3rd Week Current Affairs - March 2020
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BANKING & FINANCE

The 39th GST Council meeting was held

The 39th GST Council meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Smt Nirmala Sitharaman on 14 March in New Delhi. Union Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Thakur, along with Finance Ministers of States/UTs and seniors officers of the Ministry of Finance, participated in the meeting.

Highlights:
The officials discussed the issues faced by the taxpayers in the GST system. A summary of the recently observed IT issues, and the way forward to resolve them was submitted.

The meeting focused on smoothening the rollout of the new return system and ensured the transition to the new return system is made in an incremental manner.

The meeting addressed the compliance-related issues so that the problem of tax evasion and gaming of the system due to non-linking of FORM GSTR-1 and FORM GSTR-3B is addressed immediately.

The officials stated that in order to tackle and prevent the gaming of the system, implementation of Aadhaar authentication and spike rules would be initiated.

GST Council:
GST Council governs the tax rates, rules, and regulations in the country. It is chaired by the Finance Minister of India. The council consists of the finance ministers of the central government and all the states.

RBI to use swap transactions, LTRO to infuse liquidity

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that, in the wake of the epidemic Covid-19, the central bank would use Forex swap and long-term repo operations (LTROs) to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 on the Indian Economy.

Highlights:
RBI will conduct a sell/buy swap auction worth $2 billion to provide dollar liquidity. RBI also stated that it would not hesitate to persist with LTROs to infuse long-term rupee liquidity, amounting to Rs.1 lakh crore.
RBI is to undertake another six-month US dollar sell/buy swap auction that aggregates to $2 billion on 23 March. The move by RBI aims to provide liquidity to the foreign exchange market.

RBI is to conduct LTRO in multiple tranches of appropriate sizes up to a total amount of Rs.1 lakh crore at the policy repo rate. It aims to counterbalance the domestic liquidity effects of the swap and to improve monetary policy transmission further.

**SBI reduced FD rates, MCLRs rates for a second time in a month**

*State Bank of India* (SBI) has announced a reduction in its Marginal Cost of Funds based Lending Rates (MCLR) up to 15 basis points (bps) across tenors. This is the second time the lender is announcing the rate cut in its fixed deposit (FD) interest rates. This is the second reduction in a month and the tenth cut in the current fiscal year.

**Highlights:**
- SBI has reduced retail term deposits (less than Rs.2 crore) by 10 to 50 bps for a few tenors. The new rates for home loans and FDs took effect from 10 March.
- The one-year MCLR reduced to 7.75% from 7.85% with effect from 10 March 2020.
- EMIs on eligible home loan accounts that are linked to MCLR will come down by around Rs.7 per 1 lakh on a 30-year loan. It also said that EMIs on car loans would also be reduced by Rs.5 per 1 lakh on a seven-year loan.
- **SBI's FD rates** have been reduced by 10-50 bps due to adequate liquidity in the system. It had reduced the interest rates applicable to retail term deposit by 10 bps for maturities of one year and above, and by 50 bps for the rates up to 45 days. SBI also reduced FD rates by 15 bps for deposits with tenors of 180 days and above.

**RBI chalks out contingency plan for smooth functioning of services**

*Reserve Bank of India* (RBI) put in place a contingency plan to ensure that crucial information technology (IT) services for the delivery of digital banking, treasury services. It includes measures to prepare for anticipated disruptions, ensure smooth flow of operations and staffing, identify critical resources, and form crisis management groups while keeping all staff insulated from exposure to the virus.
NEFT
This plan launched to ensure continuity of critical services like National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT), Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS), e-Kuber for government transactions, and so on. The BCP ensures that all critical functions of the financial system continue to be available to individuals, businesses, and governments under all circumstances.

Central Bank
RBI has created a team of 37 officials comprising key personnel from essential functions like debt management, reserve management, monetary operations, and 113 officials from service providers, and moved them to a hotel near the primary data center (DC). The central bank's DC runs critical systems that operate payments across different segments. Typically, around 600 personnel of third-party service providers are deployed at DCs for various IT and non-IT services, apart from 60 officials from the bank. As per the plan, the RBI team and hotel staff isolated to ensure their safety and health.RBI made similar arrangements at other DCs to run systems with the maximum services possible. The central bank also asked other banks to put in place BCPs to prevent any disruptions of services.

RBI extends restrictions on PMC Bank for three more months
Reserve bank of India extended the regulatory restrictions on Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank (PMC) Bank by another three months. The central bank also added that it has been in talks with various authorities for the quick sale of securities and recoveries of loans. The validity of the directive dated 23 September 2019, stands modified from 23 March 2020 to 22 June 2020.
RBI imposed restrictions on PMC bank under Section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act. This was aimed at preventing a run on the bank that could end up endangering the stability of the entire financial system because of a contagion effect.These curbs were put in place after the central bank saw gross under-reporting of bad loans, financial irregularities by the bank's officials, and failure of internal controls and systems.
RBI superseded the board and the management of the bank and appointed an ex-RBI official as the administrator at the bank.RBI has offered a plan where depositors can invest in a bond called innovative perpetual deposit instrument (IPDI) with a lock-in period of 10 years.The extension of the restrictions comes at a
time when RBI and government put in place a bailout package for Yes Bank in no
time, while it still has not succeeded in doing so in the case of PMC due to the
constraints of dual regulation. Regulation of urban cooperative banks is split
between the RBI and the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. In contrast, that of
smaller co-operative banks are divided between National Bank for Agriculture and
Rural Development (Nabard) and RCS. RCS reports to the central government.

**DBS Bank, Bharti AXA join hands for insurance plan covering Covid-19**

**DBS Bank India** tied-up with **Bharti AXA** to roll out a complimentary insurance
plan covering all medical conditions. The plan would cover all medical conditions,
including Covid-19, and up to 10 days of hospitalization, with a cover of Rs 5,000
per day, for 30 days, DBS Bank India said in a release.

DBS customers can purchase health insurance products that are currently offered on
the digibank app through their general insurance partners. The bank is conducting
periodic meetings with its insurance partners to ensure seamless and end-to-end
online access to these facilities and improvisation to the products. The guarantee of
payments for hassle-free hospitalization and arrangement of emergency medical
evacuation for NRIs with dependents in the country.
INTERNATIONAL

UNCTAD reports Coronavirus outbreak cost global economy up to USD 2 trillion

The UN's trade and development agency United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reported that the coronavirus (Covid-19) cost the global economy up to $2 trillion in 2019. The announcement was made by Richard Kozul-Wright, Director, Division on Globalization and Development Strategies at UNCTAD.

Report:
As per the report, the epidemic caused a recession in some countries and depress global annual growth to below 2.5%.

The economic uncertainty has likely cost the global economy $1 trillion in 2020. A $220 billion hit the developing countries, excluding China. The most badly affected economies because of the epidemic are oil-exporting countries. They lost more than 1% point of growth and those with strong trade linkages to the initially shocked economies.

Also, growth decelerations between 0.7% and 0.9% are likely to occur in the American countries such as Canada, Mexico, and the Central American region and countries in the East and South Asia, and immediacy of the European Union.

PM Narendra Modi to participate 100th birth Anniversary celebrations of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to participate in the 100th birth Anniversary celebrations of 'Jatir Pita' Bangabandhu, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in Bangladesh on 17 March (through video message). Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19), the planned events will be held without any public gatherings.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman:
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is popularly known as Bangabandhu by the people of Bangladesh. He was born on 17 March 1920 at Tungipara, Bengal Presidency, British India. He was a leading figure of the Awami League, which was founded as an East Pakistan-based political party in Pakistan in 1949. He served as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, and then as the President of Bangladesh. He was assassinated on 15 August 1975. His daughter Sheikh Hasina is the current leader
First human trial of a vaccine to protect against COVID-19 began in the US

The first human trial of a vaccine against coronavirus (COVID-19) began at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute (KPWHRI) in Seattle, the US.

Covid-19 vaccine trial:
The vaccine is called mRNA-1273. The vaccine has shown promise in animal models.

It was developed by NIAID scientists and their collaborators at the biotechnology company Moderna, Inc., based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

A 43-year-old woman from Seattle received the first dose.

The vaccine contains a harmless genetic code copied from the virus that causes the disease. It cannot cause COVID-19.

The trial will enroll 45 healthy adult volunteers over approximately six weeks.

The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) supported the manufacturing of the vaccine candidate for the Phase 1 clinical trial.

The study participants will receive two doses of the vaccine via intramuscular injection in the upper arm approximately 28 days apart.

Participants will return to the clinic for follow-up visits between vaccinations and for additional visits across the span of a year after the second shot.

The participants will be monitored by the Clinicians for common vaccination symptoms, such as soreness at the injection site or fever, as well as any other medical issues.

A safety monitoring committee will also periodically review trial data and advise NIAID.

Virtual G20 leaders summit to be held in March

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks (through telephone call) with the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, His Royal Highness Mohammed bin Salman. The two leaders discussed the global situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Highlights:
The leaders emphasized the need for coordinated efforts to adequately address the global challenge.

Discussion on Covid-19, which impacted the health and well-being of several hundred thousand people, was held.

Prime Minister Modi proposed a virtual conference with the G20 leaders.

His Highness, Mohammed bin Salman agreed to the exercise at the level of G20 leaders. At present, Saudi Arabia holds the Chair of G20.

The G20 leaders' summit will be held in March 2020.

It is expected that it would be useful at a global scale, both for discussing specific measures to address the challenges posed by the global outbreak of COVID-19 and also to instill confidence in the global populace.

**Saudi Arabia registers 70 new COVID-19 cases bringing total to 344**

**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)** has registered 70 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the total number of infected cases to 344. Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Health stated that among the new infections were 11 cases coming from Morocco, India, Jordan, the Philippines, Britain, the UAE, and Switzerland. They were taken directly from airports to quarantine in hospitals. The remaining 58 cases involved transmission from persons already infected, who were attending social occasions, such as marriage parties, condolence offerings, and family meetings.

**UN releases World Happiness Report 2020**

**United Nations** released the World Happiness Report 2020. The World Happiness Report ranks **156 countries** by how happy their citizens perceive themselves. The report is a landmark survey of the state of global happiness. This is the 8th edition of the World Happiness Report. The special focus of the World Happiness Report 2020 was on environments for happiness, which emphasizes more specifically on social environments for happiness, as reflected by the quality of personal social connections and social institutions.

World Happiness Report 2020 covers the period of 2017-2019 and analyses the countries on the following **six variables:**

- GDP per capita
- Social support
Healthy life expectancy
Freedom to make life choices
Generosity
Perceptions of corruption

**Ranking of countries as per the World Happiness Report 2020:**
1. Finland
2. Denmark
3. Switzerland
4. Iceland
5. Norway
6. Netherlands
7. Sweden
8. New Zealand
9. Austria
10. Luxembourg
144. India
INDIAN AFFAIRS

Minister Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated ROPAX Service from Bhaucha Dhakka to Mandwa

Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, the Union Minister of State for Shipping (I/C), visited ROPAX (roll-on/roll-off passenger) service at Bhaucha Dhakka, Maharashtra on 15 March. He visited ROPAX terminal and inspected the facilities created for the passengers as the ROPAX Service from Bhaucha Dhakka to Mandwa commences.

ROPAX:
ROPAX service is a Water Transport Service Project that functions under Eastern Waterfront Development.
The service reduces travel time (from 3-4 hours to just one hour), vehicular emission and traffic on the road.
Around 15 lakh passengers commute annually by catamarans and launches from Gateway of India to Mandwa.
The importance of the roadway was recognized by Mumbai Port Trust and Maharashtra Maritime Board, and with Government support decided to start ROPAX service from Bhaucha Dhakka (Mumbai to Mandwa).
Also, Mumbai Port Trust has developed ROPAX jetty and terminal facilities at Bhaucha Dhakka (Ferry Wharf) at the cost of Rs.31 crores. Maharashtra Maritime Board has developed Breakwater, ROPAX jetty, and terminal facilities at Mandwa at the cost of Rs.135 crores.
It will reduce road traffic from Mumbai to Alibag/Goa to a certain extent. It will also reduce fuel consumption and vehicular emission, a step towards reducing Carbon Footprint.

Wings India 2020 concluded in Hyderabad

Ministry of Civil Aviation is to expand various factors, including Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs), modern airports, FDI in domestic airlines, advanced IT in order to increase the regional connectivity across the country. The information was passed by Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, the Union Minister (I/C) of Civil Aviation at the "Wings India 2020" in Hyderabad. GoI also plans to bring aviation turbine fuel
under Goods and Services Tax (GST), and by and large, there is an acknowledgment from across states to make it happen.

**Wings India 2020:**
The International conference and exhibition on the Civil Aviation sector Wings India 2020 was held from 12-15 March at Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad, India. It was organized by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Airports Authority of India (AAI) along with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

**Highlights:**
The delegates discussed the domestic traffic that has grown 14 times in the last 18 years. Total traffic has grown 8.2 times, including international traffic.

It highlighted the increasing connectivity through UDAN Scheme, which has helped the per capita trips to rise from 0.1 per person to 0.5 per person.

Swachhta Pakhwada Awards 2019 were announced during the conference.

As per FICCI data, an aircraft lands or takes off every minute, and it will reach 1 billion passengers in India.

The conference focused on **Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul (MRO) infrastructure** that builds 100% of Indian aircraft being serviced from India, in India, and beyond India.

Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), along with FICCI, has agreed to ensure 100% of aircraft have parts or manufacturing components from India by 2040.

Also, four MoUs were signed between various stakeholders. It includes:

1) Exchange of Tri-partite MoU under **MoCA Krishi Udaan Scheme by Ras-Al-Khaimah International Airport**, GMR Hyderabad International Airport, and SpiceJet Ltd
2) MoU signed between Government of Telangana, GMR Hyderabad International Airport and Airbus BizLabs
3) MoU signed between Government of Telangana and DJI
4) MoU signed between Government of Telangana, Asia Pacific FTO, and Marut Drones

**Participants:**
Delegations including Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Shri K T Rama Rao, Shri Arvind Singh, Chairman, AAI, and Shri Anand Stanley, Chairman FICCI, Civil Aviation Committee and Managing Director, Airbus India along with over 1000 participants,
including Airports agencies, Flight Operations/Transportation Government, Flight/Simulator Training, Head of Department, among others, participated in the event.

**R K Singh launched the new website of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy**

The Minister of State (I/C) for Power and New and Renewable Energy Shri R K Singh launched the new website of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy on 14 March. He directed that the sectoral updation of the site should be personally ensured at the senior level so that it maintains pace with time.

**New Website:**

The website is hosted by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) server. The new website was developed with an aim to look into the present need for quick and accurate information dissemination needs of the Ministry with the latest techniques to make it more informative, interactive, and user-friendly, including persons with visual disabilities.

The responsive design of the website will enable ease of access from various devices, including mobile phones.

The website will optimized user interface, three-click interfaces, Rubik's cube structure, and improvised search options.

The website has been designed with a Structured back end content management system (CMS) to manage the website with minimum sources and less time-consuming.

The website has additional portals such as Akshay Urja Portal and India Renewable Idea Exchange (IRIX).

It provides well identifiable links for all the activities of the Ministry to provide the information at ease.

Two language interfaces are provided on the website to make the contents reachable to a wider public. Ministry's social media such as Facebook, youtube, and twitter are linked on the homepage of the web site.

**Centre to introduce Industrial Policy to boost economic development of JK**

Centre is to introduce an Industrial Policy for the rapid economic development of
Jammu and Kashmir, soo, The information was announced by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

**Highlights:**

- J&K attracts **Rs.13,000 crore** for the last 70 years. With the new policy, GoI aims to **triple the investment by 2024** in the region.
- Government has assured to take all steps for the overall development of the region.
- Central Government works with all sections of the society to realize the hopes of **statehood for J&K** at an early opportunity.
- A reasonable Economic Development Policy will be drafted soon after widespread consultation.
- A **Commission will be set up** soon for the implementation of the policy in the UT. The policy will reach **Gujjars, nomads, and other communities.**

**Jammu and Kashmir:**

- **Formed as UT on:** 31 October 2019
- **Capital:** Srinagar (May-October), Jammu (November-April)
- **Lieutenant Governor:** Girish Chandra Murmu
- **Districts:** 22

**CJI ruled out complete shutdown of SC and other courts**

The **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** ruled out the complete shutdown of the **Supreme court (SC)** and other courts. SC is to launch virtual courts. These virtual courts will hold trials in the top court, and it will be limited. SC commenced on 16 March 2020.

**Highlights:**

- Also, **Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA)** and **Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association (SCAORA)** were directed to ensure proper communications with the members of the bar with regard to the awareness of self-discipline and also motivate the members to disclose and self-restrain from attending courts.
- **Sick persons** with symptoms of cough and cold were asked not to attend court.
- Members of the bar should be prepared to accept and **promote the e-filing and video conference** of court halls.
- No adverse orders are to pass, and adjournments will be granted leniently.
Parliamentary panel reported annual post-harvest loss in fisheries

A Parliamentary panel reported that the Fisheries Sector suffered a high Post-harvest loss of Rs.61,000 crore. The report stated that the Marine Fisheries has a loss of Rs.15,000 crore, and both Marine and Inland Fisheries had a loss of Rs.61,000 crore.

Report:

The report highlighted that the possible cause for Post-harvest losses is faulty handling practices, inordinate delay in packing and transportation, lack of proper cold storage facilities, and lack of technological know-how for harvesting fishes.

The Committee recommended modernizing the existing harbours and establish more cold storage facilities.

The panel suggested ensuring the availability of more refrigerated trucks and vans for transportation of fishes.

It also urged GoI to allocate sufficient funds to the Fisheries Department so that the Post-harvest losses can be minimized and hence safeguarding the interest of various stakeholders in the Fisheries Sector.

During the year 2018-19, the total fish production in India stood at around 13.42 million metric tonnes (MMT). Out of the total, marine fisheries contributed 3.71 MMTs. During 2018-19, the export of marine products stood at nearly 1.4 MMTs and was valued at Rs.46,589 crore.

India pledged USD 10 million toward a Covid-19 emergency fund

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosted a video-conference meet of leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) member nations to tackle the novel coronavirus (Covid-19).

Highlights:

The conference witnessed the participation of leaders of all SAARC countries.

PM Modi proposed for Covid-19 emergency fund.

India pledged $10 million toward a Covid-19 emergency fund and planned to put together a rapid response team of doctors and specialists for SAARC nations.

India suggested Integrated Disease Surveillance Portal (IDSP) that is currently being used to detect infected patients and contact tracing.

The leaders proposed that health secretaries and experts from all SAARC member
nations should coordinate to monitor and curb the spread of Covid-19.

**Centre urges people to share solutions for COVID-19 on MyGovIndia**

**Government of India** has urged the people to share technology-driven solutions for COVID-19 on **MyGovIndia (@mygovindia)**. The information was announced was made by PM Narendra Modi. The aim is to harness innovation for a healthier planet. A lot of people have been sharing technology-driven solutions for COVID-19. It is believed that efforts might help many.

**MyGovIndia:**

MyGovIndia is an innovative platform where the citizen can engage themselves with the Government of India. The platform was launched on 26 July 2014 by **PM Narendra Modi**. The portal aims to make the people contribute their ideas and views towards good governance. MyGov platform has kept the citizens engaged in important policy issues and governance, including **Clean Ganga, Girl Child Education, Skill Development, and Healthy India**, among others.

Currently, more than **9.5 million users** have contributed their ideas through discussions and also participate through the various earmarked tasks. The initiative aims to culminate in a mass movement towards self-governance. The major attributes of the platforms are discussion, **tasks, talks, polls, and blogs** on various groups based on diverse governance and public policy issues. Also, more than 10,000 posts per week are posted on various issues that are analyzed and put together as suggestions for the concerned departments who are able to transform them into actionable agenda.

**GoI announced blanket travel ban in response to Coronavirus**

**Government of India** has suspended **visas for visitors** from all other countries for at least a month in response to the coronavirus pandemic. India has drastically limited the number of people entering the country. The announcement was approved and announced by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**. The blanket ban by India was criticized by the World Health Organization (WHO).

**Ban:**

India has banned travellers from the **European Union (EU)**, Turkey and the **United Kingdom (UK)** are prohibited from entering India between 18-31 March.
The ban on EU includes 27 countries across Europe and European free trade association's (EFTA) four members Switzerland, Norway, Liechtenstein, and Iceland.

The airlines have been urged to enforce the move at the port of initial departure.

The measure effectively bans all tourism to India until at least 15 April.

The announcement came as the number of coronavirus cases increased to more than 100 (as on 15 March 2020) in India.

MoCA flagged off first-ever Indore-Kishangarh flight under UDAN

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) flagged off the first-ever thrice-weekly flight from Indore (Madhya Pradesh) to Kishangarh (Ajmer, Rajasthan) on 16 March Under the UDAN scheme of Government of India.

Indore-Kishangarh flight:

The tender for the Indore-Kishangarh route during the UDAN 3 bidding process was awarded to Star Air. The aim is to connect the unconnected regions.

The distance between Indore and Kishangarh is around 550 km (approx.).

The time taken for the people to reach Kishangarh from Indore by road is more than 10 hours. The flight operations on this route will make the travel easy for the people and visit the famous Nine Planets Temple, Pushkar Lake, Phool Mahal Palace, Roopangarh Fort, Ajmer Sharif Dargah, etc.

Kishangarh is famously known as the 'Marble City of India.' It is a big market for red chilies.

The people can now travel between Belagavi and Kishangarh in just 3 hours.

Under RCS-UDAN, Star Air already operates direct flights from Belagavi to Indore.

MoCA has operationalized 268 routes under the UDAN scheme.

UGC to set up 10 Chairs in different universities for research activities

The University Grants Commission (UGC) is to set up 10 Chairs in different fields with an aim to carry out research activities to encourage women. UGC will implement it with the assistance of UGC, Ministry of Women and Child Development.
About Initiative:
The initiative of UGS is called "Establishment of Chairs in the University in the Name of Eminent Women Administrators/ Artists/ Scientists/ Social reformers."
The move aims to establish the Chairs in the name of eminent women from India. It is expected that it will inspire women to pursue higher education and to achieve excellence in their various areas of work.
The initiative will highlight and celebrate women achievers of the country and motivate the young girls and women towards pursuing higher studies.

GoI saves more than Rs.12 crore pa after implementing 2013 DPCO

Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers reported that the Ministry had saved the total saving of Rs.12,447 crores per annum to the public after the implementation of the DPCO, 2013. The information was passed by the Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers, Shri. D.V. Sadananda Gowda.

DPCO, 2013:
According to the provisions of Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013 (DPCO, 2013), the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) was empowered to fix the ceiling price of scheduled formulations adopted from the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) and new drugs.
It also monitors the prices of non-scheduled formulation so that their maximum retail price (MRP) is not increased by more than 10% of MRP during the preceding twelve months.
NPPA also fixed the ceiling prices of 530 scheduled formulations under NLEM, 2011.
The Schedule-I of the DPCO, 2013, as amended by adopting NLEM, 2015.
The NPPA also fixed the ceiling prices of 866 scheduled formulations under NLEM, 2015.
NPPA fixed prices of 106 Anti-diabetic and Cardiovascular drugs under DPCO, 2013 in Public interest.
NPPA capped the Trade Margin 42 select Anti-cancer medicines under Trade Margin Rationalization, and the price of above 500 brands of medicines was reduced up to 90%.

National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA):
Formed on: 1997
Headquarters: New Delhi, India
Chairman: Bhupendra Singh
NPPA functions under the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers. NPPA controls and fixes the prices of pharmaceutical drugs in India.

Health Ministry issued guidelines for notifying coronavirus

The Health Ministry issued guidelines for notifying COVID-19 in private facilities. The move is to strengthen containment measures amid rising cases of coronavirus.

**Guideline Highlights:**

- Each case of coronavirus should be isolated and provided appropriate treatment, and their contacts should be traced at the earliest to break the chain of transmission.
- It is mandatory for all Government and Private hospitals, medical officers in government health institutions, and registered private medical practitioners to notify such person(s) with COVID-19 affected person too concerned district surveillance unit.
- All practitioners should get the self-declaration forms of people having a travel history of COVID-19 affected countries as per the extant guidelines and are falling under the case definition of coronavirus (suspect/case).
- If the person has any such history in the last 14 days and is symptomatic as per the case definition of COVID-19, the person must be isolated in the hospital and will be tested for the disease as per the protocol.
- Also, the information of all such cases should be given to the state helpline number and also to national helpline 1075.

JK Epidemic Disease Regulations, 2020 extended to both Jammu and Kashmir

The Union Territory Jammu and Kashmir Administration have extended J&K Epidemic Disease Regulations, 2020 to both Jammu and Kashmir Divisions. The aim is to step up efforts to tackle the Coronavirus (COVID-19) disease. The Regulations were extended under the orders of Lieutenant Governor Girish Chandra Murmu.

**Highlights:**
The regulation defines powers, duties, and responsibilities to the surveillance personnel, duties, and responsibilities of Medical Officers and Practitioners, Enforcement, and Offences.

J&K administration has urged the general public to maintain social distancing as it is the key to stop and prevent the spread of COVID-19 from those who are infected. People are advised not to panic and take care of health and protect others.

As per the Media Bulletin on COVID-19, 2,615 suspected cases were enlisted for surveillance, and so far, three cases have tested positive in J&K. Also, 113 samples have been sent for testing, of which 105 tested as negative, and three cases have tested positive while reports of five cases are pending.

GoI stated National e-commerce policy is still under consideration

Government is still considering the drafting of national e-commerce policy, and no timeline about its launch has been released. The information was announced by the Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on 18 March 2020.

Aim:
The National e-commerce policy aims to empower domestic entrepreneurs and to encourage Make in India and safeguard interests of the consumers and facilitating job creation.

National e-commerce policy:
The draft policy aims to create a facilitative regulatory environment for the growth of the e-commerce sector.

Several meetings have been held at the level of Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry, and Internal Trade (DPIIT) with different stakeholders, including major e-commerce companies, industry associations, think-tanks, startups, academicians, etc.

To draft the provisions of the policy, GoI held sessions with export promotion councils, data centre providers, logistics companies, to discuss the issues faced by the sector.

Background:
On 23 February 2019, GoI introduced the first draft of the National e-Commerce policy in the public domain for suggestions. It received more than 120 stakeholders, including Indian and foreign, industry associations, think tanks, foreign governments. Following this, it conducted a series of meetings to contain the
provisions for the policy.

Microsoft India, NASSCOM Foundation launch Innovate for an Accessible India campaign to empower PwDs

Microsoft India and NASSCOM Foundation announced an "Innovate for an Accessible India campaign" to empower persons with disabilities (PwDs).

Organizing Team:
The campaign is supported by in partnership with the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Department of Science & Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology and National Research and Education Network under MeitY (ERNET).

Innovate for an Accessible India campaign:
The campaign aims to create tools and technology that are required for better integration of PwDs into society. This is aimed to be done by giving them access to equal opportunities.

The campaign will be an aggregator of workable technology solutions developed using Microsoft Cloud, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and other technologies that address gaps PwDs face in acquiring services and support in education, skill-building, employment, mobility, rehabilitation, and other government services.

The program is open to students, startups, impact organizations, and NGOs who want to build customized solutions that address challenges faced by people with disabilities across the 21 officially recognized disabilities.

The campaign focuses on addressing are e-governance and access, education, skilling and Livelihood, mobility, and health.

Meeting on Research in Indian Traditional Knowledge Systems was held in Delhi

A Meeting on Research in Indian Traditional Knowledge Systems was held in Delhi on 18 March. The meeting was chaired by the Union Human Resource Development Minister, Mr. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. He reviewed the ongoing research works of different institutions on the traditional knowledge system.

Aim:
The main objective of the meeting is to ensure the development of society by coordinating the ancient and modern genres of knowledge.

**Highlights:**
The meeting highlighted the traditional Indian knowledge system, which stood out in the fields of science, technology, art, architecture, culture, mathematics, medicine, etc.

It urged the participants to solve the present-day problems by connecting traditional knowledge to modern research and innovation.

The meeting appealed for steps to promote research in traditional Indian knowledge and Inter-disciplinary research.

It recommended for flexibility in education models, materials, financial assistance to invite the brightest students and professors for research.

**NHA ties up with Private hospitals to fight against Coronavirus**

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) signed an agreement with the National Health Authority (NHA). The aim is to identify capacities to admit patients from among 19,840 empanelled hospitals under the scheme. Also, on 18 March, the Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan chaired a high-level review meeting with chiefs of All India Institute of Medical Sciences, RML, and Safdarjung Hospital to examine infrastructure preparedness.

**Measures:**

MoHFW is consulting with the private sector and non-profit hospitals across the country to ramp up facilities.

The Ministry is in the process of shortlisting tertiary care units that are accredited to assist in the process.

The NHA is planning the rates to include Covid-19 packages in Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY).

India has recorded 168 confirmed cases to date, of which 14 have been cured, and three have died.

**Centre issued notification for adaptation of 37 central laws in JK**

The government of India issued a gazette notification for the adaptation of 37 central laws in the Concurrent List for the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and...
Kashmir. The gazette notification was issued by the Department of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh Affairs of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. It comes into force with immediate effect.

**Highlights:**
The Concurrent List contains the 37 central laws, including the representation of people Act, the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, the protection of human rights Act, the prevention of corruption act, and the Indian Penal Code (IPC) among others.

The central laws are necessary to adapt as they are made under the Concurrent List with required modifications and amendments.

It will ensure administrative effectiveness and smooth transition with respect to UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

It will also remove any ambiguity in their application in line with the Constitution of India.

**Background:**
On 26 February, the Union Cabinet approved to issue an order which will allow 37 central laws in the Concurrent List to be implemented in the UT of J&K. In August 2019, the Indian government announced the abrogation of Article 370 provisions for J&K and bifurcated the state into two Union territories, namely Jammu and Ladakh UTs.

**Indian Navy sets up Quarantine Camp at INS Vishwakarma**

A Quarantine Camp has been set up by the Indian Navy at INS Vishwakarma in Eastern Naval Command (ENC) for Indian nationals who are being evacuated from COVID-19 affected countries. The move aims to augment India's fight against the spread of Coronavirus.

**Quarantine Camp:**
The Camp has been fully equipped to accommodate nearly 200 personnel with all suitable facilities and other arrangements.

As per the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, the evacuated personnel will be closely monitored to ensure Social Distancing and under medical supervision by a team of naval personnel and medical professionals of ENC.

As a precautionary measure, the evacuated persons will be kept under quarantine
for fourteen days.
Indian Navy aims to ensure adequate preventive care is provided to all evacuated personnel and to prevent the spread of the virus.

CSIR-IHBT develops a new hand-sanitizer as preventive measures against Coronavirus

Scientists of Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (CSIR-IHBT), Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, has developed a new hand-sanitizer as a preventive measure against Coronavirus.

New hand-sanitizer:
The natural flavours, active tea constituents, and alcohol content in the hand-sanitizer have been used as per the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO).
The special feature of the sanitizer is it is free of chemicals like parabens, triclosan, synthetic fragrance, and phthalates.
The technology has been transferred to M/s A.B. Scientific Solutions for the commercial production of the hand-sanitizer as per an agreement signed between CSIR-IHBT and the company.

CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology:
CSIR-IHBT was founded in 1983. It is a laboratory of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. The institute is engaged in modern biology and several advanced research aspects of Himalayan Bio-resources.

Resolution seeking removal of the phrase Socialism to be placed in Rajya Sabha

A resolution that seeks the removal of the phrase "socialism" from the preamble of the Constitution is to be placed in Rajya Sabha on 20 March. The resolution argued that the word is "redundant" in the current scenario, and hence it should be dropped to create space for economic thinking without a particular thought.

Highlights:
The preamble of the Indian Constitution has declared the country to be a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic.
Socialism and secularism were not part of the preamble, which was adopted on 26 November 1949 by the Constituent Assembly.
The terms socialist and secular were inserted in the preamble as part of the 42nd Constitution Amendment Act, 1976, which was passed during the Emergency. It was added to qualify the character of the Indian republic.
Many groups demand to restore the original preamble.
It is said that in the socio-economic developmental context, socialism is completely a redundant

Four convicts of Nirbhaya Case hanged to death in Tihar Jail

The four convicts, Pawan Gupta (25), Vinay Sharma (26), Akshay Kumar (31), and Mukesh Kumar (32), of Nirbhaya Gang Rape were hanged to death in Tihar Jail on 20 March 2020. The convicts of the case were sentenced to death by a fast track court in September 2013.

Criminal Law (Amendment) Act in 2013:
Following the incident, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act in 2013 has widened the definition of rape and made punishment more stringent. The Act came into effect into effect on 2 April 2013. The Act increased jail terms in most sexual assault cases and also provided for the death penalty in rape cases that cause the death of the victim or leave her in a vegetative state. It also created new offences, such as the use of criminal force on a woman with intent to disrobe, voyeurism, and stalking. The punishment for gang rape was increased to 20 years to life imprisonment; earlier, it was 10 years to life imprisonment.

GoI fixes cap for the prices of Alcohols used in manufacturing hand sanitizers under EC Act

Government has notified an Order under the Essential Commodities (EC) Act to declare price cap prevailing as on 5 March 2020 on the above alcohols up to 30 June 2019. The move comes as the alcohol used in manufacturing the hand sanitizers have been exorbitantly increased by the producers of such alcohol.

Highlights:
GoI also notified that the raw materials used in the manufacture of essential commodities also fall under the essential commodities under the EC Act.
All the States/UTs can now ask the manufactures of these alcohols not to increase the prices of their produce without the concurrence of the Central Government.

The move will empower the Central, States/UTs governments to regulate prices, production, sale, distribution, transport, movement, storage, information, etc. of alcohols used in manufacturing the hand sanitizer as a preventive measure to avoid infection from COVID-19. With this, it will smoothen the sale and availability of these items and carry out operations against hoarders, speculators, profiteers, black marketeers, etc.

Central government has advised the manufacturers of deodorants to manufacture alcohol-based hand sanitizer spray with ethyl alcohol as the main content on a mass scale at a very low cost and make it available in the market at the earliest.

MHRD develops School Health Programme to promote well being of students

Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) have jointly developed a Comprehensive School Health Programme (SHP) under Ayushman Bharat. The information was announced by the Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'.

Aim:
The program aims to foster the growth, development, and educational achievement of school-going children by promoting their health and wellbeing.

School Health Programme (SHP):
Under the School Health Program, eleven themes have been identified, which include Reproductive Health and HIV Prevention.

These modules are expected to create awareness on the subject among adolescents. Also, the Department of School & Literacy is to implement the Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) as part of the National Population Education Project (NPEP). The aim is to pursue the National Curriculum Framework, 2005. AEP is to make the learners aware of the concerns of adolescence, HIV/AIDS, and Substance (Drug) Abuse and to inculcate in them a positive attitude regarding these concerns.

Ministry of Textiles plans to host Pilot shopping festival
Union Minister of Textiles Smriti Zubin Irani has proposed a pilot shopping festival at Bengaluru. The fest will be organized in 2020-21. It will be organized in other cities.

**Shopping Festival:**

The festival will focus on various sectors, including gems & jewellery, textiles, handicrafts, and Yoga and Ayurvedic products.

The products to be showcased will include tribal products/handicrafts, products from Jammu & Kashmir, North East States, and the other Hill States.

The festival aims to promote e-marketing of handloom products, and a policy framework was designed and under which any willing e-commerce platform with a good track record can participate in online marketing of handloom products.

Also, **23 e-commerce entities** have been engaged in the online marketing of handloom products.

So far, total sales of **Rs.80.76 crore** have been reported through the online portal.

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**SIDBI to start Swavalamban Express on 5 June**

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) is to start **Swavalamban Express** on 5 June 2020. The aim is to promote budding business aspirants and entrepreneurs. SIDBI will start a special train based on the opinions and suggestions of various stakeholders.

**Swavalamban Express:**

Swavalamban Express will depart from Lucknow on 5 June. The journey will be for **15 days**, and it will cover about **7000 km of track**.

The express will travel to the 11 entrepreneurial cities including **Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu, Mumbai, Kolkata and Varanasi** as the final destination.

Over 20 workshops and other programs will be organized during the journey.

A Candidate who is aged between **20 and 35 years** can apply for the journey. Aspirants who want to start their own business or running a small business can apply for the Swavalamban Express journey.

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**ARPIT train more than 1.8 Lakh teachers in 2 years**

Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) announced that the
initiative **Annual Refresher Programme In Teaching (ARPIT)** is successfully implemented in the past two years for the professional development of higher education faculty.

**ARPIT:**

ARPIT program was launched in 2018 to fulfill the government's commitment to quality education.

The program aims to enhance the quality of teaching in higher education.

The initiative includes online professional development of 15 lakh higher education faculty.

ARPIT is a step of government towards "**Har Ek Kaam Desh Ke Naam.**"

Under the initiative new & emerging trends, pedagogical improvements and methodologies for transacting revised curriculum were imparted to more than 1.8 Lakh teachers in the last two years.

In 2018-19, 37199 teachers were trained under this program, and in 2019-20, 146919 teachers were trained under the program.

**Uttar Pradesh govt seeks Central Grant of 100 cr for Lucknow University and Kashi Vidyapeeth**

**Uttar Pradesh Government** has sought a Central Grant of 100 crore rupees for Lucknow University and Kashi Vidyapeeth. Deputy Chief Minister and Education Minister of Uttar Pradesh Dr. Dinesh Sharma on Friday met Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank in Delhi and made the request. The educational institutions have completed 100 years of their establishment, and there is a provision of a special grant of Rs 100 crores for these institutions.

**Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith**

Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith is a public university located in Varanasi or Benaras, Uttar Pradesh, India. Established in 1921 as Kashi Vidyapith and later renamed, it is administered under the state legislature of the government of Uttar Pradesh. Founded: 10 February 1921

**Peatland protection will help attain climate goals**

Food and Agriculture Organization operating under the United Nations released a report cover only 3% of the earth's surface; they trigger the carbon that was locked in a few decades.
**About the report:**
The report says that peatlands consist of 30% of world soil carbon. They emit greenhouse gases. The climate peatlands occur in mangrove forests. Peatlands cover only three percent of Earth's surface. However, their degradation due to drainage, fire, agricultural use, and forestry can trigger the release of the stored carbon in a few decades. The publication, authored by 35 experts, highlights essential case studies from Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Peru in their attempts to map and monitor peatlands. Peatlands contain 30 percent of the world's soil carbon. According to Maria Nuutinen, co-author and FAO's forestry officer, peatlands, a lot of drainage has happened since the time of the Roman Empire, both for cropping as well as grazing, particularly in Europe and Ukraine.

**Mapping peatlands:**
Peatlands are formed due to the accumulation of partially decomposed plant remains over thousands of years under conditions of water-logging. For countries keen on reducing emissions, monitoring the groundwater level of peatlands is vital, or else they can turn into carbon emission sources. Mapping methodologies include both ground and remotely-sensed input data. The report also offered an overview of the different monitoring approaches and their advantages and limitations. According to the authors, mapping forms the basis. Without a map, there will be no sensible monitoring of peatlands. The monitoring exercise requires a mix of satellite and ground-based activities. To facilitate countries' access to a cloud computing-based and free monitoring platform as well as high-quality imagery, FAO has developed two state-of-the-art peatland restoration monitoring modules. System for Earth Observation Data Access, Processing, and Analysis for Land Monitoring (SEPAL) platform contains a number of tools for land use and land-use change monitoring. Two of these modules are for peatlands.

**CBSE launches toll-free helpline on coronavirus safeguards for students**

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has launched a toll-free helpline on coronavirus safeguards for students. The facility is available on helpline number 1800118004 from 8 am to 8 pm, initially up to 31st March.

**CBSE:**
The dedicated coronavirus safeguard tele-counseling service will be provided by trained counselors who will deal with students and parents for preventive
interventions, reducing transmission and counsel on first-aid to stop corona spread. They will assist students in engaging in useful and productive activities while at home. The board has postponed all exams till March 31, and evaluation work has also been suspended. Central Board of Secondary Education founded in 1962.

ICMR received several complaints against misuse of stem cell therapy

Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Ashwini Kumar Choubey informed the Lok Sabha that the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) received several complaints against the misuse of stem cell therapy from various sources. The complaints are considered in the National Apex Committee for Stem Cell Research and Therapy (NAC-SCRT), and recommendations are forwarded to concerned authorities for appropriate action.

ICMR:
ICMR is finalizing guidelines on the clinical use of stem cells and is framing guidelines for storage and banking of stem cells.

Issues:
According to the National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research, there is no approved stem cell therapy other than Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation.

EMC 2.0 Scheme will help India become mobile manufacturing hub

The union government has proposed a total outlay for the EMC 2.0 Scheme at 3,762.25 crore, which includes the financial assistance of Rs.3,725 crore and administrative and management expense to the tune of 37.25 crores over a period of eight years.
The new Production-linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) would not only support the Government's efforts to establish India an integral part of the Global Value Chain (GVC) in the mobile handset. The union government announces a policy that can be a game-changer taking the sector to the next level, and PLI is precisely that. Its visionary, scalable, and global in its outlook. The Scheme will create a robust infrastructure base for the electronic industry to attract a flow of investment in the ESDM sector and lead to greater employment opportunities.
Currently, 85 percent of the global mobile exports are catered to by two countries -
China and Vietnam. Further, only three global ecosystems - Samsung, Apple, and Chinese majors such as Oppo, Vivo, Xiaomi, and Huawei, dominate the multi-billion-dollar mobile phone export. It is well-recognized that India suffers a manufacturing disability vis-a-vis China (19-23 percent) and Vietnam (9-12 percent).

**UP govt announces one month free food grains to poor**

*Uttar Pradesh* govt announced several actions and measures in its fight against coronavirus. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced to provide one-month free food grains to poor people along with Rs 1,000 as compensation to daily wage workers who have been affected due to the outbreak of the deadly virus.

**Corona Virus:**

Around 20 lakh 37 thousand labourers registered with the labor department will be given rupees 1000 each in their accounts through the DBT scheme. One crore 65 lakh needy poor people will be provided a one-month foodstuff, including 20 kilograms flour free of cost. People under old-age pension, Divyang pension and widows and poor people allowance will be given two months advance. Owners of schools, Malls, restaurants, and hotels, and other institutions asked to provide appropriate payments to the effected laborers. The government decided that the rest of the poor people and daily wagers will be given help on the recommendation of concerned area officials.
Indian scientists develop friction-reducing nanocomposite coatings to increase system life

Scientists from the International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI) developed a process for size-selective deposition of nanocomposite coatings, which can reduce the friction of these dynamic systems.

**Need:**
The aerospace, defence, automobile, space devices are in need to reduce friction, wear, and tear caused in the device in order to enhance the life of components. At present, to reduce friction, the dynamic systems are lubricated, which adds to the cost, complexity, and weight of these systems.

**Nanocomposite coatings:**
The newly developed coating is of **nickel tungsten-based** with impregnation of particular sized **Silicon Carbide (SiC) submicron particles.** It uses economical and straightforward pulsed electroplating or electrodeposition process.

It can provide an excellent combination of wear and corrosion resistance with the low friction coefficient and good oil retention capacity.

The coating can withstand corrosion due to salt spray better than many similar wear-resistant coatings available in the market.

**ARCI:**
ARCI was established in 1997. It functions under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology, GoI. It is headquartered in Hyderabad, Telangana. ARCI is mandated to develop High-Performance Materials and Processes for Niche Markets, demonstrate technologies at Prototype/pilot scale, and transfer of Technology to Indian Industry. The centre is chaired by Dr. Anil Kakodkar, Former Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy, Mumbai.

INST Scientists develops calcium-modified carboxymethyl-starch to stop rapid blood loss during accidents

Scientists from the Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST) have developed a starch-based 'hemostat' material, named **calcium-modified**
carboxymethyl-starch, that can stop life-threatening bleeding after a serious injury.

**Calcium-modified carboxymethyl-starch:**

The Hemostat material is a biodegradable microparticles. It concentrates the natural clotting factors in blood by physically absorbing excess fluid.

The microparticles were prepared by modifying some of the chemical hydroxyl groups on starch to carboxymethyl groups and incorporating the beneficial calcium ions. This combination increases the aggregation of red blood cells (RBCs) and platelets and speeds up the activation to generate the fibrin protein network that forms a stable blood clot.

The microparticles form a cohesive and adherent gel within 30 seconds after contact with blood in lab tests.

The material has increased absorption capacity, improved absorption, inexpensive, biocompatible, and biodegradable.

It is a versatile, potentially life-saving, and inexpensive product that will bring a realistic solution for lower-income economies worldwide.

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**ISRO to launch 36 missions in the current fiscal year**

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh, announced that the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) had planned 36 missions for the fiscal year 2020-21. ISRO is to send up ten earth observation satellites during 2020-21.

**Mission of ISRO for FY-2020-21:**

- Earth observation satellite- 10
- Communication satellite- 3
- Navigation satellite-
- Space science satellite- 3
- Technology Demonstration- 1
- PSLV- 10
- GSLV MK II- 3
- GSLV MK III- 1
- Small Satellite Launch Vehicle- 2
- Gaganyaan (Unmanned mission)- 1

ISRO has focused on peaceful uses of Outer Space. So far, Space Technology has
been used for the benefit of the country and society. It provides solutions for developmental activities and address problems of the society at large.

**SpaceX to launch its first manned flight to ISS in 2020 May**

*SpaceX* has announced that it is to launch its **first manned flight** to the **International Space Station (ISS)** in **May 2020**. The announcement comes despite the COVID-19 epidemic.

**SpaceX 1st manned Mission:**

*SpaceX*’s *Falcon 9* rocket is to launch the *Crew Dragon*. It will carry NASA astronauts **Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley** to space from Launch Complex 39A at NASA’s Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

NASA is to quarantine the astronauts for two weeks before their missions to ensure they don't carry illnesses to space.

NASA’s Commercial Crew Program partnered with SpaceX through a public-private partnership to launch astronauts on American rockets and spacecraft from American soil.

The program aims to provide **safe, reliable, and cost-effective transportation to and from the space station**, which will allow for additional research time and will increase the opportunity for discovery aboard humanity’s testbed for exploration.
ENVIRONMENT

NBRI develops pest-resistant variety of cotton against whiteflies

National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI), Lucknow has developed a pest-resistant variety of cotton against whiteflies. The field test trials will begin from April to October at the Faridkot Center of Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana.

Highlights:
Whiteflies are one of the top devastating pests in the world that can damage more than 2000 plant species. It also functions as vectors for some 200-plant viruses. Cotton is one of the worst-hit crops by the Whiteflies. In the year 2015, two-third of the cotton crop was destroyed by the pest in Punjab.

Researchers explored 250 plants to develop the pest-resistant variety from lower plant biodiversity to identify novel protein molecules that are toxic to whitefly. During the trial, the leaves were extracted from all the plants. They were prepared separately. Then, the whiteflies were led to feed on a total of 250 plants. It was observed that the leaf extract of the edible fern Tectaria macrodonta caused toxicity to the whitefly.

This fern is known as a salad in Nepal. The plant worked against whiteflies but being safe for application on the crop plants and provides protection from the plant. As the whiteflies fed on sub-lethal doses of insecticidal protein, it resulted in very poor egg-laying, abnormal egg, nymph, and larval development and extraordinary poor emergence of the fly.

The test also showed that the protein is specifically toxic only to whitefly and does not cause any harmful effects on other beneficial insects like butterfly and honeybee.
**BILLS & ACTS**

**UP promulgates 2020 UP Recovery of Damage to Public and Private Property Ordinance**

The **Uttar Pradesh** state government promulgated **Uttar Pradesh Recovery of Damage to Public and Private Property Ordinance, 2020** law on 15 March. The ordinance was approved by the State Cabinet under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

**UP Recovery of Damage to Public and Private Property Ordinance, 2020:**

Under the new law to **recover compensation** from those who damage public and private property during protests and riots.

**Compensation Claims** will be decided by designated **Claims Tribunals**. The tribunals will be authorized to investigate complaints and assess the damage. The Claims Tribunal will be headed by a **retired district judge**, and its members would be of the rank of additional commissioner. It is empowered with all the powers of the **Civil Court**.

The law states that the owner of any private property may file claims for compensation within three months of the **public protests, bandhs, or riots**.

**Ministry of Culture to revisit 1958 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act**

**Ministry of Culture** has announced that it is to revisit the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**. The Act regulates construction around centrally-protected monuments and classify them based on their historical significance.

**Policy:**

Currently, the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, imposed a ban on construction of any kind within a 100m periphery of centrally-protected monuments. It also allows only certain types of regulated construction within the **100-200m perimeter**.

The existing provisions hinder much significant development work around these areas.

Therefore, in 2018, the government moved an amendment to the law in order to **remove these restrictions**.
In February 2019, a parliamentary standing committee examined the bill and submitted its report. The Committee advocated the need for a law that balanced the preservation of monuments of historical significance and development of infrastructure around the monuments.

Lok Sabha to discuss 2020 Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill

Lok Sabha is to take up the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill, 2020, for consideration on 19 March.

Bill provisions:

The bill aims to provide for the establishment of an Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda by merging three Ayurveda institutes. It seeks to declare the institution as an institution of national importance for the promotion of quality and excellence in education, research, and training in Ayurveda and allied disciplines.

The existing institutes that are to be merged are the Institute of Post Graduate Teaching and Research in Ayurveda, Jamnagar; Shree Gulabkunwerba Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Jamnagar; the Indian Institute of Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Sciences, Jamnagar.

The institute will develop patterns of teaching in medical education in Ayurveda and pharmacy. It will bring together educational facilities for training of personnel in all branches of Ayurveda.

The institute will attain self-sufficiency in postgraduate education to meet the need for specialists and medical teachers in Ayurveda.

The Teaching and Research institute will make an in-depth study and research in the field of Ayurveda.

Lok Sabha passed 2020 Aircraft Amendment Bill

Lok Sabha passed the Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020, on 17 March. The Bill was moved by the Union Civil Aviation Minister, Hardeep Singh Puri. The Bill aims to amend the Aircraft Act, 1934.

Bill provision:
The Bill aims to **convert three existing bodies** under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, namely the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), and the Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB), into **statutory bodies under the Act**.

Each of the statutory bodies will be headed by a **Director-General** who will be appointed by the centre.

The Bill empowers the central government to make rules on several matters, including registration of aircraft, regulating air transport services, and prohibition of flight over any specified area.

The Bill penalty for various offences is **imprisonment** of up to two years, or a fine of up to **Rs 10.lakh**, or both. The offences include carrying arms, explosives, or other dangerous goods aboard aircraft, contravening any rules notified under the Act, and constructing buildings or structures within the specified radius around an **aerodrome reference point**.

The Bill will add **air navigation services** to the list for which the central government can make rules.

The Bill empowers the central government to **cancel** the licences, certificates, or approvals granted to a person under the Act if the person contravenes any provision of the Act.
**DEFENCE**

**DAC approves procurement of 83 indigenous Tejas fighter jets for IAF**

The Defence Ministry's Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved for the procurement of **83 indigenous Tejas fighter jets** for Indian Air Force (IAF) with the more advanced configuration on 18 March. The proposal will be forwarded for the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).

**Highlights:**
- The procurement of fighter jets will be a **major boost to Make in India**.
- The aircraft is indigenously designed, developed and manufactured by HAL and several local vendors.
- HAL's 83 fighter jets are of the more **advanced Mk1A version** of the aircraft.
- The expected cost of the aircraft is **Rs.39,000 crores**.
- Earlier, GoI has placed an order of **40 Tejas aircraft** with HAL in initial configurations.
- With this procurement, IAF aims to meet the requirements of its squadron numbers and **modernize** its inventory with fourth-generation plus and fifth-generation aircraft.

**GoI encourages NCC Certificate holders to join Paramilitary forces**

The Central government has announced that it has decided to give **National Cadet Corps (NCC) Certificate holders Bonus Marks** indirect entry examinations for the **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)**, as prevalent in Armed forces examinations. The move is to achieve the government's vision to increase participation of India's youth in NCC.

**Highlights:**
- The provision regarding this are:
  1) **NCC 'C' certificate** holders will be given **5%** of the maximum marks of the examination as bonus marks.
  2) **NCC 'B' certificate** holders will be given **3%** of the maximum marks of the examination as bonus marks.
  3) **NCC 'A' certificate** holders will be given **2%** of the maximum marks of the examination as bonus marks.
The scheme awards bonus marks to NCC 'A' certificate. The award will be applicable in CAPF recruitment. Government of India urged all State governments to make similar provisions in the direct recruitment examination for their respective Police Forces in order to encourage NCC Certificate holders to join them. This decision aims to inspire youth to join NCC and ensure the availability of trained and disciplined youth to the CAPFs.

Defence Ministry signs with IWI to procure LMGs

Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed a capital acquisition contract with Israel Weapons Industries (IWI) for the procurement of 16,479 light machine guns (LMGs).

**Highlights:**
- The cost of the agreement was **Rs.880 crore**.
- The contract was signed with the approval of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- As per the agreement, IWI would provide Negev 7.62X51 mm LMGs to the Indian armed forces.
- The weapon will boost the confidence of the frontline troops and provide much-needed combat power to the Indian armed forces.
- The acquisition wing of MoD has signed the capital acquisition contract with IWI for the procurement of LMGs.

**LMG:**
Negev 7.62X51 mm LMG is a combat-proven weapon. The weapon is currently used by several countries around the globe. The LMG will enhance the lethality and range of a soldier vis-a-vis the presently used weapon.

Defence Minister releases Draft Defence Procurement Procedure 2020

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh released the Draft Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP), 2020 at a function in New Delhi. The policy is aligned with the vision of the government to empower the private industry through the Make in India initiative with the ultimate of turning India into a global manufacturing hub. The government has introduced leasing as another category to get defense equipment at affordable rates. The greater participation of the Indian industry and
develop a robust defence industrial base, the use of indigenous raw materials, unique alloys, and software has been incentivized under the DPP-2020.

**Make in India**
Make in India, a type of Swadeshi movement covering 25 sectors of the Indian economy, was launched by the Government of India.

**Launch year**: 2014
**AWARDS AND HONOURS**

**Paramananda Majumder was conferred the Moghai Ojah award**

Eminent researcher and writer Dr. Paramananda Majumder was presented the 10th Moghai Ojah Award at a function held at the auditorium of Jorhat Science Centre and Planetarium on 15 March. He was awarded for his significant role in raising issues of public interest and society's betterment.

Majumder compiled the first book on the life and works of folk musician Moghai Ojah. The award recognized his invaluable contribution in bringing dhol maestro Moghai Ojah and his magnificent skill of playing the dhol back to the public domain by compiling a book on him.

**Moghai Ojah award:**
The Moghai Ojah award was instituted in 2011 by the Jorhat district unit of the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP). The award is annually presented on 15 March, on the death anniversary of Ojah. The award carries a cash prize of Rs.21,000, a citation, a gamosa, a seleng chadar, and a memento.

**Prachi Salve, Pradeep Dwivedi won 2019 Road Safety Media Fellowship award**

Prachi Salve of IndiaSpend and Pradeep Dwivedi of DainikJagran jointly won the top prize in the Road Safety Media Fellowship 2019. The award recognized their contribution towards reporting on road safety by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS). The awardees were selected by a three-member jury.

**Other awardees:**
Journalist B. Raveendra Shetty of Vijay Karnataka and Purnima Singh of Times Now Hindi shared the second prize.
The third prize was jointly won by Kishor Dwivedi, Press Trust of India (PTI), and Sangamesh Menasinakai, The Times of India.

**CMS:**
CMS is a not-for-profit research think tank. It is supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) India. CMS conducted a three-month fellowship program for journalists. The participating member was directed to work on road safety and related issues in the year 2019.
SPORTS

Tai Tzu Ying won 2020 All England Badminton Championships

Taiwan's Tai Tzu Ying won the third women's singles title in four years at the Yonex All England Badminton Championships 2020 in Birmingham, England. She defeated the defending champion, Chen Yu Fei, on 15 March. Also, Viktor Axelsen won the All England title in the men's singles championship. He secured Denmark's first win in the event since Peter Gade's triumph in 1999.

Result:
- **Men's Singles**: Viktor Axelsen
- **Women's Singles**: Taipei Tai Tzu-Ying
- **Men's Doubles**: Hiroyuki Endo, Yuta Watanabe
- **Women's Doubles**: Yuki Fukushima, Sayaka Hirota
- **Mixed Doubles**: Praveen Jordan, Melati Daeva Oktavianti

**All England Open 2020**:
- **Edition**: 112th
- **Dates**: 11-15 March
- **Location**: Birmingham, England
- **Total prize money**: $1,100,000

Indian umpires Janani Narayanan and Vrinda Rathi named in ICC panel

The number of women matches officials across different International Cricket Council panels has gone up to 12 as Janani Narayanan, and Vrinda Rathi of India was named in the International Panel of ICC Development Umpires. The announcement comes soon after the launch of 100% Cricket, a 12-month campaign anticipated building on the momentum of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020. The campaign launched just before 86,174 people watched the final of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020 final at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on International Women's Day.
ARTS & CULTURE

Indian Culture Portal to showcase rich cultural heritage of India

Indian Culture Portal, an online portal of the Ministry of Culture, showcases the information about the rich cultural heritage of India across the globe.

**Indian Culture Portal:**
Indian Culture Portal was launched on 10 December 2019.
The portal is available in 2 languages, namely Hindi and English.
The portal aims to create awareness about the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of India.
The portal holds various contents comprising mainly of artefacts from museums, rare books, manuscripts, virtual galleries, e-books, archives, photo archives, gazetteers, write-ups and beautiful pictures on cuisines, Indian National Bibliography, videos, detailed accounts of Indian UNESCO World Heritage site, Musical Instruments of India, festivals, paintings, folk art and classical art from the different states of India, etc.

Ministry of Culture established institute to promote Buddhist studies, art, and Culture

Ministry of Culture has established an institute named Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies (CIHCS) at Dahung, Arunachal Pradesh.

**Aim:**
The main objective of CIHCS is to preserve ancient Buddhist manuscripts, to promote research in different aspects of Buddhism, digitize ancient Buddhist text preserved in the languages of Pali, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian languages through the system of a modern university.

**Highlights:**
The move by the government is to provide education in Buddhist philosophies, Culture, and Art.
The Ministry took over three universities, namely Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda (NNM), Bihar; Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS), Sarnath, Varanasi; Central Institute of Buddhist Studies (CIBS), Leh, UT of Ladakh. These 3 universities were granted Deemed University Status by UGC.
The Ministry also provides for 6 other Grantee Bodies, along with the four institutes, namely CIHCS, NNM, CIHTS, CIBS. The 6 institutes are Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala; Tibet House, New Delhi; Centre for Buddhist Cultural Studies, Tawang Monastery, Arunachal Pradesh; Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Sikkim; International Buddhist Confederation; GRL Monastic School, Bomdila, Arunachal Pradesh.

The Ministry is also implementing a Scheme of financial assistance for the Development of Buddhist and Tibetan Culture and Art to give financial assistance to voluntary Buddhist/Tibetan organizations, including monasteries engaged in the propagation and scientific development of Buddhist/Tibetan culture, tradition and research in related fields.
SCHEMES

Manipur government announced schemes for sportspersons, artistes

The Manipur State government is to provide benefits to sportspersons and artistes of the state and the country. The announcement was made by the Chief Minister N Biren Singh on 15 March. It was declared that it was the biggest ever scheme for the welfare of the sportspersons and artistes of the state.

**Highlights:**

**CMAST scheme:**
For the Chief Ministers Akhannaba Sanarosingi Tengbang (CMAST) scheme, around **Rs.7.36 crore** will be required.
Under the CMAST scheme, suitable employment in government services would be provided to sportspersons winning medals in international events, on the basis of criteria laid down by the state government.
It will also support the sportspersons for purchasing costly sporting items.
Cash awards will be awarded for Olympians who bag gold, silver, bronze, and the winners will be given **Rs.1 crore, Rs.75 lakh, and Rs.50 lakh** respectively.
The government will provide incentives of up to **Rs.2 lakh per annum** to around 250 local clubs of the state.
The scheme includes a lifetime pension scheme for unemployed sportspersons and coaches of 50 years and above who have represented the state or the country either in national or international tournaments.

**CMAT:**
The newly announced Chief Ministergi Artiste Singgi Tengbang (CMAT) schemes will require around **Rs.5.70 crore**.
The CMAT scheme has been designed for renowned artistes. It encourages them to performing arts, literary arts, and visual arts. The scheme will benefit around 4,000 artistes a year.
Pension will be extended to around **1,000 artistes** who are **60 years** and above under the scheme.
The pensioners under the scheme include awardees, gurus, and non-awardees who have contributed to preserving the tradition, culture, and art forms of Manipur.
The scheme will provide financial assistance to the award winners in the national
competition and festivals.

Union Government implements POSHAN Abhiyaan

Government of India is implementing POSHAN Abhiyaan across the country to address the problem of malnutrition. The campaign aims to reduce malnutrition in the country. The abhiyaan will be implemented in a phased manner through a life cycle approach. It also aims to reduce combat under-nutrition, anemia among young children, women and adolescent girls and reduce low birth weight.

POSHAN Abhiyaan:

POSHAN (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition) Abhiyaan or National Nutrition Mission is the Government of India's flagship programme to improve nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. It was launched by Prime Minister Modi on the International Women's Day on 8 March 2018 in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan. The scheme has directed the attention of the country towards the problem of malnutrition and addresses it in a mission-mode.

Mission Solar Charkha of Ministry of MSME

The Solar Charkha Mission was initiated by the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME). The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) implemented the program.

Aim:
The Scheme aims to ensure inclusive growth by the generation of employment, especially for women and youth, and sustainable development through solar charkha clusters in rural areas. The Scheme will boost the rural economy and help in arresting migration from rural to urban areas. It also leverages low-cost, innovative technologies and processes for sustenance.

Mission Solar Charkha:
The target of the mission is to cover 50 solar clusters across the country. Under the Scheme, approximately 1,00,000 beneficiaries are to be covered.
So far, ten projects have been approved under Mission Solar Charkha.
The total cost for one cluster of Solar Charkha would involve a maximum subsidy of Rs.9.599 crore.
It aims to generate direct employment to nearly one lakh persons. A pilot project was implemented in 2016 at Khanwa village, Nawada District of Bihar.

More the Rs.20 crore has been sanctioned under the Stand Up India Scheme

Ministry of Finance reported that more than **Rs.20,466.94 crores** of loans had been sanctioned under **Stand Up India Scheme to over 91,000 accounts** up to 10 March 2020. The information was shared by Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, Minister of State for Finance & Corporate Affairs.

**Stand Up India Scheme:**
Stand Up India Scheme was launched by the Government of India on **5 April 2016** by the **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**. It is a part of the Department of Financial Services' (DFS) to promote entrepreneurial projects.

**Aim:**
The main objective of the Stand Up India Scheme is to promote entrepreneurship among the scheduled caste (SC), scheduled tribes (ST), and women by loaning money to start a new business.

The scheme will lend bank loans between **Rs.10 lakh and Rs.1 crore** to at least one **Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe borrower** and at least one woman borrower per bank branch of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs). The loan will facilitate the borrower to set up greenfield enterprises in the manufacturing, services, or the trading sectors.

The people who avail the benefits of the scheme will be informed about the online platforms, other resources of e-marketing, web-entrepreneurship, factoring services, and registration.

Health Ministry placed Draft National Policy for Rare Diseases in its website

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has finalized and placed the **Draft National Policy for Rare Diseases** on its official website. It was announced by the Minister of State (Health and Family Welfare), Sh Ashwini Kumar Choubey.

**Highlights:**
A component of **rare diseases** has been included in the draft. It was made effective from 1 January 2019.
Under the Umbrella Scheme of Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi, the Ministry has included one-time financial assistance up to Rs.15 lakh to patients belonging to families living below the threshold poverty line for treatment of specified Rare Diseases amenable to one-time treatment in Government hospitals.

The financial assistance covers disorders amenable to treatment with Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation (HSCT), including such Lysosomal Storage Disorders (LSDs) for which Enzyme Replacement Therapy (ERT) is presently not available and severe form of Mucopolysaccharidosis (MPS) type I within first two years of age.

Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi:
Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi was established as a society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. It is also called the National Illness Assistance Fund. The scheme provides financial assistance to patients, living below the poverty line, who suffers life-threatening diseases in the form of a 'one-time grant.'

Around 1.5 lakh SSAs covered with at least one bank branch under PMJDY

Ministry of Finance reported that all villages were mapped by banks into 1.59 lakh Sub-Service Areas (SSAs) under Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). One SSA caters to 1,000 to 1,500 households. The report was submitted by Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, Minister of State for Finance & Corporate Affairs in Rajya Sabha.

Highlights:
Over 0.33 lakh SSAs have been covered with bank branches, and 1.26 lakh SSAs are covered by the deployment of interoperable Business Correspondents (BCs) so far.
Banking outlets are being rolled out in uncovered areas, and the process is looked after by State Level Bankers' Committees, in consultation with the concerned State Government, member banks and other stakeholders.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana:
The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana seeks to integrate the poorest of the poor with bank accounts. The implementation of the scheme done in 3 phases so far.
The 3 phases are:
Phase I: 15 August 2014-14 August 2015
Phase II: 15 August 2015-14 August 2018
Phase III: After 14 August 2018
APPPOINTMENTS / RESIGN

Google appointed Karan Bajwa as MD of Google Cloud in India

Google appointed Karan Bajwa as Managing Director (MD) of Google Cloud in India. He will advise Google Cloud's work with the local developer ecosystem and India-based Global System Integrators (GSIs). Google Cloud's field sales, partner, and customer engineering organizations in India will report to Bajwa. He will be responsible for driving all revenue and go-to-market operations for Google Cloud's extensive solution portfolio that includes Google Cloud Platform and G Suite in the country.

Karan Bajwa:
Karan Bajwa is a senior leader with over three decades of leadership experience. He recently served as MD for India and South Asia for IBM. Before that, he worked as an MD in Microsoft for nine years. He led the company's operations in India. He worked with Cisco Systems in India and Singapore.

Former CJI Ranjan Gogoi took oath as a member of Rajya Sabha

Former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi took oath as a member of Rajya Sabha on 19 March 2020. He was nominated by President Ram Nath Kovind. His nomination to the upper house was made against the vacancy created due to the retirement of senior lawyer KTS Tulsi.

RanjanGogoi:
RanjanGogoi was retired on 17 November 2019. He is the first person from the northeast region to reach the top of the judiciary. He served as the Judge of Gauhati High Court from 28 February 2001 to 8 September 2010. In September 2010, he was appointed as the Judge of Punjab and Haryana High Court. He then served as the Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court on 12 February 2011. In 2012, he served as the Judge of the Supreme Court of India. On 3 October 2018, he replaced Justice Dipak Misra as CJI. He was appointed as CJI by the President of India Ram Nath Kovind.
IMPORTANT DAYS

Ordnance Factory Day was observed on 18 March

The Ordnance Factory Day is observed on the 18 March. The Ordnance Factories are observing their 219th foundation day this year. The day marks the establishment of the first Ordnance Factory on 18 March 1801. The first factory is known as the 'Gun and Shell Factory' at Cossipore in Kolkata.

The Ordnance Factories are a conglomerate of 41 ordnance factories. It functions under the aegis of its corporate headquarters Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), in Kolkata. OFB has evolved as one of the largest defence manufacturing conglomerates in the world, with more than 90% of indigenous content and a strong technological and R&D infrastructure that currently contributes to 255 of the revenue.

Ordnance Factory Board (OFB):

In 1712, the Dutch Ostend Company's Gun Powder Factory at Ichhapur was established. It came with a new effect on 2 April 1979. It is headquartered at Kolkata, West Bengal.

The Indian Ordnance Factories organization is a family of 41 Ordnance Factories. It possesses 200 years of experience in defence production. OFB is engaged in the marketing, research, testing, and logistics of a comprehensive product range in the areas of air, land, and sea systems. OFB functions under the Department of Defence Production of the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

International Day of Happiness is celebrated on 20 March

International Day of Happiness is celebrated on 20 March. The day aims to inspire and advance the global happiness movement. The campaign theme for the year 2020 is 'Happiness For All, Together.' The campaign is a global celebration to mark the United Nations International Day of Happiness.

History:

International Happiness Day was founded and conceptualised by Jayme Illien, the CEO of the United Nations New World Order project, in 2006. The main idea behind celebrating the day is to establish happiness as a fundamental human right among the masses. It was one of the goals of the United Nations (UN) to celebrate
the happiness, freedom, and well-being of mankind on earth.
In 2011, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution which recognized happiness as a "fundamental human goal" International Happiness Day was celebrated for the first time in 2013.

**World Sparrow Day is observed on 20 March**

World Sparrow Day is observed on 20th March. It is observed every year. The day aims to raise awareness about the importance of sparrows in the ecosystem. It also conveys the message of conservation of sparrows that are disappearing faster than other common birds.

**Theme:**
The theme for the 2020 World Sparrow Day is 'I Love Sparrow.' The day aims to teach the public about the threat of polluted urban environments and non-caring humans to the house sparrow population and to other common bird species.

**History:**
The World Sparrow Day was initiated by the founder of The Nature Forever Society, Mohammed Dilawar. He also started many projects, including the BiodiverCity Photo Competition, the annual Sparrow Awards, Project Save Our Sparrows, and the Common Bird Monitoring of India program. The first World Sparrow Day was observed in the year 2010. In 2011, the World Sparrow Awards were instituted. The award recognizes the individuals who have made the biggest contributions toward conserving the environment and protecting common species.

**French Language Day is observed on 20th March**

French Language Day is observed on 20th March. The day explores the influences of the language as a culture, its history, and its achievements. The day celebrates multilingualism and cultural diversity.

**Aim:**
The French language day is celebrated annually in order to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity and to promote equal use of all six official working languages throughout the organization.

**History:**
The observation of French language day was established by the United Nations.
Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2010. The United Nations named six language days in recognition of the six official languages of the UN in 2010. It aimed to bring attention to the history, culture, and achievements of each of the languages. The UN selected 20 March to celebrate the French Language Day in honor of the 40th anniversary of the International Organization of La Francophonie.

French language:
French was developed from Latin between the 5th and 8th centuries. It is one of the Romance languages spoken in the world. French is spoken in more than 25 countries. French was the most important language of diplomacy and international relations from the 17th century to approximately the middle of the 20th century.

International Day of Forests observed on 21 March

United Nations celebrates International Day of Forest on March 21. The Day is celebrated since 2012.

Aim:
To increase awareness and importance of forests

Theme: "Forests and Biodiversity"

March 21 has chosen to mark the international day of forests as it is the Vernal Equinox in the northern hemisphere and autumnal equinox. The organizers are the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with Governments, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other relevant organizations in the field.

Forests:
The Day celebrates and raises awareness of the importance of all types of forests. On each International Day of Forests, countries are encouraged to undertake local, national and international efforts to organize activities involving forests and trees, such as tree-planting campaigns. The theme for each International Day of Forests is chosen by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Forests are the most biologically diverse ecosystems on land, home to more than 80% of the terrestrial species of animals, plants, and insects.

International Nowruz Day celebrated on March 21
International Nowruz Day is celebrated globally on 21 March every year. International Nowruz Day to celebrate Nowruz which is an ancestral festivity and marks the first day of spring as well as the renewal of nature. The values of peace and solidarity among generations and within families hence contributing to cultural diversity and friendship among peoples as well as in different communities.

Nowruz

Nowruz marks the first day of spring celebrated on the occasion of the astronomical vernal equinox that generally occurs on 21 March. It is celebrated by more than 300 million people all around the world as the beginning of the new year honored for over 3,000 years in the Balkans, the Black Sea Basin, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East, and other regions.
AGREEMENTS MOU

OIL signed agreement with Numaligarh Refinery for crude oil sale

India's second-largest national oil explorer Oil India Ltd (OIL), signed an agreement with Numaligarh Refinery for purchase and sale of crude oil for a term of five years. The agreement was signed by the finance directors of the two companies.

Agreement:
The Crude Oil Sales Agreement (COSA) will come in effect from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025.

The agreement will streamline the sale and purchase transactions of crude oil produced from fields in North East India.

Numaligarh Refinery:
Owned by: Numaligarh Refinery Limited
Location: Morangi, Assam

Numaligarh Refinery is a joint venture (JV) between Bharat Petroleum (61.65%), Oil India (26%), and Government of Assam (12.35%).

Finance Ministry notified about its agreement with Brunei

Ministry of Finance appraised the Government of India about the agreement between India and the Government of Brunei Darussalam.

Agreement Highlights:
The Agreement will enable the exchange of information, including banking and ownership information, between the two countries for tax purposes.

The agreement is based on international standards of tax transparency and exchange of information and enables the sharing of information on request and automatic exchange of information.

The Agreement also provides for representatives of one country to undertake tax examinations in the other country. It provides assistance in the collection of tax claims.

It will also enhance mutual co-operation between the two countries by providing an effective framework for the exchange of information in tax matters in order to curb tax evasion and tax avoidance.
Background:
The agreement was signed on 28 February 2019 in New Delhi. The agreement was signed for the exchange of information and assistance in collection with respect to taxes.

Note:
The Central Government is authorized under section 90 of the **Income Tax (IT) Act, 1961**, to enter into an agreement with a foreign country or specified territory for exchange of information for the prevention of evasion or avoidance of income-tax chargeable under the **Income Tax Act, 1961**.

**Brunei Darussalam:**
- **Sultan and Prime Minister:** Hassanal Bolkiah
- **Crown Prince and Senior Minister:** Al-Muhtadee Billah
- **Capital:** Bandar Seri Begawan
- **Currency:** Brunei dollar (BND)

**APEDA, SFAC signed MoU to improve productivity and quality of the varieties of crops**

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has signed MoU with Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) on 18 March 2020. The MoU was signed by Ms. Neelkamal Darbari, Managing Director SFAC and Mr. Paban Kumar Borthakur, Chairman, APEDA.

**MoU provisions:**
- As per the MoU, SFAC will share a list of all clusters in various states with APEDA for achieving scale and aggregation with export orientation.
- APEDA and SFAC will jointly work together to link up the Farm Producer Organizations (FPOs) with the exporters to achieve the goal and double the farmers' income.
- Both the organization will work towards capacity development, outreach programs, awareness programs, and workshops of various stakeholders.
- APEDA and SFAC will work together to showcase to the Indian and Global Market, the products, technologies, processes, knowledge, and services by the FPO sector stakeholders through a variety of modes as may be identified by them from time to time.
- APEDA will facilitate certification of organic produce /areas by the FPCs assisted
or identified by SFAC.
The MoU will start an **Agri-Business Promotion Unit in the North East** and to mentor and handhold the FPOs in North East.

**LLTS, IIT-Kanpur signed MoU to promote research in cybersecurity programs**

L&T Technology Services Limited (LLTS) signed a multi-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT Kanpur)**. The MoU aims to collaborate on research in industrial and infrastructure cybersecurity. The MoU was signed by CEO and MD of LTTS, Dr. Keshab Panda, and Deputy Director at IIT Kanpur and Professor Manindra Agarwal in the premises of IIT Kanpur.

**MoU Provision:**

As per the MoU, LTTS and IIT-Kanpur will together set-up a **Center of Excellence (CoE)** in the **IIT-Kanpur campus**.

It will conduct research in the areas of **Honeypot, blockchain, intrusion detection systems, malware analysis, vulnerability assessment**, and penetration testing, and provide cybersecurity awareness and training programs.

The MoU will both LTTS access to IIT-Kanpur's cutting-edge testbed for critical infrastructure.

The CoE will be a part of IIT-Kanpur's C3i Center was developed to work on solutions and technologies to protect India's Strategic and Critical Utility Infrastructure.

LTTS' deep-rooted and proven technological expertise combined with the cybersecurity research expertise of the C3i Center will help counter such cyberattacks.
India is third-largest producer of Electricity in the World

The World Energy Statistics published by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in 2019 states that India is the 3rd largest producer of electricity in the world. India ranked 106th in terms of per capita consumption in 2017.

Highlights:

As per the list, the reforms in the power sector has grown continuously. India has now become a power surplus from a power deficit situation.

The power sector reforms focus on the supply of 247 quality power to consumers, higher standards of service, promotion of renewable energy sources, development of hydropower, improving efficiency, especially in the distribution sector, etc.

Also, the Central government is planning to implement reforms linked distribution schemes and changes in tariff policy, among others.
QUIZ CORNER

1) Where is Bhaucha Dhakka located?

A. Madhya Pradesh  
B. Maharashtra  
C. Odisha  
D. West Bengal

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Bhaucha Dhakka is a wharf along the Thane Creek, along the coast of Dockyard Road on the Eastern seafront of Mumbai, the capital of the Indian state of Maharashtra.

2) Where was the All England Open 2020 held?

A. London  
B. Bristol  
C. Birmingham  
D. Glasgow

**Answer C**

**Explanation** The All England Open 2020 was held at Birmingham, England.

3) ________ signed an agreement with Numaligarh Refinery for purchase and sale of crude oil for a term of five years.

A. OIL  
B. GAIL  
C. Bharat Petroleum  
D. Hindustan Petroleum

**Answer A**

**Explanation** India’s second-largest national oil explorer Oil India Ltd (OIL), signed an agreement with Numaligarh Refinery for purchase and sale of crude oil for a term of five years. The agreement was signed by the finance directors of the two companies.
4) When was the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) established?

A.1927  
B.1934  
C.1950  
D.1967

**Answer A**

**Explanation** Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) was established in 1927, on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi by GD Birla and Purushottam Das Thakurdas, it is the largest, oldest and the apex business organization in India.

5) Who is the second-largest national oil explorer in India?

A.ONGC  
B.Bharat Petroleum  
C.OIL  
D.GAIL

**Answer C**

**Explanation** Oil India Limited (OIL) is the second-largest hydrocarbon exploration and production Indian public sector company with its operational headquarters in Duliajan, Assam, India.

6) Who is the President Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)?

A.Uday Shankar  
B.Sangita Reddy  
C.Sanjiv Mehta  
D.Dilip Chenoy

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Sangita Reddy is an Indian businessperson. She is Joint Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals Enterprises and The President of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industries. She was elected as a Member of the Steering Committee on Health for the Twelfth

7) Numaligarh Refinery is a joint venture (JV) between _______.
   A. Bharat Petroleum
   B. Oil India
   C. Government of Assam
   D. All the above

   **Answer D**

   **Explanation** Numaligarh Refinery is a joint venture (JV) between Bharat Petroleum (61.65%), Oil India (26%), and Government of Assam (12.35%).

8) An MoU was signed between Government of Telangana, GMR Hyderabad International Airport and ________ at the Wings India 2020.
   A. Aero360
   B. KUN Avian Ltd.
   C. Airbus BizLabs
   D. Onema India

   **Answer C**

   **Explanation** An MoU was signed between the Government of Telangana, GMR Hyderabad International Airport, and Airbus BizLabs at the Wings India 2020.

9) Where is the Numaligarh Refinery located?
   A. Assam
   B. Manipur
   C. Mizoram
   D. Tripura

   **Answer A**

   **Explanation** Numaligarh Refinery is located in Morangi, Assam. Numaligarh Refinery is a joint venture (JV) between Bharat Petroleum (61.65%), Oil India (26%), and Government of Assam (12.35%).
10) The ________ GST Council meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Smt Nirmala Sitharaman.

A.36th  
B.39th  
C.40th  
D.45th  

**Answer B**

**Explanation** The 39th GST Council meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Smt Nirmala Sitharaman on 14 March in New Delhi. The officials discussed the issues faced by the taxpayers in the GST system. A summary of the recently observed IT issues, and the way forward to resolve them was submitted.

11) Which state government has announced schemes for sportspersons, artistes on 15 March?

A.Manipur  
B.Uttar Pradesh  
C.Assam  
D.Sikkim  

**Answer A**

**Explanation** The Manipur State government is to provide benefits to sportspersons and artistes of the state and the country. The announcement was made by the Chief Minister N Biren Singh on 15 March. It was declared that it was the biggest ever scheme for the welfare of the sportspersons and artistes of the state.

12) Who launched the new website of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy?

A.Mahendra Nath Pandey  
B.Prahlad Singh Patel  
C.R K Singh  
D.Piyush Goyal  

**Answer C**
The Minister of State (I/C) for Power and New and Renewable Energy Shri R K Singh launched the new website of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy on 14 March. He directed that the sectoral updation of the site should be personally ensured at the senior level so that it maintains pace with time.

13) For Manipur's Chief Ministers Akhannaba Sanaroisingi Tengbang (CMAST) scheme, ________ is required.

A. Rs.4.21 crore  
B. Rs.5.41 crore  
C. Rs.6.28 crore  
D. Rs.7.36 crore

Answer D

For the Chief Ministers Akhannaba Sanaroisingi Tengbang (CMAST) scheme, around Rs.7.36 crore will be required. Under the CMAST scheme, suitable employment in government services would be provided to sportspersons winning medals in international events, on the basis of criteria laid down by the state government.

14) Who hosted the new website of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy?

A. Hub Server  
B. NIC Server  
C. CATD Server  
D. STIMEC Server

Answer B

The Minister of State (I/C) for Power and New and Renewable Energy Shri R K Singh launched the new website of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy on 14 March. The website is hosted by the NIC server.

15) For Manipur's Chief Minister's Artiste Singgi Tengbang (CMAT) schemes, ________ is required.

A. Rs.4.21 crore  
B. Rs.5.70 crore  
C. Rs.6.28 crore
The newly announced Chief Ministergi Artiste Singgi Tengbang (CMAT) schemes in Manipur will require around Rs.5.70 crore.

16) What is/are the additional portals of the new website of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy?
A. Akshay Urja Portal
B. Kisan Krishi Portal
C. India Renewable Idea Exchange
D. A&C

**Answer D**

Explanation Akshay Urja Portal and India Renewable Idea Exchange (IRIX) are the additional portals of the new website of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

17) Who is the Chief Minister of Manipur?
A. N. Biren Singh
B. Neiphiu Rio
C. Pema Khandu
D. Najma Heptulla

**Answer A**

Explanation Nongthombam Biren Singh is an Indian politician and former footballer and journalist. He is the current Chief Minister of Manipur. He began his career as a footballer and got recruited in the Border Security Force playing for its team in domestic competitions. He resigned from the BSF and turned to journalism.

18) Centre is to introduce an Industrial Policy for the rapid economic development of _________.
A. Jammu and Kashmir
B. Ladakh
C. Uttar Pradesh
Centre is to introduce an Industrial Policy for the rapid economic development of Jammu and Kashmir, so, the information was announced by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah. J&K attracts Rs.13,000 crore for the last 70 years. With the new policy, GoI aims to triple the investment by 2024 in the region.

19) Who is the governor of Manipur?

A. Okram Ibobi Singh  
B. Jagdish Mukhi  
C. Anusuiya Uikey  
D. Najma Heptulla

Answer D

Najma Akbar Ali Heptulla is an Indian politician and Governor of Manipur and the Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, and former vice-president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and a six-time member of the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian parliament, between 1980 and 2016, and Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha for sixteen years.

20) Which State government promulgated the ordinance to recover compensation from those who damage public and private property during protests and riots?

A. Maharashtra  
B. Uttar Pradesh  
C. Rajasthan  
D. Madhya Pradesh

Answer B

The Uttar Pradesh state government promulgated Uttar Pradesh Recovery of Damage to Public and Private Property Ordinance, 2020 law on 15 March. The ordinance was approved by the State Cabinet under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Under the new law to recover compensation from those who damage public and private property during protests and riots.
21) UNCTAD reports Coronavirus outbreak cost global economy up to ________.
A. $1 trillion
B. $2 trillion
C. $3 trillion
D. $5 trillion

Answer B

Explanation The UN's trade and development agency United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reported that the coronavirus (Covid-19) cost the global economy up to $2 trillion in 2019. The announcement was made by Richard Kozul-Wright, Director, Division on Globalization and Development Strategies at UNCTAD.

22) ________ was promulgated to recover compensation from those who damage public and private property during protests and riots.
A. Bihar Recovery of Damage to Public and Private Property Ordinance, 2020
B. Odisha Recovery of Damage to Public and Private Property Ordinance, 2020
C. Uttar Pradesh Recovery of Damage to Public and Private Property Ordinance, 2020
D. Madhya Pradesh Recovery of Damage to Public and Private Property Ordinance, 2020

Answer C

Explanation The Uttar Pradesh state government promulgated Uttar Pradesh Recovery of Damage to Public and Private Property Ordinance, 2020 law on 15 March. The ordinance was approved by the State Cabinet under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Under the new law to recover compensation from those who damage public and private property during protests and riots.

23) Who is the Director, Division on Globalization and Development Strategies at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)?
A. Robert Rowthorn
B. Rob Vos
C. Frank Ackerman
D. Richard Kozul-Wright

Answer D
Richard Kozul-Wright is the Director of the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

24) As per the Parliamentary panel report, the Fisheries Sector suffered a high Post-harvest loss of ________.

A. Rs.42,000 crore  
B. Rs.48,000 crore  
C. Rs.55,000 crore  
D. Rs.61,000 crore

**Answer D**

A Parliamentary panel reported that the Fisheries Sector suffered a high Post-harvest loss of Rs.61,000 crore. The report highlighted that the possible cause for Post-harvest losses is faulty handling practices, inordinate delay in packing and transportation, lack of proper cold storage facilities, and lack of technological know-how for harvesting fishes.

25) When was the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) established?

A. 1964  
B. 1967  
C. 1970  
D. 1974

**Answer A**

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established on 30 December 1964.

26) Ministry of Culture has announced that it is to revisit the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, ________.

A. 1945  
B. 1958  
C. 1964  
D. 1970
Ministry of Culture has announced that it is to revisit the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. The Act regulates construction around centrally-protected monuments and classify them based on their historical significance.

27) Where is the headquarters of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) located?

A. Stockholm  
B. Vienna  
C. Davos  
D. Geneva

Answer D

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

28) Where is the headquarters of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) located?

A. Columbia  
B. Dhaka  
C. Naypyitaw  
D. Kathmandu

Answer D

The headquarters of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) located in Kathmandu, Nepal.

29) Who won the men's singles title of All England Badminton Championships 2020?

A. Hiroyuki Endo  
B. Yuta Watanabe  
C. Praveen Jordan  
D. Viktor Axelsen
Answer D

Explanation Viktor Axelsen won the All England title in the men's singles championship. He secured Denmark's first win in the event since Peter Gade's triumph in 1999.

30) Who is the Secretary-General of SAARC?

A. Esala Weerakoon
B. Amjad Hussain B. Sial
C. Arjun Bahadur Thapa
D. Pabitra Regina

Answer A

Explanation Esala Weerakoon is a Sri Lankan diplomat. He is the current Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Tourism Development and former permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and had served as Sri Lankan High Commissioner to India and Ambassador to Norway.

31) Who won the women's singles title of All England Badminton Championships 2020?

A. Yuki Fukushima
B. Tai Tzu-Ying
C. Sayaka Hirota
D. Melati Daeva Oktavianti

Answer B

Explanation Viktor Axelsen won the All England title in the men's singles championship. He secured Denmark's first win in the event since Peter Gade's triumph in 1999.

32) Moghai Ojah was associated with ________.

A. sports
B. politics
C. music
D. medicine

Answer C
Moghai Ojah or Moghai Baruah was a musician from Assam who popularized the Dhol of Assam to the world audience. Moghai Ojah had also acted in a few films, which include Pioli Phukan, Ranga Police, Pratidhwani, Mahut Bandhu Re, and Maram Trishna.

33) Indian Culture Portal is available in 2 languages. What are the languages?

A. English, Sanskrit
B. English, Hindi
C. French, Hindi
D. French, Sanskrit

Answer B

Indian Culture Portal was launched on 10 December 2019. The portal is available in 2 languages, namely Hindi and English.

34) ________ was nominated to Rajya Sabha on 16 March 2020.

A. Former CJI S. H. Kapadia
B. Former CJI Altamas Kabir
C. Former CJI P. Sathasivam
D. Former CJI Ranjan Gogoi

Answer D

Former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi was nominated to Rajya Sabha on 16 March 2020. He was nominated by President Ram Nath Kovind. His nomination to the upper house was made against the vacancy created due to the retirement of senior lawyer KTS Tulsi. There are 11 other nominated members in the Rajya Sabha.

35) Mission Solar Charkha functions under ________.

A. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
B. Ministry of Science and Technology
C. Ministry of Human Resource Development
D. Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises

Answer D
**Explanation** The Solar Charkha Mission was initiated by the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME). The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) implemented the program.

36) **Who nominated the appointment of former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi to Rajya Sabha?**

A. President Ram Nath Kovind  
B. Prime Minister Narendra Modi  
C. Home Minister Amit Shah  
D. CJI Sharad Arvind Bobde

**Answer A**

**Explanation** Former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi was nominated to Rajya Sabha on 16 March 2020. He was nominated by President Ram Nath Kovind. His nomination to the upper house was made against the vacancy created due to the retirement of senior lawyer KTS Tulsi. There are 11 other nominated members in the Rajya Sabha.

37) **Who implemented the Solar Charkha Mission?**

A. CII  
B. FICCI  
C. KVIC  
D. NITI Aayog

**Answer C**

**Explanation** The Solar Charkha Mission was initiated by the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME). The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) implemented the program.

38) **Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the _______ birth Anniversary celebrations of 'Jatir Pita' Bangabandhu, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in Bangladesh on 17 March.**

A. 75th  
B. 100th  
C. 120th
Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to participate in the 100th birth Anniversary celebrations of 'Jatir Pita' Bangabandhu, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in Bangladesh on 17 March (through video message). Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19), the planned events will be held without any public gatherings.

39) The target of the Solar Charkha Mission is to cover ________ solar clusters across the country.

A. 50
B. 75
C. 100
D. 150

Explanation The Solar Charkha Mission was initiated by the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME). The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) implemented the program. The target of the mission is to cover 50 solar clusters across the country. Under the Scheme, approximately 1,00,000 beneficiaries are to be covered.

40) When was the MyGovIndia innovative platform launched?

A. 2014
B. 2015
C. 2016
D. 2017

Explanation MyGovIndia is an innovative platform where the citizen can engage themselves with the Government of India. The platform was launched on 26 July 2014 by PM Narendra Modi. The portal aims to make the people contribute their ideas and views towards good governance.

41) The pilot project of Mission Solar Charkha was implemented in ________ at Khanwa village, Nawada District of Bihar.
A.2015
B.2016
C.2017
D.2018

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Mission Solar Charkha aims to generate direct employment to nearly one lakh persons. A pilot project was implemented in 2016 at Khanwa village, Nawada District of Bihar.

42) The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) flagged off the first-ever thrice-weekly flight from Indore to ________.

A.Kishangarh
B.Jaipur
C.Kota
D.Ujjain

**Answer A**

**Explanation** The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) flagged off the first-ever thrice-weekly flight from Indore (Madhya Pradesh) to Kishangarh (Ajmer, Rajasthan) on 16 March. Under the UDAN scheme of Government of India.

43) The first human trial of a vaccine against coronavirus (COVID-19) began at ________.

A.Germany
B.US
C.UK
D.France

**Answer B**

**Explanation** The first human trial of a vaccine against coronavirus (COVID-19) began at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute (KPWHRI) in Seattle, the US.

44) The tender for the Indore-Kishangarh route during the UDAN 3 bidding process was awarded to ________.
A. TruJet
B. Alliance Air
C. Star Air
D. Air India

**Answer C**

**Explanation** The tender for the Indore-Kishangarh route during the UDAN 3 bidding process was awarded to Star Air. The aim is to connect the unconnected regions. MoCA has operationalized 268 routes under the UDAN scheme.

45) What is the name of the vaccine that is used in the first human trial of a vaccine against coronavirus (COVID-19)?

A. mRNA-15A
B. mRNA-1273
C. tRNA-A140
D. tRNA-184

**Answer B**

**Explanation** The first human trial of a vaccine against coronavirus (COVID-19) began at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute (KPWHRI) in Seattle, the US. The vaccine is called mRNA-1273. The vaccine has shown promise in animal models.

46) Where is Kishangarh located?

A. Rajasthan
B. Gujarat
C. Madhya Pradesh
D. Maharashtra

**Answer A**

**Explanation** Kishangarh is a city and a Municipal Corporation in the Ajmer district in the Indian state of Rajasthan. Its popular full name is Madanganj-Kishangarh. It was built by the Rajgharanas and Maharajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur.

47) UGC is to set up ________ Chairs in different fields with an aim to carry
out research activities to encourage women.

A.5  
B.8  
C.10  
D.15  

**Answer C**

**Explanation** The University Grants Commission (UGC) is to set up 10 Chairs in different fields with an aim to carry out research activities to encourage women.

**48) When was the UDAN scheme launched?**

A.2014  
B.2015  
C.2016  
D.2017  

**Answer C**

**Explanation** Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) was launched as a regional connectivity scheme under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in 2016.

**49) Who was awarded the Moghai Ojah award?**

A. Dr. Paramananda Majumder  
B. Dr. Krishna Raj  
C. Dr. Meerasha  
D. Dr. Mohammed Rafi  

**Answer A**

**Explanation** Eminent researcher and writer Dr. Paramananda Majumder was presented the 10th Moghai Ojah Award at a function held at the auditorium of Jorhat Science Centre and Planetarium on 15 March. He was awarded for his significant role in raising issues of public interest and society's betterment.

**50) When was the Indian Culture Portal launched?**
A.2015
B.2016
C.2018
D.2019

Answer D

Explanation Indian Culture Portal was launched on 10 December 2019.

51) When was the Moghai Ojah award instituted?

A.2000
B.2005
C.2008
D.2011

Answer D

Explanation The Moghai Ojah award was instituted in 2011 by the Jorhat district unit of the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP). The award is annually presented on 15 March, on the death anniversary of Ojah.

52) Which country provided three new school buildings in Nepal?

A. India
B. Pakistan
C. Indonesia
D. Iran

Answer A

Explanation Indian government will provide 107.01 million Nepali Rupees for three new school buildings in Nepal. Embassy of India and Nepal's Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with Mahakali Municipality, Darchula, and Mukhiyapatti Musharniya Rural Municipality, Dhanusha in Kathmandu today for the construction of two new school buildings.

53) Where did the Ministry of Culture establish an institute to preserve ancient Buddhist manuscripts, to promote research in different aspects of
Buddhism, digitize ancient Buddhist text?

A. Central Institute of Mizos Culture Studies, Mizoram  
B. Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies, Arunachal Pradesh  
C. Central Institute of Art & Culture Studies, Assam  
D. Central Institute of Ethnic Studies, Sikkim  

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Ministry of Culture has established an institute named Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies (CIHCS) at Dahung, Arunachal Pradesh. The main objective of CIHCS is to preserve ancient Buddhist manuscripts, to promote research in different aspects of Buddhism, digitize ancient Buddhist text preserved in the languages of Pali, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian languages through the system of a modern university.

54) Indian scientists developed a process for size-selective deposition of ________composite coatings, which can reduce the friction of these dynamic systems.

A. micro  
B. nano  
C. pico  
D. femto  

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Scientists from the International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI) developed a process for size-selective deposition of nanocomposite coatings, which can reduce the friction of these dynamic systems.

55) Where is Dahung located?

A. Assam  
B. Arunachal Pradesh  
C. Manipur  
D. Sikkim  

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Dahung is a Village located in the Taluka of Singchung, in the district of West
Kameng district, in the state of Arunachal Pradesh state with a total population of 93. There are 25 houses in the Village.

56) When was the International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI) established?

A.1990  
B.1997  
C.2000  
D.1985

**Answer B**

**Explanation** International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI) was established in 1997. It functions under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology, GoI. It is headquartered in Hyderabad, Telangana. ARCI is mandated to develop High-Performance Materials and Processes for Niche Markets, demonstrate technologies at Prototype/pilot scale, and transfer of Technology to Indian Industry.

57) When was an agreement between India and the Government of Brunei Darussalam to allow the exchange of information, including banking and ownership information, between the two countries for tax purposes?

A.2015  
B.2016  
C.2017  
D.2019

**Answer D**

**Explanation** Ministry of Finance appraised the Government of India about the Agreement between India and the Government of Brunei Darussalam. The Agreement was signed on 28 February 2019 in New Delhi. The Agreement will enable the exchange of information, including banking and ownership information, between the two countries for tax purposes.

58) International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI) functions under ________.

A.Ministry of Earth Science  
B.Ministry of Steel & Power
C. Ministry of Science and Technology
D. Ministry of Coal

**Answer C**

**Explanation** International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI) was established in 1997. It functions under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology, GoI. It is headquartered in Hyderabad, Telangana.

**59) Which is the Capital of Brunei Darussalam?**

A. Kuala Belait
B. Seria
C. Tutong
D. Bandar Seri Begawan

**Answer D**

**Explanation** Bandar Seri Begawan is the capital of the Southeast Asian nation of Brunei. The Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei.

**60) What is the currency of Brunei Darussalam?**

A. Bruneian Rial
B. Bruneian Pound
C. Bruneian Dollar
D. Bruneian Dinar

**Answer C**

**Explanation** The Bruneian dollar is the currency of Brunei Darussalam. Our currency rankings show that the most popular Brunei Darussalam Dollar exchange rate is the USD to BND rate. The currency code for Dollars is BND, and the currency symbol is $.

**61) Who is the chairperson of the International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI)?**

A. Dr. Naveen Kumar
B. Dr. Anil Kakodkar
C. Dr. Sandeep Singh
D. Dr. Anil Kudumbi

Answer D

Explanation Dr. Anil Kakodkar is the chairperson of the International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI).

62) Who is the Sultan and Prime Minister of Brunei Darussalam?

A. Al-Muhtadee Billah
B. Hassanal Bolkiah
C. Omar Ali Saifuddin
D. Muhammad Shah

Answer B

Explanation Hassanal Bolkiah is the 29th and current Sultan and Yang di-Pertuan of Brunei, as well as the Prime Minister of Brunei, making him one of the last absolute monarchs.

63) Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi was established as a society registered under the Societies Registration Act, ________.

A. 1860
B. 1888
C. 1901
D. 1920

Answer A

Explanation Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi was established as a society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The scheme provides financial assistance to patients, living below the poverty line, who suffers life-threatening diseases in the form of a 'one-time grant.'

64) Ministry of Finance reported that more than ________ of loans had been sanctioned under Stand Up India Scheme to over 91,000 accounts up to 10 March 2020.

A. Rs. 14,832.71 crores
B. Rs. 17,656.36 crores
Ministry of Finance reported that more than Rs.20,466.94 crores of loans had been sanctioned under Stand Up India Scheme to over 91,000 accounts up to 10 March 2020. The information was shared by Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, Minister of State for Finance & Corporate Affairs.

**65) Who fixes the price of medicine and drugs in India?**

A. CDSCO  
B. NPPA  
C. INTA  
D. NTA

**Answer B**

National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) functions under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals, and Fertilizers. NPPA controls and fixes the prices of pharmaceutical drugs in India.

**66) Stand Up India Scheme is a part of _________.**

A. Department of Expenditure  
B. Department of Disinvestment  
C. Department of Economic Affairs  
D. Department of Financial Services

**Answer D**

Stand Up India Scheme was launched by the Government of India on 5 April 2016 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is a part of the Department of Financial Services' (DFS) to promote entrepreneurial projects.

**67) When was the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) established?**

A. 1986
68) Who launched the Stand Up India Scheme launched in 2016?

A. President Ram Nath Kovind
B. Former President Pratibha Patil
C. Prime Minister Narendra Modi
D. Late Former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley

Answer C

Explanation Stand Up India Scheme was launched by the Government of India on 5 April 2016 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is a part of the Department of Financial Services' (DFS) to promote entrepreneurial projects.

69) Who is the chairman of the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)?

A. Bhupendra Singh
B. Gopal Bhargava
C. Narottam Mishra
D. Bhupinder Singh Hooda

Answer A

Explanation Bhupendra Singh is the chairman of the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA).

70) Stand Up India Scheme will lend bank loans between Rs.10 lakh and ________ one SC/ST borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs).
A.Rs.25 lakh  
B.Rs.50 lakh  
C.Rs.1 crore  
D.Rs.2 crore  

**Answer C**

**Explanation** Stand Up India Scheme will lend bank loans between Rs.10 lakh and Rs.1 crore to at least one Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs). The loan will facilitate the borrower to set up greenfield enterprises in the manufacturing, services, or the trading sectors.

71) Who won the Road Safety Media Fellowship 2019 award?

A.Prachi Salve  
B.Pradeep Dwivedi  
C.B. Raveendra Shetty  
D.A&B  

**Answer D**

**Explanation** Prachi Salve of IndiaSpend and Pradeep Dwivedi of DainikJagran jointly won the top prize in the Road Safety Media Fellowship 2019. The award recognized their contribution towards reporting on road safety by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS).

72) When was the Stand Up India Scheme launched?

A.2014  
B.2015  
C.2016  
D.2018  

**Answer C**

**Explanation** Stand Up India Scheme was launched by the Government of India on 5 April 2016 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is a part of the Department of Financial Services' (DFS) to promote entrepreneurial projects.

73) Centre for Media Studies (CMS) is supported by ______.
A. Ministry of Arts & Culture  
B. Ministry of Tourism  
C. WHO India  
D. UNESCO  

**Answer C**

**Explanation** Centre for Media Studies (CMS) is a not-for-profit research think tank. It is supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) India.

74) RBI has announced that it would use Forex swap and LTRO to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 on the Indian Economy. What does LTRO stand for?

A. Loan Tenure ratio operation  
B. long-term repo operations  
C. Locational Extension reverse repo operations  
D. land acquisition tenure operation  

**Answer B**

**Explanation** LTRO (long-term repo operations) is a tool in which the central bank offers money to banks for a period of one to three years at the prevailing repo rate (currently at 5.15 percent). The banks, in turn, offer government securities with the same or higher tenure as a collateral to the central bank.

75) Which country holds the chair of G20 for the year 2020?

A. India  
B. UAE  
C. Saudi Arabia  
D. Oman  

**Answer C**

**Explanation** The 2020 chair will be Saudi Arabia, which will host the 2020 G20 Riyadh summit.

76) SBI has announced a reduction in its MCLR or marginal cost of funding-based lending rates up to ______ basis points (bps) across tenors.
State Bank of India (SBI) has announced a reduction in its MCLR or marginal cost of funding-based lending rates by 10-15 basis points (bps) across tenors.

77) Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has signed MoU with _______.

A. National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India 
B. Spices Board of India 
C. Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium 
D. Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India 

Answer C

Explanation Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has signed MoU with Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC).

78) 2020 G20 is to be held in _______.

A. New Delhi 
B. Tokyo 
C. Beijing 
D. Riyadh 

Answer D

Explanation The 2020 chair will be Saudi Arabia, which will host the 2020 G20 Riyadh summit.

79) When did GoI first introduce the first draft of the National e-Commerce policy in the public domain for suggestions?

A. 2017 
B. 2018
C.2019  
D.2020  

**Answer C**

**Explanation** On 23 February 2019, GoI introduced the first draft of the National e-Commerce policy in the public domain for suggestions. It received more than 120 stakeholders, including Indian and foreign, industry associations, think tanks, foreign governments. Following this, it conducted a series of meetings to contain the provisions for the policy.

80) When was Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) established?

A.1980  
B.1986  
C.1970  
D.1995  

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) was established in 1986. It is responsible for the export promotion of agricultural products.

81) When was Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) founded?

A.1985  
B.1989  
C.1990  
D.1994  

**Answer D**

**Explanation** Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is an Autonomous Society promoted by Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Government of India. It was registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 on 18th January, 1994.

82) Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) functions under _______.
A. Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare
B. Ministry of Commerce and Industry
C. Ministry of Agriculture and Research
D. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is an apex body under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, responsible for the export promotion of agricultural products.

**83) Microsoft India partnered with ________ and announced an "Innovate for an Accessible India campaign" to empower persons with disabilities (PwDs).**

A. IBM
B. TCS
C. NASSCOM Foundation
D. Qualcomm

**Answer C**

**Explanation** Microsoft India and NASSCOM Foundation announced an "Innovate for an Accessible India campaign" to empower persons with disabilities (PwDs).

**84) Ordnance Factory Board functions under ________.**

A. Ministry of Corporate Affairs
B. Ministry of Home Affairs
C. Ministry of Commerce and Industry
D. Ministry of Defence

**Answer D**

**Explanation** In 1712, the Dutch Ostend Company's Gun Powder Factory at Ichhapur was established. It came with a new effect on 2 April 1979. It is headquartered at Kolkata, West Bengal. OFB functions under the Department of Defence Production of the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

**85) ________ aims to provide for the establishment of an Institute of**
Teaching and Research in Ayurveda by merging three Ayurveda institutes.

A. Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill, 2020
B. Indian Institute for Research and Ayurveda Medicine Bill, 2019
C. National Commission for Homoeopathy Bill, 2019
D. National Commission for Homoeopathy Bill, 2020

Answer A

Explanation Lok Sabha is to take up the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill, 2020, for consideration on 19 March. The Bill aims to provide for the establishment of an Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda by merging three Ayurveda institutes. It seeks to declare the institution as an institution of national importance for the promotion of quality and excellence in education, research, and training in Ayurveda and allied disciplines.

86) Who is the Chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)?

A. Saurabh Kumar
B. Hari Mohan
C. Rajkumar Singh
D. Dayanand Kamal

Answer B

Explanation Shri Hari Mohan is the Chairman, Ordnance Factory Board (OFB). He took charge from 1 December 2019 from Shri Saurabh Kumar who superannuated from the services.

87) Which Bill convert three existing bodies under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, namely the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), and the Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB), into statutory bodies?

A. Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2016
B. Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2017
C. Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2019
D. Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020

Answer D

Explanation Lok Sabha passed the Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020, on 17 March. The Bill was
moved by the Union Civil Aviation Minister, Hardeep Singh Puri. The Bill aims to amend the Aircraft Act, 1934. The Bill aims to convert three existing bodies under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, namely the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), and the Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB), into statutory bodies under the Act.

88) Who took oath as a member of Rajya Sabha on 19 March 2020?

A. Former CJI Ranjan Gogoi
B. Former CJI Jagdish Singh Khehar
C. Former CJI Dipak Misra
D. Former CJI Praveen Kumar

Answer A

Explanation Former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi took oath as a member of Rajya Sabha on 19 March 2020. He was nominated by President Ram Nath Kovind. His nomination to the upper house was made against the vacancy created due to the retirement of senior lawyer KTS Tulsi.

89) Who is organizing the Innovate for an Accessible India campaign 2020?

A. NASSCOM Foundation
B. Microsoft India
C. National Research and Education Network under MeitY
D. All the Above

Answer D

Explanation Microsoft India and NASSCOM Foundation announced an "Innovate for an Accessible India campaign" to empower persons with disabilities (PwDs). The campaign is supported by in partnership with the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Department of Science & Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology and National Research and Education Network under MeitY (ERNET).

90) The government of India issued a gazette notification for the adaptation of ______ central laws in the Concurrent List for UT of J&K.

A.21
The government of India issued a gazette notification for the adaptation of 37 central laws in the Concurrent List for the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir.

91) Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020 will amend ______.

A. Aircraft Act, 1934  
B. Aircraft Act, 1948  
C. Aircraft Act, 1953  
D. Aircraft Act, 1960

**Answer A**

**Explanation** Lok Sabha passed the Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020, on 17 March. The Bill was moved by the Union Civil Aviation Minister, Hardeep Singh Puri. The Bill aims to amend the Aircraft Act, 1934.

92) The Concurrent List is given in the ______ Schedule to the Constitution of India.

A. 6th  
B. 7th  
C. 8th  
D. 9th

**Answer B**

**Explanation** The Concurrent List or List-III (Seventh Schedule) is a list of 52 items given in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India.

93) When was the Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB) established?

A. 1997  
B. 2003
C.2007  
D.2011  

**Answer D**

**Explanation** The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau is a division of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, which investigates aircraft accidents and incidents in India. The agency was established on 26 May 2011.

**94) The legislative section of Indian constitution is divided into _______.**  
A.2  
B.3  
C.4  
D.5  

**Answer B**

**Explanation** The legislative section is divided into three lists: Union List, State List, and Concurrent List.

**95) Which of the following functions under the Ministry of Civil Aviation?**  
A. Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)  
B. Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS)  
C. Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB)  
D. All the above  

**Answer D**

**Explanation** Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), and the Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB) functions under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

**96) When was the Dutch Ostend Company's Gun Powder Factory established?**  
A. 1712  
B. 1735  
C. 1747  
D. 1780
In 1712, the Dutch Ostend Company's Gun Powder Factory at Ichhapur was established. It came with a new effect on 2 April 1979. It is headquartered at Kolkata, West Bengal.

97) When was INS Vishwakarma commissioned?

A. 2000
B. 2002
C. 2010
D. 2015

Answer D

INS Vishwakarma is a premier technical establishment and alma-mater for Naval Architect Officers, Shipwright Officers, and Shipwright Sailors of the Indian Navy. INS Vishwakarma was established as the Shipwright School and was commissioned as INS Vishwakarma on 14 November 2015.

98) Who chaired the Meeting on Research in Indian Traditional Knowledge Systems?

A. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank
B. Prakash Javadekar
C. Arjun Munda
D. Harsh Vardhan

Answer A

A Meeting on Research in Indian Traditional Knowledge Systems was held in Delhi on 18 March. The meeting was chaired by the Union Human Resource Development Minister, Mr. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. He reviewed the ongoing research works of different institutions on the traditional knowledge system.

99) Who developed a new hand-sanitizer with natural flavours, active tea constituents, and alcohol content in the hand-sanitizer have been used as per the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO)?
A.Purell
B.CSIR-IHBT
C.IIT-Kharagpur
D.AIIMS

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Scientists of Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (CSIR-IHBT), Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, has developed a new hand-sanitizer as a preventive measure against Coronavirus. The natural flavours, active tea constituents, and alcohol content in the hand-sanitizer have been used as per the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO).

100) The Ordnance Factories observed ________ foundation day in 2020.

A.189th
B.193rd
C.208th
D.219th

**Answer D**

**Explanation** The Ordnance Factory Day is observed on the 18 March. The Ordnance Factories are observing their 219th foundation day this year. The day marks the establishment of the first Ordnance Factory on 18 March 1801. The first factory is known as the 'Gun and Shell Factory' at Cossipore in Kolkata.

101) Where was the Meeting on Research in Indian Traditional Knowledge Systems held?

A.Kathmandu
B.New Delhi
C.Dhaka
D.Mumbai

**Answer B**

**Explanation** A Meeting on Research in Indian Traditional Knowledge Systems was held in Delhi on 18 March. The meeting was chaired by the Union Human Resource Development Minister, Mr. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. He reviewed the ongoing research works of different institutions.
on the traditional knowledge system.

102) Where is the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (CSIR-IHBT) located?

A. Uttar Pradesh  
B. West Bengal  
C. Himachal Pradesh  
D. Assam

**Answer C**

**Explanation** Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (CSIR-IHBT) is located in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh.

103) Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved for the procurement of ________ indigenous Tejas fighter jets for Indian Air Force (IAF) with more advanced configuration.

A. 42  
B. 55  
C. 68  
D. 83

**Answer D**

**Explanation** The Defence Ministry’s Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved for the procurement of 83 indigenous Tejas fighter jets for Indian Air Force (IAF) with more advanced configuration on 18 March. The proposal will be forwarded for the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).

104) When was CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology established?

A. 1963  
B. 1967  
C. 1980  
D. 1983
CSIR-IHBT was founded in 1983. It is a laboratory of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. The institute is engaged in modern biology and several advanced research aspects of Himalayan Bio-resources.

**105) What is the estimated cost for 83 indigenous Tejas fighter jets of HAL for IAF?**

A. Rs.20,000 crores  
B. Rs.34,500 crores  
C. Rs.39,000 crores  
D. Rs.43,700 crores

**Answer C**

**Explanation** The Defence Ministry's Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved for the procurement of 83 indigenous Tejas fighter jets for Indian Air Force (IAF) with more advanced configuration on 18 March. The proposal will be forwarded for the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). The expected cost of the aircraft is Rs.39,000 crores.

**106) A Resolution seeking removal of the phrase _______ from the preamble of the Constitution is to be placed in Rajya Sabha on 20 March.**

A. Sovereign  
B. Socialism  
C. Democratic republic  
D. Secular

**Answer B**

**Explanation** A resolution that seeks the removal of the phrase "socialism" from the preamble of the Constitution is to be placed in Rajya Sabha on 20 March. The resolution argues that the word is "redundant" in the current scenario, and hence it should be dropped to create space for "economic thinking without a particular thought."

**107) Who is appointed as MD of Google Cloud in India?**

A. Karan Bajwa  
B. Sundar Pichai
Google appointed Karan Bajwa as Managing Director (MD) of Google Cloud in India. He will advise Google Cloud's work with the local developer ecosystem and India-based Global System Integrators (GSIs).

108) The term Socialism and secularism were adopted to the preamble on ______.
A. 1949
B. 1963
C. 1967
D. 1979

Answer A

Explanation: The preamble of the Indian Constitution has declared the country to be a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic. Socialism and secularism were not part of the preamble, which was adopted on 26 November 1949 by the Constituent Assembly.

109) When is the Ordnance Factory Day observed?
A. 8 March
B. 10 March
C. 18 March
D. 24 March

Answer C

Explanation: The Ordnance Factory Day is observed on the 18 March. The Ordnance Factories are observing their 219th foundation day this year. The day marks the establishment of the first Ordnance Factory on 18 March 1801. The first factory is known as the 'Gun and Shell Factory' at Cossipore in Kolkata.

110) The terms socialist and secular were inserted in the preamble as part of the _______ Constitution Amendment Act, 1976.
A. 42nd  
B. 44th  
C. 48th  
D. 52nd

**Answer A**

**Explanation** The terms socialist and secular were inserted in the preamble as part of the 42nd Constitution Amendment Act, 1976, which was passed during the Emergency. It was added to qualify the character of the Indian republic.

111) **When was the first Ordnance Factory set up?**

A. 1745  
B. 1787  
C. 1801  
D. 1841

**Answer C**

**Explanation** The Ordnance Factory Day is observed on the 18 March. The Ordnance Factories are observing their 219th foundation day this year. The day marks the establishment of the first Ordnance Factory on 18 March 1801. The first factory is known as the 'Gun and Shell Factory' at Cossipore in Kolkata.

112) **The Ordnance Factories are a conglomerate of ________ ordnance factories.**

A. 28  
B. 35  
C. 41  
D. 45

**Answer C**

**Explanation** The Ordnance Factories are a conglomerate of 41 ordnance factories. It functions under the aegis of its corporate headquarters Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), in Kolkata.

113) **Innovate for an Accessible India campaign is to empower _______.**
A. women  
B. persons with disabilities  
C. start-up  
D. students  

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Microsoft India and NASSCOM Foundation announced an "Innovate for an Accessible India campaign" to empower persons with disabilities (PwDs).

**114) Where is the headquarters Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) located?**

A. New Delhi  
B. Kolkata  
C. Mumbai  
D. Kochi  

**Answer A**

**Explanation** In 1712, the Dutch Ostend Company’s Gun Powder Factory at Ichhapur was established. It came with a new effect on 2 April 1979. It is headquartered at Kolkata, West Bengal.

**115) Where is the Indian Institute of Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Sciences located?**

A. Uttar Pradesh  
B. Gujarat  
C. Rajasthan  
D. Madhya Pradesh  

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Indian Institute of Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Sciences is a constituent college of Gujarat Ayurved University located in Jamnagar, Gujarat, India.

**116) When was the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) established?**

A. 1980
B.1985
C.1988
D.1990

**Answer C**

**Explanation** The National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) is a trade association of Indian Information Technology (IT) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry. It was established in 1988, NASSCOM is a non-profit organization.

**117) National Research and Education Network (ERNET) functions under _______.**

A. Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology
B. Ministry of Commerce and Industry
C. Ministry of Science and Technology
D. Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution

**Answer A**

**Explanation** ERNET India is the National Research and Education Network dedicated to support the needs of the research and education community within the country. It was established in 1998 as an autonomous scientific society under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India. It operates the ERNET network a pan-Indian terrestrial and satellite network with 5 points of presence at premier research and academic institutions.

**118) Criminal Law (Amendment) Act in 2013 extended punishment for gang rape to _______ years to life imprisonment.**

A. 10
B. 15
C. 20
D. 30

**Answer C**

**Explanation** The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act in 2013 has widened the definition of rape and made punishment more stringent. The punishment for gang rape was increased to 20 years to life imprisonment; earlier, it was 10 years to life imprisonment.
119) How many light machine guns (LMGs), India, is to buy from Israel?

A. 12,345  
B. 16,479  
C. 21,732  
D. 25,115

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed a capital acquisition contract with Israel Weapons Industries (IWI) for the procurement of 16,479 light machine guns (LMGs).

120) When is the French Language Day observed?

A. 1 March  
B. 20 March  
C. 30 March  
D. 2 April

**Answer B**

**Explanation** French Language Day is observed on 20 March. The day explores the influences of the language as a culture, its history, and its achievements. The day celebrates multilingualism and cultural diversity.

121) When is the International Day of Happiness celebrated?

A. 15 February  
B. 20 February  
C. 10 March  
D. 20 March

**Answer D**

**Explanation** International Day of Happiness is celebrated on 20 March. The day aims to inspire and advance the global happiness movement.

122) The observation of French language day was established by UNESCO in ________.
A.1998
B.2010
C.2006
D.2000

**Answer B**

**Explanation** The observation of French language day was established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2010.

**123) What is the theme of 2020 International Day of Happiness?**

A. Happiness For All, Together
B. Get Fresh Air and Exercise
C. Measure Good Deeds
D. Create a Happiness Worksheet

**Answer A**

**Explanation** International Day of Happiness is celebrated on 20 March. The day aims to inspire and advance the global happiness movement. The campaign theme for the year 2020 is 'Happiness For All, Together.' The campaign is a global celebration to mark the United Nations International Day of Happiness.

**124) The United Nations named six language days in recognition of the ________ official languages of the UN in 2010.**

A. 4
B. 6
C. 7
D. 9

**Answer B**

**Explanation** The United Nations named six language days in recognition of the six official languages of the UN in 2010. It aimed to bring attention to the history, culture, and achievements of each of the languages.

**125) Who instituted the International Day of Happiness?**
A. Richard Thompson  
B. Dave Swarbrick  
C. Simon Nicol  
D. Jayme Illien  

**Answer D**

**Explanation** International Happiness Day was founded and conceptualized by Jayme Illien, the CEO of the United Nations New World Order project, in 2006. The main idea behind celebrating the day is to establish happiness as a fundamental human right among the masses. It was one of the goals of the United Nations (UN) to celebrate the happiness, freedom, and well-being of mankind on earth.

126) The UN selected 20 March to celebrate the French Language Day in honor of the ________ anniversary of the International Organization of La Francophonie.

A. 25th  
B. 40th  
C. 50th  
D. 100th  

**Answer B**

**Explanation** The UN selected 20 March to celebrate the French Language Day in honor of the 40th anniversary of the International Organization of La Francophonie.

127) When did the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopt a resolution that recognized happiness as a "fundamental human goal"?

A. 2005  
B. 2007  
C. 2011  
D. 2015  

**Answer C**

**Explanation** In 2011, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution which recognized happiness as a "fundamental human goal" International Happiness Day was celebrated for the first time in 2013.
128) From which language did French develop?

A. Greek  
B. Hebrew  
C. Latin  
D. Arabic  

**Answer C**

**Explanation** French was developed from Latin between the 5th and 8th centuries. It is one of the Romance languages spoken in the world. French is spoken in more than 25 countries. French was the most important language of diplomacy and international relations from the 17th century to approximately the middle of the 20th century.

129) When was the first International Day of Happiness celebrated?

A. 2000  
B. 2006  
C. 2010  
D. 2013  

**Answer D**

**Explanation** In 2011, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution which recognized happiness as a "fundamental human goal". International Happiness Day was celebrated for the first time in 2013.

130) Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) had planned ______ missions for the fiscal year 2020-21.

A. 21  
B. 20  
C. 36  
D. 43  

**Answer C**

**Explanation** Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) had planned 36 missions for the fiscal year 2020-21. ISRO is to send up ten earth observation satellites during 2020-21.
131) What is the cost of the light machine guns (LMGs) that India is to procure from IWI?

A. Rs.880 crore  
B. Rs.930 crore  
C. Rs.1104 crore  
D. Rs.1250 crore

Answer A

Explanation Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed a capital acquisition contract with Israel Weapons Industries (IWI) for the procurement of 16,479 light machine guns (LMGs). The cost of the agreement was Rs.880 crore.

132) When is the World Sparrow Day observed?

A. 18 March  
B. 19 March  
C. 20 March  
D. 21 March

Answer C

Explanation World Sparrow Day is observed on 20 March. It is observed every year. The day aims to raise awareness about the importance of sparrows in the ecosystem. It also conveys the message of conservation of sparrows that are disappearing faster than other common birds.


A. International Energy Agency  
B. United States Department of Energy  
C. Energistyrelsen  
D. Danish Energy Agency

Answer A

Explanation The World Energy Statistics was published by the International Energy Agency (IEA).

134) What is the theme for the 2020 World Sparrow Day?
A. I Love Sparrow  
B. Sparrow: Nature's Friend  
C. Save Sparrow to Survive  
D. Let Sparrows Live

**Answer A**

**Explanation** The theme for the 2020 World Sparrow Day is 'I Love Sparrow.' The day aims to teach the public about the threat of polluted urban environments and non-caring humans to the house sparrow population and to other common bird species.

135) As per World Energy Statistics, India is the ________ largest producer of electricity in the world.

A. 3rd  
B. 7th  
C. 10th  
D. 14th

**Answer A**

**Explanation** The World Energy Statistics published by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in 2019 states that India is the 3rd largest producer of electricity in the world. India ranked 106th in terms of per capita consumption in 2017.

136) Who initiated the World Sparrow Day?

A. Franklin Peter  
B. Mohammed Dilawar  
C. Harish Patel  
D. Vikram Singh

**Answer B**

**Explanation** The World Sparrow Day was initiated by the founder of The Nature Forever Society, Mohammed Dilawar. He also started many projects, including the BiodiverCity Photo Competition, the annual Sparrow Awards, Project Save Our Sparrows, and the Common Bird Monitoring of India program.
137) When was the International Energy Agency (IEA) established?

A. 1965  
B. 1974  
C. 1980  
D. 1992

**Answer B**

**Explanation** International Energy Agency (IEA) was established in November 1974. IEA is a Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organization established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis.

138) When was the first World Sparrow Day observed?

A. 2000  
B. 2004  
C. 2007  
D. 2010

**Answer D**

**Explanation** The first World Sparrow Day was observed in the year 2010. In 2011, the World Sparrow Awards were instituted. The award recognizes the individuals who have made the biggest contributions toward conserving the environment and protecting common species.

139) Ministry of Defence signed a capital acquisition contract with ________ for the procurement of light machine guns (LMGs).

A. Israel Weapons Industries (IWI)  
B. Iran Weapons Industries (IWI)  
C. UAE Weapons Industries (UAEWI)  
D. China Weapons Industries (CWI)

**Answer A**

**Explanation** Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed a capital acquisition contract with Israel Weapons Industries (IWI) for the procurement of 16,479 light machine guns (LMGs).
140) When was the World Sparrow Awards instituted?

A. 2006  
B. 2008  
C. 2011  
D. 2013

**Answer C**

**Explanation** In 2011, the World Sparrow Awards were instituted. The award recognizes the individuals who have made the biggest contributions toward conserving the environment and protecting common species.

141) Who is the founder of The Nature Forever Society?

A. Mohammed Dilawar  
B. Samson Daniel  
C. Hari Krishna  
D. Prasanna Kumar

**Answer A**

**Explanation** The Nature Forever Society (NFS) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization working for the conservation of house sparrows and other common flora and fauna since 2006. Started by Mohammed Dilawar (founder and president), Nature Forever Society was registered in 2008.

142) How many active cases of COVID-19 are recorded in India on March 21st?

A. 236  
B. 200  
C. 225  
D. 185

**Answer A**

**Explanation** COVID-19 cases rose to 236 in India after 63 new cases were reported in a day. The government in the national capital and Maharashtra announced the shutdown of public places to contain the spread of coronavirus that has claimed more than 10,000 lives globally.
143) Which state govt seeks Central Grant of 100 cr for Lucknow University and Kashi Vidyapeeth?

A. Karnataka
B. Kerala
C. Andhra Pradesh
D. Uttar Pradesh

**Answer D**

**Explanation** Uttar Pradesh state govt seeks Central Grant of 100 cr for Lucknow University and Kashi Vidyapeeth.

144) Which country registered 70 new COVID-19 cases bringing total to 344?

A. New Zealand
B. India
C. Switzerland
D. Saudi Arabia

**Answer D**

**Explanation** Saudi Arabia registered 70 new COVID-19 cases bringing total to 344.

145) When International Day of Forests observed?

A. 22 May
B. 21 March
C. 22 June
D. 23 July

**Answer B**

**Explanation** International Day of Forests observed on 21 March.

146) Saudi Arabia registers 70 new COVID-19 cases bringing total to

A. 364
B.344
C.395
D.420

Answer B

Explanation Saudi Arabia registers 70 new COVID-19 cases bringing total to 344.

147) When Reserve Bank of India was founded?

A.1935
B.1936
C.1937
D.1938

Answer A

Explanation Reserve Bank of India was founded on the 1 April 1935.

148) When Central Board of Secondary Education was founded?

A.1961
B.1962
C.1963
D.1964

Answer B

Explanation Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has launched e-content for various subjects on DIKSHA app.

149) Where was ICMR headquarters located?

A.1912
B.1911
C.1913
D.1914

Answer B
Indian Council of Medical Research, the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research, is one of the oldest and largest medical research bodies in the world.

150) Where was the DBS Bank located?

A. Ireland  
B. Malaysia  
C. Singapore  
D. Switzerland

**Answer C**

DBS Bank is a Singaporean multinational banking and financial services.

151) Union govt orders implementation of ____________-Central Laws in Jammu and Kashmir

A. 32  
B. 37  
C. 35  
D. 42

**Answer B**

Union govt orders implementation of 37 Central Laws in Jammu and Kashmir.

152) When Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority was founded?

A. 1989  
B. 1987  
C. 1986  
D. 1990

**Answer C**

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority is an apex body under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.
153) When Make in India was launched?

A. 2014
B. 2015
C. 2016
D. 2017

**Answer A**

**Explanation** Make in India, a type of Swadeshi movement covering 25 sectors of the Indian economy, was launched by the Government of India founded on 2014.

154) When Food and Agriculture Organization was founded?

A. 1947
B. 1946
C. 1945
D. 1948

**Answer C**

**Explanation** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security. It is founded on 16 October 1945.

155) Uttar Pradesh govt seeks Central Grant of ________crores for Lucknow University and Kashi Vidyapeeth

A. 98
B. 100
C. 105
D. 110

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Uttar Pradesh govt seeks Central Grant of 100 cr for Lucknow University and Kashi Vidyapeeth.

156) Where was International Cricket Council headquarters?
A. Malaysia  
B. Dubai  
C. Thailand  
D. Singapore

**Answer B**

**Explanation** International Cricket Council is the global governing body of cricket.

157) China reports no new domestic cases of COVID - 19 for ____________ successive day

A. first  
B. second  
C. third  
D. fourth

**Answer B**

**Explanation** China reports no new domestic cases of COVID - 19 for 2nd successive day.

158) When Punjab and Maharashtra co-operative Bank was founded?

A. 1985  
B. 1984  
C. 1986  
D. 1987

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Punjab and Maharashtra co-operative Bank was founded on the year 1984.

159) Where was Bharti Axa General Insurance headquarters?

A. Chennai  
B. Mumbai  
C. Raipur  
D. Kolkata
Answer B

Explanation Bharti Axa General Insurance Company Ltd. is a joint venture between Bharti Enterprises and Axa business Group that operates in India

160) When was ICC founded?

A. 16 June 1909
B. 15 June 1909
C. 16 July 1912
D. 16 May 1914

Answer A

Explanation International Cricket Council is the global governing body of cricket.

161) RBI extends restrictions on PMC Bank for _____ more months

A. Four
B. Three
C. Fifth
D. eight

Answer B

Explanation RBI extends restrictions on PMC Bank for three more months.

162) Who was DBS Bank CEO?

A. Piyush Gupta
B. Suresh Kumar
C. Vikram Sharma
D. Rajesh Sharma

Answer A

Explanation DBS Bank is a Singaporean multinational banking and financial services corporation headquartered in Marina Bay Financial Centre Tower 3, Marina Bay, Singapore. DBS Bank CEO is Piyush Gupta
163) Which state govt announces one month free food grains to poor?
A. Uttar Pradesh  
B. Kerala  
C. Tamil Nadu  
D. Andhra Pradesh  

**Answer A**

**Explanation** UP govt announces one month free food grains to poor.

164) Where was Reserve Bank of India located?
A. Chennai  
B. Mumbai  
C. Goa  
D. Rajasthan  

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Reserve Bank of India is India's central bank, which controls the issue and supply of the Indian rupee. Headquarters located at Mumbai.

165) **World Happiness Report** is a landmark survey of the state of global happiness that ranks _______ countries
A. 158  
B. 156  
C. 157  
D. 159  

**Answer B**

**Explanation** World Happiness Report is a landmark survey of the state of global happiness that ranks 156 countries.

166) Who was International Cricket Council CEO?
A. Manu Sawhney  
B. Dave Richardson
International Cricket Council is the global governing body of cricket. International Cricket Council CEO is Manu Sawhney.

167) When Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank was founded?
A. 1985
B. 1984
C. 1986
D. 1988

Answer B
Explanation Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank was founded on the year 1984.

168) When Coronavirus disease got infected in human?
A. 2020
B. 2019
C. 2018
D. 2017

Answer B
Explanation Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease was first identified in 2019 in Wuhan, Central China, and has since spread globally, resulting in the 2019-20 coronavirus pandemic.

169) What is the Parent Organisation of Bharti Axa General Insurance?
A. Bharti Enterprises
B. ICICI Lombard
C. Tata AIG
D. HDFC ERGO
Answer A

Explanation The parent organisation of Bharti Axa General Insurance is Bharti Enterprises

170) When World Happiness Report 2020 was released?

A. March 16
B. March 20
C. February 15
D. February 28

Answer B

Explanation The World Happiness Report 2020 will be released on March 20 on International Day of Happiness.

171) World Happiness Report is a landmark survey of the state of global happiness that ranks ______ countries

A. 156
B. 165
C. 185
D. 168

Answer A

Explanation World Happiness Report is a landmark survey of the state of global happiness that ranks 156 countries
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