

LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTRE, NOIDA

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



MAY - 2020

For the first time in India: More rural Internet users than Urban

Internet users in rural areas surpassed those in urban areas for the first time, according to the 'Digital in India' report by the Internet & Mobile Association of India (IAMA). As of last November, there were 227 million active internet users in rural areas which is 10% more than around 205 million in urban areas. In total, India had 504 million active internet users. The report showed that in rural India, the number of people actively accessing the internet on a daily basis increased by 30 million since March last year. However, the time spent on the internet is higher in urban India compared to the rural areas.

Kashmir Saffron receives GI Tag

Department of Agriculture Kashmir has been granted Certificate of Registration by Registrar of Geographical Indication, Chennai, Government of India for Kashmiri saffron, as per media reports.



Bharat Market: National E-Commerce Marketplace launched by CAIT

Technology for MSMEs: Umbrella association for nearly 40,000 trade bodies across India representing 7 crore traders – Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has opened its upcoming e-commerce portal BharatEMarket for seller registration. The traders' body, announcing the name of the marketplace last week, had said that the portal will be launched in a month's time. The registration is open in brands, distributors/wholesalers, retailers.

Long March 5B: China's new Rocket launch successful

China has successfully launched a new rocket and prototype spacecraft, according to state media, in a major test of its ambitions to operate a permanent space station and send astronauts to the Moon.



Arogya Setu Mitr Website launched

NITI Aayog, the body responsible for creating the Aarogya Setu app, has partnered with the Principal Scientific Advisor to the PM to launch AarogyaSetu Mitr website. The website aims to bring healthcare services to the “doorstep of all Indians in the time of the Covid-19 crisis.” The initiative also involves voluntary participation from organizations, industry coalitions and startups. With AarogyaSetu Mitr, users will get free consultancy from doctors on Covid-19 in addition to ancillary services like home collection of samples for Diagnostics .

Saras Collection launched on the Government E-Marketplace portal, GeM

Saras Collection aims at showcasing the daily utility products that have been made by the Self - Help Groups (SHG). It will also provide market in rural areas with access to State and Central government buyers. The Saras Collection has been launched by the Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Government e Marketplace (GeM) portal on May 4. Saras Collection aims at showcasing the daily utility products that have been made by the Self - Help Groups (SHG).

West Bengal Red Flagged by the Inter-Ministerial Team

The Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) sent to West Bengal red-flagging the state’s poor testing rate and irregularities in accounting of Covid-19 deaths underscores the need for a lot more central monitoring, even if states are to be allowed to strategise and execute their response. The West Bengal government’s insistence that the ICMT is against the principle of federalism doesn’t hold water since similar teams have been sent to Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh (the last two being BJP-ruled).

“Special Corona Fee” imposed on Liquor by Delhi Government

NEW DELHI: Liquor in Delhi will cost more from Tuesday as the govt has decided to impose a 70 per cent 'Special Corona Fee' on maximum retail price, sources said Monday. The move will boost the government revenue, which has been hit hard due to the coronavirus-forced lockdown, but there will be a steep rise in the prices of retails liquor bottle."70 per cent 'Special Corona Fee' has been imposed on the MRP of liquor bottles.

New Agro MSME Policy to be implemented

The government is working on an agro MSME policy which will focus on entrepreneurship development in rural-, tribal-, agricultural- and forest areas for manufacturing products using local raw material, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Monday. The Minister for MSME and Road Transport and Highways was speaking during the meetings held via video-conferencing with the representatives of SME Chamber of India.

Uttar Pradesh Government launches "Ayush Kavach" application

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday launched the Ayush Kavach app that will provide health-related tips and information about ayurvedic medicines to people during the coronavirus crisis. "Today the whole world is looking up to India with hopes in its fight against the global pandemic COVID-19. I firmly believe that the Ayush Kavach mobile app will help people access prescriptions to strengthen their bodies' resistance through an ancient mode of Yoga and Ayurveda of India," he said at the launch.

IMD includes PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan

The IMD's Regional Meteorological Centre has started including cities under Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir in its forecasts, a departure from its earlier format, officials said on Thursday. The IMD has started including Gilgit-Baltistan and Muzaffarabad, which are parts of PoK, under the Jammu and Kashmir meteorological sub-division since May 5, said Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the Regional Meteorological Department that gives forecast for the northwest meteorological division of the IMD.

What is Corona Virus Copy Machine?

Once the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2 invades a human cell, the crucial next stage is replication, when it creates copies after copies of itself. For this, the virus uses its "copy machine", which is an enzyme with this function. Trials with various drugs are targeting various stages of virus activity, and some of them, notably remdesivir, seek to inhibit specifically the enzyme that multiplies the genetic material of the virus..

Israel isolates key antibody of COVID-19

JERUSALEM: Israel has isolated a key coronavirus antibody at its main biological research laboratory, the Israeli defence minister said on Monday, calling the step a "significant breakthrough" toward a possible treatment for the coronavirus pandemic. The "monoclonal neutralising antibody" developed at the Israel Institute for Biological Research (IIBR) "can neutralise it (the disease-causing coronavirus) inside carriers' bodies.

India begins Clinical Trials of AYUSH medicines

NEW DELHI: The clinical trials of Ayush medicines on health workers and those working in COVID-19 high-risk areas have begun today, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said on Thursday. "Today is a very important day, as a historical work has begun in India today. The clinical trials of Ayush medicines like Ashwagandha, Yashtimadhu, Guduchi Pippali, Ayush-64 on health workers and those working in high-risk areas has begun today," Dr Harsh Vardhan told reporters here.

Vizag Gas Tragedy leaked Styrene Gas

A gas leak, reminiscent of the 1984 Bhopal tragedy, has claimed at least 11 lives and affected thousands of residents in five villages in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. The source of the leak was a styrene plant owned by South Korean electronics giant LG



Commonwealth Youth Games postponed to 2023

The 2021 Commonwealth Youth Games was postponed on Friday to 2023 because of clash of dates with the Tokyo Olympics. The Olympics was originally scheduled to be held from July 23 to August 8 this year but was postponed by a year last month owing to the pandemic. “The Commonwealth Games Federation Executive Board have decided to explore rescheduling options for the 2021 Commonwealth Youth Games,” the CGF said in a statement.

USFDA approves emergency use of an investigational vaccine, Remdesivir

WASHINGTON: The US food and drug regulatory body has allowed the emergency use of an investigational anti-viral vaccine to treat COVID-19 patients after some researches, including one led by an Indian-American physician, found that the drug helped recover some of the infected cases faster. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) gave emergency use authorisation (EUA) for the use of investigational anti-viral Remdesivir in the treatment of COVID-19 patients.

Russia awards North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un a commemorative war medal

Russian President Vladimir Putin has awarded Kim Jong Un a commemorative war medal marking the 75th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany, the Russian embassy in Pyongyang said Tuesday.



Indian American nominated as OECD Envoy by the US President Trump

US President Donald Trump has nominated senior Indian-American diplomat Manisha Singh as his envoy to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Currently Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs at the State Department, Singh will be the US representative to OECD with the rank of an Ambassador, according to the nomination sent to the Senate by the White House.

Iran: New Currency introduced to tackle Inflation

The rial unit of currency, which has lost much of its value against the dollar, will be replaced by the toman, which the government says will be worth 10,000 rials. For many years, Iran's government debated changing the national currency, the rial, by basically slashing four zeros off its face value — an acknowledgment of how American sanctions and economic mismanagement have contributed to inflation in the country.

Smart City Programme: Control rooms in 50 cities for Lock Down 3.0

With India slowly opening up for business, the control rooms set up under the marquee smart cities programme have become the nerve centres in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. These integrated command and control centres in around 50 cities have been repurposed as war rooms, and have been helping the civil administration cater to the needs of health care, logistics and lockdown monitoring in real time.

Vandhe Bharat Mission: The Biggest Evacuation Exercise begins

Air India has opened up bookings on Thursday on special flights to 12 foreign countries that will also bring back more than 14,000 stranded Indian citizens on the return flight. Air India is operating 64 flights to 12 countries over nine days to evacuate Indian citizens between May 7 to May 15 under the government's Vande Bharat Mission and the national carrier on Thursday said that citizens from these countries looking to return could book a ticket home on these flights. Indian nationals with at least a year-long visa to these destinations will also be allowed to travel in case of medical and other emergencies.

Operation "Samudra Setu" launched by Indian Navy

NEW DELHI: Taking steps to evacuate Indians stranded overseas, the Indian Navy on Tuesday launched 'Operation Samudra Setu' (Sea Bridge) sending naval ships Jalashwa and Magar to the Port of Malè, Republic of Maldives. "The Operation Samudra Setu will commence evacuation operations from 08 May 2020 as part of Phase-1," Navy officials said. A total of 1000 persons are planned to be evacuated during the first trip, catering for coronavirus-related social distancing norms vis-a-vis the carrying.

Indian American appointed as US representative to IBRD

U.S. President Donald Trump has nominated Indian-American Ashok Michael Pinto as a representative to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Pinto was on Monday nominated as US Alternate Executive Director of IBRD for a term of two years. If confirmed by the Senate, Pinto would replace Erik Bethel, who has resigned from the post. Pinto currently serves as Counselor to the Under Secretary for International Affairs at the United States Department of the Treasury.

UNEP: Actress Dia Mirza's term as Goodwill Ambassador extended

MUMBAI: The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on Thursday extended environmentalist and actor-producer Dia Mirza's term as its National Goodwill Ambassador for another two years till the end of 2022. Dia, who is also a United Nations Sustainability Development Goals Advocate, said she views the extension as an opportunity to work towards championing nature.

Iraq new Prime Minister: Mustafa Al Kadhimi

Iraqi lawmakers have approved a new prime minister and government after six months without one as parties squabbled until the last minute over cabinet seats in backroom deals. The new prime minister, Mustafa al-Kadhimi, Iraq's intelligence chief and a former journalist.



Gol releases Rs 6,195 crores of funds to 14 states

The government released Rs 6,195.08 crore to 14 states as the second equated monthly installment of the Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant on Monday. "This would provide them additional resources during the Corona crisis," the finance ministry said in a statement Monday. The grant was recommended by the 15th Finance Commission, and an equal first installment of the grant was issued by the Centre to states on March 14. On Monday, the Centre released advance payments of over Rs 1,276 crore to Kerala.

INR-USD Futures and Options Contracts launched by Finance Minister

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman on Friday launched Rupee-Dollar (INR-USD) futures and options contracts on the two international exchanges BSE's India INX and NSE's NSE-IFSC at GIFT International Financial Services Centre in Gandhinagar through video conference. Over the last decade or so, a significant market share in financial services related to India has moved to other international financial centres.

Defence Ministry signs MoU with TATA Power to modernize 37 airfields

NEW DELHI: The Defence Ministry signed a contract with Tata Power SED on Friday for modernisation of infrastructure at 37 airfields of the Indian Air Force, Coast Guard and the Navy at a cost of around Rs 1,200 crore. This is the phase two of the Modernisation of Airfield Infrastructure (MAFI) programme, the ministry said, adding that airfields of the Indian Air Force were upgraded in the first phase.

May 11: National Technology Day

The National Technology Day occupies an important place in the technological innovations for India for it is the day India successfully tested nuclear bombs in Pokhran on May 11, 1998. The National Technology Day was named by the late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Bajpayee on May 11 as a reminder of India's technological achievements. On May 11, 1998, India successfully test-fired its Shakti-1 nuclear missile in operation called Pokhran-II, also codenamed as Operation Shakti.

DHRUVs: UV based Sanitizer by DRDO to sanitize phones

The RCI, a premier laboratory of DRDO based at Hyderabad, has developed an automated contactless UVC sanitising cabinet to sanitise mobile phones, iPads, laptops, currency notes, cheque leaves, challans, passbooks, and paper. DRDO's dream Research Centre Imarat (RCI), a part of Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO), developed the Defence Research Ultraviolet Sanitiser (DRUVS).

ICMR to develop COVID-19 Vaccine

The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) on Saturday announced a research collaboration with Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International Ltd (BBIL) to develop a COVID-19 vaccine. Interactive map of confirmed coronavirus cases in India | State-wise tracker for coronavirus cases, deaths and testing rates. The ICMR said in a statement that it had transferred the virus strain isolated at the National Institute of Virology, Pune (an ICMR institute) to BBIL.

COVID KAVACH: India's first indigenous ELISA Test Kit for COVID-19

New Delhi, May 10 (ANI): Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan on Sunday said that the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, has successfully developed India's first indigenous antibody testing kit -- ELISA -- to combat COVID-19. The ELISA -- enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay -- antibody test is a kind of blood test. ELISA kits are similar to rapid antibody tests, which detect antibodies in the blood to find out if an individual was infected with COVID-19.

COBAS 6800: India's first automated COVID-19 testing machine

New Delhi: Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, visited the National Centre for Disease Control in Delhi.



Global Energy Transition Index: India ranks 74th

India has moved up two positions to rank 74th on a global 'Energy Transition Index' with improvements on all key parameters of economic growth, energy security and environmental sustainability, the World Economic Forum (WEF) said on Wednesday. Releasing the annual rankings, the Geneva-based international organisation for public-private cooperation said Covid-19 will compromise the transition to clean energy without an urgent stakeholder.

WHO releases Global Nutrition Report, 2020

India is among 88 countries that are likely to miss global nutrition targets by 2025, according to the Global Nutrition Report 2020 released on Tuesday. It also identified the country as one with the highest rates of domestic inequalities in malnutrition. The malaise of malnutrition | For a malnutrition-free India. In 2012, the World Health Assembly identified six nutrition targets for maternal, infant and young child nutrition to be met by 2025.

117 new Mandis integrated to E-NAM platform

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Monday launched integration of 117 additional wholesale mandis with the electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM) platform, taking the total number of online mandis to 962 across the country. The additional mandis integrated with eNAM platform include Gujarat (17), Haryana (26), J&K (1), Kerala (5), Maharashtra (54), Odisha (15), Punjab (17), Rajasthan (25), Tamil Nadu (13) and West Bengal (1), an official.

Passenger Train services partially restored

Almost 50 days after stopping passenger trains, the Railways on Tuesday partially resumed services with eight trains operating to and from New Delhi, ferrying over 10,000 passengers. "Indian Railways begins restoration of passenger train services with eight trains today [Tuesday]. Starting in a graded manner, these trains would run from New Delhi, Mumbai, Howrah, Ahmedabad, Patna and Bengaluru," a Railway spokesperson said.

COVID-19: Rs 3,100 crores allocated from PM CARES Funds

Nearly 50 days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi set up the PM CARES Fund, the trust that he leads on Wednesday decided to allocate Rs 3,100 crore for the fight against Covid-19. A statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said the PM CARES Fund Trust had decided to spend Rs 2,000 crore to buy ventilators, Rs 1,000 crore to take care of migrant workers and earmark another Rs 100 crore to support development of a vaccine against Covid-19.

SAMARTH scheme implemented by NIT Kurukshetra

To automate operations, the National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra, one of the institutes of national importance and one of 30 such institutions in the country, has implemented Samarth, an enterprise resource planning software. This initiative will enhance productivity through better information management in the institute by seamless access to information, and its utilization for various purposes, said an official statement.

GI Tag provided to Telangana's Telia Rumal and Jharkhand's Sohrai Khovar painting

Jharkhand's Sohrai Khovar painting and Telangana's Telia Rumal were given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag on Tuesday by the Geographical Indications Registry headquartered in Chennai.



Investment Capacity of India in renewable sector reached 500-700 billion USD

Renewable energy in India has taken centre stage with a significant development of energy infrastructure and attracted foreign capital to achieve the economic goals, as ultra-mega solar

parks kick-start the country's clean energy transition



COVID-19: President Ram Nath Kovind to donate 30% of his salary for a year

President Ram Nath Kovind has decided to forego 30% of his salary for the whole year apart from directing officials to adopt other austerity measures in the wake of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a communique from Rashtrapati Bhavan said on Thursday. The domestic tours of the President will be substantially reduced, guest lists as well as food menu at official ceremonies will be cut and plans to purchase a new Presidential Limousine (estimated to cost ₹10 crore) have been deferred.

Under 17 FIFA Women World Cup to begin in 2021

The FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association) U-17 Women's World Cup is now scheduled for early 2021 in India, the world football governing body revealed on Tuesday, Hindustan Times reported. Earlier it was supposed to be held later this year in India. However, due to the extended shutdown due to the novel coronavirus, the famous sports event has been postponed to next year. FIFA added that the age and eligibility criteria would remain the same.

CO2 Emissions of India falls in 4 decades

Falling electricity use and competition from renewables had weakened the demand for fossil fuels even before the coronavirus hit, according to analysis by the environmental website, Carbon Brief. However, it was the sudden nationwide lockdown in March that finally tipped the country's 37-year emissions growth trend into reverse.



Pranavayu Programme launched in Karnataka

Many COVID-19 patients have low oxygen levels that puts them at risk of complications. In a measure that it hopes will help early detection, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) on Friday launched an initiative that will allow them to monitor blood oxygen levels and heart rates of patients showing influenza-like illnesses (ILI) in fever clinics.



Gol launches "Mission Sagar"

Government of India launched Mission Sagar to provide assistance to Indian Ocean Region Nations amid the coronavirus crisis on Sunday. "As part of the Government of India outreach amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Indian Naval Ship Kesari has departed for Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros, to provide Food Items.



United States provides 3.6 million USD assistance to India

The US' Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has committed USD 3.6 million to assist India's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the aid will support prevention, preparedness and response activities. The funds will also be used to support the development of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) centres of excellence that can improve the ability of hospital networks to detect COVID-19 and strengthen local health systems.

World Bank approves 1 billion USD to India

NEW DELHI: The World Bank on Friday approved USD 1 billion 'Accelerating India's COVID-19 Social Protection Response Program' to support the country's efforts for providing social assistance to the poor and vulnerable households, severely impacted by the pandemic. This takes the total commitment from the World Bank towards emergency COVID-19 response in India to USD 2 billion.

Prime Minister Research Fellowship Scheme (PMRF)

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) has made several changes in the Prime Minister Research Fellowship (PMRF). The aim is to increase the number of students who pursue research in the prestigious national institutes. The PMRF extends the research facilities of IITs, IISc, IISERs, NITs and central universities to master's level students from any Indian institute. Now, candidates can apply for the scholarships through two modes — direct and lateral.

PM Modi announces Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

NEW DELHI: PM Narendra Modi's pledge of a total spending of Rs 20 lakh crore to weather the fallout of coronavirus pandemic is among the largest economic stimulus package announced by nations around the world. Modi's Atma-nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan or Self-reliant India Mission is about 10 per cent of India's GDP in 2019-20 and would rank behind Japan, the US, Sweden, Australia and Germany.

Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme approved

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday approved the launch of Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS) with an outlay of ₹400 crore for creating state-of-the-art testing infrastructure for domestic defence and aerospace manufacturing sector. "The Scheme would run for the duration of five years and envisages to set up six to eight new test facilities in partnership with private industry.

Men are more vulnerable to COVID-19 than women: How and Why?

Over the pandemic, researchers have come up with various findings — and hypotheses — about why men seem to be more vulnerable to Covid-19 than women. Now, a new study has suggesting the reason may be related to the concentration of a key enzyme in the blood of men and women. The paper, published in the European Heart Journal on Monday, looks at the concentration of the enzyme ACE2 in blood.

ICGS Sachet Commissioned in Goa: First Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vessel

A ship and two Interceptor Boats (IB) were commissioned into the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) in Goa via videoconference from the national capital by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday. This marks a landmark for the ICG: it now has 150 ships and boats and 62 aircraft. "The ships, on joining the fleet, will be deployed extensively for Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance, coastal security and other duties as enshrined in the Coast Guard charter of duties, to safeguard the maritime interests of the nation," the ICG said in a statement.

India joins 61 nations in WHO to identify Zoonotic source of COVID-19

India is among 62 countries that have moved a proposal at the World Health Assembly to “identify the zoonotic source” of the coronavirus and asked for an “impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation” of the WHO’s response to Covid-19. China and the US are not part of the resolution. The proposal is part of a seven-page draft resolution moved by 35 countries and the 27-member European Union, and is likely to be taken up on Monday at the Assembly, which is the decision-making body of the WHO.

US to donate Ventilators to India

President Donald Trump has announced that the U.S. will donate ventilators to India, moments after he underlined the close partnership between the two countries and called Prime Minister Narendra Modi his “good friend”. India’s tally of confirmed COVID-19 cases crossed 85,000 on Friday, surpassing China’s count of 82,933 confirmed cases. “I am proud to announce that the United States will donate ventilators to our friends in India,” Trump tweeted on Friday.

What is Baltic Travel Bubble recently in news?

The Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on Friday started what is being referred to as a ‘travel bubble’ to help put their economies back on track post-Covid lockdowns. With the pandemic throwing both international and domestic trade and travel out of gear since earlier this year, such ‘travel bubbles’ are now being recommended to keep at least parts of the global economy afloat.

What is “Hanko” in news recently?

In Japan, where the government has been fiercely engaged in tackling the novel coronavirus pandemic, a centuries-old ritual is sharing the blame for impeding social distancing efforts. The extensive and almost unavoidable use of the ‘hanko’— a personal seal generally made from wood or plastic — for authorising official documents ranging from contracts, marriage registrations and even delivery slips — has been forcing several employees to go to the office to get work done.

US Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine: First to show positive response

Yubraj Khatiwada, Minister of Finance and Information and Communication, announced that a new political map of Nepal is being issued. "The updated map of Nepal presented by the Ministry of Land Management in today's Council of Ministers meeting has been endorsed. The new map incorporates northern, southern, western and eastern International borderlines as well as includes the political and administrative arrangements," Khatiwada, also the government spokesperson said on Monday.

Nepal approves new Map: Includes Kalapani

The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) on Saturday announced a research collaboration with Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International Ltd (BBIL) to develop a COVID-19 vaccine. Interactive map of confirmed coronavirus cases in India | State-wise tracker for coronavirus cases, deaths and testing rates. The ICMR said in a statement that it had transferred the virus strain isolated at the National Institute of Virology, Pune (an ICMR institute) to BBIL.

India provides 2 million USD aid to United Nations Relief and Works Agency

Ramallah (West Bank): India has given USD 2 million in aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency working for the welfare of Palestinian refugees in support of its core programmes and services, including education and health, amidst the coronavirus crisis. India had increased its annual contribution to the UNRWA from USD 1.25 million in 2016 to USD 5 million in 2019. It pledged another USD 5 million for 2020 which opens its way to become a member of the agency's advisory commission, according to official sources.

WHO: Independent Inquiry in handling of COVID-19

Australia's foreign minister insists a motion that has won support from more than 120 countries will pave the way for an impartial, independent and comprehensive investigation into the handling of the Covid-19 outbreak. Facing criticism from some hawkish Coalition backbenchers that the motion to go to the World Health Assembly on Monday night had been "watered down", Marise Payne described the growing global backing for a review as "a win for the international community".

New Incidents change dynamics of India-China Border

A greater capability by India to patrol up to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) coupled with an increasingly assertive Chinese posture is fuelling new tensions along the border, according to former senior Indian officials. Indian and Chinese troops have been involved in as many as four incidents in recent weeks along the undefined LAC. On Monday, Chinese state media said.



India-Bangladesh sign Inland Water Transit and Trade Protocol

Tripura got its first ever international waterway as five new protocol routes were announced between India and its eastern neighbour Bangladesh late Wednesday night, with Chief Minister Biplab Deb expressing hope that the state will emerge as 'gateway of Northeast' in future by tapping into bilateral connectivity and trade potential.



Fifth Tranche of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan announced

Nirmala Sitharaman, the union finance minister, unveiled the fifth and last tranche of the Rs 20 lakh crore COVID-19 economic package as part of the "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-reliant India campaign)" on Sunday. Addressing her fifth press conference in as many days, the minister began her speech by quoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi while addressing the reporters, She said, "In order to prove the resolve of the self-reliant India, land, labour, liquidity and laws, all have been emphasised in this package,".

PFRDA suggests comprehensive Scheme to the Finance Ministry

NEW DELHI: To enhance social security cover for unorganised sector workers and low-income persons, a composite scheme providing both pension and insurance benefits has been suggested to the government, the chairman of the Pension Fund and Regulatory Authority of India (PFRDA) said. The authority has suggested to the Finance Ministry that a comprehensive social security scheme can be explored for people having low income, PFRDA Chairman Supratim Bandyopadhyay told .

Gol to implement several initiatives to boost Education Sector

MUMBAI : Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday announced the immediate launch 'Pradhan Mantri e-VIDYA' initiative for digital education, which is likely to boost already high interest in the ed-tech startups, given the extended at-home learning requirements that the industry is catering to. Top 100 universities of the country will be allowed to start online courses by 30 May, Sitharaman said while announcing several measures for the education sector.

Beneficiaries of Ayushman Bharat touches 1 crore

The number of people who have benefitted under the Centre's Ayushman Bharat Scheme has crossed the one crore-mark, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday. "It would make every Indian proud that the number of Ayushman Bharat beneficiaries has crossed 1 crore," he wrote in a series of tweets, adding that the initiative "has had a positive impact on so many lives." The PM spoke about his interaction with the "1 croreth beneficiary" of the health insurance scheme – Pooja Thapa from Meghalaya who is the wife of an army personnel.

Govt to convert world's only horse serving cavalry into regular armoured regiment

One of the world's last remaining horse-mounted cavalry regiments may be riding into the sunset. The Indian Army's only mounted cavalry regiment is set to say goodbye to its horses, with the government approving a proposal to equip the 61st Cavalry with tanks.



Indian Army to implement "ToD"

Industrialist Anand Mahindra has supported an army proposal that seeks to allow the country's youth to serve the military for three years under a new "tour of duty" (ToD) model and said that the exposure would give them an "added advantage" in the next workplace they choose, people familiar with the matter said on Saturday. The ToD model is similar to the short-service commission that allows officers to serve the armed forces for 10 to 14 years. In an e-mail to the Indian Army, Mahindra said his group would be happy to consider the candidature of ToD optees for corporate jobs.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana: 6.8 crore free Cylinders distributed

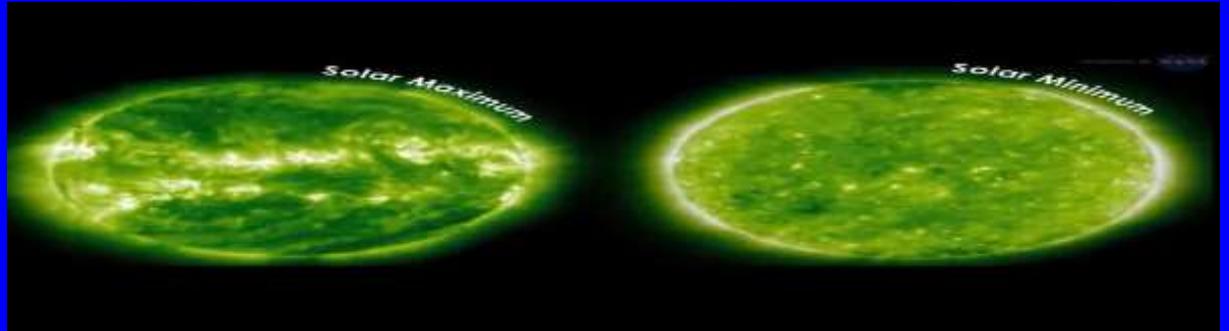
NEW DELHI: Half-way through the free gas cylinder scheme, over 8 crore Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries have got 6.8 crore free LPG cylinders during April to mid-May, the oil ministry said on Thursday. Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package for healing COVID pain of poor, the government had in March announced distribution of three 14.2-kg LPG cylinders free of cost to Ujjwala beneficiaries from April to June. Three cylinders for eight crore beneficiaries translated into giving away of 24 crore cooking gas bottles for free.

Indian Air Force shelves three main projects

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has decided to shelve three major acquisition projects worth Rs. 8000 crore as the central government push for indigenisation. These projects included IAF's plan to buy 20 additional Hawk Planes from Britain, 38 Pilatus basic trainer aircraft, and the plan to upgrade 30 Jaguar fighter planes with engines from the United States. The Air Force Chief RKS Bhadauria informed that they will not be going forward with the planned projects and plans have been shelved at the moment for different reasons including Make in India.

Sun has entered into deepest period of Sunshine Recession

Most of us are in lockdown, and now experts believe that the sun has reportedly also gone into one. The sun is said to have gone into a state called the 'solar minimum' and is about to enter the deepest period of 'sunshine recession' as sunspots are virtually not visibly at all.



Artificial Intelligence: GoI launches National Test Abhyas

Union Human Resource Development Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank on Wednesday (May 20) launched a new Artificial Intelligence-powered mobile app called the 'National Test Abhyas' for mock tests for JEE Main, NEET 2020. NTA has developed the AI-powered app to allow the aspiring candidates to take mock tests for upcoming exams under the purview NTA. "The app has been launched to facilitate candidates' access to high quality mock tests in the safety and comfort of their homes since there was a demand for making up the loss to students due to closure of educational institutions

Federation of Indian Export Organization: Indian Exports to fall by 20%

Kolkata: The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said on Tuesday that the export from the country is expected to fall by 20 per cent in the current fiscal in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The outlook is 'extremely negative' at the moment, and fall in export will also be accompanied by a decline in import, an official of the apex exporters' body said. "We expect that export during the current financial year is likely to fall by 20 per cent. In value terms, this will be around \$50 to 60 billion," FIEO director general and chief executive officer Ajay Sahai said.

COVID-19: ICMR Clinical Trials on BCG Vaccine

In a growing list of global trials on the efficacy of tuberculosis vaccines in preventing Covid-19, one is an upcoming 10-month trial being conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on the BCG vaccine. Short for Bacillus Calmette-Guérin, BCG is a vaccine that uses a live attenuated strain (potency of the pathogen artificially disabled, but identifying characters retained) derived from an isolate of Mycobacterium Bovis. It has been used across the world, including in India for decades, against tuberculosis.

India: The Second Largest Manufacturer of PPE in the world

India has become the world's second largest manufacturer of personal protective equipment (PPE) body coveralls within a short time span of two months, the government said on Thursday. China is the world's leading producer of PPE body coveralls, crucial to safeguard against the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In a statement, the Ministry of Textiles said it has been taking several steps to ensure that both quality and quantity of PPE coveralls going up to the desired levels within a very short span of time of two months.

Bundesliga of Germany: World's first sports competition after COVID-19 lock down

Germany's Bundesliga has become the world's first major sports competition to resume its season post nationwide lockdown imposed to contain coronavirus pandemic. The European Football League's remaining matches from the 2019-20 season kickstarted from May 16, 2020.



ICC bans use of saliva to shine a Cricket Ball

On Monday, the ICC Cricket Committee headed by Anil Kumble banned saliva use to shine the ball. Also, non-neutral umpires made a coronavirus-forced return for all international matches. Henceforth, players would be barred from using saliva to shine the ball. The decision has been taken today, as the Kumble-led Cricket Committee had a meeting via conference call that addressed issues like maintaining the condition of the match ball. The ICC says changes to regulations have been brought in to "to mitigate the risks posed by the COVID-19 virus and protect the safety of players and match officials".

India attends World Health Assembly

New Delhi: Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan will represent India at the 2-day World Health Assembly of the World Health Organisation (WHO) starting today. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHO has announced that the 73rd World Health Assembly will be held virtually. Coronavirus will be the agenda of the meeting, which will be attended by all 194 WHO member states plus observers. The agenda has been reduced to fit into two days, starting on May 18 and concluding no later on May 19, said a statement.

World Steel report: India's steel output declined by 65%

India's crude steel output declined over 65 per cent to 3.13 million tonnes (MT) during April, according to the World Steel Association. The government imposed a nationwide lockdown on March 25 to prevent the spread of the coronavirus pandemic which has impacted production, demand and supply of steel in India. The country had produced 9.02 MT of crude steel during the same month a year ago, the World Steel Association (worldsteel) said in a report. India had posted a 14 per cent decline in steel output at 8.65 MT in March as compare.

World Gold Council Report: 37% of Indian Women never bought gold

The World Gold Council's 'Retail Gold Insights: India Jewellery' report highlighted that 37% of Indian women have never bought gold jewellery in the past but would consider buying it in the future, presenting a significant potential audience for retail jewellers to capture. 60% of Indian women already own gold jewellery; it is the second most popular item among 'fashion and lifestyle' shoppers – preceded only by designer clothes/silk sarees.

Supreme Court's suo motu cognisance of Migrant Workers' plight

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday took suo motu cognisance of the plight of migrant workers during the lockdown after criticism by activists, lawyers and retired judges that the court was "insensitive" and had "bowed to the government" by refusing to admit PILs highlighting the condition of workers who are walking home or are being herded into trucks. A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, Sanjay K Kaul and M R Shah sought responses within 48 hours from the Centre.

NPCI launched Pai: An Artificial Intelligence Virtual Assistant

National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) said that it has launched an artificial intelligence (AI) based chatbot, PAi, to create awareness around its products like FASTag, RuPay, UPI, AePS on a real time basis. This is yet another NPCI's initiative to improve digital financial inclusion in India. The AI virtual assistant, PAi is available round the clock helping users with access to accurate information on NPCI products.

22nd Financial Stability and Development Council meeting chaired by Finance Minister

New Delhi: The Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday cautioned that the Covid-19 poses a serious threat to the stability of the global financial system as the ultimate impact of the crisis and the timing of recovery, is uncertain at this point of time. "While decisive monetary and fiscal policy actions aimed at containing the fallout from the pandemic have stabilised investor sentiment in the short-run.

Finance Minister launched instant Aadhaar based E-KYC

NEW DELHI : As announced in the Union Budget earlier, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman today formally launched the facility for instant allotment of PAN card using Aadhaar-based e-KYC. The facility is now available for all those Permanent Account Number (PAN) applicants who possess a valid Aadhaar number and have a mobile number registered in the UIDAI database. Issued on a near to real time basis, the allotment process is paperless and an electronic PAN (e-PAN) is issued to the applicants free of cost by the income tax department.

Emission Norms of L7 category of BS VI notified

NEW DELHI: The government has notified BS-VI emission norms for quadricycles, paving the way for higher production of the new category of vehicle that was introduced less than two years ago. "The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued notification regarding the emission norms for L7 (quadricycle) category for BS-VI. These norms are applicable from the date of notification. This notification completes the process of BS-VI for all category vehicles in India," the government said in a release on Sunday. The emission norms are on the lines of the European Union's World Motorcycle Test Cycle (WMTC), the release said.

Char Dham Highway Development Project: Chamba Tunnel inaugurated

Char Dham highway project achieves major milestone! Despite the challenges and restrictions due to countrywide lockdown, Chardham Pariyojna of the government has received a huge boost.



India and ADB sign 177 million USD to upgrade Maharashtra State Highways

MUMBAI: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday signed a USD 177 million loan to upgrade 450 km of state highways and major district roads in Maharashtra. "ADB and the Central government signed a USD 177 million loan to upgrade 450 km of state highways and major district roads in the state of Maharashtra," an official release said. Under the Maharashtra state road improvement project, two major district roads and 11 state highways.

Delimitation Commission holds meeting

NEW DELHI: The Delimitation Commission tasked with redrawing parliamentary and assembly seats of UT of Jammu & Kashmir, Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh had its second meeting on Thursday. It noted that information on details of state election commissioners had been received from the states concerned. Also nomination of associate members, as required under the Delimitation Act, 2002, was received from the Lok Sabha as well as assemblies of Assam and Manipur.

CIPET renamed as Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering and Technology

Central Institute of Plastics Engineering and Technology (CIPET) has been renamed as Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering and Technology (CIPET), a premier national institution under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India. The changed name has been registered under the Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act 1975 (Tamil Nadu Act 27 of 1975), a statement from the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers said.

Gol lifts ban on Paracetamol API exports

On Thursday, Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) declared in a statement that the Government of India has now lifted the restriction on active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) exports of paracetamol with immediate effect. Earlier, a restriction on the exports of API and medicines had been imposed by the government on March 03, 2020 due to COVID-19 outbreak. Accordingly, companies can now export the API.

Mizoram provides industrial status to Sports

The northeastern state of Mizoram has accorded 'industry' status to sports. On Friday, the Cabinet cleared the Sports and Youth Service department's proposal to recognise sports as an 'industry' in the state. "This is a historic decision since I have not heard any other state to do this," said state Sports minister Robert Romawia Royte, adding that the idea was first proposed in 2019 as part of the state sports policy by the ruling Mizo National Front government. According to him, the main aim of the decision is to professionalise sports in the state.

Sports Authority of India deposits Rs 30,000 in Khelo India Athletes accounts

NEW DELHI: The Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Sunday said that it has deposited Rs 30,000 each as out of pocket allowance in accounts of 2,749 Khelo India athletes, adding up to Rs 8.25 crore in all. "The money has been transferred to the bank accounts of the athletes on May 22, 2020. A total of 2893 athletes will be given the OPA for the period, with the funds to the remaining 144 athletes to be transferred by the end of May 2020," a press release from SAI said.

State Health Register to be launched by Karnataka Government

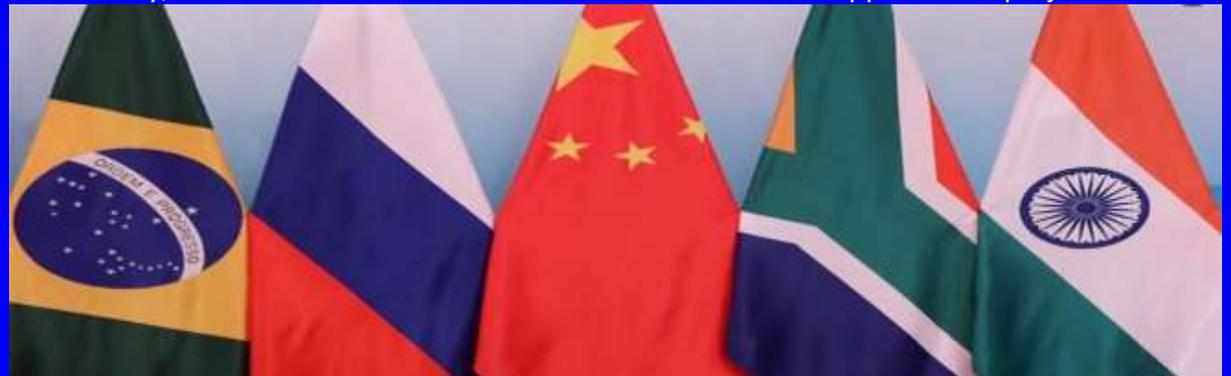
Karnataka government on May 27, 2020 announced that it will be launching a new project to maintain a 'State Health Register' comprising the database of all its citizens. The health register, first-of-its-kind, will be a robust and standardized health repository of all the citizens of the state. Elaborating on the same, Karnataka's Medical Education Minister K Sudhakar stated that the COVID-19 experience has demonstrated the need to maintain a robust, real-time repository of health data of each and every citizen.

UP Government implements Herbal Roads Project

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh will develop 800 km roads as Herbal belt with medicinal and herbal trees along both sides of the road. Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Maurya, who also holds the PWD portfolio, said that these herbal roads will have trees like Peepal, Neem, Sahjan along with other herb varieties like Brahmi, Ashwagandha and Jatropa. He said that these plants will provide raw material for the medicines and will also help in curbing the erosion of land.

India attends New Development Bank Governors meet

New Development Bank (NDB) has elected Marcos Troyjo from Brazil as its new president, as the term of KV Kamath comes to an end. Anil Kishora from India will be the new vice-president. Attending the special board of governors meeting of the NDB through a video conference on Wednesday, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said NDB has approved 55 projects.



Russia constructs its first Stealth Bomber

MOSCOW: Russia has begun building a prototype of its first stealth bomber which should be completed next year, the state-controlled TASS news agency reported on Tuesday, citing two sources in the military-industrial complex. When completed and operational the new plane will be able to carry an array of advanced missiles and bombs, including hypersonic weapons, TASS said.

European Union: 750 billion Euros announced as COVID-19 Recovery Fund

The big day has arrived the European Commission has laid out its vision for post-pandemic recovery funds, and it is worth 1.85 trillion euros. The plan relies on both the long-term EU budget (2021-27) and a special recovery fund. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is addressing the European Parliament, an effort to persuade MEPs who also get a say on the final plan. "This is Europe's moment," she said. "We either all go it alone...or we pave a strong path for our people and for the next generation

WHO suspended Hydroxychloroquine trials

The World Health Organization said on Monday it had temporarily suspended clinical trials of hydroxychloroquine as a potential treatment for coronavirus. The decision came after a study published in The Lancet medical journal last week suggested the drug could increase the risk of death among COVID-19 patients, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual press conference. Tedros said the executive group of the so-called Solidarity Trial.

United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the year award to India's major Suman Gawani

Major Suman Gawani, an Indian Army officer and woman peacekeeper who has served with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), has been selected for the prestigious United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award (2019). She has been awarded for her outstanding contribution to peacekeeping efforts in the UNMISS.



US joins G7 partnership on Artificial Intelligence

The US has joined an international panel for setting ethical guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence. The Trump administration had earlier dismissed the idea. White House's chief technology officer, Michael Kratsios, told The Associated Press on Thursday it is important to establish shared democratic principles as a counter to China's record of "twisting technology" in ways that threaten civil liberties. "Chinese technology companies are attempting to shape international standards on facial recognition and surveillance at the United Nations," he said.

9 Crore 60 lakh Farmers Benefitted under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN), a scheme launched by the government has benefitted a total of 9.67 crore farmers amid the lockdown. The central government further informed that an amount of more than 19 thousand crore rupees has also been released under the scheme in the last two months.



Rozgar Setu Scheme launched by Madhya Pradesh for skilled workers

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced the launch of the 'Rozgar Setu' scheme, saying it would help secure employment for skilled workers who have returned. "The State is the first to devise such a work plan. We are surveying skilled workers who were employed at industries elsewhere, but have now returned," said Mr. Chouhan. "We are identifying the skills they possess."

"AGNEEPRASTHA", the Missile Park: Foundation Stone laid

A 2 megawatt solar photovoltaic plant was commissioned at INS Kalinga, Visakhapatnam by Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command. This is in keeping with the initiative of the Government of India to promote solar power and the objective to achieve 100 GW of solar power by 2022 as part of the National Solar Mission, an official said.

J.K. Rowling announces "The Ickabog"

JK Rowling is to publish a new children's book, a fairy tale "about truth and the abuse of power" that she has kept in her attic for years, for free online for children in lockdown. The Ickabog, which is set in an imaginary land unrelated to any of Rowling's other works, will be serialised online from Tuesday afternoon, in 34 daily, free instalments. It will then be published as a book, ebook and audiobook in November, with Rowling's royalties to go to projects assisting groups impacted by the pandemic.



**Thank
You!!!**