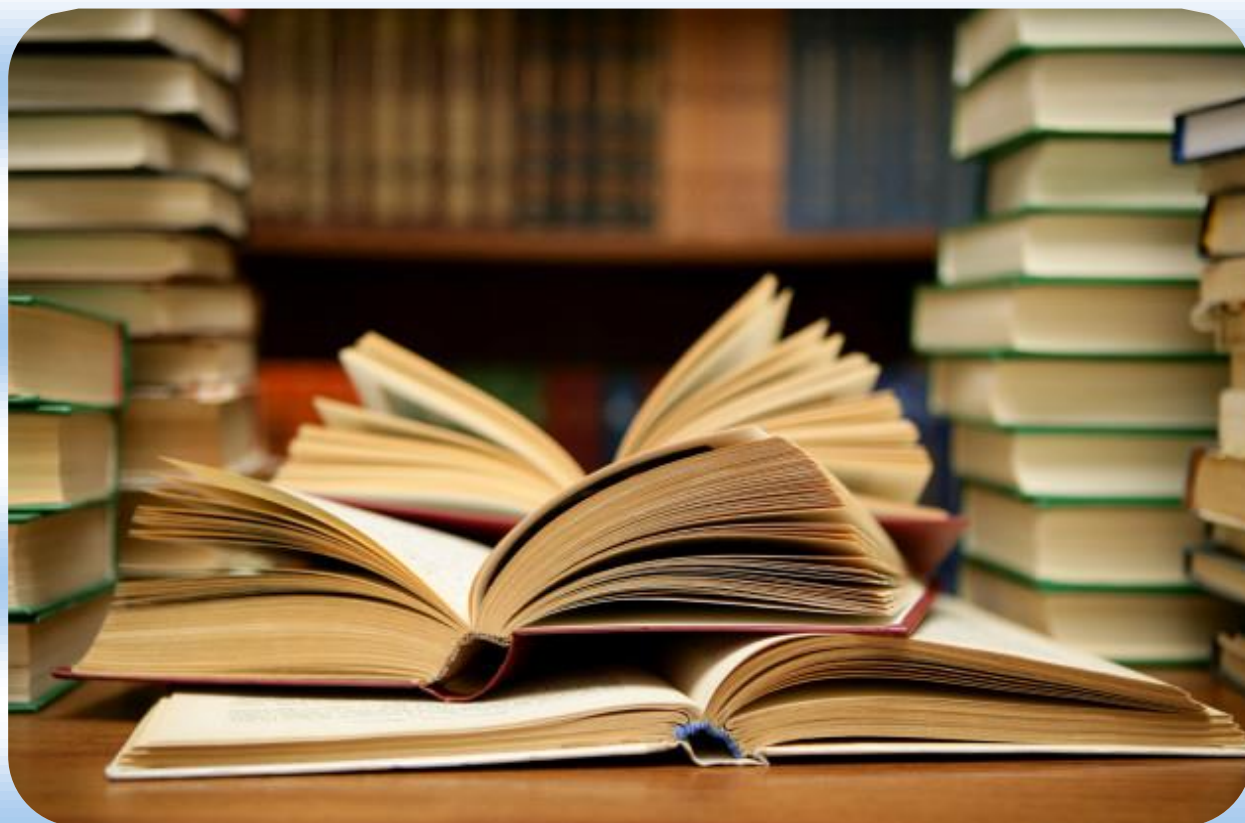


# LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA

## GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



# MAY-2021

# NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## *Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) 4.0*

In order to support Covid-hit MSMEs further, the government on Sunday announced a three-month extension of its Rs 3 lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to September 30, 2021, from June 30, 2021, or till guarantees for an amount of Rs 3 lakh crore are issued under the fourth revision of the scheme dubbed ECLGS 4.0. The Ministry of Finance also announced a 100 per cent guarantee cover to loans up to Rs 2 crore to hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, medical colleges for setting up on-site oxygen generation plants with the interest rate capped at 7.5 per cent.

## *PM-CARES for Children Scheme*

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday (May 29, 2021) announced to help the children who have been orphaned due to COVID-19 and said that they will be supported under the 'PM-CARES for Children' scheme.



## *Goa launches solar-based electrification programme*

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Sunday launched solar-based electrification programme for rural households in the state. This project will bring electricity through renewable energy to areas in Goa where grid connectivity is not feasible. "With a focus on delivering clean, affordable, and reliable energy to all, Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister of Goa, inaugurated a solar-based electrification programme for remote rural households in Goa," a CESL Statement said. The solar PV-based home lighting systems for households was inaugurated only two days after the agreement was signed between Convergence Energy Services Ltd (CESL) and Goa Energy Development Agency (GEDA).

### ***YUVA – Prime Minister's Scheme for mentoring young authors***

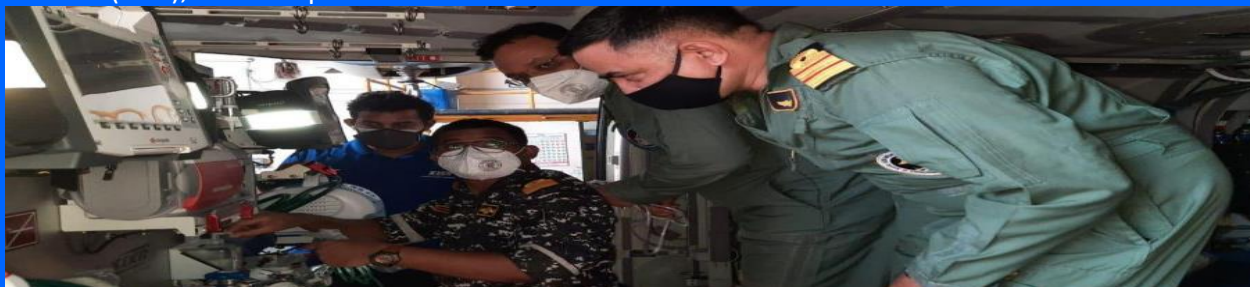
New Delhi: The Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education has launched a scheme today to train and mentor young authors. Termed YUVA (Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors), the Prime Minister's scheme seeks to mentor authors under the age of 30 and train them to promote reading, writing and book culture in the country, and project India and Indian writings globally. A consolidated scholarship of Rs50,000 per month for a period of six months per author will be paid under the YUVA Scheme.

### ***Additional benefits under ESIC & EPFO schemes for dependents of workers***

In a huge relief to workers who lost their earning member to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Labour ministry on Sunday announced a slew of benefits through ESIC and EPFO schemes to address the fear and anxiety of such workers about well-being of their family members. The social security cover by the Centre is "sought to be provided to the workers without any additional cost to the employer," the ministry said in a statement.

### ***Indian Navy installed medical ICU on Advanced Light Helicopter***

ANAJI: The Indian Navy has augmented its capacity to evacuate critical patients even in unfavourable weather conditions by fitting a medical intensive care unit (MICU) on-board an Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) at Goa's naval air station INS Hansa, an official said. The MICU has been installed on-board ALH Mk-III from INAS 323 at INS Hansa by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), a naval spokesman said in a media statement issued here.



### ***Public Sector Banks announce new loans***

Public Sector Banks (PSBs) have announced to provide unsecured loans of upto ₹5 lakh to individuals to meet their and family members' COVID-19 treatment cost. This comes in the wake of the ongoing second wave of the pandemic that has swept across the country unleashing untold miseries on families across income groups. This forms part of three new loan products announced by them on Sunday to provide fresh lending support to vaccine manufacturers, hospitals/dispensaries, pathology labs, manufacturers and suppliers of oxygen, ventilators, importers of vaccines & COVID related drugs logistics firms and individuals suffering from COVID-19.



### ***India to host 2022 FIFA under-17 Women's World Cup***

The U-17 women's World Cup will be held in India from October 11 to 30 next year, FIFA Council said on Thursday. India were earlier scheduled to host the 2020 U-17 World Cup but it was postponed to 2021 before being cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The governing body then handed the hosting rights of the 2022 edition to India last November. On the eve of the 71st FIFA Congress, the FIFA Council approved key dates for the international match calendars, including the dates of the 2022 U-17 world Cup in India.

### ***Air India Cyber-Attack***

The breach was first reported to the company in February. Details including passport and ticket information as well as credit-card data were compromised. But Air India said security details for credit cards - CVV or CVC numbers - were not stored on the server targeted. It is not immediately clear who was behind the attack.



### ***Cheetah to be re-introduced in India***

Cheetah, the world's fastest land animal which was declared extinct in India in 1952, is expected to be re-introduced into the country in November this year at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, state Forest Minister Vijay Shah said on Sunday. The country's last spotted cheetah died in Chhattisgarh in 1947 and it was declared extinct in the country in 1952. The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) some years back prepared a cheetah re-introduction project.



### ***Six Heritage Sites added to India's UNESCO World Heritage sites Tentative List***

Six sites, including the Ganga ghats in Varanasi, temples of Kancheepuram in Tamil Nadu and the Satpura Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, have been added to India's tentative list of UNESCO world heritage sites, Culture Minister Prahlaad Singh Patel said on Wednesday.



### ***Merger of DCCBs with StCBs***

The Reserve Bank on Monday said it will consider amalgamation of District Central Co-operative Banks (DCCBs) with State Cooperative Banks (StCBs) subject to various conditions, including that a proposal should be made by the state government concerned. The Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2020 has been notified for the StCBs and DCCBs with effect from April 1, 2021. Amalgamation of such banks need to be sanctioned by the Reserve Bank of India.

### ***Internet Explorer to retire in June 2022***

NEW DELHI : Microsoft is finally pulling the plug on its original Internet browser—the Internet Explorer. After a life cycle of over 25 years, the desktop application for Internet Explorer will be “retired” on 15 June 2022 and it will no longer receive support services from the company either. The company is encouraging users to shift to Microsoft Edge instead, which has legacy support for Internet Explorer-based websites built in.



### ***SEBI to appoint Forensic Auditors for Listed Firms***

Markets regulator Sebi is looking to appoint auditors for conducting forensic audits of financial statements of listed companies as part of efforts to curb frauds. In recent months, Sebi has ordered forensic audit of certain companies. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has invited applications from eligible CA (Chartered Accountant) firms "for empanelment to take up assignments relating to forensic audit of financial statements of listed companies", according to a public notice.

### ***Railway orders suspension of wrestler Sushil Kumar***

The Northern Railway issued an order on Tuesday suspending wrestler Sushil Kumar following his arrest by the Delhi Police in a murder case. Olympic medallist Kumar was arrested, along with his associate and co-accused Ajay, from outer Delhi's Mundka area on May 23 for his alleged involvement in the death of a 23-year-old wrestler at Chhatrasal Stadium. A senior commercial manager with the Northern Railway.

### ***Haryana Recovery of Damages to Property Act***

Haryana Governor S N Arya on Wednesday gave his assent to the Haryana Recovery of Damages to Property Act. Home Minister Anil Vij said, "The Haryana Recovery of Damages to Property Act' is being implemented in the state due to which any damage done to people's shops, vendor carts, houses, government offices, vehicles, buses and other public property in guise of any movement will be recovered from the protestors".

### ***Panel to examine Valuation of Services by Online Gaming companies***

The government has set up a panel of state ministers for better valuation of services of casinos, online gaming portal and race courses for levying goods and services tax (GST). The seven-member panel, convened by Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel, will also examine whether any change is required in the legal provision for better means of valuation of these services. The group of ministers (GoM) will "examine the issue of valuation of services provided by casinos, race courses, and online gaming portals and taxability of certain transactions in a casino.

### ***IIT Mandi reveals Key Protein Structure in Covid-19 Virus***

A team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology Mandi (IIT Mandi), led by Dr Rajanish Giri, Assistant Professor, School of Basic Sciences, have shed light on the part of structure of a key protein in the Covid-19 virus. This helps in understanding its mode of action, its role in the spread, severity of the disease and development of antiviral therapeutics. The team's recent findings have been published in the journal.

### ***Centre invites applications for Citizenship***

New Delhi: A year-and-a-half after it enacted the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that provided a fast track route to citizenship for non-Muslim communities from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Centre on Friday allowed Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, Christians and Buddhists from these three countries who are residing in 13 districts of India to apply for the host country's citizenship. However, the applications have been invited under the Citizenship Act of 1955 since the rules pertaining to the amended Act are yet to be finalised.

### ***IBF to be renamed as IBDF***

NEW DELHI: The Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF), the apex body of broadcasters, is being renamed Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation (IBDF), as it expands its purview to cover digital platforms to bring all digital over-the-top streaming firms under one roof, it said in a statement. IBDF is in the process of forming a new wholly-owned subsidiary to handle all matters pertaining to digital media, it added.

### ***Telecom Department permits 5G Technology and Spectrum Trials***

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) on Tuesday allowed mobile operators to conduct 5G trials in the country with equipment manufacturers they have tied up with, barring Chinese companies.



### ***S&P cuts India's GDP growth forecast to 9.8% for FY22***

S&P Global Ratings on Wednesday slashed India's GDP growth forecast for the current financial year to 9.8 per cent saying the second COVID wave may derail the budding recovery in the economy and credit conditions. The US-based rating agency in March had a 11 per cent GDP growth forecast for India for the April 2021-March 2022 fiscal on account of a fast economic reopening and fiscal stimulus. S&P, which currently has a 'BBB-' rating on India with a stable outlook, said the depth of the Indian economy's deceleration will determine the hit on its sovereign credit profile.

### ***RBI measures to boost economy***

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on May 5 announced a slew of measures to help the financial services industry tide over the second coronavirus wave that threatens economic recovery. "RBI has continued to show its commitment to remain dovish and accommodative till the uncertainty of COVID prevails," said Devang Shah, Co-Head-Fixed Income at Axis AMC. India is currently in the middle of the second wave of COVID that has once again brought life to a virtual halt. Lockdown like restrictions in several states pose a serious threat to the economy, which had just started to show green shoots of recovery after a fierce round one with the virus. As a result, global and domestic rating agencies have lowered their FY22 growth estimates of India.



### ***Intellectual Property Waiver for COVID Vaccines***

The United States on Wednesday announced support for waiving intellectual property protection for Covid-19 vaccines, saying extraordinary circumstances call for extraordinary measures. United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai said the US will pursue “text-based negotiations” on the waiver at the World Trade Organization (WTO). Text-based negotiations involve negotiators exchanging texts with their preferred wording and then thrashing out a consensus on the working — a fairly long-drawn affair.

### ***PayPal introduces digital Foreign Inward Remittance Advice (FIRA)***

PayPal, a global digital payments company, has introduced an automated process for receiving Foreign Inward Remittance Advice (FIRA) — a key document for Indian MSME exporters and freelancers that establishes proof of receipt of export proceeds in foreign currency from outside the country. At zero-cost, merchants will now be able to download their monthly digital FIRA issued by the bank, by simply logging into their PayPal account. This FIRA was otherwise coming at a cost close to ₹2,000 for every 20 international transactions.

### ***Plasma Therapy for COVID-19 Treatment dropped***

The use of convalescent plasma has been dropped from the recommended treatment guidelines for COVID-19, according to late Monday advisory from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The National Task Force of the ICMR, along with experts from the Health Ministry, periodically updates guidelines on recommended modes of treatment. Registered Doctors anywhere, however, aren’t bound by the Task Force recommendations.

### ***India’s first Agriculture Export Facilitation Centre set up at Pune***

Pune, 14th May 2021: The Mahratta Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA), in association with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), will launch India’s first and unique Agriculture Export Facilitation Centre on 15th May 2021. This Facilitation Centre will work as a one-stop-shop for the exporters in the agricultural sector. The Center would guide the prospective exporters on various relevant aspects through experts in areas like pesticide residue management, global gap certification.

### ***Government amends Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017***

Good news for policyholders. With a view to improve the working of the Insurance Ombudsman mechanism to facilitate resolution of complaints regarding deficiencies in insurance services in a timely, cost-effective and impartial manner, the government has notified comprehensive amendments to the Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017. The amended rules have enlarged the scope of complaints to Ombudsmen from only disputes earlier to deficiencies.



# INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## *Why WhatsApp sue Indian Government?*

WhatsApp has sued the Indian government over new internet laws which the company says will “severely undermine” the privacy of their users. The new IT laws, which have been described as oppressive and draconian, give the Indian government greater power to monitor online activity, including on encrypted apps such as WhatsApp and Signal.



## *US announces restrictions on Ethiopia and Eritrea*

The United States has announced visa restrictions on Ethiopian and Eritrean officials accused of increasing the six-month-old war in Ethiopia's Tigray region, saying those involved had “taken no meaningful steps to end hostilities”. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Sunday it was also imposing curbs on economic and security assistance to Ethiopia but humanitarian aid in areas such as health, food and education.

## *Singapore approves Covid Breath Test*

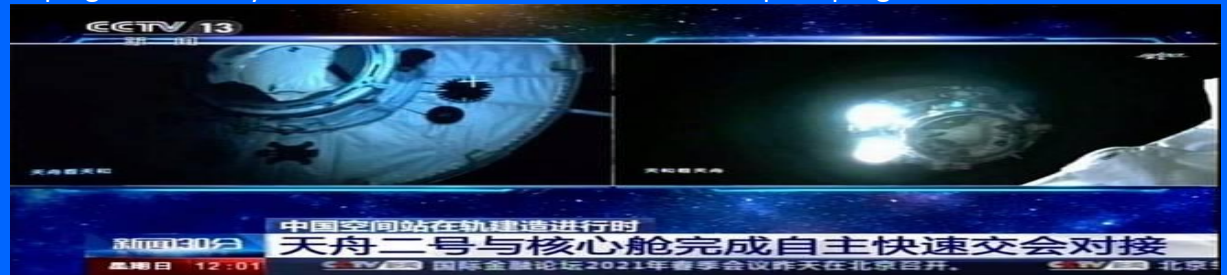
A breath test designed to detect Covid-19 and give accurate results within one minute has been approved for use in Singapore, the National University of Singapore said in a statement. The test, developed by NUS spin-off startup Breathonix, works much like a standard breathalyzer test that police might use to see if an erratic driver is drunk. A person blows into a one-way valve mouthpiece, and compounds in the person's breath.

## *Italy hosts the Global G 20 Health Summit*

A year ago, we were near the beginning of efforts to fight the pandemic. It was obvious then that it would require an unprecedented and truly global mobilization of scientific talent, financial resources, industrial agility, and political will to turn the pandemic around. Since then there have been some remarkable feats of progress. We have rapid diagnostic tests that can be used anywhere, and virtually no one would have been able to predict that in under a year.

### ***China to send Three Astronauts to Space Station***

China on Monday announced plans to send three male astronauts to its space station next month for a three-month stay, a day after the successful docking of a cargo spacecraft with it, hoping to achieve yet another milestone in its ambitious space programme.



### ***Hubble Captures Striking New Image of NGC 691***

NGC 691 is an unbarred spiral galaxy located some 125 million light-years away in the constellation of Aries. This galaxy was discovered by the German-born British astronomer William Herschel on November 13, 1786. It is the foremost member of the NGC 691 group, a collection of nine galaxies of varied shapes and colors. Also referred to as LEDA 6793, UGC 1305 and TC 448 in various astronomical catalogues, NGC 691 has a diameter of 130,000 light-years.



### ***A-76: World's largest iceberg breaks off of Antarctica***

A huge ice block has broken off from western Antarctica into the Weddell Sea, becoming the largest iceberg in the world and earning the name A-76. It is the latest in a series of large ice blocks to dislodge in a region acutely vulnerable to climate change, although scientists said in this case it appeared to be part of a natural polar cycle.



### ***China-Russia to begin the biggest Nuclear Power Project***

Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Wednesday hailed the nuclear cooperation between the two neighbours as they virtually attended the groundbreaking ceremony of the biggest nuclear energy project to build four nuclear power plants in China costing about USD 3 billion. The ceremony, which was attended by the two leaders via a video link, was held to mark the first day of construction of power units.

### ***IMF Proposes USD 50 Billion Global Vaccination Plan***

Washington: The International Monetary Fund has proposed a USD 50 billion global vaccination plan that would cover at least 40 per cent of the global population by the end of 2021 and at least 60 per cent by the first half of 2022. With strong and coordinated action now and with little in terms of financing relative to the outsized benefits the world can durably exit this unprecedented health and economic crisis, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said in her address to the G20 Health Summit.

### ***Pfizer-BioNTech to provide 2 billion Covid-19 vaccine to Poor Nations***

Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE will deliver two billion doses of their Covid-19 vaccine to developing nations over the next 18 months, Pfizer Chief Executive Albert Bourla said Friday, the latest move by vaccine makers confronting a push to temporarily waive their patents.



### ***G-7 Nations pledge to accelerate efforts against Global Warming***

Environment ministers from seven leading industrialised nations agreed Friday to accelerate efforts to slow global warming, including a commitment to end government support for new coal-fired power plants by the end of this year.



### ***China defends CPEC***

China on Monday again defended its controversial USD 60 billion CPEC project with Pakistan, disregarding India's protests as it is being laid through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, saying it is an economic initiative and has not affected its principled stand on the Kashmir issue. Leaders of China and Pakistan have praised the progress of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in recent days as the two close allies celebrated the establishment of 70 years of their diplomatic relations.

### ***IMF warns for 'Ricochet Impact***

(Bloomberg) -- Emerging-market nations' struggle to claw out of the pandemic-induced economic crisis can spill over to hurt the developed world, which should be doing all it can to ensure better access to vaccines and a more equitable recovery, the head of the International Monetary Fund said. Poorer nations are faced with the risk of interest rates increasing while their economies aren't growing.

### ***Amartya Sen conferred Spain's Top Award in Social Science***

Indian economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Kumar Sen has been conferred with Spain's top Princess of Asturias Award in the social sciences category, the Spanish prize foundation announced on Wednesday. Sen, 87, was selected out of the 41 candidatures from 20 nationalities put forward for the Social Sciences Award, the Princess of Asturias Foundation said in a press release.

### ***SpaceX launches 60 Starlink Broadband Satellites***

A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket on Sunday launched 60 Starlink internet satellites into orbit early and then stuck a landing at sea to cap a record 10th flight for the company's reusable booster. The veteran Falcon 9 rocket blasted off before dawn from Space Launch Complex 40 here at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station at 2:42 a.m. EDT (06.42 GMT), marking the company's 14th launch of the year.





### ***Bashar Al-Assad Re-Elected for 4th term***

Bashar al-Assad has been re-elected for a fourth term as president of war-torn Syria with 95.1 percent of the votes cast in government-held areas, official results have shown, after a vote dismissed by the opposition and Western powers as a sham.



### ***Hong Kong woman breaks record for fastest ascent of Everest***

It is a phrase she often repeated to her friends before recording the world's fastest ascent of Mount Everest by a woman last Sunday. Ms Tsang, 45, reached the top of the world's highest mountain from base camp in 25 hours and 50 minutes. That was fast enough to beat the previous record, set by a Nepalese climber in 2017, by more than 12 hours.



### ***Denmark laws to screen Foreign Investment***

Danish lawmakers have passed legislation to allow the screening of future foreign investments to ensure they don't pose a threat to national security, the business ministry said on Wednesday. The new legislation was developed in part following security concerns over a bid by China's Huawei to build Denmark's 5G network. Denmark's biggest telecoms operator, TDC, eventually picked Ericsson over Huawei for the job.

### ***SpaceX successfully lands its Starship rocket***

SpaceX flew the 15th prototype of its Starship fully reusable next-generation rocket today, with a test flight that included a successful climb to around 30,000 feet, as well as a controlled flip, descent and soft landing upright as planned. A very small fire appeared to break out at the base of the rocket shortly after landing but it was contained. The craft was powered by three Raptor rocket engines, which shut down in sequence prior to the vehicle reaching apogee (it's highest point, around 10km).

### ***China population grew at 0.53%***

China's slowest population growth in decades may be felt more acutely beyond its borders than within them. The economy will keep humming and incomes can continue to climb, albeit at a slower rate. The rest of us, however, will need to adjust to a persistently slacker pace of global expansion and the prospective ebbing of deflationary pressure. The caricature of China as an unlimited supplier of cheap labor holding down the cost of everything from dishwashers to dolls should be consigned to the history books.

### ***Rafael Nadal wins Italian Open, 2021***

Rafael Nadal on May 16, 2021, beat world number one Novak Djokovic and won a 10th Italian Open title in Rome. Nadal won through 7-5, 1-6, 6-3 against the top seed during a 2hr 49 minutes match on the clay court.



### ***US Gas Shortage 2021***

A sudden fuel shortage worsened across the eastern half of the United States on Wednesday after a cyberattack crippled a major pipeline, as long lines, sharp words and pumps gone dry greeted unhappy drivers from the Alabama foothills to the Chesapeake Bay. Although government and industry officials said the nation had plenty of fuel and the pipeline was set to resume operations in the evening, nervous drivers clogged gas stations and created shortages in parts or all of 11 states. At least 12,000 gas stations reported being completely empty, and the squeeze pushed the price of a gallon past \$3, its highest in years.

### ***Tianwen-1: Chinese Rover lands on Mars***

A Chinese spacecraft has landed on Mars, making China only the second country after the US to send a rover to the surface of the Red Planet. A China National Space Administration (CNSA) lander from the Tianwen-1, which has been in orbit since February, touched down on Utopia Planitia, a large plain in the northern hemisphere of Mars on Saturday at about 7 a.m. local time, according to reports by state media CCTV. The lander was carrying the Zhurong rover, named after an ancient Chinese god of fire, which will explore the surface near the landing site.

### *Simorgh Supercomputer*

Tehran, Iran – Iran has unveiled a supercomputer – its strongest till date – developed domestically by Tehran's Amirkabir University of Technology (AUT), according to the state-run news website IRNA. The supercomputer – named Simorgh after a mythical Persian bird – has a performance capacity of 0.56 petaflops at the moment and will reach one petaflops in two months.



### *Miss Universe 2020*

FLORIDA: Andrea Meza of Mexico has been crowned Miss Universe for the year 2020, besting contestants from 74 other countries, including India's Adline Castelino, who came in fourth at the beauty pageant. The 69th edition of the event, which was held on Sunday night at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood here, was a scaled-down affair in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

