP 3.0) for the young innovators of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL).



### ***RBI introduced Financial Inclusion Index***

Going by the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index), which the central bank introduced on Tuesday, the extensive work done to improve access to financial services appears to be paying off. According to the RBI's assessment, the FI-Index for the period ended March 2021 was 53.9 as against 43.4 for the period ended March 2017. The central bank will publish the index annually in July. The index will be a single value between 0 and 100, where 0 represents complete financial exclusion and 100 shows full financial inclusion.

### ***Bharat Petroleum launched door-to-door delivery of Diesel***

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has launched door-to-door delivery of 'High Speed Diesel' to meet the growing demand. Celebrating the 'spirit of nationalism', the company on the eve of Independence Day also dedicated 15 mobile bowzers and 9 jerry can facilities in different corners of the Eastern Region.



### ***WHO's medical alert on fake Covishield Vaccines***

SII confirmed that some vaccine vials reported at the patient-level were fake, according to WHO. Doubts have arisen about the genuineness of Covishield reaching patients in India, with the country reporting circulation of fake vials of the covid-19 vaccine developed by Oxford-AstraZeneca and manufactured by Serum Institute of India (SII). Despite the Union government's efforts to provide genuine coronavirus vaccines through transparent procurement and supply systems and the technology-backed CoWin platform for administration, the World Health Organization's (WHO) global surveillance and monitoring system for substandard and fake medical products identified fake Covishield in India and Uganda.

### ***Lovlina Borgohain wins India's third medal at the Games***

Indian boxer Lovlina Borgohain took home the bronze medal after going down fighting in women's welterweight semi-final to the top seed from Turkey Busenaz Surmeneli on Wednesday. It was India's third medal at the ongoing Tokyo Olympics. With the bronze, Lovlina became only the third Indian boxer after Vijender Singh and Mary Kom, both also bronze medal winners, to win an Olympic medal.



### ***Tokyo Olympics: Neeraj Chopra wins Gold Medal***

Neeraj Chopra on Saturday clinched a gold medal with a stunning throw of 87.5m in the men's javelin throw final at the Tokyo Olympics. With the win, Neeraj became only the second Indian to win an individual gold in the Olympics, and the first to notch up a track and field Olympic medal for the country.



# INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## *Cuba to recognise and regulate cryptocurrencies*

Cuba's government said August 26 it will recognize — and regulate — cryptocurrencies for payments on the island. A resolution published in the Official Gazette said the Central Bank will set rules for such currencies and determine how to license providers of related services within Cuba.



## *U.S. ends 20-year war in Afghanistan*

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## *Tropical storm Henri makes landfall near Rhode Island*

Tropical Storm Henri hit the coast of Rhode Island on Sunday afternoon, packing high winds that knocked out power to tens of thousands of homes and bands of rain that led to flash flooding from New Jersey to Massachusetts.



### ***Evidence of Solar-Driven Change traced on moon***

Solar radiation could be a more important source of tiny lunar iron nanoparticles than previously thought, scientists have found. Asteroid impacts and solar radiation affect the moon in unique ways because it lacks the protective magnetic field and atmosphere that protect us here on Earth. Both asteroids and solar radiation break down lunar rocks and soil, forming iron nanoparticles (some smaller, some larger) that are detectable from instruments on satellites orbiting the moon. A team led by Northern Arizona University (NAU) scientists used data from National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) spacecraft to understand how quickly iron nanoparticles form on the moon over time. Their findings have recently been published in the journal Geophysical Research Letters.

### ***Amazon CEO to join White House cybersecurity meeting***

Amazon Inc Chief Executive Andy Jassy will join tech executives at a White House meeting with President Joe Biden on Wednesday to discuss efforts by private companies to improve cybersecurity, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters. (Subscribe to our Today's Cache newsletter for a quick snapshot of top 5 tech stories. Click here to subscribe for free.) The source asked not to be identified as the information was not public. Apple Inc CEO Tim Cook and Microsoft Corp Chief Executive Satya Nadella will also attend the White House cybersecurity event, Bloomberg News reported on Monday, citing sources.

### ***Ismail Sabri Yaakob: New Prime Minister of Malaysia***

Former Deputy Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob was appointed as the new Prime Minister of Malaysia on Friday. Malaysia's King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah appointed Ismail Sabri as the new Prime Minister of the country, the national palace said, reported Xinhua. He will succeed Muhyiddin Yassin, who resigned on Monday after losing majority support in the lower house of parliament.



### ***China passes new Online Privacy Law***

China passed a sweeping privacy law aimed at preventing businesses from collecting sensitive personal data on August 20, as the country faces an uptick in internet scams, leaks and concerns about tech giants abusing clients' personal information. (Subscribe to our Today's Cache newsletter for a quick snapshot of top 5 tech stories. Under the new rules passed by China's top legislative body, state-run and private companies handling personal information will be required to reduce data collection and obtain user consent.

### *PayPal launched crypto buying and selling in UK*

PayPal Holdings will allow customers in the UK to buy, sell and hold bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies starting this week, the company said on Monday. The roll-out, which marks the first international expansion of PayPal's cryptocurrencies services outside of the United States, could inspire further mainstream adoption of the new asset class.



### *Israel launched Covid antibody tests for children aged 3*

Israel on Sunday launched antibody testing for children aged as young as three, seeking information on the number of unvaccinated youths who have developed protection against coronavirus ahead of the new school year.



### *China rolls out high speed 600km/hr Maglev train*

China's self-developed and the world's fastest maglev transportation system with a speed of 600 kilometers per hour rolled off the assembly line on Tuesday in Qingdao, East China's Shandong Province, marking another crucial milestone in the country's.



### ***Egypt closes Gaza border***

Egypt closed its main border crossing point with the Gaza Strip on Monday amid tensions with the territory's militant Hamas rulers, officials said. It was the first time the Rafah crossing was shuttered during a workday since early this year. Egyptian authorities had kept it open during the 11-day war between Israel and Hamas in May.



### ***Evidence of Solar-Driven Change traced on moon***

Solar radiation could be a more important source of tiny lunar iron nanoparticles than previously thought, scientists have found. Asteroid impacts and solar radiation affect the moon in unique ways because it lacks the protective magnetic field and atmosphere that protect us here on Earth.



### ***Ain Dubai: World's largest and tallest observation wheel***

Standing at over 250-metres high, Ain Dubai is the latest landmark to join Dubai's long list of world record-breaking attractions. The monument represents another addition to Dubai Holding's extensive entertainment portfolio and supports Dubai's long-term vision, as set by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.



### ***World Bank stops funding of projects in Afghanistan***

The World Bank has suspended aid to Afghanistan, saying it is "deeply concerned" about the situation there after the Taliban seized power and especially the prospects for women, a bank spokesperson told AFP. "We have paused disbursements in our operations in Afghanistan and we are closely monitoring and assessing the situation," the official said. The World Bank has more than two dozen development projects ongoing in the country and has provided \$5.3 billion since 2002, mostly in grants, according to the bank's website.

### ***Facebook bans Taliban supporting content***

Social media giant Facebook said that it has banned the Taliban and all content supporting it from its platforms as it considers the group to be a terrorist organisation, the BBC has quoted. The company says it has a dedicated team of Afghan experts to monitor and remove content linked to the insurgent group. For years, the Taliban has used social media to spread its messages. "The Taliban is sanctioned as a terrorist organisation under US law and we have banned them from our services under our Dangerous Organisation policies. This means we remove accounts maintained by or on behalf of the Taliban and prohibit praise, support, and representation of them," a Facebook spokesperson told the BBC.

### ***IAEA: Iran has accelerated uranium enrichment***

Iran has accelerated its enrichment of uranium to near weapons-grade, switching to two clusters of advanced centrifuges enriching up to 60% purity from one, the U.N. nuclear watchdog said in a report on Tuesday seen by Reuters.



### ***IMF approves \$650 billion for poor countries to tackle Covid***

The executive board of the International Monetary Fund approved a \$650 billion expansion in resources to support economically vulnerable nations as they battle the coronavirus pandemic. IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said Friday that the new support, the largest such expansion in the history of the 190-nation lending institution, would be a "shot in the arm for the world." To put the size of the funding expansion in context, the IMF approved a \$250 billion boost in SDR reserves following the 2008 financial crisis.

### ***UAE launches Covid vaccine for children aged 3-17***

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates will start providing China's Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine to children aged 3-17, the UAE government said on Twitter on Monday. It cited the health ministry as saying the decision comes after clinical trials and extensive evaluations, without providing any details. Authorities said in June the trial would monitor the immune response of 900 children. The Gulf Arab state, which has among the world's highest immunisation rates, was already providing the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children aged 12-15.

### ***EU imposes record Data Privacy Fine on Amazon***

Amazon.com Inc has been hit with a record \$886.6 million (746 million euros) European Union fine for processing personal data in violation of the bloc's GDPR rules, as privacy regulators take a more aggressive position on enforcement. The Luxembourg National Commission for Data Protection (CNPD) imposed the fine on Amazon in a July 16 decision, the company disclosed in a regulatory filing on Friday. Amazon will appeal the fine, according to a company spokesperson. The e-commerce giant said in the filing it believed CNPD's decision was without merit.

### ***Thailand bans Coral-Damaging Sunscreens***

Thailand on Wednesday banned sunscreens containing chemicals that damage coral reefs from its marine national parks. The kingdom's sandy beaches have long been popular destinations for millions of tourists but concerns are growing that the lotions they use as protection from the tropical sun are harming delicate, slow-growing corals.



### ***Tokyo Olympics-2020***

The once in four years prestigious sporting event, which was originally scheduled to be held in 2020 is being held from July 23 to August 8, 2021, amid COVID-19 pandemic.



### ***China's plan to become carbon-neutral by 2060***

China's industrialization has occurred at a breathtaking pace, lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty and transforming the country into the world's factory floor. That's also made it the biggest emitter of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas driving climate change. The most-populous nation has set itself the ambitious goal of becoming carbon-neutral by 2060, a challenging target given it hasn't even reached its emissions peak. To get there, President Xi Jinping wants to transition away from an economy reliant on coal and other fossil fuels by switching to renewable energy and developing new technology to capture emissions.

### ***Hong Kong to adopt China's anti-sanctions law***

Hong Kong's justice secretary said on Sunday that a mainland Chinese law to counter foreign sanctions could also be adopted in the China-ruled city by writing it into Hong Kong's mini-constitution, pending a decision by the Chinese parliament.



### ***China opens new terminal at Lhasa Airport in Tibet***

China has opened a newly constructed terminal - stated to be the biggest in Tibet - at the provincial capital Lhasa, further expanding the transport infrastructure in the strategic Himalayan region and helping it emerge as a global logistics hub for South Asia, the official media here reported on Monday. Lhasa Gonggar Airport opened its newly constructed Terminal 3 for operations on Saturday, marking a significant milestone in the remote region's rapid infrastructure development that could significantly boost passenger and cargo transport, state-run Global Times reported.

